Climate
Action Plan

CAPE COD

COMMUNICATIONS FRAMEWORK

DRAFT

CAPE COD
CLIMATE INITIATIVE

CAPE COD
COMMISSION

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This framework was developed by Cape Cod Commission staff with the support of the Communications Stakeholder Working Group who was generous with their knowledge, time, and expertise.

2021 CAPE COD CLIMATE ACTION PLAN COMMUNICATIONS FRAMEWORK
APRIL 2021 DRAFT

Prepared by Cape Cod Commission Staff

The maps and graphics in this document are for planning purposes only. They are not adequate for legal boundary definition, regulatory interpretation, or parcel level analysis.

Table of Contents

CAPE COD CLIMATE INITIATIVE

The Cape Cod Climate Action Plan is a major component of the Cape Cod Climate Initiative, a community-focused, information-based effort to inform a strategic framework and collaborative approach to address the region's contributions to and threats from climate change.

Introduction

Climate change is a key challenge facing the natural, built, and community systems of Cape Cod. Cape Cod is vulnerable to climate-related hazards, such as sea level rise, storm surge and flooding, erosion, damaging winds, elevated summer temperatures, and wildfire. These hazards put vulnerable populations at risk and can cause loss of life, damage buildings and infrastructure, impair coastal environments, and otherwise impact a community's economic, social, and environmental well-being, including impacting how Cape Cod's ecosystems function.

In response to regional climate challenges, the Cape Cod Commission (Commission) developed a Climate Action Plan for Cape Cod, in collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders, that describes challenges, impacts, and potential mitigation and adaptation strategies.

This Climate Communications Framework, an addendum to that Plan, serves as a guide for municipal and regional government staff, educators, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and others who endeavor to build on the regional Climate Action Plan and communicate to their audiences about climate change, mitigation, and adaptation on Cape Cod.

The Climate Communications Framework works in tandem with the research and strategies put forth by the Climate Action Plan to offer a path to developing a coordinated and effective strategy for delivering key messages and engaging with communities across Cape Cod about climate change. It includes both theoretical and practical guidance focused on how to develop a climate communications plan.

The process for developing a climate communications plan is broken down into six different components including setting goals and objectives, determining key audiences and collaborators, drafting key messages, selecting outreach strategies, establishing a timeline, and measuring and evaluating success. Each section is explored in depth, covering topline strategies and practical tactics for communicating about

climate change with different communities across Cape Cod. As much as possible, this framework takes the COVID-19 pandemic into account, offering both virtual and in-person communications strategies and considerations. The framework also links diverse communications resources, ranging from educational content to free online photo and video banks.

This resource will support stakeholders across Cape Cod as they translate the Climate Action Plan into results.

CLIMATE COMMUNICATIONS ON CAPE COD

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

In July 2020, the Cape Cod Commission launched a regional climate action planning process that considers both climate change mitigation and adaptation, building off of the 2019 Cape Cod Climate Initiative. With the goal of improving the region's resilience to climate hazards and mitigating climate change on Cape Cod through reducing net regional greenhouse gas emissions in support of the framework and targets established by the Commonwealth, the Commission set out to begin development of the following components of the Climate Action Plan:

- Legal and Jurisdictional Analysis
- Economic Impact Modeling
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies
- Student Climate Ambassador Program
- Cape-wide Survey
- GHG Emissions Inventory

The Cape Cod Commission collaborated with stakeholders to identify strategies and develop an action plan to address the critical challenges posed by climate change. Stakeholders contributed to problem definition, climate adaptation and mitigation actions and strategies, and approaches to communication and education.

Four working groups provided guidance and feedback in the topic areas of transportation, housing and development, natural resources and working lands, and energy. Four subregional municipal meetings were also held to better understand municipal goals, capacity, and needs relative to climate action. Focus groups with local organizations and a cross-sector working group also provided input to guide development of the Climate Action Plan.

ABOUT THE CAPE COD CLIMATE INITIATIVE

The Climate Initiative—a collaborative process to develop a strategic framework to address the region's contributions to and threats from climate change—was informed by a series of recommendations from the 2018 Regional Policy Plan, including development of a baseline GHG emissions inventory for the region, and structured in response to broad community input. The Cape Cod Climate Action Plan is a major component of the Cape Cod Climate Initiative.

DEVELOPING A COMMUNICATIONS FRAMEWORK

The Cape Cod Climate Action Plan Communications Framework was developed by Cape Cod Commission staff, in collaboration with a network of communications and education stakeholders in the region through a series of stakeholder working group meetings.

Commission staff and meeting facilitators identified an initial set of communications challenges during the extensive outreach process conducted between 2019 and 2020, which led to the establishment of a Communications Stakeholder Working Group. This group met twice virtually in 2021. In the first meeting, participants shared the challenges they observed as communicators and educators in this field. During the second meeting, participants responded to a draft outline of the framework, including guiding principles, goals, intended audiences, and key strategies. Participants also shared resources they identified or leveraged in

their own work, ranging from curriculum materials to online tools to articles in the media (see *Resources* section). In addition, Commission staff conducted a field scan of over 50 documents related to climate change communications. The field scan surfaced several communications plans that were designed specifically to work in tandem with a Climate Action Plan, as well as other relevant resources that have also been added to the Resources section of this document. The C40 Climate Action Planning Communications Toolkit[1] produced by The C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group was particularly helpful in the

creation of this communications framework and contains additional information that may be helpful to other communicators.

CHALLENGES TO CLIMATE COMMUNICATIONS

Throughout the stakeholder engagement process, the Commission heard from practitioners about the toughest challenges they are facing in communicating about climate change, from difficulties in the Cape's classrooms to barriers facing public sector employees in community engagement.

---

1   The C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group. "The C40 Climate Action Planning Communications Toolkit." 2020. Link: https://bit.ly/30zwFSL.

A NOTE TO EDUCATORS

Many educators contributed to the development of this communications framework. Though this resource does not include specific guidance on developing a curriculum around climate change issues, it should serve as a useful resource for developing messaging and finding innovative ways to convey it. The resource section at the end of the framework may be especially helpful to find new ways to engage students on climate change and the environment.

One of the top challenges facing climate communicators on the Cape is that the public is hearing inconsistent messaging about climate change from a variety of different sources. Information on local climate change impacts is not universally available or reaching necessary audiences. There is also a common misconception that climate impacts will occur in the distant future, while communities bear the costs of adaptation and mitigation today, which can be deterring. In the Commission's stakeholder outreach efforts, participants shared that the public would benefit from a clearer understanding of the threats the region is facing from climate change and the urgent actions that individuals and groups can take to improve the situation. Moving forward, it will be important for communicators across the Cape can leverage the Climate Action Plan and this framework as a guide to help unify messaging and reach a broader audience.

Other challenges involve obstacles to public participation in local decision making. During the outreach process, stakeholders working in local government noted difficulties around motivating community members to attend public meetings and read documentation that can inform policy change or related actions. Stakeholders also mentioned needing additional support, including physical spaces, for people to gather and discuss important issues in public.

Educators who participated in the Communications Stakeholder Working Group also shared the unique challenges faced when working to spread awareness of climate change issues and inspire action amongst students. Initial feedback indicates that schools may not have available classes and/or sufficient course material that address climate change (especially impacts on Cape Cod), and that Massachusetts state standards are not well aligned with the goal of increasing climate education across all grade levels.

Some stakeholders also expressed that while climate change education is well integrated at some grade levels, the opportunities are not spaced well across grades and are not always mandatory and, therefore, do not reach as many students as they could. Teachers also expressed that they need support in developing curriculum and accessing materials to help teach students of all ages about climate change.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR A CLIMATE-FRIENDLY RECOVERY FROM COVID-19

During the development of the regional Climate Action Plan, the COVID-19 pandemic emerged and rapidly spread throughout the world. While the pandemic brought its own set of devastating challenges to communities, there are many lessons to be learned from these challenges that can be applied to climate planning efforts. COVID-19 showed that healthcare and sanitation systems are an essential part of responding to natural threats; clean air and water are necessary to protect against health risks; and the most vulnerable members of society are disproportionately affected when disaster strikes. These lessons can be directly applied to the threats the Cape is facing as extreme weather and degradation of the environment become more commonplace.

As Cape Cod continues to recover from COVID-19, it is important to consider and prepare for future emergencies—both climate-related and otherwise. Instead of returning to 'business as usual,' local leaders and residents can work together to think through the ways the pandemic changed aspects of everyday life and how understanding these changes can improve how we address future challenges. There also may be greater opportunities to integrate more environmentally friendly systems and solutions during this time of change and adaptation. Though the action needed to adapt to climate change can feel overwhelming at times, in the face of the pandemic there may be an opportunity to reach people in ways that may resonate more strongly now, and to take collective action to make the Cape a safer and healthier place for all current and future residents and visitors.
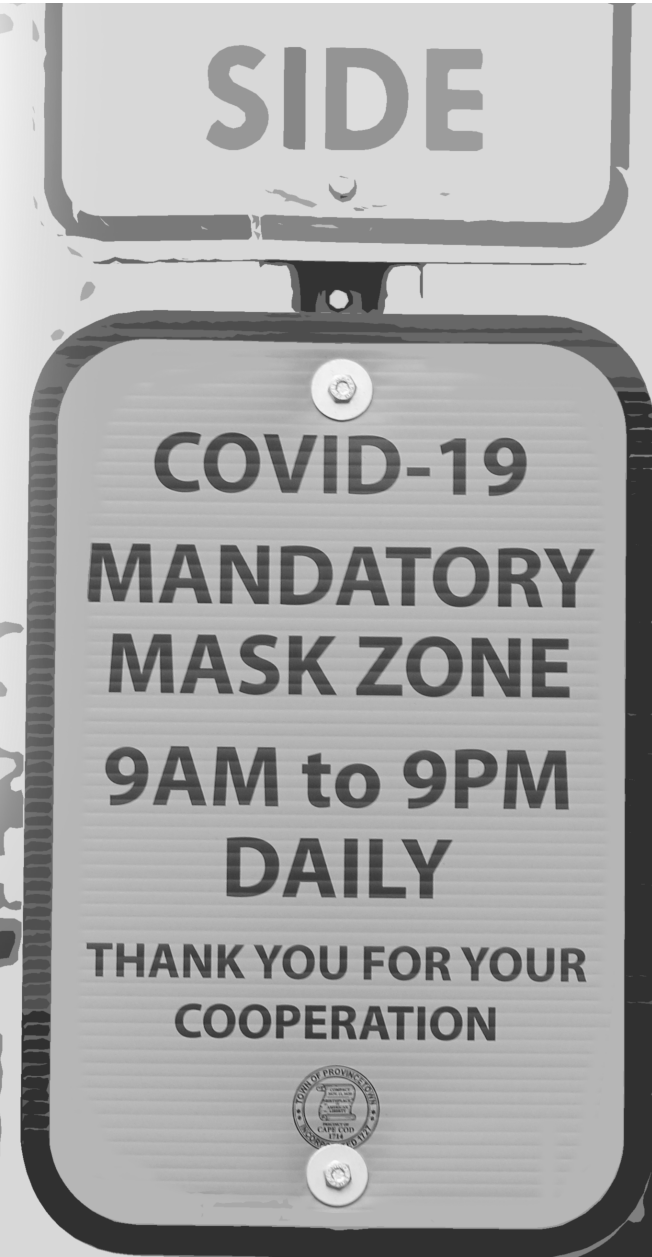
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This framework will help communicators and educators raise broad awareness of community and individual responsibilities related to Cape Cod's changing climate, integrating equity into implementation and increasing engagement on climate issues. The framework has been crafted around three main guiding principles:

- **Grow Awareness of Climate Issues**: Leverage this framework in spreading awareness of the impacts of climate change and the actions that can mitigate them among Cape Cod's stakeholders.

- **Inspire Behavioral Change**: Inspire Cape Cod residents and stakeholders to take meaningful action on climate change.

- **Promote Inclusivity and Equity**: Engage the diverse and vulnerable populations that live on Cape Cod, deeply integrating equity into climate change communications.

Building on the guiding principles, the specific objectives of this framework are to:

- Improve awareness and understanding of the Cape Cod Climate Action Plan strategies for climate action

- Provide a common strategic vision and allow various entities to speak with one voice around climate change and associated impacts

- Encourage Cape Cod towns and other stakeholders to take collective actions that will strengthen the region's resilience to climate change

- Share communications resources and best practices, as well as monitoring and evaluation strategies, with key Cape Cod stakeholders to increase the Climate Action Plan's reach and effectiveness

- Generate support and political commitment among key decision-makers for pursuing policies that will contribute to the Cape's ability to mitigate climate change and its impacts

- Motivate the public and private sectors to make significant and timely investments in climate change adaptation

HOW TO USE THIS FRAMEWORK

The communications framework should be used by municipal and regional government staff, educators, non-governmental organizations, non-profits, and others who communicate about the impacts of climate change on Cape Cod.[2] The strategy and resources can support their efforts to increase engagement on and awareness of community and individual actions to address climate change, especially as it relates to equitable outreach and implementation.

This framework is organized into six sections: goals and objectives, audience segmentation, key message development, outreach strategies, timelining, and evaluation. Most sections include a theoretical section on how to approach content development with climate action in mind, followed by

practical applications of the information. The last chapter provides additional resources for communications planning and implementation.

Depending on available time and resources, this framework can be leveraged at multiple scales. Scalability has been taken into consideration throughout the framework, and recommendations for its use in an organization with limited resources is provided where possible. Organizations wishing to develop a climate communications strategy can leverage this document to set goals and measure progress, and can utilize the creative resources and case studies to develop content. Town staff can create unified talking points to educate voters in advance of Town Meeting. Educators developing a curriculum around climate change impacts can use these materials to educate students on how climate change has already begun impacting their community.

---

2   Throughout the document, there are references to "the organization;" this is intended to be inclusive of any group leveraging the framework, including town staff, non-profits, and other community leaders.

MASSACHUSETTS NET-ZERO EMISSIONS GOAL

The Commonwealth established a 2050 target of "net zero" emissions, which is defined as "a level of statewide greenhouse gas emissions that is equal in quantity to the amount of carbon dioxide or its equivalent that is removed from the atmosphere and stored annually by, or attributable to, the Commonwealth; provided, however, that in no event shall the level of emissions be greater than a level that is 85% below the 1990 level."

EMISSIONS REDUCTIONS FROM 1990 LEVELS

1990 LEVELS

by 2030
50%

by 2050
85%
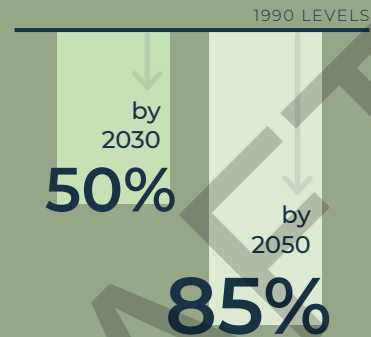
Ultimately, the framework will help communicators and educators raise broad awareness of community and individual responsibilities related to Cape Cod's changing climate, integrating equity into implementation and increasing engagement on climate issues.

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN OR CAMPAIGN?

Though often used interchangeably, communications campaigns are a part of communications plans—but are different than the plans themselves.

A communications plan outlines the broader goals, objectives, audiences, messaging, and calls to action, tools, and channels that pertain to a given issue, while campaigns are then mobilized to implement the broader communications plan. Any given communications plan may include material that is relevant to just one communications campaign, or it may outline ideas for multiple campaigns. A communications plan is a roadmap to guide the campaigns, and each

communications campaign will require more detailed planning to put it in motion.

For example, an organization that supports energy efficient housing may develop a communications plan to outline their target audiences, key messages, and which tools they will use to reach those audiences. The communications campaign will determine how key messages about energy efficient housing are turned into communications materials such as posters or videos, that specific contact lists are built to reach key audiences, and that a more detailed timeline is developed to guide the use of different tools such as social media platforms over the period of the campaign.

This communications framework provides information and resources that will support the development of both communications plans and campaigns, but the framework itself is designed specifically to guide the development of climate action communications plans.

Communications Framework Strategy

Once a town or organization has determined a need for a communications strategy around climate change, the six-step process outlined below should provide a realistic plan of action. This section provides details and advice on each of these six steps to support the development of a climate action communications plan. Each of the six parts begins with a theoretical framework that explains why this step is important, and various considerations to take into account when making decisions about the plan. Following the theory portion, communicators will find practical information as well as other tools, resources, and templates to support the application of the concepts into tangible action.

1 SETTING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

What are you hoping to achieve by communicating about climate change?

2 IDENTIFYING KEY AUDIENCES AND COLLABORATORS

Who are you trying to reach, and what partners might help you to reach them?

3 DEVELOPING KEY MESSAGES

What are the primary messages you want to communicate? Can you organize them by audience segment, by sector, by issue, or other themes?

4 SELECTING OUTREACH STRATEGIES

What mediums are best for each audience and message?

5 DETERMINING MILESTONES AND TIMELINES

What external and internal factors might determine your timing, and how do you think about the timeline of the plan versus the timeline of each campaign?

6 DEFINING AND MEASURING SUCCESS

How will you know if your communications efforts have succeeded? How can you harness learnings to improve future communications plans and campaigns?

1. SETTING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals and objectives should outline what communicators intend to achieve through outreach. Goals describe what a plan will seek to achieve, and objectives define how the goals will be met.

While the Climate Action Plan addresses Cape Cod's population broadly, an organization's goals and objectives will likely be more specific and depend on the communities it wishes to reach. To determine these goals, the organization should assess the strengths and weaknesses of previous communications efforts, opportunities to influence key stakeholders and encourage behavioral change, and past challenges encountered in reaching audiences.

Following a self-audit, an organization should define overarching goals by considering the intended outcomes of communication.

In general, communications campaigns should inform or influence behaviors in large audiences by increasing knowledge and providing a call to action. Once goals are in place, set measurable and time-bound objectives that support them. Be sure to consider the human and financial resources available to ensure that the objectives are achievable within the specified time frame.

Each goal may have one or multiple objectives that support it; specific objectives should include a concrete deliverable that is time-bound.

Encouraging Change Through Communications

Communications strategies should be used to inspire behavioral changes that can slow down the rate of climate change and allow people and places to readily adapt to and mitigate its effects.

Influencing people to understand and act on climate change is a challenge, but the path towards large-scale adaptation and mitigation begins with consistent and clear communications at a local scale.

Financial and other incentives have a critical role to play in social change. But thoughtful and strategic storytelling is key to increasing awareness, which is always the first step in influencing change. While the conversation around climate change may at times be weighed down by fear and pessimism, solution-oriented communication has the power to offer hope along with understanding.

2. IDENTIFYING KEY AUDIENCES AND COLLABORATORS

Key to a successful climate aciton communications campaign is identifying who the key audiences are and what other organizations may be helpful in extending the reach of messaging to those key audiences.

AUDIENCE SEGMENTATION

Climate communications efforts can benefit from audience segmentation. Audience segmentation is the process of dividing a wider audience into specific groups of people who have similar needs, values, or characteristics.[3]

Segmentation recognizes that different groups of people will respond to communication tactics and messages in different ways, and then works to maximize the impact of communications by tailoring strategies to match the needs of various groups as much as possible.

Targeted outreach messages and methods are based on the needs and interests of stakeholder groups, such as:

- Year-round residents
- Seasonal residents
- Business owners
- Families and individuals who will be or have been especially impacted by climate change
- Students and young adults
- Individuals, committees, and governance bodies responsible for deciding and enforcing related policies and regulations

At the beginning of the outreach process, communicators should determine the tone of an organization's communications. For example, some organizations may lean towards a more serious, informative tone, while others may decide on a lighter, more conversational tone. Tone may vary depending on the target audience and communications channel (more information in *Selecting Outreach Strategies*). Breaking down the target audience into smaller clusters can help communications planning in several ways:

- **Relevant messaging**: By designing messages based on the values and needs of specific audiences, communications strategies are likely to be more effective and efficient.

- **Communications platforms**: Different groups tend to use different communications channels. By segmenting audiences using certain

---

3   MailChimp. "Audience Segmentation." Retrieved March 11, 2021. Link: https://mailchimp.com/marketing-glossary/audience-segmentation/.

demographic factors such as age, communicators are more likely to connect with those specific groups.

- **Shared barriers**: Devising messages to combat specific barriers that are shared by members of a specific group increases the probability that communications efforts will be acted upon. For example, messages targeted at homeowners that provides details about how to schedule a free home energy assessment could increase the likelihood that homeowners take action to reduce their energy use.

- **Calls to Action**: Communicators should leverage the Climate Action Plan in determining specific calls to action, as it outlines specific actions

that individuals and organizations can take to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

PRIORITIZATION OF AUDIENCE SEGMENTS

One way to prioritize outreach to stakeholder groups is based on the level of influence and/or interest they may have on climate action in the region, and selecting either active or passive communications strategies accordingly. Some individuals or groups should be informed broadly about climate action, while others may warrant proactive consultation and collaboration. Other audiences warrant explicit outreach

due to their vulnerability to climate impacts, such as race, age, disabilities, or socioeconomic status. (See *Integrating Equity Considerations* below.)

It can also be helpful to break larger audience segments into smaller subgroups focused around common behaviors, beliefs, or practices based on insight and research. With a sense of the beliefs and behaviors of various subgroups, it may make sense to assign specific actions to each subgroup based on their perceived level of receptiveness to climate messaging. Identifying the full spectrum of audiences can help to prioritize outreach accordingly.

INFLUENCE/INTEREST MATRIX

An influence/interest matrix provides a visual for how a communicator might think of assessing audience segments and determining how to prioritize them. Individuals that fall into the high influence, high interest category may also serve as potential collaborators to implementing the communications strategy. Adapted from Mendelow, A.L. (1981) Environmental Scanning: The Impact of the Stakeholder Concept. ICIS 1981 Proceedings, 20.

INFLUENCE		
HIGH INFLUENCE, LOW INTEREST	HIGH INFLUENCE, HIGH INTEREST
LOW INFLUENCE, LOW INTEREST	LOW INFLUENCE, HIGH INTEREST

INTEREST
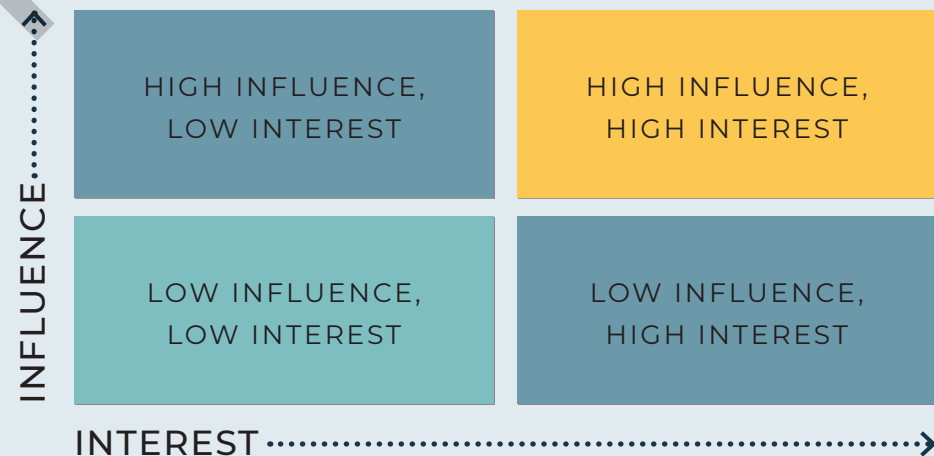
PARTNERS AND COLLABORATION

Climate issues by nature are interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral. After determining its goals, objectives, and key audiences, an organization should consider partnering with other local agencies and stakeholders that have shared interests. Stakeholders can also consider collaborating on research, monitoring, and evaluation efforts to increase efficiency. In the long run, developing inter-agency and cross-sector relationships can help to strengthen shared visions and processes for climate change adaptation and mitigation, contributing to better outcomes for Cape Cod as a whole.

RESOURCE COLLABORATIONS

Co-producing communications materials can save money and increase workload capacity, while cross-promoting communications materials with other agencies can help to build and expand audiences.

Partnership Considerations

- **Build from existing relationships**: Consider the organization's existing network and whether there are any potential partnerships that could stem from existing working relationships. Familiarity and a high level of comfort with communications approaches and shared interests may save time and resources.

- **Collaborate beyond the environmental sector**: Organizations and stakeholders already working in the environmental sector can be strong partners, but it is also valuable to look beyond usual collaborators to other sectors, such as small businesses, real estate developers and agents, arts organizations, and others. Cross-sectoral teams may reach larger audiences and help avoid any appeal to self-interest. It is important to include individuals that are well connected to the communities the information is intended to reach.

- **Clearly define roles and responsibilities**: In any collaboration, set clear expectations early and define roles and responsibilities before the partnership begins. Schedule and attend regular meetings together to ensure coordination and maintain momentum.

- **Set goals, deliverables, and timelines together**: As part of defining roles and responsibilities, set shared goals for the communications efforts, as well as detailed expectations for who will contribute what and when.

- **Invite the audience to interact**: Audiences themselves can be some of the strongest partners. Use social media and other platforms for engagement to expand on ways for people to share their views, and to join the campaign and help spread the word.
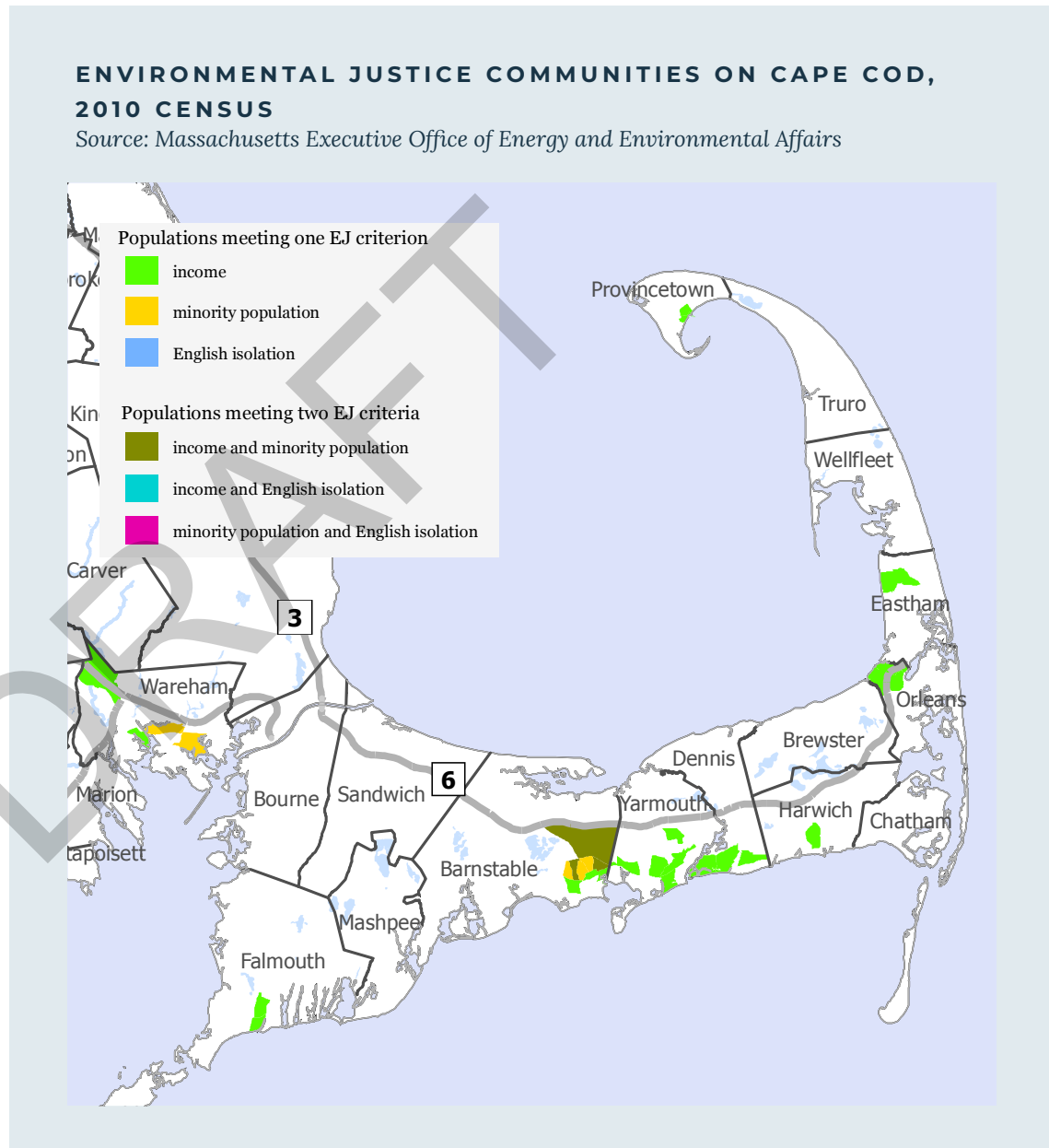
INTEGRATING EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

Vulnerable populations are often disproportionately impacted by the effects of climate change, and typically have less access to the resources needed for recovery. These groups can include, but are not limited to, communities of color, low-income neighborhoods, youth, older adults, people with impairments, people facing homelessness, and people with limited English proficiency.[4]

Cape Cod is home to several Environmental Justice (EJ) communities, defined by the Massachusetts Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (MA EOEEA) as areas with high minority, non-English speaking, and/or low-income populations. In Barnstable County, the EJ populations are concentrated in Hyannis and along Nantucket Sound, with income-based pockets in Falmouth, Orleans, Eastham, and Provincetown.

---

4   City of Boston. "Climate Action Plan." 2019. Link: https://www.boston.gov/sites/default/files/embed/file/2019-10/city_of_boston_2019_climate_action_plan_update_4.pdf

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMUNITIES ON CAPE COD, 2010 CENSUS
Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Populations meeting one EJ criterion
- income
- minority population
- English isolation

Populations meeting two EJ criteria
- income and minority population
- income and English isolation
- minority population and English isolation

"Environmental justice is based on the principle that all people have a right to be protected from environmental pollution, and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment. Environmental justice is the equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies and the equitable distribution of environmental benefits."

— Massachusetts Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

MA EOEEA encourages two frameworks of environmental equity, "stopping the environmental 'bads,' such as a disproportionate burden of toxins, and promoting the environmental 'goods,' such as assuring access to parks, green amenities, and recreational opportunities."[5] Communications efforts to EJ communities should integrate one or both of these frameworks.

Communications strategies should enhance inclusivity through as many of these concepts as possible:

- **Transparency**: Communications about climate change should be clear and use straightforward language to make sure the information is accessible to all. Linking or sharing source information where appropriate also increases transparency.

- **Diversify outreach platforms**: To reach the widest range of communities, use a variety of communications channels while maintaining consistent messaging.

Language, geographic location, age, access to broadband and other digital resources, and other demographic factors should all be considered when deciding on the outreach strategy.[6]

- **Leverage translation services**: Communicators engaging vulnerable populations may need to leverage translation services (or engage fluent language speakers for outreach events) in order to share key messages effectively. As the Environmental Justice map above indicates, there are several census block groups that identify residents for whom English is a second language (ESL). On Cape Cod, ESL speakers often speak Portuguese as a first language.

- **Engagement process**: In an effective engagement process, communications should flow both ways and be part of an ongoing process of building relationships rather than a one-time effort. Providing ways for audiences to reach out or provide feedback—whether through email, telephone, or social media, etc.—can benefit both sides. Strategies that encourage active involvement on the part of communities can build capacity and help to drive climate action forward through shared ownership.

---

5   MA EOEEA. Objectives of Environmental Justice. Access March 2021. https://www.mass.gov/service-details/objectives-of-environmental-justice
6   The American Planning Association provides resources to planners to support smart, inclusive, and equitable growth: https://www.planning.org/resources/equity/

- **"Active" communications strategies**: As noted preiously in the influence versus interest matrix, some audiences may require an active communications approach. When leveraged effectively, this usually means proactively "meeting them where they are," rather than passively sharing information and expecting people to seek it out.

- **Relevant partnerships**: As part of community engagement, determine which local organizations and entities are most trusted by and connected with specific audiences and consider partnering with these groups on communications efforts. For example, faith-based organizations and social service organizations are often local hubs for community news and organizing. Communications can often be better received if coming from a familiar and trusted source within communities.

- **Empowerment through Engagement**: Engaging with vulnerable populations imparts key knowledge and information, while also enriching communications efforts by identifying implementation barriers. Effective engagement leads to empowered communities that understand why and how environmental and economic decisions are being made, and allows them to use their voice to have a say in the outcomes. Communicators can also empower community members to conduct surveys, facilitate meetings, and provide background information so that the communications efforts expand beyond its initial reach.

Increased communication, coordination, and collaboration with the diverse communities on the Cape will improve the region's disaster preparedness and resilience. By integrating an equity lens throughout the communications plan and prioritizing outreach to vulnerable populations, communicators can contribute to a safer and more livable Cape for all residents and visitors.

3. DEVELOPING KEY MESSAGES

This section summarizes themes in messaging that are common and helpful to climate communications campaigns, and outlines specific key messages that draw on the Climate Action Plan and are organized by sector and by subtopic. Once key messages have been chosen, the next section provides guidance on how to choose and use various platforms for audience engagement.

INCREASING AWARENESS

Increasing awareness of the causes, effects, and solutions to climate change is a core function of the key messages that make up any climate communication campaign. It is important for reducing barriers to participation and increasing the likelihood that climate adaptation and mitigation is supported locally. These key messages may seek to increase awareness of climate issues themselves, or they may aim to increase audience awareness of specific actions to take to improve the situation. No matter the specific audience or sub-topic, it will be important to develop key messages that seek to increase awareness of a given topic to provide context for other messages that may seek to influence behavioral change.

INDIVIDUAL CHANGE

One ongoing challenge of climate change communications is how powerless individuals may feel in the face of such a huge problem. The Communications Stakeholder Working Group emphasized that hope and optimism are both crucial when trying to motivate individuals to take action to mitigate climate change and its impacts. When developing key messages, emphasize that everyone has an important role to play in adapting to and mitigating climate change. It is also essential to include clear and actionable steps that people can take to contribute to Cape Cod's resilience, while ensuring equity concerns are taken into consideration.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL SCALE CHANGE

In addition to increasing awareness and spurring individuals to act, this communications framework also aims to support coordinated action across various sectors on Cape Cod that can lead to larger scale local and regional change. Key messages that target various sectors and urge stakeholders to take coordinated action have the potential to make a significant and positive impact on Cape Cod's ability to adapt to climate threats. In addition, it is important to empower others to facilitate change by providing people with information about how and why to engage in local decision making around environmental and economic issues. Communicators can share messages about events such as Town Meeting and local elections, or share relevant town

resources and documents. Key messages that encourage audiences to get involved in local policymaking and provide details about how to engage with government can be an effective way to increase community participation.

CLIMATE CHANGE MESSAGING BEST PRACTICES

In researching climate communications plans in other regions and in discussions with the Communications Stakeholder Working Group, several best practices rose to the top for climate change messaging. Communicators should adopt the following

best practices when designing their communications plans and campaigns:

- **Provide hope and incentivize action:** Messaging should provide actionable solutions as well as information about the issues in order to motivate people. Design messages that show people the benefits they can expect in the future if they act now, and provide enough detail to remove barriers to action (like guidelines or key contact information).

- **Use simple, clear, consistent language:** Avoid technical jargon in favor of language that is more accessible to a wide range of audiences. Maintain terminology consistency across platforms and unify messaging when using different communications channels.

- **Use compelling visuals:** Whenever possible, use visuals such as photos, videos, or infographics to make content more engaging and relevant. Show local images of Cape Cod to make the issue more tangible and meaningful. When possible, use real people and real situations to talk about the impact climate change is having on communities. There are resources towards the end of this document that provide information on places to find visuals if needed.

- **Highlight positive stories and testimonials:** Stories of people taking action and experiencing a positive result can convince others to participate and offer an important connection to the broader community as well as the potential benefits of acting on climate issues. Climate

action can seem less overwhelming when people feel connected to others making similar decisions.

- **Tailor messages to each target audience segment:** Consider specific audiences before crafting or adapting key messages. The more specific messages are, the more meaningful and impactful they will be. More information on tailoring messages is included below.

- **Use data:** Statistics and other data can help people grasp and remember the message, and place climate change information in context.

Public Backlash and Countering Misinformation

In monitoring communications efforts, organizations may encounter backlash from groups or individuals who are averse to the changes being advocating for, or who do not believe the information being shared. Anticipate which topics may be red flag issues for a community and prepare clear position statements on them so the communications team is aligned on how to respond. However, while a response is often

necessary, it is also important to know when to stop the debate.

This backlash may also include people who respond by spreading misinformation. Before launching a campaign, it will be helpful to think through the potential responses the outreach may garner and prepare messages to counter any misinformation.

25

Tailoring Talking Points to Identified Climate Action Goals

This section describes key messages broken down by climate subtopic and suggested audience. Messages may define important terms or correspond directly to implementing the Climate Action Plan's goals and objectives by Sector Area: Housing and Development, Energy, Transportation, Natural Resources, and Community.

HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT

TRANSPORTATION

ENERGY

NATURAL RESOURCES AND WORKING LANDS

COMMUNITY

Housing and Development

GOAL: REDUCE GHG EMISSIONS FROM THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

KEY MESSAGES

- A Net-zero energy building or home is one that creates as much energy as it uses.

- Net-zero energy buildings and homes are generally higher performing, and more resilient to economic and climate changes.

- Net-zero energy buildings produce significantly lower carbon emissions, which supports better air quality across the region and a healthier and more livable environment for Cape Cod residents.

- Centralizing development where infrastructure is already (or likely to be) located is better for both the economy and the environment.

- Improving walkability and allowing a mix of land uses in Cape Cod's neighborhoods will make them more vibrant, enjoyable places to live.

AUDIENCES

- Government Agencies (State, County, Town)

- Individuals (Homeowners, Landlords)

- Organizations (Non-governmental organizations, Energy efficiency program organizations, Civic organizations)

- Businesses (Real Estate Development, Utilities)

GOAL: REDUCE GHG EMISSIONS FROM WASTE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

KEY MESSAGES

- Diverting waste away from landfills by reducing, re-using, and recycling waste prevents pollution that can harm the health of Cape Cod's residents and environment.

- Through the efficient treatment of wastewater, Cape Cod can reduce the overall amount of waste that is released into the environment, resulting in lower health risks for residents and a cleaner environment.

AUDIENCES

- Government Agencies (State, County, Town)

- Individuals (Homeowners, Renters, Visitors)

- Organizations (Civic organizations)

- Businesses

Housing and Development

GOAL: IMPROVE AND ADVANCE THE RESILIENCE OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

KEY MESSAGES

- Cape Cod's buildings and infrastructure are being increasingly exposed to higher climate stresses, which reduces their function and lifespan and increases maintenance costs.

- Climate-smart designs are needed and will provide the region with long-term benefits and future cost savings.

AUDIENCES

- Government Agencies (State, County, Town)

- Individuals (Coastal homeowners)

- Organizations (Research organizations)

- Businesses (Real Estate Development, Utilities, Engineering, Consultants)

Energy

GOAL: INCREASE THE PRODUCTION AND USE OF CLEAN ENERGY

KEY MESSAGES

- Increasing the production and use of green energy could improve Cape Cod residents' quality of life through the creation of more jobs with livable wages.

- Everyone has an important role to play. Residential buildings are the region's largest contributor of greenhouse gas emissions in the energy sector, so adoption of clean energy at the household level will have the greatest impact.

- Clean energy infrastructure for improvements such as electric vehicles and battery technology will increase the Cape's resilience to natural disasters, lower operational costs, and improve overall access to electricity.

- Green Community designation is an important step to building a more resilient town. Continue to support efforts to pass bylaws and adopt stretch code.

AUDIENCES

- Government Agencies (State, County, Town)

- Individuals

- Organizations (Non-governmental organizations, Schools)

- Businesses (Real Estate Development, Utilities)

Transportation

GOAL: REDUCE EMISSIONS FROM THE TRANSPORTATION SECTOR

KEY MESSAGES

- Vehicles make the largest contribution to greenhouse gas emissions in the region. Even small changes make a difference in helping to take care of our environment. Consider virtual meetings, carpooling, combining trips, shopping in walkable areas, or alternate modes of transit.

AUDIENCES

- Government Agencies (State, County, Town)
- Individuals (Residents, Visitors)
- Organizations (Schools)
- Businesses

GOAL: IMPROVE THE RESILIENCE OF THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM TO THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

KEY MESSAGES

- Near-term investments in transportation systems that are physically resilient to climate impacts and provide options in case one mode is disrupted by a climate shock will save money and lessen disruption in the long term.

AUDIENCES

- Government Agencies (State, County, Town)
- Organizations (Non-governmental organizations, Civic Organizations, Research Organizations)

Natural Resources and Working Lands

GOAL: SUPPORT AND PROMOTE PROTECTION, CONSERVATION, AND RESTORATION OF NATURAL ECOSYSTEMS

KEY MESSAGES

- Open spaces, parks, and wetlands, provide recreational opportunities and habitats for wildlife that are key to the Cape Cod's tourism industry and high quality of life for residents.

- Wetlands are an essential part of Cape Cod's natural environment. The Cape's wetlands protect our shores from the impacts of storms, reduce flooding, absorb pollutants, and improve water quality.

AUDIENCES

- Government Agencies (State, County, Town)

- Individuals (Residents)

- Organizations (Non-governmental organizations, Schools, Civic Organizations, Research organizations, Advocacy organizations, Land trusts, Conservation organizations)

- Businesses (Real Estate Development)

GOAL: INCREASE CARBON SEQUESTRATION IN THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

KEY MESSAGES

- Forests and wetlands naturally support carbon sequestration, which translates into cleaner air and a cooler planet. We must protect Cape Cod's natural environments to keep the region a healthy place to live for all residents.

AUDIENCES

- Government Agencies (State, County, Town)

- Individuals (Residents)

- Organizations (Non-governmental organizations, Research organizations, Land trusts, Conservation organizations)

31

Natural Resources and Working Lands

GOAL: PROTECT THE ABILITY OF WORKING LANDS AND WATERS TO PROVIDE ESSENTIAL SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SERVICES WHILE PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

KEY MESSAGES

- Cape Cod's working lands are important sources of food, economic vitality, recreation, and tourism for our region. They also provide key services such as carbon storage, flood hazard prevention, drinking water protection, and more. By supporting and protecting our working lands, we are protecting the future of Cape Cod.

AUDIENCES

- Government Agencies (Federal, State, County, Town)

- Individuals (Residents)

- Organizations (Non-governmental organizations, Civic Organizations, Research organizations, Land trusts, Conservation organizations)

- Businesses (Fishing, Farming)

Community

GOAL: IMPROVE BROAD PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS AND PROGRAMS

KEY MESSAGES

- All community members have a role to play in helping to improve and take care of our environment. Communications and education efforts that engage diverse communities on Cape Cod will help to guide and motivate people to take meaningful action.

AUDIENCES

- Government Agencies (State, County, Town)

- Organizations (Non-governmental organizations, Schools, Civic Organizations, Research organizations, Faith-based organizations, Social service organizations)

GOAL: ACCELERATE ADOPTION OF EMISSIONS REDUCTION STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS ACROSS REGIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

KEY MESSAGES

- Cape Cod government can help to ensure its populations are healthier, safer, and enjoy a better quality of life by immediately taking measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as much as possible.

AUDIENCES

- Government Agencies (County, Town)

- Organizations (Civic Organizations)

Community

GOAL: INCREASE DATA COLLECTION AND ACCESS

KEY MESSAGES

- Expanded access to better and more data will help Cape Cod to take appropriate and effective action on climate change.

AUDIENCES

- Government Agencies (County, Town)
- Organizations (Research organizations)

GOAL: ENSURE THE HEALTH, SAFETY, AND EQUITABILITY OF MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION SOLUTIONS

KEY MESSAGES

- Boosting Cape Cod's green economy could improve residents' quality of life through the creation of more jobs with livable wages that help to improve our environment. Cape Cod's government needs more information to assess the best path forward to maximize green economy job opportunities.

AUDIENCES

- Government Agencies (County, Town)
- Individuals (Residents)
- Organizations (Non-governmental organizations, Civic Organizations, Research organizations)
- Businesses (Real Estate Development, Construction, Engineering)

Community

GOAL: ESTABLISH STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS TO ADVANCE SHARED GOALS

KEY MESSAGES

- Climate change does not recognize town boundary lines or sector-based silos. All levels of Cape Cod's government and stakeholders across various sectors must collaborate creatively for the future of the Cape.

AUDIENCES

- Government Agencies (State, County, Town)
- Individuals (Residents)
- Organizations (Non-governmental organizations, Civic organizations)
- Businesses
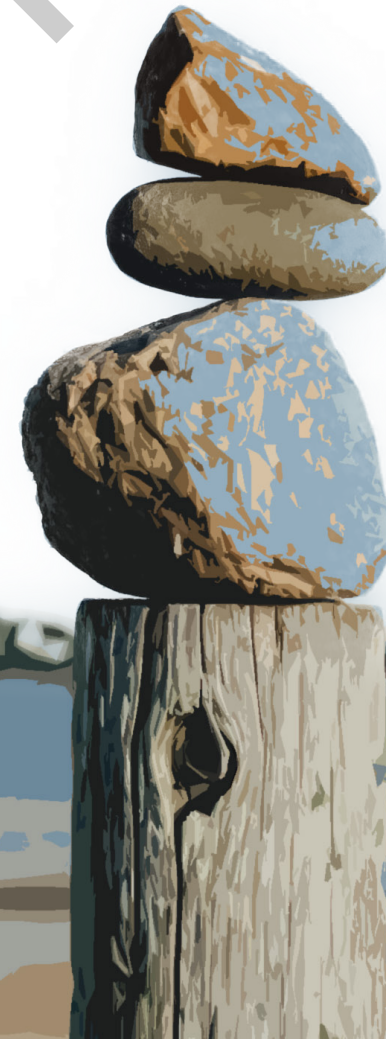
4. SELECTING OUTREACH STRATEGIES

This section provides information to help communicators decide on outreach strategies, including details about some of the most widely used communications channels, and potential benefits and drawbacks of each to take into account. The outreach strategies chosen should be informed by the goals and the audiences the communicator is trying to reach. Almost all messages can be adapted to fit any outreach strategy, but each communications channel has its own pros and cons related to its typical audience demographics and the human and financial resources it can take to leverage. Prioritize the channels that target audiences most frequently use, and ensure that the core messaging remains consistent across platforms.

DIGITAL VS. IN-PERSON OUTREACH

Each communications campaign that stems from an organization's communications plan may use a different mix of outreach strategies and tools. In all cases, consider using both digital and analog platforms to reach the widest swath of constituents possible and account for equity and accessibility considerations. During the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual events and digital engagement have become a much more significant part of everyday life for many. However, it remains important to consider those who may not have reliable internet or phone access, and to find ways to reach them through efforts such as direct mail, flyers posted in the public realm, and more.

Although they may logistically be easier to organize than in-person events, virtual meetings can still present unexpected challenges and take dedicated staff resources to conduct effectively.

Here are a few pieces of advice to consider when planning a virtual event:

- **Large audiences:** Any time an organization plans to host more than 100 people on a digital platform, it may be worthwhile to invest in professional assistance to ensure the event runs smoothly, and to help people with technical difficulties. For smaller events, it is advisable to have an in-house IT person on hand to manage the technical aspects of the event, plus additional staff members who have been trained to field questions and assist audience members.

- **Interaction:** If the event involves interactive elements, such as polls, breakout rooms, or other elements, it will be necessary to plan and practice managing these tools in advance and have adequate tech support at the event.

- **Aesthetic:** Be sure that presenters have appropriate background setups, are well-lit, in a quiet place, and have the tools necessary to produce high-quality sound.

OUTREACH AND EQUITY

Communications is a key part of ensuring equity in any initiative. Communicators should consider language, age, disability and socioeconomic status, digital access, and other demographic factors when selecting outreach strategies. They may also want to directly ask people who are embedded in that community for input on best ways to reach a target audience.

In addition to considering the message's platform, below are communications strategies to prioritize equity:

- **Expand translation efforts:** Translate materials and messaging into the primary languages of target audiences.

- **Enhance in-person outreach efforts:** Engage and incentivize community representatives in outreach to populations in especially vulnerable neighborhoods; hold meetings and events outside to increase visibility and accessibility of events.

- **Digital vs. analog materials:** Distribute communications in both digital and analog formats. Social media may work well for many groups, but handouts or posted flyers may be more accessible to some individuals. As always, consider the safety protocols if communicating during a pandemic.

- **Media list:** Build a list of local media publications that includes those that reach the Cape's diverse communities and include them in the outreach. This may include smaller blogs and social media influencers.

- **Repetition:** Be more repetitive with communications about events and initiatives, especially as a deadline is approaching. People with different schedules and varying access to digital technology may not see communications the first or even second time they are sent or posted.

- **Communication tone:** Be clear and concise with language. Climate change can be an intimidating topic for many, and it can be helpful to make it more approachable.

- **Diversity of form:** In addition to using a variety of platforms, it can also be helpful to use a range of mediums. Create materials that use a mix of words and visuals to reach different audiences.

- **Reducing barriers to engagement:** Ensure that materials can be accessible to those who are deaf and/or visually impaired. Provide childcare opportunities for attendees and their families. Refreshments can often be a helpful incentive for attendance as well.

PLATFORMS FOR ENGAGEMENT

The following is a list of potential communications channels for engaging with stakeholders. Platforms should be selected based on the messaging and materials being shared, the intended audience, and with consideration of available resources for implementation.

Centralize Resources on a Website

Communicators can share a page on their existing websites dedicated to their climate change planning efforts. The webpage can provide links to the regional Climate Action Plan; language based on the recommended talking points; access to educational resources and related media, including newsletter sign ups; recommendations for individual action and other ways to get involved, such as events; and information on the relationship the organization has to climate change adaptation, mitigation, and planning.

E-newsletter

Communicators can raise awareness of climate change issues through email newsletters, writing engaging content that connects climate change impacts to Cape Codders' concerns and interests. The newsletter can link to local events and relevant news articles, share website updates and recorded interviews, and provide access to educational materials. Where possible, communicators should consider building climate change content into existing e-newsletters (if one already exists) rather than collecting email addresses and starting a list of stakeholder subscribers from scratch. Links to the newsletter can be shared on the website, and sign-up forms can be shared through social media or by bringing sign-up sheets to any in-person meetings.

Social Media

Social media is one of the most popular low-cost, high-impact communications approaches available. Communicators can engage with stakeholders on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Whatsapp, TikTok, Pinterest, Snapchat, Reddit, and more. Many towns, businesses, and organizations already have official pages on Facebook; others have YouTube channels for sharing video content (e.g., interviews with municipal officials and community members, special town meeting announcements, etc.). This section provides more detail on the top social media platforms being used today.

FACEBOOK

Facebook remains the most popular social media site, with nearly 70% of all Americans indicating that they use Facebook. About three-quarters of users log in daily,[7] making Facebook a convenient option for connecting to many people at once.

---

7   Pew Research Center, 2019. https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/04/10/share-of-u-s-adults-using-social-media-including-facebook-is-mostly-unchanged-since-2018/

A NOTE ABOUT MANAGING SOCIAL MEDIA

Many organizations and municipalities have limited time and resources to devote to social media management, so a set of protocols, ground rules and expectations around its use should be set early on. Some basic rules to determine early on for governing social media use include whether one person or multiple people will be responsible for sharing content.

It may also be helpful to set specific social media goals before launching campaigns on these websites. In addition to being clear about the broader goals of using social media, such as increasing awareness of climate change in new communities, it can also be helpful to set numerical goals for social media use, such as a target number of posts generated per day or per week. It is also important to actively follow and engage with other users to increase posts' reach. Setting goals for the number of users to follow and posts to like or re-post on a daily or weekly basis can help with this.

Importantly, social media manager(s) should always ensure that 'official' accounts are used to share content, not personal accounts. For municipalities, an archive of each post must be maintained; social media communications fall under the State and local public records laws.

Social media can be planned and scheduled in advance through tools like Hootsuite and Buffer, which can help social media managers be more efficient and deliberate in their postings. (Note: subscriptions to some of these sites may require a paid account, depending on needed features.) Preparing posts ahead of time can also help managers break complex topics into manageable components.

Suggested content for climate change-related information to share on Facebook includes:

- Relevant event information

- Recordings of Board of Selectmen/ Town Council meetings and interviews with local officials (see *Recorded Interviews* below), or other short videos on climate change-related topics

- Public service announcements about ways residents can reduce their household climate change impacts, such as reducing vehicle use or recycling

- Educational materials and news articles

- Sign-up opportunities for e-newsletters

The goal for Facebook should be to encourage followers to engage with the content, through liking, commenting, or reposting it to their personal page or within interested groups. This engagement grows the potential audience and amplifies the message. The key to gaining a following on Facebook is to post content consistently, at least once a week. It is also important to include photos and videos whenever possible, as visuals are shown to increase engagement.

Communicators that engage with people on Facebook need to be cautioned against users that are deliberately disruptive, however. Having set responses in place (e.g., the *Talking Points*) is helpful, but some users are set on acting provocatively regardless of the response. Organizations should pre-emptively set guidelines around social media use for both Page Managers and Followers (e.g., no discriminatory or hate speech) that can be enforced if the need arises. Above all, avoid public, emotional arguments with users and adhere to fact-based information in social media engagement.

TWITTER

Twitter is known for its short-content format ("tweets", up to 280 characters per post) and is often considered a source for breaking, up-to-the-minute news updates.[8]

Organizations, businesses, and towns may have an official "Twitter handle" or username. On these social media pages, recommended information includes ways to participate in climate planning and adaptation, linking relevant news articles and educational information, and sharing engaging visuals that connect climate change and Cape Cod. Twitter and Facebook accounts can also be linked such that content shared on Facebook can be automatically shared to Twitter.

Twitter followers generally engage more readily with posts that have associated multimedia – links, photos, infographics, or videos.

INSTAGRAM

Instagram is an image-driven social media app where users are focused on sharing high-quality photos and videos. There are two main components to Instagram – the Instagram Feed and Instagram Stories. The Instagram Feed is the primary focus of the app, and is the space where users scroll to see photos and videos posted by accounts they follow. Instagram Stories are designed to be quick, casual videos that disappear within 24 hours—however, it is also possible to save a selection of Stories to the Instagram profile page for long-term access. Users typically access Stories of the accounts that they follow at the top of their Instagram Feed.

---

8   American Press Institute, 2015. https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/publications/reports/survey-research/how-people-use-twitter-in-general/

While much of the same content posted on Facebook and Twitter can be repurposed for Instagram, it is important to remember that the aesthetics are the most important component of Instagram posts. It is recommended to use filters and other tools to enhance images and video. Instagram users typically only post 1-2 images or videos to their account per day, but additional content can be included using the Stories function. Instagram can also be linked to Facebook, Twitter, and other platforms for helpful cross-promotion across platforms.

LINKEDIN

LinkedIn is a site primarily used by professionals to build their networks and follow organizations that they are interested in. An organization or government agency may create a LinkedIn page and use it in a similar way as a Facebook page, but to reach more targeted, professional audiences. Audiences on LinkedIn may use this platform to keep up-to-date on news and trends in their sector, which could make it an appropriate site to communicate sector-specific messages about climate change.

SNAPCHAT

Snapchat is a mobile-only app that allows users to share photos and videos that automatically disappear within 24 hours. Like Instagram, Snapchat is most focused on visual content, and tends to be used by a younger demographic (about 82% of users are under age 34). Compared to more traditional platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, Snapchat was designed to be a more casual social media app, and users may respond better to content that is delivered in a more informal tone. This platform may be an especially useful tool for promoting events, challenges, fundraisers, or other interactive aspects of a campaign.

TIKTOK

TikTok is an app based on sharing short videos that usually include music, filters, and other effects. Somewhat similar to Instagram and Snapchat, TikTok is the newest social media platform on this list and has gained widespread popularity with younger audiences aged 16-24 in particular.[9] TikTok's audience is continuing to grow rapidly around the world, and the app was the most downloaded on Apple's App Store worldwide for Q1 2019 with more than 33 million installs,[10] followed by YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Facebook Messenger. Like Snapchat, the tone used on this platform is typically less formal than on older social media sites.

WHATSAPP

WhatsApp is a free mobile app that uses a phone's internet connection to let someone chat with other WhatsApp users, without SMS text message charges. The app also lets users share files and images, and supports free voice and video calls without a mobile network provider. Many communities around the world use Whatsapp as their primary communication platform, and the app has 1.5 billion monthly active users.[11]

9   Beer, Chris. January 3, 2019. GlobalWebIndex: https://blog.globalwebindex.com/trends/tiktok-music-social-media/
10   Briskman, Jonathan. May 15, 2019. SensorTower: https://sensortower.com/blog/top-apps-worldwide-q1-2019-downloads
11   Constine, Josh. January 31, 2018. TechCrunch: https://techcrunch.com/2018/01/31/whatsapp-hits-1-5-billion-monthly-users-19b-not-so-bad/

Organizations can think of using Whatsapp as akin to using an email newsletter, but in text form. Instead of collecting subscribers' email addresses, organizations instead collect phone numbers to build a broadcast list within Whatsapp. Organizations are then able to efficiently send text messages, images, and other files to that broadcast list that appear as a normal one-on-one message (similar to the BCC function in an email). Whatsapp has also launched a free Business App with small business owners in mind that allows businesses and organizations to interact with customers using tools to automate, sort, and quickly respond to messages.

REDDIT

Reddit is an online forum on which users discuss an enormous range of topics. Reddit is divided into sub-communities, or subreddits, based on topic area. Any user can create or contribute to a subreddit, and a user may also choose to 'join' a subreddit to follow updates regularly. There is currently a subreddit dedicated to Cape Cod (r/CapeCod) which has 7.1 thousand subscribed members.

One popular way that many organizations and brands interact with the reddit community is to host an "Ask Me Anything" (AMA) session on the platform, which functions as a crowdsourced interview. The AMA channel is one of the most visited on Reddit and hosting an AMA session provides an opportunity to reach a large audience by answering questions about topic expertise or services in real time. These sessions take place at a specific time on the AMA subreddit (r/AMA), and anyone can host one at any time. One key to a successful AMA is to publicize the event to the intended audiences beforehand. There are also detailed instructions and tips on how to conduct an Ask Me Anything provided by Reddit.

PINTEREST

Pinterest is an image-based social media site where people collect and share images. Users can search for, organize, and share images and videos from around the internet, which makes Pinterest one of the largest search engines for visual content to use in communications campaigns as well. On Pinterest, users organize their content into boards called Pinboards, and can name and customize the Pinboards. Users also have the option to keep boards private or publicly accessible.

A NOTE ABOUT HASHTAGS

Hashtags are keywords or phrases that make it easy for users to find relevant content by placing content into searchable, relevant categories. Hashtags can be used across social media sites, and posts can use more than one hashtag. Communicators could choose a hashtag to associate with their climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts, so that all relevant content can be linked and easily found by clicking on the hashtag. There are no set rules to creating one, but useful ones are generally short, unique to the topic, and easy to remember.

Media Outreach

Communicators should regularly engage with the local and regional media outlets to share newsworthy information related to climate change on Cape Cod. Newsworthy information may include local success stories of climate adaptation, relevant legislation, as well as visible and less visible impacts that climate change is having on Cape Cod, and more.

Communicators can write press releases, op-ed pieces, and letters to the editor related to climate change adaptation and mitigation, including pilot projects, grants awarded, and important legislation or research. Media coverage will likely be the primary source for residents and voters to learn about local climate action. Ensure educational materials and source material, such as the Climate Action Plan are linked wherever relevant. Communicators should also track relevant media coverage to appropriately respond to any misinformation in a timely manner.

Some of the main media outlets on Cape Cod include:

- **Local newspapers:** Cape Cod Times, Wicked Local Eastham, The Cape Codder, Cape Cod Chronicle, Provincetown Independent, Barnstable Patriot

- **Local broadcasters**: WFCC, WQRC, Cape Country 104, Ocean 103, CapeCod.com, WCAI – Cape Cod NPR Radio, iHeart Radio – WXTK, WCOD, WCIB

- **Public Access Television**: Lower Cape TV, Cape Cod Media Center, Falmouth Community Television, Sandwich Community Television, Mashpee Community Television, Bourne Community Television, Provincetown Community Television

- **Local magazines and online publications**: Cape and Plymouth Business Communicators

Interactive Maps

One way to share place-based information is to develop and share interactive map-based webpages and applications, such as Esri Story Maps. Story Maps can have various levels of complexity. Communicators and other users are able to add geo-tagged links, pictures, and videos to a map that people can access independently online, or that organizations can use in a presentation. Stakeholders can also be invited to contribute pictures and text to the Story Map, which can be a constructive way to collaborate with and collect feedback from the community.

Communicators can use this platform to crowdsource stories of how climate change has affected and continues to affect Cape Cod. These maps can also be used to share case studies and pictures of adaptation and mitigation efforts throughout the region, so stakeholders can learn from one another's efforts.

To create a Story Map, an organization will first need to create an ArcGIS Online account to develop and share the project. Then, choose an application template that fits the project needs (for example, some use

scroll-through text with few pictures, others share pictures with shorter captions). Each template provides a tutorial and best-use description that explain how to add content.

The following links provide additional resources and guidance on creating ESRI Story Maps:

- About Story Maps: https://www.esri.com/en-us/arcgis/products/arcgis-storymaps/overview

- Story Map resources: https://www.esri.com/en-us/arcgis/products/arcgis-storymaps/resources

- Story Map templates: https://storymaps.arcgis.com/en/app-list/

- Story Map Best Practices: https://blogs.esri.com/esri/arcgis/2016/10/11/10-essential-steps-story-map-success

- and https://www.esri.com/arcgis-blog/products/story-maps/sharing-collaboration/best-practices-for-embedding-apps-and-web-content-in-story-maps/

RESILIENT CAPE COD STORYMAP

As part of its Resilient Cape Cod effort, Commission staff created and crowdsourced information for a Story Map that catalogues climate change impacts in the region. This simple application collected over 50 entries from community members engaged in the Resilient Cape Cod project. Stakeholders, friends, family, and staff all contributed photos that reflected coastal hazards across the region. The Story Map remains active and has been shared as a resource illustrating the impacts of erosion, flooding, and sea level rise. In this way the StoryMap combines map-based data with impactful visuals. It was also integrated as part of a more complex Story Map that included case studies of coastal impacts, 3D map elements and applications previously developed by the Commission.
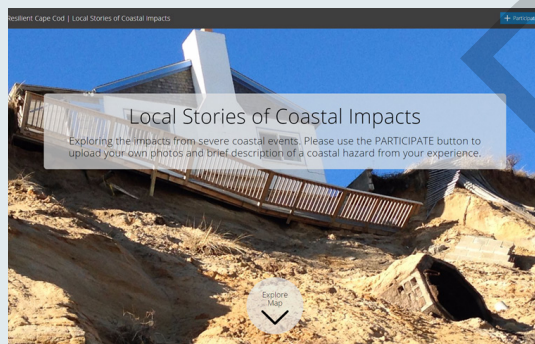
The local Stories of Coastal Impacts Story Map allowed users to upload their own images of coastal hazards
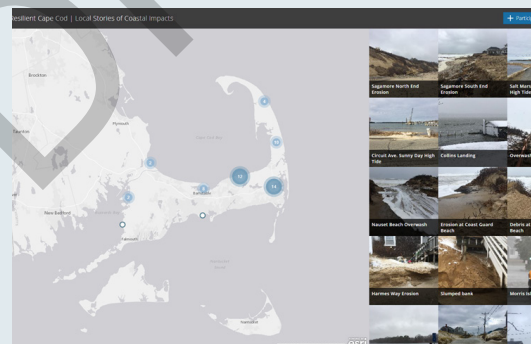
The Story Map allows viewers to zoom to any area and filter the images based on location
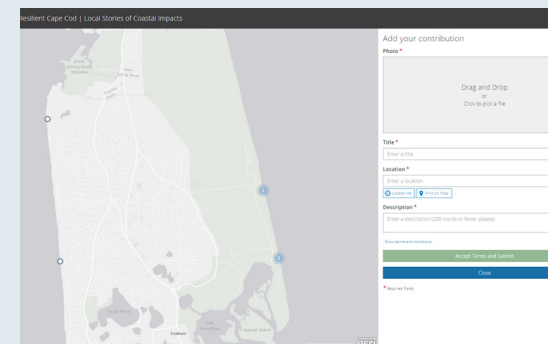
A simple interface allows users to upload their photos and type a location or drop a pin on a map to add coordinates

Recorded Interviews and podcasts

Communicators can interview climate change experts and leaders for distribution through multiple channels. If in-house capacity is unavailable, leverage community media centers and local cable access television channels in the production of recorded interviews, which can be cross-posted to websites, social media, newsletters, and to other media outlets.

The Town of Sandwich worked with the Commission to create an outreach plan to support implementation and funding of their local comprehensive water resource management plan (CWRMP). The Town created an engaging series of YouTube videos on their CWRMP as part of their communications plan, covering topics like "What is the CWRMP?", "Why do we need to do something?", and "How much will it cost the average taxpayer?" The videos can be viewed on the Town's YouTube channel and website.

CAPE COD CLIMATE ACTION PODCAST

The Cape Cod Commission's "Cape Cod Climate Action Podcast" series highlights efforts of the agency and its community partners working together to build resiliency against climate change, covering topics including data and climate projections, regional greenhouse gas emissions, climate policy, efforts to promote renewable energy options, and expansion of transportation options, including more widespread use of electric vehicles. The podcast can be found on the Cape Cod Commission's website.

Public Presentations

Engaging presentations can educate stakeholders about climate change impacts, planning, adaptation, and mitigation. Public presentations are an important part of increasing transparency, raising awareness, and growing grassroots support for climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts. During times when in-person gathering is not feasible, virtual presentations and webinars are a great way to connect with audiences virtually.

Begin each presentation with an overview of the meeting goals and desired takeaways – include intended lessons learned both for and from the audience.

Tips for discussing climate change in public presentations:

- Review the problem, including the sources and impacts of greenhouse gas emissions
- Review local and regional climate change planning efforts

- Discuss why taking action now is imperative
- Solicit feedback on barriers to implementing change, including financial
- Share opportunities for action on climate change planning efforts, especially potential individual actions that can be taken

Promote public presentations through available social media channels, website, a press release, and e-newsletters.

Digital and printed Handouts

Short, one- or two-page overviews can answer frequently asked questions, point stakeholders to more information (e.g., on the website, the e-newsletter, and the Climate Action Plan), and invite them to attend relevant events. These materials could also describe the problem, proposed solutions, and how they can participate (at home or through voting). When printed and distributed, these handouts can be a way to reach people who may have limited access to or skill with digital tools.

Online Surveys

Organizations and communities can conduct online surveys to gauge stakeholder reactions and feedback. They can be conducted formally, gathering a statistically significant subset of the population, or informally, which can give quick snapshots of knowledge levels and opinions. Informal surveys should not be extrapolated to larger groups or used in policy-making contexts.[12]

Surveys can be used ad hoc and as needed to collect information from stakeholders (e.g., during or after a presentation), or they can be used to identify issues, objections, and support for climate action. There are many options for creating surveys online; two common websites are Survey Monkey and Google Forms (see *Resources* below).

---

12   Statistical significance is an important indicator that would indicate whether one has captured results that characterize the broader population, or if the "result is likely due to chance or to some factor of interest." More information: https://hbr.org/2016/02/a-refresher-on-statistical-significance
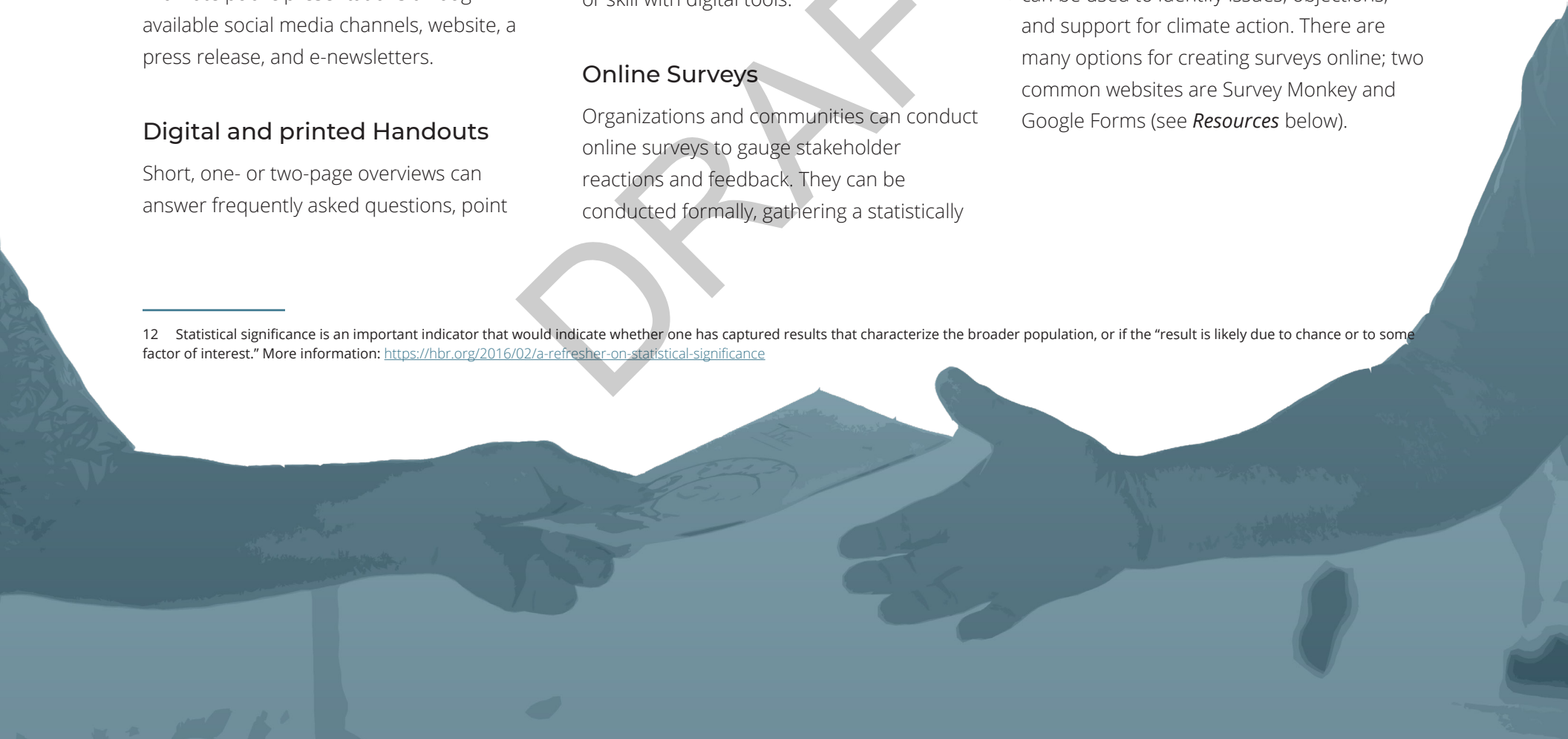
PUBLIC ART

Public art installations can be a powerful tool to help communities visualize the impacts of climate change. When placed in popular public spaces, public art can also be an effective way to reach audiences that may otherwise not have received or engaged with digital or other written content about climate change. Public art comes in many forms and can be either temporary or permanent, and projects can be adjusted to fit various budgets.

A public art installation created by University of Massachusetts Amherst artist and landscape architect Carolina Aragón visualized predictions for future flood levels along the Boston Harborwalk. The project used low-cost materials such as lobster traps and aluminum and involved collaborations with UMass Amherst students.

FUTURESHORELINE, A PUBLIC ART INSTALLATION VISUALIZED SEA LEVEL RISE

Landscape Architect Carolina Aragón collaborated with students at UMass Amherst to create the public artwork FutureSHORELINE in Boston's Fort Point Channel. FUTURE Shoreline is a temporary water and land-based art installation that shows the projected flooding for that area of Fort Point due to sea level rise. Based on scientific projections from the Massachusetts Coast Flood Risk Model (MC-FRM), the various colors and levels seen in the floating sculpture visualizes expected water levels for the 1% annual chance flood for 2030, 2050, and 2070, while the structures on land suggest the height of the proposed berm to protect the coast. Photo credit: Matt Conti.

DECIDING ON A COMMUNICATIONS PLATFORM

The following table summarizes the benefits of the suggested communications platforms above, and highlights considerations that may influence whether an organization chooses to integrate it into their communications efforts.

Next to each platform name are a series of symbols used to indicate the platform's relative financial cost, audience reach, scheduling considerations, and level of effort required. Below are descriptions of each category of symbols and the way the symbols are used in the summary chart of communications platforms. Depending on the user, each communications platform included in this list may be leveraged in various ways, which will affect the cost, reach, timing, and effort needed. For this reason, the symbols assigned to each platform represent estimates of these considerations.

$ Financial Cost

On a scale of zero to three, the dollar signs represent the relative cost of using each communications platform. Each platform is assigned a range rather than a fixed symbol because there are typically decisions the user can make when using the platform that will influence the final cost. For example, when building a website, one can typically choose a platform that has pre-made templates for no cost or decide to customize the website for a higher fee.

Audience Reach

Each platform is assigned a symbol based on whether the reach is typically targeted, like an e-newsletter that requires email addresses, or community-wide, like social media that is publicly accessible. Platforms that target audiences more specifically have the red target symbol, while platforms that are more widely accessible have the icon that shows a group of people. There are a few platforms that could either be targeted or accessible to the community depending on user decisions, and in these cases both icons are shown.

Scheduling Considerations

For this category, each platform is assigned a symbol to indicate whether the platform requires ongoing effort over an indefinite period, like social media, or is typically scheduled for a specific date and time, like a presentation. Note that even platforms that are not ongoing can be used repeatedly over time, but the length of time between each use is typically longer than with a platform that requires ongoing effort. The two arrows that form a circle represent ongoing effort, and the calendar with a checkmark represents a specifically scheduled communication.

Level of Effort

The dial indicates the relative level of effort it would take to leverage each platform effectively. The dial is segmented into five colors on a spectrum from green to red, with green representing the lowest level of effort and red representing the highest level of effort. The relative level of effort for each platform was decided by taking into account both the time and/or human resources it would take to develop and leverage, as well as any specialty technical skills that would be necessary for its use.

PLATFORM BENEFITS AND CONSIDERATIONS

	FINANCIAL COST	AUDIENCE REACH	SCHEDULING	LEVEL OF EFFORT

WEBSITE

Benefits: A one-stop resource; Can support access to other resources, such as social media, newsletters, etc.

Considerations: Requires human and financial resources to keep updated

$-$$$

E-NEWSLETTER

Benefits: Highly targeted; Low cost; Easy to track metrics such as open rates and click throughs

Considerations: Requires a quality mailing list; Requires human resources to create high quality, informative, consistent content

$-$

SOCIAL MEDIA

Benefits: Low cost, Easy to track metrics through engagement, shares, follows, etc., Organic growth and advertising

Considerations: Requires human resources to frequently monitor and update channels; Requires high-level of planning to be effective; Must be open to feedback and interaction

$-$

MEDIA OUTREACH

Benefits: Media publications lend influence and credibility; Easy to tack metrics through circulation numbers

Considerations: The final message is in the publication's control; There is no guaranteed outcome for time and work input

$

INTERACTIVE MAPS

Benefits: Allows for community collaboration; Visual/spatial content may be more engaging for some audiences

Considerations: Requires human resources to create and manage maps; Requires wider strategy to drive audiences to interact

$-$$

Legend:

$ — The relative amount of money each platform typically costs on a scale of 0 to 3

— Outreach that targets specific entities or groups

— Outreach that is accessible to the general public

— Outreach that requires ongoing effort to maintain

— Outreach that is scheduled for a specific date and time, does not need to be ongoing

— A dial that indicates the relative amount of effort needed to successfully use a given platform, on a scale of 1 to 5

PLATFORM BENEFITS AND CONSIDERATIONS

	FINANCIAL COST	AUDIENCE REACH	SCHEDULING	LEVEL OF EFFORT

RECORDED INTERVIEWS AND PODCASTS

Benefits: Ability to control message; Accessible to visually impaired people; Opportunity to communicate with more emotion

Considerations: Requires wider strategy to drive audiences to listen; Requires technical skills to create and edit content

$-$

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

Benefits: Opportunities for small group and one-on-one engagement

Considerations: Requires wider strategy to drive audiences attend; Requires skilled human resources to create and present content

$-$

DIGITAL AND PRINTED HANDOUTS

Benefits: Low cost; Simple to create; Effective way to summarize and spread information about other efforts; Can reach people who are harder to reach

Considerations: For printed handouts, consider sustainability and whether print is necessary to increase reach

$-$$

ONLINE SURVEYS

Benefits: Allows for community engagement and feedback; Can be used for research and evaluation that informs future communications efforts

Considerations: Requires wider strategy to drive people to the survey; Depending on goals, can require highly skilled human resources, or can be more informal

$-$

PUBLIC ART

Benefits: Can reach people who are harder to reach; Can be more engaging for some audiences

Considerations: Requires diverse skillsets; Can require moderate to high financial investment

$$-$$$

$ *The relative amount of money each platform typically costs on a scale of 0 to 3*

🎯 *Outreach that targets specific entities or groups*

👥 *Outreach that is accessible to the general public*

🔄 *Outreach that requires ongoing effort to maintain*

📅 *Outreach that is scheduled for a specific date and time, does not need to be ongoing*

A dial that indicates the relative amount of effort needed to successfully use a given platform, on a scale of 1 to 5

5. DETERMINING MILESTONES AND TIMELINE

An effective communications strategy will include major milestones that connect to an organization's goals and help to guide the strategic timing of communications work. Additionally, an organization's communications plan should also include a timeline that outlines when to implement and complete each tactic. These milestones can include external considerations, such as the timing of a Town Meeting, or they can be generated internally to connect with specific climate action campaign goals, such as the launch of a partnership, an event, or a target date for a climate action achievement.

Here are some suggestions for key milestones to include in a timeline:

- Town Meetings or Town Council Meetings

- Stakeholder engagement events or initiatives

- Local climate change initiatives and activities produced by others

- Key partnerships to accelerate climate action

- Climate change mitigation and resilience targets

- Sector or issue-specific campaign launches

In addition to milestones, an organization's communications plan should also include a timeline that outlines when to implement and complete each tactic. Setting key milestones first can help to build out more detailed timelines to support each milestone.

In past communications planning efforts, the Commission has helped to set the timing and pace of the strategy based on the intended output. For the Town of Sandwich, for example, the wastewater communications plan was intended to support a spring Town Meeting vote. In that case, Commission staff used the date of Town Meeting to work backwards and set periodic milestones to help move the effort forwards.

Additionally, considerations for available resources must be made. For example, will the communications strategy be implemented by full-time staff? Or will it be a volunteer effort? Is it the main focus of one person's work, or is it dispersed among a team? Depending on the answers to these questions, consider condensing or extending a timeline to create realistic expectations.

Finally, be sure to explicitly include timelines for conducting follow up communications. Audiences typically require repeated outreach for a message or request to sink in. In some cases, and if resources allow, contacting stakeholders one-by-one may significantly increase the effectiveness of an organization's outreach efforts. For example, before an event, reaching out to people who have RSVP'd—or those who have yet to RSVP—can help to increase attendance. Though it is also important not to inundate people with communication, strategic follow-up efforts at key points during campaigns can build stronger relationships, leading to sustained support.

6. DEFINING AND MEASURING SUCCESS

The individuals and/or entities responsible for implementing the communications plan framework should compare the goals and objectives set in step one to the outcomes throughout the plan's implementation. By evaluating the effectiveness of messaging and communications strategies periodically, staff can adapt and adjust their techniques and messaging, goals, and objectives as needed.

EVALUATING COMMUNICATIONS EFFORTS

Communications campaigns of all types and sizes benefit from evaluation. Measuring and evaluating communications efforts is not only crucial to understand the strengths and weaknesses of a communications approach, but also vital to the success of an organization's communications plan overall. Only by putting effort into evaluations of campaigns will communicators be able to understand whether campaigns have been effective, which will help to hone communications plans and efforts moving forward.

Measuring Progress

A campaign's goals should directly determine the metrics of success. It is necessary to set targets and goals before the campaign begins to measure whether the campaign successfully reached those goals. Setting expectations from the outset can avoid a lack of clarity around whether a campaign achieved positive results and the outcomes will demonstrate the value of an organization's investment in the campaign.

The following questions can help set campaign goals and expectations:

- What is your measure of success?

- How will you measure it?

- What stakeholders are you targeting?

- What are you asking of them?

Adjusting Communications Goals

After setting targets and measuring outcomes, communicators will then need to evaluate the success and assess how well they are connecting with intended audiences. Some examples of questions to ask in the evaluation stage include the following:

- Are you reaching the stakeholders and communities you are targeting?

- Are people engaging with your communications efforts? How are they reacting to your messages?

- What did audiences do with the information they received?

- How many people have you reached?

- Which demographics are you reaching? Which demographics are you not reaching?

- Are your audiences growing?

- Are you changing beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors around climate change? How is this being demonstrated?

If the campaign did not achieve the desired results, the next step will then be to assess the reasons why. A few common reasons that campaigns fall short of their goals include a lack of time or money, targeting the wrong stakeholders, or having a mismatch between outreach strategies and audience segments, and external factors beyond an organization's control.

A clear understanding of what went wrong can be turned into learnings that will make the next communications campaign more efficient and effective. If using digital measurement tools, it may not even be necessary to wait until a campaign is over to make adjustments that can improve the course of the campaign while it is still active. If evaluating a campaign once it is over, be sure to document it thoroughly so that findings can be referenced when setting goals and strategies for the next campaign.

Tools for Monitoring and Evaluation

SURVEYS

One potential evaluation tool is conducting a stakeholder survey to gauge changing awareness on climate change issues. Communicators can issue one or more surveys to determine the baseline of knowledge and attitudes about a particular topic; future surveys can indicate any changes to level of knowledge or rate of implementation.

Commission staff conducted a regionwide survey as part of the Climate Action Plan process to determine a baseline for public attitudes about climate change and receptiveness to and support for various adaptation and mitigation actions. With this baseline in place, measurement and evaluation later on could provide a more accurate reading of how effective various efforts were at raising awareness and motivating behavioral change. Surveys can also be used to better understand an audiences' preferences for communications

and help to make decisions on what tools and methods to use in the future.

GOOGLE ANALYTICS

Google Analytics is a free web analytics service that provides detailed insight into visitors to an organization's website. This tool is most useful when posting climate action related content to a primary website, and then using a variety of outreach strategies to drive people to the webpage. Google Analytics provides details such as the audience demographics, which channels are driving the most traffic to the webpage, how long people are engaging with content, and more. The data can be viewed in various graphic formats, and help to understand which strategies are working, and whether a campaign is meeting communications goals. Google also provides free resources to better understand the tools and improve evaluation efforts through Google Analytics Academy.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media websites provide information and data points on engagement with content. To understand the effectiveness of online engagement, it may be useful to track simple metrics such as the number of followers, the number of "impressions" on social media posts (number of people who have seen content), and the number of e-newsletter subscribers or website visitors. These numbers can be compared at the beginning, middle, and end of the communications plan to evaluate audience growth, and track how audience interest levels in climate change-related topics have changed over time.

MEDIA MONITORING

Outreach strategies that focus on publishing articles in outlets such as newspapers, newsletters, and blogs can be measured based on the number of people those publications are reaching. The circulation numbers for a variety of newspapers and other high-visibility publications can often be found through a Google search. Sometimes these statistics will be locked behind a paywall, but the advertising department of most publications will typically provide them upon inquiry. If sending out a newsletter or publishing a blog, platforms such as MailChimp and Wordpress will provide data on the number of subscribers, views, and more. Finally, if an op-ed or news article is published in an outlet with high circulation, often other writers and bloggers will re-post the article on their own site. Be sure to search for the title of the article to track all media hits.

EVENTS

If organizing events as part of a climate communications plan, there are variety of ways to measure the success of a given event. Tools such as Eventbrite can help advertise an event and keep track of the number of views an event advertisement has, the number of RSVPs, and the final number of attendees. During or following the event, it can be useful to understand how the attendees' experience was. Audience polling tools (such as Mentimeter or AhaSlides) can be used to take the audience's temperature at various points throughout the event using surveys, polls, and more, while Survey Monkey is a popular free tool one can use to get feedback on the attendees' experience afterwards.

Resources

The following resources have been compiled from a variety of sources, including recommendations from the Climate Action Plan's stakeholder engagement process and Commission staff's field scan of climate communications resources. The resources included here are meant to support different aspects of communications planning efforts, from finding visuals to use for campaigns, to deciding which method of evaluation to use. Resources for educators and community leaders in search of tools to help students or other audiences learn more about climate related issues are also included.

CAPE COD COMMISSION RESOURCES

As part of the development of the regional Climate Action Plan, the Commission developed several resources that the public can leverage in their communications framework.

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS INVENTORY

Commission staff developed a greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory in 2020, which provides a better understanding of the sources of carbon emissions, which will help the region to set policies to reduce GHG emissions.

The inventory estimates emissions from activities inside Barnstable County and certain activities outside the county from the following sectors:

- Stationary energy (buildings)
- Transportation
- Waste
- Industrial processes and product use
- Agriculture
- Land Use and Forestry

Gases inventoried include carbon dioxide (CO_2); methane (CH_4); nitrous oxide (N_2O); and fluorinated gases: hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), sulfur hexafluoride (SF_6). Barnstable County-specific data and methods were used where possible and appropriate. The inventory also considers seasonality in emissions where appropriate and feasible.
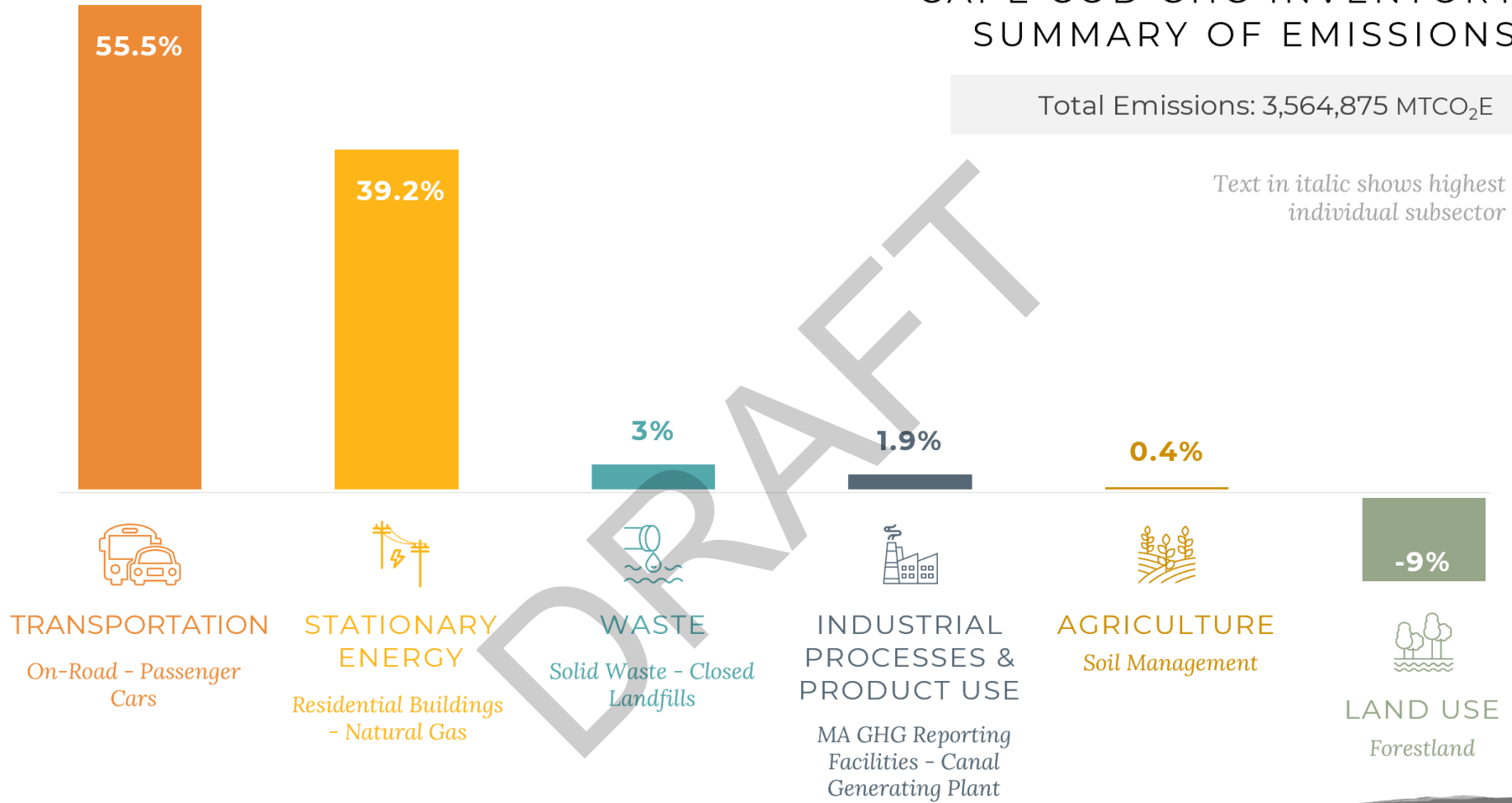
Communicators can use this information to provide region-specific data points on the sources of greenhouse gases that cause climate change.

More information and a final report are available on the GHG emissions webpage.

CAPE COD GHG INVENTORY SUMMARY OF EMISSIONS

Total Emissions: 3,564,875 MTCO$_2$E

Text in italic shows highest individual subsector

55.5%

39.2%

3%

1.9%

0.4%

-9%

TRANSPORTATION

On-Road - Passenger Cars

STATIONARY ENERGY

Residential Buildings - Natural Gas

WASTE

Solid Waste - Closed Landfills

INDUSTRIAL PROCESSES & PRODUCT USE

MA GHG Reporting Facilities - Canal Generating Plant

AGRICULTURE

Soil Management

LAND USE

Forestland

Together, transportation and stationary energy account for nearly 95% of the region's greenhouse gas emissions.

ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATION ANALYSIS

Because transportation has such an outsized impact on GHG emissions, Commission staff conducted a GIS analysis to support expanding the Cape's electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure. EV charging stations can be found at a variety of locations on Cape Cod, including shopping centers, grocery stores, recreation centers, restaurants, hotels, and resorts. Going forward, general recommendations for siting future charging stations include the installation of publicly available, higher-voltage (Level 2) chargers that can provide charging on the go for residents and visitors along major roads, as well as integratIng opportunities to charge EVs at workplaces. The Commission's analysis considers locations that can support future EV charging stations: Community Activity Centers, areas of business density, large parking lots, and other community activities sites. See the Siting EV Stations StoryMap for more information.

Potential EV Charging Station Locations
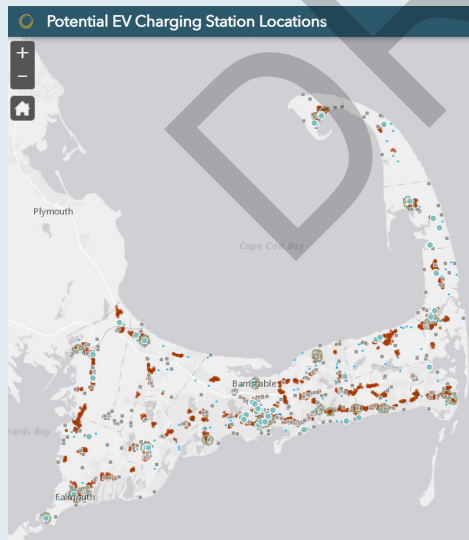
SOLAR SCREENING TOOL

The Commission developed a web-based solar screening tool that will help guide large-scale photovoltaic projects toward appropriate areas and away from important conservation areas. The tool considers both built and natural environments to identify areas appropriate for solar development. It is designed for use by anyone interested in developing or reviewing large-scale solar facilities and can be used as a resource for those interested increasing the use of renewable energy in Barnstable County. More information and a link to the tool are available on the Solar Screening Tool webpage.

Large-Scale Solar Screening Tool — a Cape Cod Commission application
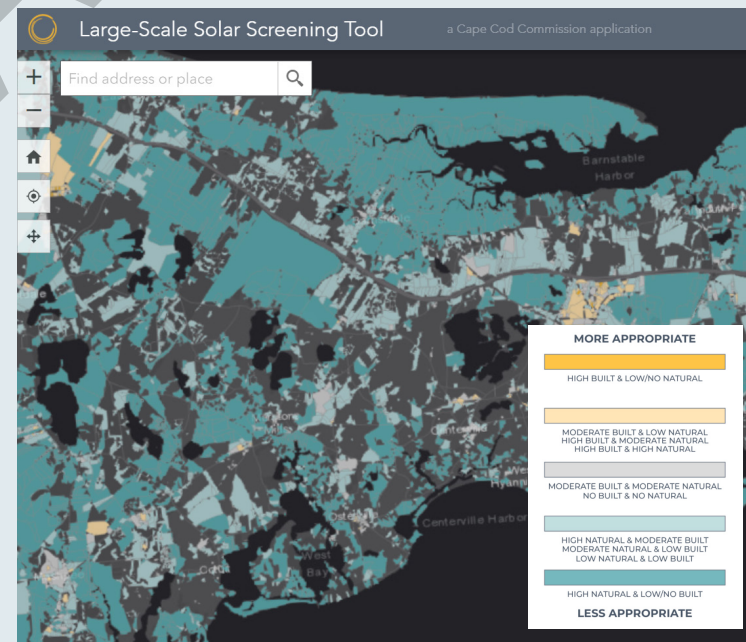
CLIMATE CHANGE ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

The Commission engaged Eastern Research Group, Inc. and Synapse Energy Economics for a study on the economic impacts of climate change to Cape Cod. Their report puts climate risks – and options to address those risks – into a monetary context to inform policy decisions. ERG and Synapse assessed the impacts climate change may have on the region's economy, revenues, and investment decisions and evaluated the costs and benefits of key strategies identified in the Climate Action Plan. Climate change communicators can leverage the content of this report to make effective economic arguments for taking action against climate change in the region, such as encouraging transportation electrification or reducing impacts from flooding to protect property values and the tourism industry.

The report, Economic Impacts of Climate Change on Cape Cod, was released with the Climate Action Plan in Spring 2021.

STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH MATERIALS

Stakeholder input was an essential component of the Climate Action Plan from the beginning. Stakeholders helped identify strategies and develop an action plan to address the critical challenges posed by climate change on Cape Cod. Four working groups provided feedback in the topic areas of transportation, housing and development, natural resources and working lands, and energy. A fifth group was eventually added, a

Communications and Education Stakeholder Working Group, to provide guidance on this Climate Communications Framework. Additionally, there were four subregional municipal meetings that helped the Commission better understand local goals, capacity, and needs relative to climate action.

More information and links to stakeholder outreach materials, including presentations and meeting summaries, are available on the Stakeholder Outreach meetings webpage.

TIMELINE OF CLIMATE ACTIONS

Stakeholders also contributed to the development of a Climate Change Action Timeline, which highlights the organizations, reports, and events that have helped advance the understanding of climate change causes and effects, and action taken to mitigate and adapt to its impacts. The timeline documents local and regional efforts, and should be used by communicators as a tool to access resources and information and provide context for climate planning within the region.
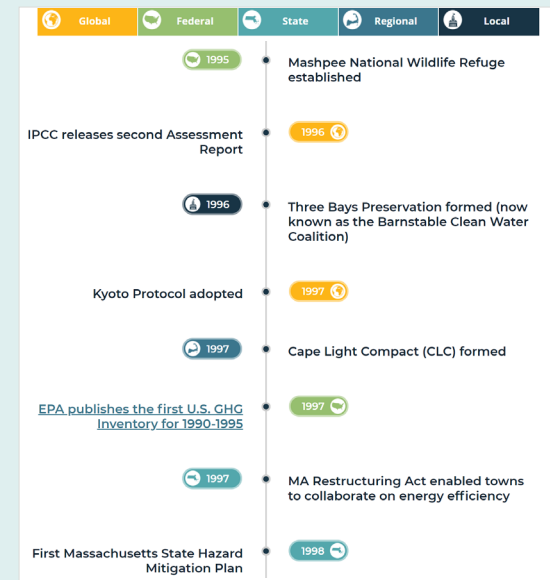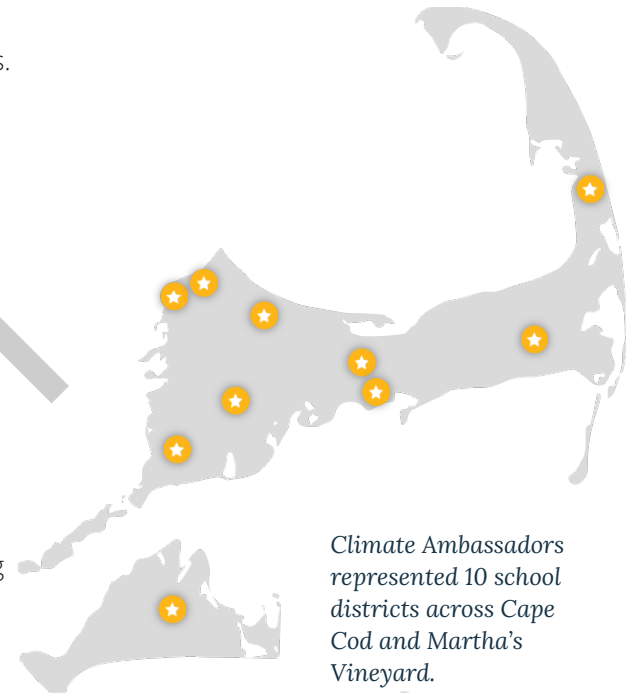
Climate Ambassador Program

Young stakeholders raised their voices early during the Climate Initiative, indicating that they felt strongly about climate change and wanted to be part of the process; and that to date they felt it was difficult to make their voices heard. The Commission took steps to try to make the planning process more accessible to youth. Hearing that young people often look to their peers as trusted sources of information, the Commission developed the Climate Ambassador Program as a means to educate and engage youth and build a network for information-sharing. Following a call for students, a group of 18 high school students from districts across Cape Cod and Martha's Vineyard were selected to participate in the eight-week program.

Throughout the Program, students learned about global and local climate causes and impacts, climate policy and advocacy, climate change communications, equity considerations, and workforce opportunities. Each participant worked on a student-led project, either on their own or in a small group, and had an opportunity to present their work.

The initial call for participants generated far more interest than could meaningfully be accommodated and the 18 students that have participated in the program have expressed positive feedback. With the demand for and success of the program to date, the Commission anticipates continuing the Climate Ambassador Program in the future, working with additional groups of students.

More information on the **Climate Ambassadors Program** is available on the Commission website.

Climate Ambassadors represented 10 school districts across Cape Cod and Martha's Vineyard.

Communicators can leverage meeting materials, presentation slides, and Climate Ambassadors Program materials to structure or expand content for their own outreach efforts.

CLIMATE CHANGE SURVEY

The Cape Cod Commission worked with the UMass Donahue Institute and the Center for Public Opinion at UMass Lowell to develop and administer a Climate Action Plan Survey of Barnstable County residents. This survey was designed to understand Cape Cod residents' views on climate change, its impact on the region, and potential policy interventions. A total of 719 surveys were completed between November 27, 2020 and January 11, 2021. Full results are available here.

CLIMATE ACTION QUESTIONS RESPONSES

77% somewhat or strongly agree that human behavior plays an important part in climate change.

73%

60%

15%
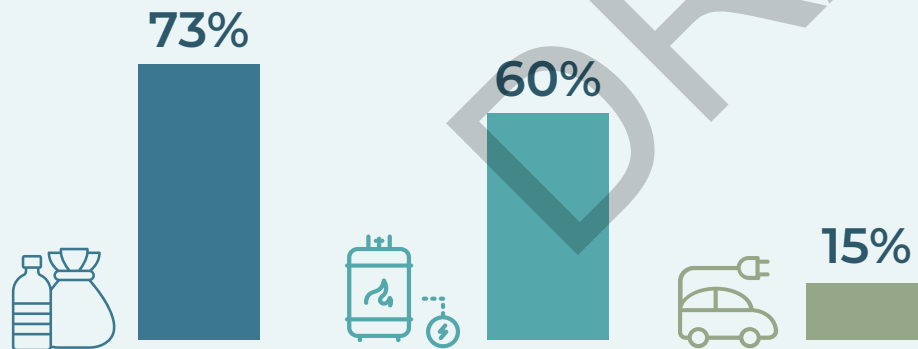
TOP ACTIONS TAKEN TO MITIGATE CLIMATE CHANGE

Respondents indicated that reducing waste and reducing electricity/natural gas consumption were the top two actions already being taken (73% and 60%); 15% currently drive an EV or hybrid vehicle.

TOP 5 BARRIERS TO ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE

Difficulty in changing behavior

69%

Lack of governmental support

57%

Cost of taking action

56%

Lack of public information and education

55%

Lack of business or industry support

52%

RESILIENT CAPE COD RESOURCES

In 2016, NOAA awarded a three-year, $780,000 Regional Coastal Resilience Grant to the Cape Cod Commission and partners to develop a tool and public outreach program to study the environmental and socioeconomic effects of local and regional coastal resiliency strategies. The "Resilient Cape Cod" project focused on the effects of erosion, storm surge, and sea level rise, and resulted in the creation of several resources that climate change communicators can leverage in their work.

The Adaptation Strategies Database is a collection of information on a broad range of 41 "green" and "gray" strategies to address coastal hazards on Cape Cod. The strategies include nature-based solutions, structural solutions, and policy approaches that are classified based on their ability to protect, accommodate, or retreat from the impacts of erosion, storm surge, and sea level rise. Information is available in a full Excel matrix and as simplified fact sheets, as well as integrated into the Coastal Planner tool.

CAPE COD COASTAL PLANNER

Coastal Planner: Commission staff engaged the Timmons Group, Inc., in the development of a decision support tool to communicate the impacts of coastal threats and adaptation strategies, including costs and benefits, and the need for action in a GIS-based, user-driven tool. The Coastal Planner educates users on the climate change hazards impacting Cape Cod's coastline, the adaptation strategies available to address them, and implications for local infrastructure and ecosystems. Communicators can leverage the tool in place-based discussions on climate change impacts. It centralizes coastal hazard planning layers such as FEMA FIRM and projected sea level rise scenarios, and integrates the cost of doing nothing into scenario results. Available at capecodcoast.org.

SEA LEVEL RISE (4') AND DISCONNECTED ROADS

SLOSH LAYERS SHOWING POTENTIAL HURRICANE STORM SURGE FLOODING

SEDIMENT TRANSPORT DIRECTION AND 40 YEAR EROSION IMPACTS

CLIMATE ACTION PODCAST

Commission staff created a Climate Action podcast series to highlight efforts of the agency and its community partners working together to build resiliency against climate change. Topics include data and climate projections; regional greenhouse gas emissions; climate policy; efforts to promote renewable energy options; and expansion of transportation options, including increased use of electric vehicles.

Podcast episodes can be shared via social media, linked on websites, or shared in newsletters as a way to educate and inform community members about important climate-related issues.

The Cape Cod Climate Action Podcast is available on the Commission website.

COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS

This table is a list of communications tools that have been mentioned throughout this document, including social media and website platforms, online tools for virtual engagement and event management, and more.

PURPOSE	WEBSITE LINK
E-newsletter	Mailchimp
Event Management	Eventbrite
Measurement and Evaluation	Google Analytics
Measurement and Evaluation	Google Analytics Academy
Online Survey	Google Forms
Online Survey	Survey Monkey
Social media	Facebook
Social media	Instagram
Social media	LinkedIn
Social media	Pinterest
Social media	Reddit
Social media	Snapchat
Social media	TikTok
Social media	Twitter
Social media	Whatsapp
Social media	YouTube
Story Maps	ArcGIS StoryMaps
Virtual Engagement	AhaSlides
Virtual Engagement	Mentimeter
Virtual Engagement	Resilient MA's virtual engagement toolkit
Website / blog	Squarespace
Website / blog	Wordpress

SELECT METRICS FOR COMMUNICATIONS EVALUATION

This is a select list of metrics that may be helpful to evaluate the reach of communications campaigns. Please note this list is not exhaustive.

PLATFORM	EXAMPLE METRIC
Social Media	Number of followers
Social Media	Number of shares
Social Media	Number of comments
Social Media	Number of likes
Social Media	Number of impressions
Media coverage	Number of hits
Media coverage	Number of readers or listeners
Media coverage	Equivalent of advertising spend
E-newsletter	Number of opens
E-newsletter	Number of click-throughs
E-newsletter	Audience reached by email and partner networks
Partnership	Ambassadors recruited
Event or Presentation	Attendees at events
Website	Website hits and dwell time
Website	Number of downloads of campaign assets

EXAMPLE METRICS FOR CAMPAIGN IMPACT[13]

Below is a list of examples to illustrate metrics that can be used to measure the overall impact of communications campaigns on climate-related behavioral changes in communities.

EXAMPLE METRIC
Adoption of energy efficient measures, or the adoption of renewables
Civic waste reduction and recycling rates
Mobility changes – greater use of mass transit or cycling and walking; electric vehicle purchases
More meat-free meals being eaten
Number of people involved in green conservation activities such as tree planting
Number of people taking part in carbon literacy training
Number of people taking sustainability pledges or volunteering

---

13   The C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group. "The C40 Climate Action Planning Communications Toolkit." 2020: https://bit.ly/30zwFSL

FREE PHOTO BANKS[14]

The following websites provide some photographs at no charge that can be used in communications campaigns.

ORGANIZATION	LINK
Burst	https://burst.shopify.com/
Canva	https://www.canva.com/photos/free/
Climatevisuals	https://climatevisuals.org/
IPCC (Climate Outreach collaboration)	https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/mulitimedia/photo-library/
Pexels	https://www.pexels.com/search/climate%20change/
Picjumbo	https://picjumbo.com/
Picspree	https://picspree.com/es
Pixabay	https://pixabay.com/es/
StockSnap.io	https://stocksnap.io/
Unsplash	https://unsplash.com/

FREE VIDEO BANKS[15]

The following websites provide some videos at no charge that can be used in communications campaigns.

ORGANIZATION	LINK
Clipstill	https://www.clipstill.com/
Coverr	https://coverr.co/
Distill	https://wedistill.io/
Lifeofvids	https://www.lifeofvids.com/
Pexels (video)	https://www.pexels.com/search/climate%20change/
Pixabay (video)	https://pixabay.com/es/videos/
Splitshire	https://www.splitshire.com/category/video/
Videezy	https://es.videezy.com/
Videvo	https://www.videvo.net/

---

14   The C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group. "The C40 Climate Action Planning Communications Toolkit." 2020: https://bit.ly/30zwFSL
15   Ibid.

FREE GRAPHICS BANKS[16]

The following websites provide graphics and other illustrated resources at no charge that can be used in communications campaigns.

ORGANIZATION	LINK
Absurd illustrations	https://absurd.design/
Drawkit	https://www.drawkit.io/#browse-now-button
Freebie	https://freebiesupply.com/
Freepik	https://www.freepik.es/
Flaticon	https://www.flaticon.com/
Humaans	https://www.humaaans.com/
Iradesign	https://iradesign.io/
Manypixels	https://www.manypixels.co/gallery
NonScandinavia	http://www.nonscandinavia.com/
Ouch!	https://icons8.com/illustrations
The Noun Project	https://thenounproject.com/
Vivid	https://webkul.github.io/vivid/

---

16   The C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group. "The C40 Climate Action Planning Communications Toolkit." 2020: https://bit.ly/30zwFSL

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

The following educational resources were identified by members of the Communications Stakeholder Working Group.

EFFORT	INTENDED AUDIENCE	ISSUE AREA
350MA Advocacy Group	General public	Green New Deal, Environmental justice
After Ice app	General public	Sea level rise
Blue Line Project	General public	Sea level rise
Climate Prep Week: (CREW)	General public	Food systems
Climate Resilience Hubs (CREW)	Community leaders	Community Engagement
Expedition BLUE	General public	Blue economy
Food Forest Initiative	General public	Food security/sovereignty, Environmental stewardship
Google Earth	General public	General - climate-related issues
Library Services and Technology Act Grant	Intergenerational	General - climate-related issues
Mass Audubon Summits/Resources	Youth and others	Youth Climate Leadership Program
Massachusetts Climate Education Organization (MCEO)	Educators, students	General - climate-related issues
MEES Conference 2021	Educators	General - climate-related issues
National Network for Ocean and Climate Change Interpretation (NNOCCI)	Climate communicators	Ocean impacts
NOAA Digital Coast	Community leaders	Coastal impacts
NY Times	General public	General - climate-related issues
Pachamama Alliance	General public	General - climate-related issues, Environmental justice
Resilient Roots Cape Cod	General public	Food security/sovereignty, Environmental stewardship
Roger Williams University Fact Sheets	General public	General - climate-related issues
Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve - Bringing Wetlands to Market	Educators	Carbon sequestration, Wetlands
Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve Education Programs	Educators	Water impacts
Yale E360	General public	Sea level rise

This page left blank intentionally

2021 CAPE COD CLIMATE ACTION PLAN COMMUNICATIONS FRAMEWORK
APRIL 2021 DRAFT

DRAFT

CAPE COD COMMISSION

P.O. Box 226 (3225 Main Street),
Barnstable, Massachusetts 02630
Phone: 508-362-3828
Email: frontdesk@capecodcommission.org

www.capecodcommission.org