

SUSTAINABLE WESTCHESTER

Where Westchester County's municipalities come together to address sustainability-related opportunities through shared services and sharing of best practices.

The mission statement

Sustainable Westchester is a consortium of Westchester County local governments that facilitates effective sustainability initiatives, engages community stakeholders, and shares tools, resources, and incentives to create more healthy, vibrant and attractive communities, now and in the future.

Why Sustainable Westchester?

Westchester's municipalities have ambitious sustainability goals in an environment of severe budgetary constraints. Sustainable Westchester helps participating municipalities seize opportunities and address challenges by leveraging existing municipal resources as well as outside funding and expertise. Sustainable Westchester is an inter-municipal platform that facilitates shared services and information for the development of effective responses to important sustainability-related opportunities including energy efficiency, renewable energy, waste reduction initiatives, transportation, food security, and more.

What is Sustainable Westchester?

Sustainable Westchester is the result of combining the parallel efforts of the Northern Westchester Energy Action Consortium (NWEAC.org) and the Southern Westchester Energy Action Consortium (SWEAC.org) under one county-wide organizational umbrella.

To enable the merger, NWEAC, a 501(c)(3) organization comprised of member municipalities, is in the process of modifying its certificate of incorporation to become "Sustainable Westchester." The change in charter will allow any local government in Westchester County to join the new organization.

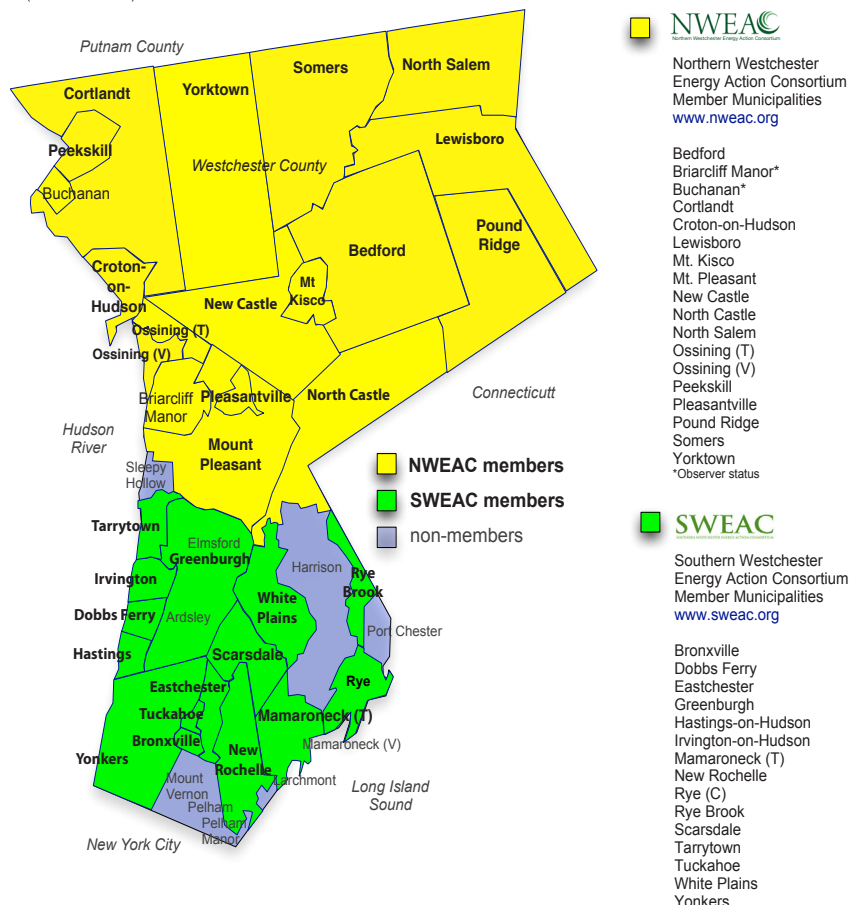
NWEAC, which began operating in 2009, and SWEAC, which began in 2010, have been advocating for the power of inter-municipal collaboration within each consortium. The merger will allow Sustainable Westchester and its municipal members to capture the opportunities that scale offers to more effectively serve all the interested municipalities in Westchester County.

About 85% (863,000 residents) of the entire County population lives in one of 33 municipalities that have already joined either NWEAC or SWEAC.

What services will Sustainable Westchester offer its members?

Sustainable Westchester's services and programs will be tailored to reflect the priorities of its member municipalities. In preparation for the creation of Sustainable

Westchester's Energy Action Consortium Members
(as of March 2014)



Westchester, SWEAC and NWEAC prepared a short survey in collaboration with the Westchester Municipal Officials Association. This survey was distributed to chief elected officials and managers of all 45 cities, towns, and villages in November 2013 and had a response rate of 67%, with the responding municipalities representing three-quarters of the population of the county. The survey results will help Sustainable Westchester determine which issues are of high priority for its members. Survey responses indicate the following:

- ▶ 91% of responding municipalities have a designated staff member or committee addressing sustainability concerns.
- ▶ 100% say the energy efficiency of municipal buildings is critically important or important.
- ▶ 97% say that energy efficiency of outdoor lighting and street lights is critically important or important.
- ▶ The significant majority indicated that the other areas, including lowering energy costs for residents and business owners, reducing solid waste, implementing complete streets are critically important or important.

Both NWEAC and SWEAC have strong track records of providing services valued by their municipalities. These services include helping to launch the very successful Energize New York energy efficiency program rolled out in fourteen municipalities, as well as developing successful programs designed to share best practices on topics including energy efficient streetlights, green building codes, autumn leaf management and solar permitting as well as other significant initiatives in development. The programs developed and offered by Sustainable Westchester will build on the successes to date of NWEAC and SWEAC and will reflect the priorities of its members.

Initiatives will emphasize shared services, access to intellectual capital and case studies from participating municipalities, public-private partnerships and leveraging other external resources for the benefit of participating municipalities and their communities.

What is the organizational structure?

The organizational structure is a dues-paying membership model. Organizations eligible to become members include local governments (i.e. cities, towns, villages, and, potentially, other local jurisdictions) within Westchester County.

We anticipate the following conditions will apply to membership:

1. Members will be represented by the chief elected official or a proxy (e.g. staff member, other elected official, or volunteer) designated by that individual.
2. Members will pay an annual membership fee (dues) and have a voting role in membership matters, such as electing a Board of Directors, and have access to all the resources that Sustainable Westchester provides.
3. Membership meetings will be held at least once per year and will be open to the public.
4. The Annual Members Meeting will serve the purpose of electing a Board of Directors, and reviewing and approving direction and activities of Consortium, considering other fundamental decisions, e.g., change of membership criteria (to include school districts as members, etc).
5. The Board of Directors will be comprised of twelve individuals, and nominations for the Board will be solicited from Members.

What is the schedule and membership process?

Once NWEAC receives New York State's approval for the amendment to its certificate of incorporation, it will hold an existing member meeting, projected to be in April 2014, to address final housekeeping items to effect the change. Thereafter, we expect Sustainable Westchester to be "open for business" by May 2014 for new members.

Members dues for 2014 will be \$1,000 per local government, consistent with the existing NWEAC dues. Municipalities may join Sustainable Westchester by submitting a letter to apply for membership and paying the required dues. A sample resolution for the membership letter will be made available. We anticipate Sustainable Westchester will hold its first Members Meeting by summer 2014 and elect its Board of Directors at that time.

Contact information

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