

## Evidenced-Based Communications and Behavior Change

### **Recommendation 1: Increase and stimulate internal climate action communications across County divisions.**

1. County should host an internal government kick off climate change meeting to elevate the issue and demonstrate it's a county government priority that all agencies should support.
  - a. ALL divisions should participate.  
<https://montgomerycountymd.gov/government/orgchart.html>
2. County should integrate climate change messages throughout the government to change internal behaviors and decisions.
3. Any legislation from county council should align and prioritize the work of the workgroups.
4. Establish an interagency climate change group with leadership from each division and comm leads; meet quarterly.
  - a. Emphasize communication methods with this group.
  - b. Each division share activities and communication strategies.

### **Recommendation 2: Showcase county's climate action activities and commitment via external communications**

1. County should institutionalize a steady drumbeat of outreach from EVERY division.
2. Communicate county's progress in implementing climate action recommendations (Data & Results).
3. Integrate climate change messages into county outreach.
  - a. Bottom of traffic tickets: "Did you know slowing down by 5 miles an hour ..."
  - b. On buses: "Taking public transit rather than driving alone in your car reduces carbon..."
4. Include climate change connection messages when there are emergency events.
  - a. When emergency happens (flooding, storms); issue news release to show the climate change connection is communicated and highlight urgency of action.
5. As county implements emission reducing activities, publicize examples for community.  
Examples:
  - a. Improving building insulation.

- b. Eliminating plastic water bottles at events.

**Recommendation 3: Develop and Use Evidence-based Communication Messages**

1. Based on communication theory and effective practices, create a communication message box of core messages that should be shared in ALL external communications.
2. Create Communication Process flow (slide 19). The process flow will help to determine which recommendations will be highlighted in the campaign and determine:
  - a. Is internal (government) or external (community)?
  - b. Will have immediate and measurable impact (only support and promote activities with immediate carbon reduction impacts)?
  - c. Are there impacts and accounts for disadvantaged and vulnerable populations and provides equitable approaches?
3. Core Messages include: Health, Local, Urgency, Legacy, and Economics. “Your health and our community will benefit from these changes!”
4. Establish additional core messages relevant to each County division.
5. Provide regular trainings on communications research and behavior change related to climate change for government communications officers.

**Recommendation 4: Prioritize communicating climate change solutions that require and benefit most from public stakeholder engagement and support.**

1. Prioritize what benefits most from public engagement (using resources wisely).
2. Use the process flow to determine what actions are promoted in the campaign.

**Recommendation 5: Engage and facilitate action through ongoing external stakeholder actions (meet residents where they are)**

1. Implement broad public relations campaign to encourage stakeholder engagement that supports broader and more significant urgent county changes.
2. Form a standing Climate Change Communication Commission or Committee of Climate Change Ambassadors from the community.
  - a. Create an ambassador model (e.g., trusted messengers) to encourage engagement and behavior changes. Peer-to-peer sharing leads to behavior change.
  - b. Provide compelling and useful tools (e.g., campaign like Green Initiative (GI) or “Healthy Green Community” that would brand everything together).

- i. Create behavior checklist.
  - ii. Give A Shift YouTube:  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCV3GIZazdyO8SIKgDbF5H1Q>
  - c. Include community leaders, ambassadors, and other public figures in outreach efforts.
  - d. Use humor when and where possible.
3. Develop and implement business outreach strategy.
  - a. Good for business
  - b. County “green seal of approval” stickers
4. Develop and implement strategies for various stakeholder groups.
  - a. Health
  - b. Education
  - c. Civic Groups
  - d. Faith-based
  - e. ... and more

**Recommendation 6: Engage community as partners and support their needs so they will take action on a personal level and support Montgomery County activities.**

1. Make the community feel seen, heard, and valued by placing humans and human needs at the center of the communication work.
2. Move away from extracting information from people to inform the plan and bring people in as partners so they contribute to and are a part of the plan.
3. “Implementation partners” could be youth (receiving SSL hours or college credit for their work), faith communities (receiving small grant), etc. – some “compensation” that shows value for time and commitment.
4. What do you need? ... and what climate action will help address that need. (focus on listening rather than telling so that people can see themselves in it).
5. Use the volunteer ambassadors to facilitate the dialogue in neighborhoods.