# Climate-Smart Tips

Check out The Village of Clayton CSC Taskforce list of suggestions on how to reduce your carbon footprint and live more sustainably. This document is divided into sections – some suggestions include insights to better inform you on the "why" and tips on how to achieve these actions. Where possible, links are provided to resources (hover over any underlined words and click to access).

## Simple Actions YOU Can Do

- **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle!** **(Refuse and Repurpose too!)**
  - *TIP: Look for recycling programs locally. Save the River in partnership with the Thousand Islands Association (TIA) operates a <u>Fishing Line Recycling Program</u> and recently launched a <u>Battery Collection Pilot Program</u>.*
- **Consider buying used items instead of new and passing along items you no longer use.**
  - *TIP: There is a "<u>Buy Nothing, Clayton, NY</u>" Facebook group, created by a community member, where you can post and find free items. Thrift stores, Facebook Marketplace, and annual "<u>Trash & Treasure</u>" yard sale days are other methods of finding cheap or free items. Clothing swaps are held periodically and is a great way to upcycle clothing while adding to your wardrobe. <u>Hawn Memorial Library</u> also holds a book recycling collection day.*
- **Shop local businesses** and **eat locally grown foods**!
  - *INSIGHT: Choosing locally sourced goods supports local economies, fosters community resilience, and reduces the carbon footprint associated with transportation of goods.*
  - *TIP: Go to a <u>local farmers' market</u>. <u>Clayton's Farmers' Market</u> is held every Thursday at the Wooden Park from 10am–4pm, seasonally.*
- **Eat less meat.** Example, "Meatless Mondays"!
  - *INSIGHT: <u>The meat industry is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, deforestation, and water consumption</u>. By deciding to eat fewer meals with meat, we can have a huge impact on our collective health and the health of the planet.*
  - *TIP: If eating less meat is not something you'd consider, think about buying <u>locally raised meat</u>.*
- **Support <u>sustainable businesses and brands</u>** whenever possible!
- **Buy in bulk!** Saves money and reduces wasted packaging.
- **Be <u>MINDFUL about your consumption</u>.** Consider if you truly need an item before buying it.
- **Compost**!
  - *INSIGHT: Diverting organic waste from landfills helps extend the lifespan of landfills, and the enriched soil produced can be used in yards and gardens.*
  - *TIP: The <u>Town of Clayton Transfer Station</u> now composts!*

- **Reduce use of <u>single use plastics</u> – switch to reusable items.** Ditch the plastic wrap and use beeswax wrap for food storage.
  - *INSIGHT: <u>9.3 BILLION US Tons of plastic has been produced since plastic was introduced in the 1950's. 79% of plastic that has ever been made still sits in landfills or the natural environment (with the exception of the small amount that has been incinerated or recycled). When plastics end up in landfills, they aren't harmless. They break down into tiny toxic particles (microplastics) that contaminate the soil and waterways and enter the food chain when animals accidentally ingest them.</u>*
  - *TIP: Say no to disposable plastic cutlery when ordering food to-go if you have access to silverware. Keep an extra set of silverware at your workspace just in case!*
- **Walk or bike** around your area, especially for those short car trips!
  - *TIP: Do you live in the Village and drive mostly everywhere you go? Consider which stops you need your car and those that you don't. Do you pay your water bill in person or via drop box? If within your capabilities, challenge yourself to walk to the Municipal Building to pay your bill rather than drive.*
- **"Leave it better than you found it" – Pick up litter.**
  - *INSIGHT: Picking up litter helps the environment and wildlife from pollution and habitat destruction. It also improves the aesthetic appeal of our surroundings and fosters a sense of community pride. <u>Since 2020, Save the River has held Trash Free River shoreline cleanups with over 7,000 pounds of trash removed</u>.*
  - *TIP: Plan a walking route, wear gloves and carry a bag to collect litter. Get others involved and make it a group event.*
- **Plant flowers, trees, fruits, vegetables, and more native species in your yard.** It brightens up your outdoors and improves your landscape!
  - *INSIGHT: Trees can reduce energy consumption and costs around homes by providing shade in summer and windbreaks in winter. Flowers and native species help pollinators thrive by providing food and habitat. Growing your own fruits and vegetables can help you access more nutrition, lower food costs, and promotes a sustainable lifestyle!*
  - *TIP: Don't have time or space to start a garden? Join Thousand Islands Land Trust (TILT) <u>community garden at Zenda Farms</u>. TILT provides the land, community members plant and tend, and then reap the harvest!*

## ❧ ——————————— ❧ Energy Conservation

Heating/Cooling

- **Get a FREE home energy audit.**
  - *INSIGHT: An energy audit or assessment can uncover underlying causes to high energy costs and put you on a path to lasting savings and comfort.*
  - *TIP: NYSERDA offers NY homeowners of 1-4 unit family homes a <u>no-cost energy assessment</u>. The Community Action Planning Council (CAPC) of Jefferson County also offers a <u>Weatherization Assistance Program</u> which includes a free energy audit and weatherization services to households meeting financial eligibility. For those who do not qualify for CAPC's program, <u>G.R.O. Energy Solutions</u>, offers free energy audits and has grants and rebates to assist homeowners with costs of weatherization projects.*
- **Invest in a <u>smart thermostat</u> or use a timer** for AC units.

- **Adjust your thermostat setting when you are out of the home.**
  - *INSIGHT: <u>You can save as much as 10% a year on heating and cooling by simply turning your thermostat back 7–10°F for 8 hours a day from its normal setting.</u>*
- **Consider switching to <u>geothermal</u>, heat pumps/mini-splits.**
  - *INSIGHT: <u>Heat pumps can reduce your electricity use for heating by up to 75%.</u>*
  - *TIP: <u>NYSERDA offers clean energy incentives</u> to help off-set costs.*
- **<u>Clean/replace filters</u> as recommended, typically every 1–3 months.**
  - *INSIGHT: Improves indoor air quality, extends lifespan of system, and lowers energy bills.*
  - *TIP: Factors like the type of filter, your household's conditions, and the amount of dust and allergens in your home can influence how often you need to change the filter.*
- **Insulate your home**, including windows, doors, and water pipes.
  - *INSIGHT: <u>Insulating hot water pipes can lead to 3–4% energy cost savings annually.</u>*
  - *TIP: Weather-strip or caulk areas of noticeable cracks around windows and doors. During winter months, consider buying plastic film for windows to prevent drafts and heat loss.*

## Lighting

- **Opt for <u>ENERGY STAR compact LED light bulbs.</u>**
  - *INSIGHT: ENERGY STAR LED bulbs last longer and use <u>70–90% less electricity</u> than incandescent bulbs!*
- **Turn off lights when not in use,** even for short periods of time.
  - *INSIGHT: <u>A single 100-watt bulb left on all night costs about $25 over 12 months.</u>*
- **Use lighting controls (<u>dimmers, motion sensors, photosensors, timers</u>).**
- **Use natural lighting** by opening curtains and shades during the day.
  - *TIP: Consider <u>skylights and solar tubes</u> during remodel or construction designs.*
- **Keep light bulbs and fixtures clean from dirt and dust.**
  - *<u>INSIGHT: Dust can cut light output by as much as 25%.</u>*

## Appliances

- **Buy ENERGY STAR certified appliances.**
  - *INSIGHT: Energy Star certified appliances meet specific energy efficiency standards set by the EPA. On average, these are 10–35% more efficient than standard models.*
  - *TIP: A wide range of these appliances exist including: <u>refrigerators</u>, <u>freezers</u>, <u>dishwashers</u>, <u>laundry machines</u>, <u>air conditioners</u>, <u>dehumidifiers</u>, <u>electric cooking products</u>, <u>heat pumps</u>, <u>water heaters</u>, <u>windows</u>, <u>computers</u>, <u>TVs</u>, and <u>lighting</u>.*
- **Clean appliance filters regularly** to run more efficiently.
  - *TIP: Appliances should be cleaned at least once a year. HVAC systems, refrigerators, dishwashers, air purifiers, dryers, and vacuums are examples of appliances with filters.*
- **Check the seals on your refrigerator, freezer, and oven doors.**
  - *TIP: If you can move a dollar bill through the closed door, the seal is not tight enough. If possible, replace the seals or consider replacing the unit if its an older model.*
- **Defrost manual freezer models regularly** or when frost is more than ¼ inch thick.
  - *TIP: Frost makes your unit work harder and wastes energy. <u>How to defrost a freezer</u>.*
- **Avoid setting refrigerator/freezer temperature colder than necessary.**
  - *TIP: <u>Set your refrigerator between 35–38°F and your freezer at 0°F.</u>*

- **Avoid placing refrigerators/freezers in spaces where temperatures are not controlled** such as a garage or porch.
  - *INSIGHT: Refrigerators are designed to operate in a controlled indoor environment, typically between 60-85°F, and will not work as efficiently outside this range.*
  - *TIP: Buy a garage-ready model.*
- **Consider purchasing an induction oven/stovetop.**
  - *INSIGHT: Induction appliances are up to 3x more efficient than gas stoves, and up to 10% more efficient than conventional smooth top electric ranges. Induction cooktops can boil water 20-40% faster than gas and traditional electric cooktops.*
  - *TIP: If you rent or want to try the induction cooking experience before swapping out your entire cooktop, consider a single-burner induction appliance.*
- **Unplug appliances that are not in use**, like toaster ovens and coffee machines.
  - *TIP: Some appliances use power while plugged in, even if not actively in use. Unplugging also reduces risk of fire. Turn off computers rather than putting into sleep mode!*
- **Don't Peek – Avoid opening oven doors when in use.**
  - *INSIGHT: Oven temperature can drop 25°F leading to more energy use to bring back to temperature.*
- **Meal prep (Batch Cooking).** Uses the oven as little as possible to save time and energy.
- **Place a lid while cooking food or boiling water to trap heat and use less energy.**
  - *TIP: Check out more kitchen appliance energy saving tips.*
- **Try to wait until you have a full load before running dishwasher and clothes washer.**
  - *INSIGHT: Disherwashers use the same amount of energy and water regardless of the number of dishes inside. Clothes washers use about the same amount of energy regardless of load.*
- **Wash clothes in cold water to use less energy,** when possible.
  - *INSIGHT: About 90% of the energy the washing machine uses goes towards heating the water. It is estimated that every household that switches to cold water washing could eliminate about 1,600 pounds of CO2 a year.*
- **Clean the lint trap** after each load to keep the dryer running efficiently.
  - *TIP: Periodically checking the air vent and hose for clogged lint prevents a fire hazard.*
- **Air dry clothes,** if possible.
  - *INSIGHT: Household dryers in the U.S. consume about 3% of our residential energy budget, about 6x that used by washing machines. Collectively, dryers cost more than $7 billion to power each year in the U.S., and generating that energy emits the equivalent of more than 27 million tons of CO2.*
  - *TIP: Check out more laundry energy saving tips.*

## Water Conservation

Indoors
- **Fix leaks.** Check faucets, sinks, toilets, showerheads, water heaters, and pipes.
  - *INSIGHT: For the average U.S. family per year, household leaks waste 10,000 gallons of water. Equivalent to 270+ loads of laundry!*
- **Skip the rinse – just scrape and place in the dishwasher.**
  - *TIP: With the right dishwasher and detergent, there is no need to pre-rinse dishes.*

- **Install water saving devices**, such as <u>low-flow showerheads and faucet aerators</u>.
  - *INSIGHT: <u>Standard showerheads use 2.5 gallons of water per minute.</u> The average family could save 2,700 gallons of water per year by installing Watersense label showerheads.*
  - *TIP: Use EPA's <u>WaterSense Calculator</u> to see how much you could save by switching!*
- **Take shorter showers.**
  - *INSIGHT: <u>Showers account for nearly 17% of indoor water use.</u>*
  - *TIP: Check out <u>EPA's Shower Better</u> tips.*
- **Turn off the tap while brushing teeth or shaving.**
- **Plug up the sink or use a wash basin if washing dishes by hand.**

Outdoors
- **<u>Collect rainwater</u> to water your garden.**
- **Create a <u>water-smart landscape</u>.**
- **Water at the right time and give plants only what they need.**
  - *INSIGHT: Avoid watering in the middle of the day when the hot sun will evaporate much of the water before it gets to the plants.*
  - *TIP: Check out EPA's <u>Watering Tips</u>.*
- **Use a sprinkler?** Consider buying a <u>WaterSense labeled sprinkler</u>.
- **Sweep driveways, sidewalks, and steps rather than hosing off.**
- **If you have a pool, use a cover to reduce evaporation when the pool is not being used.**
  - *TIP: Check out WaterSense's <u>Jump Into Pool Water Efficiency Guide</u>.*

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# Outdoor Maintenance

- **Let your grass grow a little longer, or transition to more garden area.**
  - *INSIGHT: The <u>EPA estimates that hour-for-hour, gas-powered lawn mowers spew 11x more air pollution than a new car</u>! Mowing less frequently can help reduce air pollution.*
  - *TIP: Raising the mower's blade to 3-4 inches and leaving clippings on the lawn results in a healthier, greener yard. Longer grass allows the grass to grow stronger roots and not tap its food reserves. Mowing less saves money and allows more habitat for pollinators!*
- **Consider shifting to electric powered lawn equipment.**
  - *INSIGHT: The <u>EPA estimates that over 17 million gallons of gaosline is spilled as garden equipment is refueled each year.</u>*
  - *TIP: Electric powered lawn equipment has zero emissions and no annual maintenance. They also lessen noise pollution within the community!*
- **Use mulch and compost in garden beds to retain moisture and reduce need for watering.**

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# Transportation

- **Reduce unnecessary travel by consolidating errands.**
  - *INSIGHT: <u>GHG emissions from transportation account for about 28% of total U.S. GHG emissions.</u>*
- **Consider purchasing a Hybrid or Electric vehicle (EV) next time you buy a car.**
  - *INSIGHT: <u>The Inflation Reduction Act tax credits and NYS's Drive Clean Rebate can save individuals and their businesses up to $9,500 on a selection of new EV models.</u>*
  - *TIP: Savings vary, check out the <u>IRS webpage</u> for qualifications and more information.*

- **Avoid idling your vehicle.**
  - *INSIGHT: Idling reduces vehicle fuel economy, costs money, and creates pollution. Idling for more than 10 seconds uses more fuel and produces more emissions that contribute to smog and climate change than stopping and restarting your engine does.*
  - *TIP: If that drive-thru lane at a restaurant, pharmacy, or bank is long, consider turning off the engine while you wait or parking and going inside.*
- **Carpool** when possible.
- **Buy the most fuel-efficient vehicle that fits your needs.**
- **Check tire pressure** regularly.
  - *INSIGHT: Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company estimates U.S. motorists may waste $2 billion annually because their tires are not properly inflated.*
  - *TIP: If your tires are pumped to even 4-5 pounds per square inch lower than the recommended levels, it increases your gas usage by 10%.*
- **Use public transit.**
  - *INSIGHT: While this is not entirely feasible where we live, (yet) consider using pulic transit if you travel to other areas where public transit is available - buses, ferries, trolley, train, rideshare. Keep a look out for future public tansportation options in Jefferson County! In 2022, the Jefferson County Board of Legislators applied for funds from the NYSDOT to purchase 6 buses and contract with a company to facilitate the startup program.*

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**Get involved with sustainable actions in your community!**
Attend Village of Clayton Climate Smart events, participate in the CSC Taskforce, and/or follow Clayton's Climate Smart Communities social media to learn more about climate-smart initiatives.

There are many ways to contribute to a more sustainable lifestyle - you don't need to take all these actions to make a difference, start with small changes! Choose to implement the actions that work for you, encourage family and friends to be more climate-smart, connect with others that are working towards similar goals, and build from there. Sustainability requires a collective action from diverse groups working together towards a shared purpose!

**Clayton Climate Smart Community Taskforce:**
Lori Arnot, Bridgett McCann, Cecilia Wirth, Bridget Wright, Trustee Mike Kinnie, Mayor Nancy Hyde.

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**State Support for Local Climate Action:**
Climate Smart Communities (CSC) is a New York State program that helps local governments take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to a changing climate. The program offers grants, rebates for electric vehicles, and free technical assistance. The Village of Clayton is one of over 400 Registered Climate Smart Communities in New York State.