

Ossining Community Climate Action Plan

Detailed Recommendations: Transportation Sector

Commercial Transportation Practices

Defined as:

Techniques and best practices designed to reduce the number of single occupancy vehicle trips undertaken by employees during their daily commute, to encourage employers to implement telecommuting and flexible work schedules, and optimize their usage of vehicles in daily operations so as to minimize environmental impact.

List of Measures:

A. Green Operations Plans – Transportation Component

Partner with local business for training sessions on best practices in transportation. These training sessions could be done in partnership with the Greater Ossining Chamber of Commerce and other local groups and could serve as a precursor to a Green business program for local businesses. The transportation 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 reach out to 511NY or other local and regional organizations with the expertise to conduct training sessions on best practices in transportation for small businesses.
- Establish a pilot program with one local business via Greater Ossining 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 transportation; revisit operations plans with local businesses at regular intervals to update them as needed

B. Green Business Guide – Transportation Component

- Draft a document consisting of best practices in environmentally-friendly operations for small businesses. The transportation 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 transportation-related measures that a business could undertake within the document, such as encouraging employees to utilize ride-sharing programs or to telecommute if such options are feasible.

Short Term Recommendations:

- Gather materials on best practices in transportation 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 – Transportation Component

- This would consist of a program in which participating local businesses are provided with a set of Green transportation-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 transportation 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 transportation 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 Transportation Practices

Defined as:

Techniques and best practices designed to reduce the number of single occupancy vehicle trips undertaken by households during the daily commute, maximize use of public and alternative means of transportation when possible, and optimize usage of vehicles in their daily operations so as to minimize environmental impact.

List of Measures:

A) Create a "Did You Know" Campaign 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 transportation practices, 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 transportation sector, the materials would also contain information on carpooling, public transportation, and best vehicle practices such as minimizing idling and ensuring a state of good repair.

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 energy 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 energy 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. Transportation 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

Alternative Transportation

Defined as:

Measures and practices designed to promote the use of non-motorized modes of transportation such as walking and bicycling by Village and Town residents.

A. Implement a Safe Routes to School Program when NYSDOT funding is restored

- Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a national program designed to improve safety for students during their trips to and from school as well as to facilitate ways to allow more students to walk and bike to school. SRTS focuses on the “5 Es” – Engineering, Education, Enforcement, Encouragement, and Evaluation. In the past, SRTS grants have been made available by the New York State Dept. of Transportation (NYSDOT) to fund both programmatic and infrastructure improvements to municipalities wishing to improve travel conditions for students. These grants will likely be offered again within the next several years upon the passage of a transportation bill in the US Congress. In 2007, an SRTS Needs Assessment and workshop were conducted by the Ossining School District that set forth a menu of potential options for which SRTS funds could be used. These measures could form the basis of a future funding proposal for SRTS projects within the Village and Town once NYSDOT’s funding for the program becomes available again and should be reviewed and potentially revised when NYSDOT announces the availability of the funds.

Short Term Recommendations:

- Review 2007 SRTS needs assessment and workshop documentation; develop project priority list for future SRTS funding

Long Term Recommendations:

- Establish Green Ossining subcommittee; reach out to Ossining School District to form joint SRTS subcommittee
- As SRTS funding becomes available, work with Village Planning Department to develop and submit application
- If proposal is funded, implement project(s)
- Conduct project evaluation per SRTS requirements

B. Create a Village & Town Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

- A Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan is a planning document designed to help guide the implementation of physical or programmatic improvements within a community to help facilitate bicycling and walking as both recreational and transportation options for residents. Plans can potentially set forth optimal routes between destinations in a community on low traffic streets as well as designate locations for future construction of sidewalks, painting of bike lanes, and implementation of signage designed to improve pedestrian safety and raise motorist awareness of cyclists and pedestrians. In 2009, the Village of Croton-on-Hudson created a 19 page bicycle & pedestrian plan that set forth locations for signed bicycle routes, bicycle lanes, opportunities to improve neighborhood connectivity, and public education programs for community residents. The potential exists for the creation of a similar document for Ossining in the future if community stakeholders deem such a project a priority.

Short Term Recommendations:

- Establish Green Ossining subcommittee; conduct a review of bicycle and pedestrian documents from similar communities in the region; reach out to these communities to see which elements of each plan have been implemented and analyze strengths & weaknesses of each plan

Long Term Recommendations:

- If funding is available in the future, work with municipal staff to draft plan upon approval of Village Board of Trustees and Town Council

C. *Expand and Promote Ossining School-Community Walk Day*

- The Ossining School-Community is a joint effort between the Village, Town, Ossining School District, and the Greater Ossining Rotary Club to promote walking as a healthy lifestyle and transportation option. During this event, which takes place on May 1st each year, participants are able to track and submit their mileage via an online form to see how they compare with their peers as well as utilize an online mileage calculator to see how many tons of CO₂ were saved by walking instead of driving. As this event takes place during the same month as National Bike Month, opportunities exist to expand the event to include bicycling as well as walking. The expanded event could potentially include an informational session on pedestrian and bicycle safety and could be implemented following the creation of a community bicycle and pedestrian plan, as outlined in Measure B above.

Short Term Recommendations

- Continue holding Ossining School-Community Walk Day and promote via press releases, Ossining Web Blast, Village and Town websites, Green Ossining website, and Ossining School District website

Long Term Recommendations:

- Draft bicycle and pedestrian plan (see Alternative Transportation Measure B)
- Utilize Ossining School-Community Walk Day as kickoff event for community bicycle & pedestrian plan
- Evaluate success of event and alter per evaluation results

Motor Vehicle Best Practices

Defined as:

Measures and practices involved in minimizing the harmful environmental impacts caused by cars, trucks, and other motor vehicles within the Village and Town as well as maximizing the efficiency of vehicles through measures to increase the number of occupants per vehicle.

A. *Conduct Public Outreach program on Vehicle Idling*

- As of this writing, vehicle idling for longer than three minutes is prohibited by Westchester County law, with the exception of temperatures below freezing. Violators face a fine of \$250 for a first offense and up to \$500 for a second offense. Though the

Village Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) has conducted outreach on this topic in the past via public service announcements aired on GOTV, many residents are likely unaware that this law exists and the penalty involved if caught. An outreach campaign could potentially be undertaken in partnership with Westchester County to help raise awareness of the law, the reasons for its implementation, and its associated penalties. The outreach could take the form of additional PSAs, pamphlets, and online information.

Short Term Recommendations

- Establish Green Ossining subcommittee; Create and release online survey on awareness of county idling law; Reach out to Westchester County to determine possibility of partnership on outreach
- Draft outreach material and disseminate via Ossining Web Blast, Village and Town websites, and Green Ossining website

Long Term Recommendations:

- Evaluate success of outreach via online survey; alter as needed to ensure maximum effectiveness

B. Encourage participation in Metropool, Westchester Smart Commute, and similar carpooling programs

- Metropool and Westchester Smart Commute are programs designed to reduce single-occupancy vehicle usage for commuting by facilitating contact between commuters headed to the same or nearby destinations, allowing them to carpool and use fewer vehicles. Participants enroll into the free program on their own, submitting information on their origin, destination, and time of travel so that they can be matched up with fellow commuters utilizing the same route. Usage of services such as these can help participants to save money on fuel costs, reduce air pollution, and lower their carbon footprint. Outreach on the benefits of carpooling for local businesses could potentially be done in partnership with MetroPool and the Greater Ossining Chamber of Commerce in the form of an informational workshop.

Short Term Recommendations

- Place links to websites of carpooling services on Ossining Web Blast as well as Village, Town, and Green Committee websites,
- Reach out to MetroPool and the Greater Ossining Chamber of Commerce to determine potential for an informational workshop on carpooling services

Long Term Recommendations:

- Continue to make information on carpooling programs available

Public Transportation

Defined as:

Measures involved in maximizing the opportunities of Village and Town residents to make use of public transportation, including the Westchester Bee-Line bus system and the Metro North commuter railroad.

A. *Support any future expansions of public transportation in the region via outreach and letters of support to Westchester County DOT, MTA, NYMTC, and other involved entities when new public transportation projects are proposed*

- When implementing infrastructure projects such as new public transportation initiatives, comment from stakeholders is typically solicited in order to obtain feedback on the proposed project. In the event that new public transportation projects such as additional bus routes, train station improvements, or other projects are proposed, the Green Committee and other local stakeholders can offer feedback to help shape the project and ensure the best possible outcome. As of this writing, the Tappan Zee Bridge/I-287 Corridor Improvement Project represents an ongoing opportunity to provide input and support for public transportation improvements as it will involve the provision of expanded commuter rail service, expanded bus service, and is expected to remain in the environmental impact review phase for some time.

Short Term Recommendations

- Monitor Tappan Zee Bridge/I-287 Environmental Review website for updates; attend any future stakeholder workshops and provide input

Long Term Recommendations:

- Continue to stay abreast of any developments in the Tappan Zee Bridge/I-287 Corridor Improvement Project and provide stakeholder input whenever possible