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TEXT SIZE: A A A

Home

Customer Services

Water Utilities

The Watershed

Citywide Initiatives

Business and Professionals

About DEP

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Village of Ossining and DEP Announce Completion of Water Demand Management Plan

Plan includes strategies to eliminate leaks and provide vouchers for efficient fixtures

The Village of Ossining and the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today announced the completion of a conservation plan that will help the village reduce its water use, provide local residents with an incentive to replace outdated fixtures, and help local ratepayers save money on their water bills. DEP plans to provide Ossining with up to \$280,000 to implement water demand management strategies that are outlined in the plan, including efforts to eliminate leaks from the village water system. Ossining's demand management plan is the first of at least eight that are being funded by DEP and the New York City Water Board for upstate communities that purchase water in bulk from the City's supply system. The City provided \$350,000 for the communities to create demand management plans that would include system-wide water audits, analyses of water use, and evaluating conservation opportunities such as replacing old fixtures with more efficient ones.

"We are very pleased to partner with New York City DEP to further our commitment to make the most of every drop of water in Ossining's system," Ossining Mayor Victoria Gearity said. "This proactive approach to conservation saves money for our residents and protects our essential natural resource."

"This collaborative effort between DEP and the Village of Ossining has yielded exactly the kind of results that we hoped for when the planning process began in 2014," DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd said. "Our neighbors in Ossining have identified leaks in their distribution system that will be repaired, along with strategies to save water at homes throughout the village. In the long term, this will help Ossining save money and provide DEP with the flexibility to make infrastructure repairs and deal with droughts in the future."

An audit of the village's water distribution system found that Ossining was losing approximately 16 percent of its water through leaks. The village discovered several of these by using equipment that can detect leaks through acoustic differences in distribution pipes. The leaks discovered through this process included a 400,000-gallon-per-day leak into a local creek—a leak large enough that it accounted for more than 10 percent of the city's 3.5-million-gallon daily demand. Much of the leaking water was being purchased by the village from New York City's supply system, and fixing the leak could represent significant cost savings for the village.

A copy of Ossining's demand management report will soon be available on its website at villageofossining.org.

More Information

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- › [A to Z Index](#)
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DEP plans to provide up to \$280,000 for Ossining to implement several of the demand management strategies outlined in the plan. The village’s preliminary plan for the implementation money includes spending \$140,000 to repair leaks in its distribution system, and \$40,000 on efforts to identify other leaks. The village also plans to establish a voucher program to replace old toilets with more efficient ones at 500 homes throughout Ossining. The village plans to spend \$100,000 on the voucher program, providing \$200 to each participant. Village officials plan to work on the details of this program in the coming months.

In 2014, DEP announced that it would commit \$350,000 toward developing demand management plans for many of its largest upstate customers, including the Village of Ossining. These wholesale customers individually purchase 2—17 million gallons per day on average, and combined they represent approximately 53 percent of the upstate demand on New York City’s water supply system. Development of the conservation plans has been guided by the local water utilities with assistance from DEP and WaterDM, a Colorado company that specializes in demand management for drinking water systems.

The participating customers began developing their plans last year, and many of them are near complete. As with Ossining, DEP will commit additional funding to help with the implementation of selected water-demand strategies that are outlined in the plans. The plans will also provide the local water utilities with the information, data and background needed to apply for grants from other sources in the future.

Water conservation can help homeowners and businesses save money, and it is also important for the long-term sustainability of New York City’s water supply system. Water utilities employ a set of strategies known as “demand management” that, in addition to focusing on conservation, seek to better understand and control water use in transmission and distribution systems. Typical strategies of water demand management programs—which may be included in the upcoming plans—include system-wide audits of water use and leak detection. Promoting more efficient use of water will allow DEP to make progress on key infrastructure projects now and in the future, along with helping the water supply withstand future droughts.

New York City’s water consumption has steadily declined since it hit a peak of more than 1.6 billion gallons per day in the late 1970s, when the five boroughs were home to roughly 7 million people. Today, New York City’s water supply system provides an average of 1.1 billion gallons per day to 8.5 million people in the five boroughs and an additional million people in four upstate counties. The reduction in water use during that time is attributable to better metering and more efficient appliances and fixtures.

In 2012, DEP began its Water Demand Management Program, with a goal of reducing citywide water use by 5 percent, or 50 million gallons per day. As part of the program, DEP has begun updating bathroom fixtures in 500 city schools, which will save an estimated 4 million gallons of water each day. It also partnered with the City Department of Parks and Recreation to install activation buttons on spray showers in 400 playgrounds around the city, which will save another 1.5 million gallons a day. Outreach programs that encourage residents to fix leaks, and a challenge among the city’s largest hotels to reduce their water consumption by 5 percent are also part of the program.

DEP manages New York City’s water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of high quality water each day to roughly 9.5 million New Yorkers. This includes more than 70 upstate communities and institutions in Ulster, Orange, Putnam and Westchester counties who consume an average of 110 million total gallons of drinking water daily from New York City’s water supply system. This water comes from the Catskill, Delaware, and Croton watersheds that extend more than 125 miles from the City, and the system comprises 19 reservoirs, three controlled lakes, and numerous tunnels and aqueducts. DEP has nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 scientists, engineers, surveyors, watershed maintainers and other professionals in the upstate watershed. In

addition to its \$70 million payroll and \$157 million in annual taxes paid in upstate counties, DEP has invested more than \$1.7 billion in watershed protection programs—including partnership organizations such as the Catskill Watershed Corporation and the Watershed Agricultural Council—that support sustainable farming practices, environmentally sensitive economic development, and local economic opportunity. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program with nearly \$14 billion in investments planned over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. For more information, visit nyc.gov/dep, like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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