

Community Engagement Checklist for Committees

Community engagement for municipal climate action planning aims to inform and educate the diverse populations of a town and gather feedback about new plans, policies, or actions. It should be done early and often in a climate action planning process. A Community Engagement Plan will outline public engagement opportunities, communication methods, and key milestones of the planning process.

This checklist supports development of the Engagement Plan. It identifies the key people and organizations that should be involved, and the methods of outreach used to reach them. GPCOG will use this checklist as a guide to start drafting the Engagement Plan.

GPCOG will be responsible for creating materials for the surveys and public workshops and develop outreach flyers and materials the town and committee can use for information sharing. The committee will promote the surveys and public workshops, promote active participation in the process, and identify additional outreach and engagement activities.

How people engage and how many people engage will be a direct result of the work put in by the committee!

Community Engagement Goals and Objectives

The goal of community engagement is to promote awareness of and support for the Climate Action Plan. To achieve this goal, the Community Engagement Plan aims to meet the following objectives:

- Encourage people to participate in the process and ensure community contributions guide decision-making in the Climate Action Planning process.
- Clearly describe the purpose, motivation, and boundaries of the community engagement; how the Climate Action Plan will be used; and the role public input will play in shaping the plan.
- Develop a timeline to inform the community with timely, transparent, and accurate information on any relevant decisions, updates, or opportunities for collaboration regarding the Climate Action Planning process.
- Provide opportunities for early and continuous public participation through engagement strategies that inspire the community's involvement in the Climate Action Planning process.
- Ensure participation strategies are inclusive of all identities represented by the people of the town, and public participation initiatives provide a space for varied points of view among the public's communities.
- Build sustained public support for the Climate Action Plan.

GPCOG Scope of community engagement activities

Surveys: GPCOG will produce two surveys during the process that are intended to align with the two public workshops described below. The surveys will be hosted online but GPCOG will also provide paper copies.

- Survey #1 – Gather baseline information about climate change concerns and impacts, steps people have taken to reduce their emissions or vulnerability, and feedback on key

priorities for residents, businesses, and workers in the town. This information helps to develop our baseline reports (Vulnerability Assessment and GHG Inventory). It is also a way to get people thinking about the impacts of climate change.

- Survey #2 – Focused on gathering feedback on specific priorities for climate actions and strategies across each sector.

Public workshops: GPCOG will facilitate two public workshops during the process to present information and get feedback from the community. GPCOG will develop workshop materials, content for the presentation, and will present most of the information with assistance from staff and committee members.

- Workshop #1 – This workshop, scheduled in the early to mid-stages of the project, is designed to get initial input from the community around climate concerns and set the stage for a future discussion around priority actions and strategies. This workshop will include: (1) Sharing initial results of the greenhouse gas inventory; (2) present potential emission reduction targets; (3) map initial data collection on vulnerable infrastructure, communities, and ecosystems; and (4) encourage participants to share their concerns and hopes for the town, express the broad areas they think the Climate Action Plan should focus on, supplement existing data with local knowledge, and provide any additional feedback.
- Workshop #2 – This workshop, held during the second half of the process, is designed to gather feedback on actions that address emission reductions and vulnerabilities identified in the first workshop. During the workshop GPCOG will present on which sectors should be prioritized, specific strategies that the town could undertake, how actions can be implemented, and who would be responsible for implementation.

As you fill out the checklist, please consider:

1. How do people in town typically receive and respond to information?
2. Some groups are inherently more involved than others, but how can you ensure you are reaching everybody in town?
3. What people or populations might be missing or harder to reach? Groups to consider might include: senior adults, youth, people with lower income, new Mainers, people of color, etc.
4. What times and/or days might work best to get the most participation? How can we vary our approach to be more inclusive?
5. What existing events currently exist that can be leveraged to increase engagement?

This checklist is intended to provide guidance and act as a starting point for planning engagement. This list is flexible and can be adjusted to fit the committee's needs. This is a living document that can be updated as the process progresses.

Instructions and examples are provided in italicized green text. This text is intended to be a guide and can be deleted as sections are filled out.

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability

1. Identify Stakeholders

Who are key stakeholders you want to ensure receive communication and are involved in the climate action planning process? *Add specific groups, organizations, and contacts. Please add or delete rows as necessary.*

Interest	Organization/Role (if applicable)	Yes/No - Contact/Name
Municipal Staff	GPCOG will be in contact with town staff throughout the project	
General Public	All community members who live, work, or operate businesses in town during any point of the year.	
Town Boards and Committees	Specific board or committees that should be involved, regularly updated, etc.	
Community Groups and Resources	School District	
	Civic Associations	
	Chamber of Commerce	
	Historical Society	
	Local environmental NGO or other environmentally engaged citizens (e.g., Audubon Center, Land Trust, and/or Conservation Assistance Network)	
	Veteran's organization	
	Places of Worship	
	Rotary Club	
	Community based organizations or service orgs (e.g., food banks, shelters, elderly care, etc.)	
	Person(s) or orgs doing equity work	
	Environmentally engaged student(s) or representative from school groups	
	Neighborhood Associations	
	Other service organizations or specific groups (i.e. specific senior center)	
	Library	
Businesses	Member(s) of the local business community, especially from industry/industries vulnerable to climate change (e.g., local farming community)	
Broader Community	Non-local groups to engage	

2. Methods of Communication

How can residents and businesses stay informed about the climate action planning process and upcoming engagement opportunities?

- Project website – GPCOG will create a project website that will be updated throughout the process

Town Outreach

- Town Website
Who will be responsible for posting updates: _____
- Town Social Media
What social media pages are available
 - *Ex. Official Town Facebook*
 - *Ex. Police Department Instagram*
 - _____
 Who is responsible for posting: _____
- Town Newsletter
How often is the newsletter published: _____
Who will be responsible for sending updates to the staff contact for publication:

- Email Listserv
Does the town/committee want to collect email addresses to send out periodic climate action plan specific updates/news? YES NO
Does the town already have a way to collect email addresses and create a mailing list: YES NO
- Other
Method: _____
Responsibility: _____

Stakeholder Outreach

What groups could be asked to help advertise and promote materials and how might they do it? This might be asking to share a Facebook post, have a committee member email a community group to take the survey or promote the workshop. Use the stakeholder list above as a guide to ensure you are reaching all target populations.

Group	Contact Method (social media, direct email, committee posts, newsletter)	Who will be responsible for reaching out to the group?
<i>Example: Town Chamber of Commerce</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Share Town's Facebook post</i> • <i>Include in monthly newsletter</i> 	<i>Jon Smith (committee) will be in contact with/provide</i>

		<i>information to Dan Williams (Chamber president)</i>
<i>Example: East Hill Neighborhood Association</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Send email to group listserv about survey and workshops</i> 	<i>Mary will send email (she is part of group)</i>
Library		
Neighborhood Group:		
Land Trust/Conservation:		
Community Group:		
Food Pantry		
School		
Business Association		
Historical Group		
Social Club (Rotary, Lion's)		

3. Print materials

GPCOG will create flyers and informational handouts to help advertise the climate action plan and public workshops.

Where should flyers and physical materials be posted or handed out? Examples: library, key businesses/restaurants, places of worship, farmers market, town hall, community center, popular gathering places, schools.

Location	Flyers, handouts and surveys	Who will be responsible for posting?
<i>Example: Middle School</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Send home flyer promoting workshop</i> • <i>Ask homeroom teachers to have students take survey</i> 	<i>Jane Johnson will contact X</i>
<i>Example: Town Hall</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Hang flyer at entrance</i> • <i>Put stack of flyers at X</i> • <i>Put paper surveys with box for responses at X</i> 	<i>Jane will hang the flyers Joe is responsible for the surveys</i>
Town Hall		
Community Center		
Library		
School		
Farmers Market		
Recycling Center/Compost drop off		
Park or recreational area		

Food Pantry		
Business or restaurant		
Local organization:		
Historical Center		

4. Outreach Events

Identify events or locations the committee would like to attend to engage residents and distribute information —such as tabling at an event or joining existing workshops. GPCOG will provide a list of questions and conversation starters for these events.

- To help brainstorm, below is a list of questions for the committee to consider. Is there a town event where you could set up a table with flyers?
- Is there a physical location in town that could be used to talk with people and get their feedback?
- Are there specific stakeholders that should be engaged on a more 1:1 basis? Consider setting up a meeting with an organization or group.
- Do you want to create an educational series where you bring in experts to talk about climate change and raise educational awareness about different topics? *(Note: This is a helpful tool for the community, but GPCOG is not scoped to help with this type of event. We can provide suggestions and references for experts, but coordination would be entirely up to the committee.)*

Examples:

- *Take a tablet to the farmer’s market and ask people to fill out the survey.*
- *Pass out informational flyers promoting the workshop and climate action plan at a table set up outside voting centers during elections*
- *Attend an event at a senior living center to present and get feedback.*
- *Partner with the library to start a lecture series and bring in speakers such as Maine CDC (climate impacts on human health), Gulf of Maine Research Center (sea level rise), or Efficiency Maine (electrify programs and rebates) to provide educational resources to the public.*
- *Participate in a local parade to advertise climate action plan and conduct outreach*

Date (if known)	Method	Target Stakeholders
	i.e. table at X event, stakeholder meeting, etc.	

