

# Ossining Climate Action Plan

## Detailed Recommendations: Waste Sector

Summary: These measures are focused on minimizing the amount of non-recyclables entering the waste stream and maximizing recycling rates. They are divided among four sectors: commercial waste management, household waste management, public spaces, and construction practices.

### Commercial Waste Management

**Defined as:**

*Best practices in the reduction of the greenhouse gas footprint and overall environmental impact of products purchased, used, and disposed of by a business during its daily operations. This includes the processes involved in the selection of products by the business in order to fulfill the needs of its daily operations as well as the techniques and practices surrounding the disposal of these goods following their use. The objective is to find ways to reduce, reuse, and recycle materials to the greatest extent possible.*

**List of measures:**

*A. Create Green Operations Plans with local businesses*

- Partner with local businesses for training sessions on best practices in waste management, including green purchasing options and options for reducing the amount of items entering the waste stream. 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 waste component would likely 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 waste management 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 waste management 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 waste management; revisit operations with local businesses at regular intervals to update them as needed

*B. Create a Green Business Guide*

- Draft a document consisting of best practices in environmentally-friendly operations for small businesses. The waste sector would be one of several components contained 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 the steps needed to create a Green operations plan for businesses and would include a checklist of Green measures that a business could undertake within the document.

*Short Term Recommendations:*

- Gather materials on best practices in waste management 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. Establish an Ossining Green Business Challenge*

- This would consist of a program in which participating local businesses are provided with a set of Green waste-related measures. The program could be modeled on the Westchester Green Business Challenge and the Green business initiatives currently under development in Sleepy Hollow and Tarrytown. Businesses

would be graded using a set of criteria developed by the Green Committee, with waste management 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 waste 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 programs in nearby communities such as Sleepy Hollow and Tarrytown
- Design and develop program, determining evaluation criteria and program details. Various sets of criteria would be developed that are tailored to the differences that exist between types of businesses, such as restaurants, retail establishments, offices, and other small business types.
- 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 Waste Management

### **Defined as:**

*Best practices in the reduction of the greenhouse gas footprint and overall environmental impact of products purchased, used, and disposed of by a residential household during its daily operations. This includes the processes involved in the selection of products by the household to fulfill its daily needs as well as the techniques and practices surrounding the disposal of these products following their use. The objective is to find ways to reduce, reuse, and recycle materials to the greatest extent possible.*

### **List of measures:**

#### *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 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 waste sector, the materials would also contain information on Green substitutes for common, everyday products that they use, facts and figures on solid waste generated by Ossining residents obtained from DPW, information on what happens to solid waste and recyclables once they are taken from the curbside, and information on the consequences that can take place when procedures aren't correctly followed, such as potential fines to the Village and Town and recyclables that end up thrown in the trash at the recovery facility.

#### *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 waste 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 waste practices among Ossining residents.

*B. Create a “Greenest House in Ossining” Contest*

- Establish a “Greenest House in Ossining” contest consisting of a competition to maximize recycling, maximize reuse of household items, purchase the Greenest items possible, and to minimize the waste produced by the household. Waste 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 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 Home Composting Training Program*

- Create a home composting training program in partnership with Westchester County Parks, working with homeowners as well as landlords and tenants at multifamily buildings. "Earth Machine" composting bins would be made available for purchase by the County at the event and a brochure on best practices in composting would be made available online and at Village and Town offices.

*Short Term Recommendations:*

- Reach out to Westchester County Parks to determine ability of County to work with Green Committee on project; seek alternate partner if County is unable
- Work with partner to develop program
- Conduct series of training workshops

*Long Term Recommendations:*

- Conduct trainings on an annual or biennial basis

*D. Conduct a Plastic Bags & Bottles Awareness Initiative*

- Conduct public awareness outreach on the effects of plastic bags and plastic bottles on the environment. PSAs would be created and sent out via the Ossining Web Blast and via GOTV. The PSAs would detail the effect of plastic bags and bottles on wildlife and notify the viewer of locations where they can be recycled. It will also promote the high quality of Ossining's tap water so that residents are aware that their water is safe and healthy for drinking.

*Short Term Recommendations:*

- Create PSAs and brochures focusing on the harmful environmental impacts that plastic bags and bottles can have on the environment, suggesting alternatives to the use of these items. Other PSAs can focus on the quality of Ossining's drinking water. PSAs should be available in both English and Spanish.
- Work with local grocery stores and other businesses to place PSAs in visible locations at businesses and to encourage customers to make use of reusable bags, to recycle plastic bags in the store, and to recycle plastic bottles.

*Long Term Recommendations:*

- Continue to make PSAs and brochures available through as many venues as possible.

*E. Conduct Community Swap Event & Encourage Reuse of Household Items*

- Plan, develop, organize, and execute community swap-meet style events to facilitate the exchange of used goods by Ossining residents. Events of this type could take place annually or multiple times per year and would help to divert materials from the waste stream and promote reuse of items that still have a useful service life. Several smaller events could be conducted that focus on particular types of items, such as bicycles, used sporting goods, and building materials, among others. These swaps could be done in partnership with the Ossining School District's Green Committee for events that involve items that could be of interest for students, such as sporting goods.
- Promote use of existing online-based community exchanges, such as Freecycle, Westchester FreeShare, and similar services via promotion on Green Ossining website and Ossining Web Blast.
- Reach out to Habitat for Humanity to investigate possibility of establishing a Habitat ReStore materials recycling center in Ossining.

*Short Term Recommendations:*

- Establish Green Committee subcommittee; add information on Freecycle and Westchester FreeShare to Green Ossining website and to Ossining Web Blast; Establish contact with Habitat for Humanity to look into process for establishing ReStore
- Identify potential locations to hold swap meets and investigate; Work out logistical issues
- Schedule initial event and promote via Green Ossining website, Ossining Web Blast, Village and Town websites, flyers at Village and Town buildings and at Ossining schools and; Hold initial event
- Identify strengths & weaknesses of initial event and make adjustments as needed for future events

*Long Term Recommendations:*

- Continue conducting swap meets

## Public Events

### **Defined as:**

*Activities that serve as outdoor gathering points for members of the public, such as street fairs, open-air markets, and similar events. In this context, the objective is to find ways to minimize the amount of non-recyclable waste generated by these events and maximize the rate of recycling by event participants.*

### **List of measures:**

#### *A. Create a Green Public Events Guide*

- Prepare a best practices guide for event organizers that they would be given when obtaining an event permit. The guide would encourage event organizers to integrate zero-waste practices into their operations of events.

#### *Short Term Recommendations:*

- Compile a list of best practices in Green waste management and purchasing for public events
- Create document and make available at Village and Town departments; make available online and release via Ossining Web Blast

#### *Long Term Recommendations:*

- Update document in the future to reflect changes in best practices

## Construction Practices

### **Defined as:**

*The processes involved in the construction, rehabilitation, renovation, and demolition of buildings within the Village of Ossining. In this context, the objective is to encourage developers and contractors to use the most environmentally-friendly practices possible during all phases of building construction.*

### **Measures:**

#### *A. Create a Green Practices Guide for Local Contractors*

- Create brochures for contractors on best practices in construction, rehabilitation, renovation, and demolition. Brochures should be available in both English and Spanish. The document will be written in a user-friendly format, with an emphasis on the smaller-scale projects that make up the bulk of the work performed by local contractors rather than practices targeted toward large-scale developments.

It will include measures such as recommendations for Green materials to purchase, information on local suppliers of green products, information on techniques such as deconstruction and recycling of materials instead of demolition when applicable, will direct contractors toward resources where they can learn more about LEED certification, and will also recommend Green business practices that contractors can follow that are based on the Associated Builders and Contractors' Green Contractor Certification.

*Short Term Recommendations:*

- Conduct research on best practices most applicable to Ossining-based contractors; Create list of best practices
- Create documents and make available and Village and Town Building and Planning Departments and on Village and Town websites

*Long Term Recommendations:*

- Update documents in the future to reflect changes in best practices

*B. Create a Green Practices Guide for Local Architects*

- Create brochures for locally-based architects outlining environmentally-friendly design practices and materials selection. The document will be geared toward the smaller-scale renovation and rehabilitation projects that local architects typically perform within Ossining rather than large scale new development. It will direct architects toward resources where they can learn more about the US Green Building Council's LEED certification and Energy Star measures as well as contain information on materials selection, green purchasing options, and information on local suppliers of green materials and other products.

*Short Term Recommendations:*

- Conduct research on best practices most applicable to local architects; Create list of best practices
- Create document and make available and Village and Town Building and Planning Departments and on Village and Town websites

*Long Term Recommendations:*

- Update document in the future to reflect changes in best practices