

# Policy Adoption Fact Sheet: Anti-Idling Ordinance

2020 Comprehensive Plan Review | David Chernack, Joint Environmental Committee Intern

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**Why is this action important?** When gasoline- or diesel- engine vehicles are left idling while stationary, they produce excessive noise, decrease air quality, and contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. An anti-idling ordinance is a local law that restricts engine idling in particularly sensitive areas—such as near schools or in downtown business districts—or across an entire jurisdiction.

**How is this action implemented?** Local governments possess the authority to restrict idling within their borders, and they can govern either only municipal vehicles, only vehicles over a certain gross vehicle weight, or all vehicles on the road. These standards can be even more stringent than federal idling standards.

After an ordinance is passed and included in the Town/Village code, anti-idling programs—namely public education and code enforcement—can greatly aid in the effectiveness of the ordinance. Enforcement in areas where idling is most common and fines for repeat offenders also function as targeted measures to ensure that an anti-idling ordinance serves its intended purpose.

**What does the Comprehensive Plan say about it?** Nothing specific. However, the Plan does state that fuel usage should be reduced, and that maintaining a rural, small-town character in the Town should include noise reduction. Additionally, including an anti-idling ordinance in a Comprehensive Plan update with sustainability actions can help protect the ordinance from potential legal challenges.

**What departments will it involve?** The Town or Village Planning Boards would be tasked with writing the ordinance; meanwhile, the Highway Departments will need to be trained on following the ordinances with their vehicles, and the Rhinebeck Police Department will need to be trained on enforcing the ordinance.

**What will it cost?** Very little. Anti-idling ordinances are fairly simple to implement. Some costs may be incurred by erecting signage, engaging with the public, and training Town/Village workers and enforcement personnel. However, public acclimation to the ordinance early on can help decrease costs of issuing fines and pursuing further public engagement down the road.



## Anti-idling ordinance quick facts

*CSC points:* 1 for enacting ordinance, 2 for enforcement (Action 6.15)

*Benefits to Rhinebeck:* reduced noise, improved air quality, lower emissions

*Cost:* low, some potential cost to enforce

*Relevant agencies:* Town/Village planning boards, Joint Environmental Committee, Rhinebeck Police Department