

Ossining Climate Action Plan

Detailed Recommendations: Water Resources Sector

Summary: These measures are focused on increasing household and business water conservation and conducting outreach intended to raise awareness of the effects of stormwater runoff on the environment.

Commercial Water Conservation

Defined as:

Measures focused upon reducing the water usage of small businesses. This reduction can be achieved via reducing the demand placed on municipal water resources, maximizing the efficiency of the business's plumbing and water fixtures, and through landscaping practices emphasizing conservation.

List of Measures:

A. *Green Business Operations Plans – Water Conservation Component*

Partner with local business for training sessions on best practices in commercial water conservation. These training sessions could be done in partnership with the Ossining Chamber of Commerce and other local groups and could serve as a precursor to a Green business program for local businesses. The water resources component would be one of several components focused upon at the training sessions, which would be done under the umbrella of promoting Green practices for local businesses. The goal of these sessions would be to work with each of the businesses to produce a short, easy-to-follow operations plan tailored to their particular needs and detailing steps to take to Green their operations. Business could sign a pledge sheet within the plan that would demonstrate their commitment to making their business more environmentally friendly.

Short Term Recommendations:

- Establish a Green Ossining subcommittee and gather information about potential local entities that have the necessary knowledge base and ability to partner with the Green Committee to conduct local water conservation training workshops
- Reach out to the previously identified local groups to open an initial dialogue
- Establish a pilot program with one local business via Chamber outreach with goal of refining program and creating model operations plans
- Finalize program details and hold kickoff event

Long Term Recommendations:

- Conduct training sessions on an annual or biennial basis to ensure that local businesses are kept up to date on the best practices in water conservation; revisit operations plans with local businesses at regular intervals to update them as needed

B. Green Business Guide – Water Conservation Component

- Draft a document consisting of best practices in environmentally-friendly operations for small businesses. The water resources sector would be one of several areas of practice addressed within the document, which would be written in user-friendly language and would target measures that will boost the businesses' bottom line as well as lessen the environmental impact of their operations. The Guide would also contain information on how to create a Green Operations Plan for businesses not interested in undertaking the formal process of creating one through the training sessions outlined in (a), and it would include a checklist of Green measures that a business could undertake within the document.

Short Term Recommendations:

- Gather materials on best practices in water conservation for small businesses; provide information on best practices being currently undertaken by local businesses to provide examples and show how these can be done
- Assemble document and release via Web Blast, Village & Town websites, press releases to local newspapers, and other identified conduits

Long Term Recommendations:

- Release updated versions of the document as best practices evolve over time

C. Ossining Green Business Program – Water Conservation Component

- This would consist of a program in which participating local businesses are provided with a set of Green water conservation-related measures. The program could be modeled on the Westchester Green Business Challenge and the Green business initiatives currently under development in other Westchester communities. Businesses would be graded using a set of criteria developed by the Green Committee, with water conservation as one of several categories on which the businesses would be judged. Businesses that meet a certain threshold of points would be eligible to display a "Green Ossining" emblem in their window and could be recognized via the Ossining Web Blast, GOTV, the Green Ossining website, and at a Green Ossining event. The program would utilize the Green Ossining website as a

clearinghouse for Green business activities and as a venue to make it known which businesses are making an extra effort to Green their water usage practices.

Short Term Recommendations:

- Establish Green Ossining subcommittee and reach out to Chamber of Commerce; gather information on operations of Westchester Green Business Challenge Program and similar programs in other Westchester communities
- Design and develop program, determining evaluation criteria and program details.
- Work with Chamber of Commerce to reach out to local businesses and determine initial pool of participating businesses
- Conduct an Ossining Green Business Program kickoff event and begin program

Long Term Recommendations:

- Maintain program operations over the long term, expanding it to include additional businesses over time

Household Water Conservation

Defined as:

Measures focused upon reducing household water usage. These reductions can be achieved via reducing the demand placed on municipal water resources, maximizing the efficiency of household plumbing and fixtures, through landscaping practices emphasizing conservation, and through the recycling of water for household uses that do not require potable water.

A. Create a "Did You Know?" Campaign focusing on Household Environmental Practices

- The campaign would consist of two components: an initial focus group and an outreach initiative. The focus group would consist of residents solicited via the Ossining Web Blast and notices placed on the Town and Village websites. The purpose of the focus group would be to obtain a sense of residents' current water usage practices, information on the types of products that they purchase, knowledge of best environmental practices, and gaps in their knowledge.
- The results of the group would be used to generate PSAs and other outreach materials. For the water resources sector, the materials would also contain information on low-

flow plumbing fixtures, water-efficient appliances, information on landscaping practices, and tips and techniques to conserve water.

Short Term Recommendations:

- Create Green Ossining subcommittee; Develop focus group discussion materials based upon questions designed to elicit responses from participants that yield the most accurate picture possible of their day-to-day water usage practices.
- Solicit participants via Web Blast, Village and Town websites, and other identified conduits. Conduct focus group.
- Results are analyzed to determine gaps in residents' knowledge, with PSAs designed to target these knowledge gaps. PSAs should be made available in Spanish as well as English.
- Conduct program evaluation one year later to determine effectiveness of focus groups and PSA outreach.

Long Term Recommendations:

- Conduct additional focus groups in the future and create PSAs at designated intervals to work toward increasing overall knowledge of Green water usage practices among Ossining residents.

B. Create a "Greenest House in Ossining" Contest

- Establish a "Greenest House in Ossining" contest consisting of a competition to reduce the household's environmental footprint to the greatest extent possible. Water usage practices would be one of several categories on which the household would be judged. Participating households would be graded on a set of criteria developed by the Green Committee, and the winner of the competition would have a mini-documentary or case study created on their household's practices that would be available online via the Green Ossining website and YouTube.

Short Term Recommendations:

- Establish Green Ossining subcommittee; Design and develop program, determining evaluation criteria and program details
- Conduct outreach via Ossining Web Blast, Village & Town websites, and send press releases to local newspapers to generate interest in the contest
- Conduct a Greenest House in Ossining kickoff event and begin program by releasing online household survey containing indicators developed by Committee

- Evaluate survey results using Committee’s criteria and select finalists; finalists will be asked to provide photos & other documentation of Green household practices and Green home elements
- Publicize winner via press releases, Green Ossining event, Village and Town websites, and Green Ossining website; work with winner to obtain information on household for the creation of a case study and/or a short documentary describing the household and its practices

Long Term Recommendations:

- Evaluate program’s strengths/weaknesses; maintain contact with finalists to produce a “where are they now?” follow-up after a designated interval to see if the household has taken additional steps

C. Create a “Best Practices” Brochure for Homeowners and Landscaping Contractors

- Create materials focusing on best practices in landscaping for homeowners and local landscaping contractors. These would be made available at Village and Town offices and on the Village, Town, and Green Committee websites. The brochures would contain recommendations on usage of native and drought-resistant plants, techniques for environmentally friendly pest and weed control, information on rain gardens, and other similar measures. For landscaping contractors, the overall concept would be that the contractors could recommend to their clients that the most environmentally-friendly practices be used when they are hired to perform landscaping work. For homeowners, the overall aim will be to focus on the types of work that are typically performed in the yard and home garden.

Short Term Recommendations:

- Establish Green Ossining subcommittee; Conduct research on best practices in landscaping and reach out to local landscaping contracting companies to determine awareness of best practices
- Draft brochure and make available in Village and Town offices as well as on Village, Town, and Green Committee websites

Long Term Recommendations:

- Update brochure over time as best practices evolve

D. Conduct a Native Plants-focused informational workshop

- This informational workshop could be done in partnership with the Teatown Lake Reservation, the Native Plants Center at Westchester Community College, or another local organization with the required expertise. The workshop would take place in the evening and would present information on selecting native plants, planting techniques, irrigation for water conservation, and information on rain gardens.

Short Term Recommendations:

- Establish Green Ossining subcommittee; Reach out to local environmental organization and discuss potential for partnership; identify potential sites to hold event
- Confirm event location; set date for workshop and create press release; create a short feedback form for participants to fill out following event; Put information on workshop on Town, Village, and Green Committee websites and Web Blast
- Conduct workshop

Long Term Recommendations:

- Evaluate success of workshop; revise programming for future workshops based on evaluation from participants

Stormwater Management

Defined as:

The methods and practices associated with the control and dispersal of rainwater runoff into receiving water bodies during a storm event. The objective of stormwater management is to control the quantity and quality of runoff and to mitigate the harmful effects of polluted runoff on receiving water bodies.

List of Measures:

A. Work with Village and Town on Stormwater Management and Illicit Discharges outreach

- The Village and Town are charged by the US EPA and by New York State DEC with conducting outreach on stormwater management and illicit discharge detection and elimination (IDDE) as part of Phase II stormwater regulations. Basic

information on Stormwater and IDDE are featured on the Village and Town websites. Existing outreach could potentially be bolstered by the creation of additional brochures, PSAs, and other materials and disseminated via the Village, Town, and Green Committee websites as well as the Ossining Web Blast.

Short Term Recommendations:

- Work with Village and Town to disseminate existing stormwater outreach materials

Long Term Recommendations:

- Create new brochures, PSAs, and other materials