

# Groton Communication Strategy

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# Who We Are!

We are both UConn students completing an independent study in environmental science.

## Katelynn

I am a junior at UConn in a dual degree program completing a BS in ENVS and a BS in AHS. I am currently a part of my own town's government structure and help to keep our beloved waterfall free of pollution and communicate environmental concerns regarding the park's future. My reason for choosing this project is that I have a passion for connecting human, environment, and animal health to create a more just and ethical world.



## Sydney

I'm a sophomore pursuing a dual degree program in Environmental Science and Sustainable Communities. My academic and personal life centers around providing beyond just the physical needs that communities need to thrive by also exploring and cultivating cultural and relational networks that are sustainable.



I pursued this project because communication is at the epicenter of how humanity can pour into future generations to remain prosperous and successful.

# Our Goal

For our project, we created a ***Climate Action Communication Strategy*** for the town of Groton. We aimed to produce a strategy that was representative of the diversity in Groton, focused on transparency, and founded in genuinity.

The strategy created is to act as a “how-to” guide and offer general guidelines and tips for climate communication; as well offer examples and ideas of how these guidelines could be implemented.





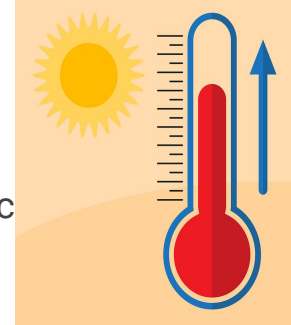
# Priority Audiences



- ❖ **Definition: Groups of people whose change in behavior is paramount for achieving the intended outcome**
- ❖ Identified priority audiences in Groton: *people of color, low-income, working class, high-income, commuters, retired/older citizens, youth, & town employees.*
  - This list is NOT exhaustive and many people will belong to more than one category.
  - There must be a balance between specific communication efforts for a specific group without alienating them from other groups.
  - Some communication techniques may work best for some groups and not others. Care should be taken to not use communication as a tool for further division.
- ❖ The goal behind using different communication techniques for different groups is to meet them all where they are and then guide everyone to the same place.

# Key Climate Change Impacts

- ❖ We have identified four impacts requiring the most immediate attention.
  - Sea-level rise, coastal erosion, extreme heat, & urban sprawl
- ❖ Science can be the place where people lose interest and get confused. It's important to know your audience and their science literacy; as well as refrain from using fear tactics to enact change.
  - Using complicated science jargon found in a peer-reviewed research study is not going to appeal to many people.
  - Blatantly "dumbing" down science will come off as rude and condescending - people will not only not listen, but feel hurt and anger toward the messenger.
- ❖ The key to communicating about these impacts resides in education and the ability to convey a sense of urgency without fear.



# Key Messages

Key messages of Groton's Climate Action Plan should be identified as it continues to be developed and refined. These messages should not only be centered on specific, measurable goals but also be framed in ways that are engaging and equitable. We've discussed a number of topics these messages should consider such as:

- The specific socio-cultural components of each sub-community in Groton
  - Ex. historical relations that may promote action/inaction, diversity of the sub-community, etc.
- Understand and portray the "why" behind the community involvement
  - Ex. how does/will climate change impact you and your community specifically?





# Channels of Communication

*Definition: The medium being used to communicate*

- ❖ Possible/common examples used in climate action: TV/cable, art, newspaper/print, radio, meetings/events, surveys, posters/infographics, email/texting lists, & social media.
- ❖ When using any channel it is important to keep in mind the “rules” of communication
  - No fear tactics, inclusive language, no blaming, no jargon, appeals to logos, pathos, and ethos, proper tone, etc.
  - Ex. **Posters/Info Boards** - Similar to the Art channel, this channel can be a double-edged sword. Posters placed in busy buildings advertising events, email lists, meetings, etc., will catch people’s attention. The town (or some smaller demographic such as students) could be challenged to a poster design contest that engages participants in climate communication. Since the library is an important hub for communication posters related to Megan’s job, general climate information and ways to get involved may generate much interest.



For example:

- ❖ Posters about a specific climate change impact Groton is facing and how it will affect citizens
- ❖ Posters advertising an event or meeting
- ❖ Posters with simple ways of engagement
- ❖ Posters with QR codes to Groton’s climate action plan, Megan’s subpage, or other helpful documents



# ZERO WASTE TIPS



Sort your own  
waste



Use reusable water  
bottle



Reduce energy  
consumption



Repair/ upcycle  
your clothes



Use your own bag  
for shopping



Buy eco-friendly  
product

Canva is a great and easy tool to make posters that are engaging! While some designs require a membership, posters can be made for free. (It just takes a little longer to navigate the free templates available)

# Connecting Messages, Audiences, and Channels

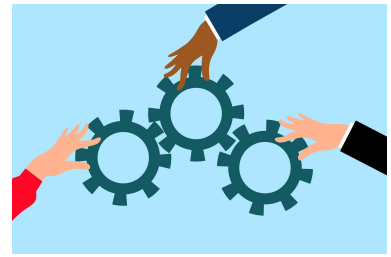
- ❖ Now that we have defined all the individual components of climate communication we have to see how they can be connected!

Message	Audience	Channel
<p>Groton cares about ALL its citizens' opinions and wants everyone to be involved in making a resilient Groton.</p> <p>General/ introductory climate change education, easy ways to get involved, and how climate change will affect them personally.</p>	<p>People of Color</p>	<p>TV, social media, posters/info boards, art, and events</p> <p>Making communication materials in all spoken languages present in Groton is very important.</p>

- ❖ The information in the chart are examples of how they can be connected, there are many other correct message and channel combinations.



# Groton Climate Coordination



- ❖ ***Goal: Reduce the impact of the “silo effect” found in Groton’s town officials and board members***
  - Task Force and Conservation Commission communication
    - Through organized and focused communication, groups with similar interests can be more aware of each other and assist one another in their environmental efforts.
  - Events that prompt coordination could include joint film viewings with subsequent discussion, guest speaker seminars, service-bonding activities, a lunch/dinner/coffee, or even a zoom call with directed discussion.
- ❖ For other town employees, continued networking by Megan and implementation of communication strategies from the document will be useful.

# Youth in Groton

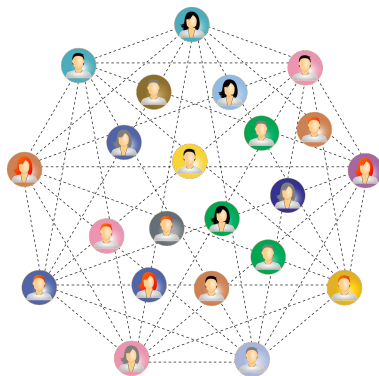
We've recognized that a major key and stakeholder in promoting climate action is engaging the future generations: Groton's Youth. Ways we suggest prompting this engagement include:

- Continue ***relationship development with teachers*** at local schools
  - Identify “teacher champions” at schools that are able to connect and provide students with environmental/community-based opportunities that the Town and surrounding organizations provide
- ***Facilitize youth engagement opportunities*** with individuals and organizations like Maggie Favertti from [Designed4Resilience](#)
  - Boys and Girls Club of S.E.C.T, UConn NRCA, local non-profits, parks, etc.
- ***Collectivize youth engagement opportunities*** in Groton and publish them via one of the communication channels listed in the Climate Communication Strategy

# Our Experience

## Katelynn

Through working on this project I have realized that connecting what I am learning in the classroom to real-world applications is not always plain to see. The need to connect my personal experiences, classroom knowledge across all levels of education, and my passions/interests is what can make this connection. Moving forward I will take the experience of this project and my connections made with everyone involved into creating other solutions for complex issues.



## Sydney

In a world that seems more polarized than ever, it's so refreshing to consider and create items whose purpose is to unify us to work towards a solution to a problem that will affect us all (those some more than others). Cultivating this climate communications strategy taught me how to communicate effectively with multiple parties and how to consider multiple perspectives and agendas in unifying towards a common goal. I will use this experience to continuing pursuing work that aims to unify instead of divide.

# Questions or Feedback?

- ◆ We appreciate all feedback and questions!

