

THE CITY OF  
**DUBUQUE**  
*Masterpiece on the Mississippi*

Sustainable Dubuque Youth Tactical Plan 18-24

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### **Situational Analysis:**

The current situation in Dubuque's sustainability campaign highlights a general lack of knowledge surrounding Dubuque sustainability. A lack of social media attention could be a contributing factor to this issue. The reduction of greenhouse gas emissions is a goal to improve both the community's and the globe's health and ensuring the Dubuque community is informed and updated is key to achieving this goal. Current youth are not engaged with the sustainability program due to lack of presence on social media and promotion throughout school districts and college campuses.

By 2030, Dubuque has a plan to reduce their carbon footprint by 50%. To reach this goal, Sustainable Dubuque is looking to expand public knowledge of the plan and is interested in increasing awareness and participation of Dubuque youth. With little Facebook and Instagram engagement, Sustainable Dubuque Director, Gina Bell, has been struggling to find ways to attract youth members.

To efficiently attract Dubuque youth, we would recommend implementing a social media campaign along with a new “promise” program, to help increase program awareness and educate youth on the importance of practicing a sustainable lifestyle. Creating educational and informative posts for this group will be an easier way for them to digest important information. Posts can be tailored around specific holidays, back-to-school time, or sustainable events happening in the community that 15–24-year-olds would be interested in. The community “promise program” will encourage local youth to make a promise to live a more environmentally friendly/sustainable lifestyle. Through these new tactics, Sustainable Dubuque will see increased engagement and awareness toward the Dubuque Climate Action Plan

### **Organizational Analysis:**

The Dubuque Office of Sustainability has taken several initiatives over the years to promote healthy living and environmental awareness in the community. Despite ongoing challenges to engage community members and lack of staff, Dubuque has proven to be committed to their values of economic prosperity, environmental integrity, and social/cultural vibrancy by creating new projects that will support their long-term Climate Action Plan.

Sustainable Dubuque, while not as active on social media platforms, keeps their website up to date with upcoming events, news, and important information regarding the Climate Action Plan. Each year, Dubuque hosts the Growing Sustainable Communities Conference, an event highlighting changes in innovation, education, and collaboration of ongoing environmental projects. This shows the city of Dubuque is committed to improving their program and encourages new perspectives to make the community and world a healthier place.

Since there little to no engagement with Dubuque youth, there are a lot of opportunities for the Office of Sustainability to increase awareness of their Climate Action Plan. The organization's social media platforms, business partners, and the Dubuque community's school education present prime opportunities for the sustainability campaign. Increasing presence and visibility on social media enables easier engagement with content and faster dissemination of information. Seeking out business partners, whether they already have a corporate sustainability plan or not, opens possibilities to promote the campaign and secure event sponsors. Putting sustainability information into more “dire” terms can persuade businesses of the petrol consumption, energy bill, and other benefits of utilizing green practices. Social media and general knowledge of how to improve the environment can rapidly improve engagement and sharing among community members.

Some possible threats to this organization could be the individuals who do not believe climate change is a real issue happening. Children are easily influenced by their parents' beliefs,

so some Dubuque youth may not agree with statements posted on social media. Recent high school graduates entering the work force may not want to pay more taxes because of implementing new environmental projects and the Climate Plan Project. These possible threats could deter their peers from participating and engaging with the program since friends can impress each other. To switch these possible threats into something positive, language created in social media posts and other marketing materials should address the possible financial and health benefits that are because of projects like the Climate Action Plan.

Sustainable Dubuque has a large window of opportunity to engage Dubuque youth. Social media would be of utmost importance to engage this specific public and promote the important values of Sustainable Dubuque. Creating engaging, creative material will increase the departments following and create change in the community

### **Targeted Publics:**

- High School students (ages 14-18)
  - All public and private high schools in the Dubuque area. This group is easily impressionable, as they are still learning their own personal values and opinions. Implementing curriculum into high schools would be a fast, efficient way to reach one of the largest portions of the target public. Students will either be going to college or entering the workforce, so information will be applicable to them for a while.
- College students (ages 18-24)
  - Students who are interested in or studying environmental/sustainability would be receptive to promoted events and social media posts that are

curated to popular trends or recent news in the sustainability industry. This individual public will also hopefully vote for improved sustainability practices in local government. College students who are about to graduate can also see economic and health benefit of living a cleaner lifestyle when promoted effectively on social media channels and on campus

- Workforce/did not continue higher education (ages 18-24)
  - Even though this specific group is not furthering their education, promoting the fiscal benefits of environmental projects and the Climate Action Plan will help this group resonate with Sustainable Dubuque's message. Environmental projects would also mean more job opportunities for working class community members. Promoting job opportunities on Facebook and Instagram would be a beneficial way to not only grow the Office of Sustainability but bring more awareness to the environmental benefits of the plan.

**Key Messages:**

- “Build a brighter future in Dubuque” which can be reflected throughout their whole lives. Other key messages offer a comparison of what life looks like with sustainable practices and what it looks like without, by using images of communities that thrive environmentally can be persuasive to young people, such as a contrast between a greener Dubuque with reduced emissions and a browner, drier Dubuque that sustains current emission levels.
- “Recycling (or reducing waste) saves you [\$X].”
  - Because of the money that sustainability saves, college students can also be encouraged to participate in waste and emissions reduction.

- “A green environment brings in green money.”
- “The growth of the environment creates job opportunities/Renewable energy creates job opportunities for working class Americans.”

**Goal, Objectives, and Tactics:**

- Goal 1: Increase youth involvement and with the Climate Action Plan and other projects promoted by Sustainable Dubuque
  - Objective: Encourage high school and college classes to talk about Sustainable Dubuque's Climate Action and easy ways this targeted public can make an environmental impact
    - Tactic: Create a community “promise program” that encourages youth to make a “promise” to live a more environmentally friendly lifestyle. Some example promises could be: “I promise to bring reusable bags to the grocery store” or “I promise to not buy plastic water bottles anymore”. Participants can make their promises on a live, interactive website that tracks people's responses. Once a promise is made, participants will be given a compostable “promise” sticker, identifying they are engaging with Dubuque's sustainability initiatives.
- Goal 2: Develop sustainable events
  - Objective: Hold an event at one of the university’s campuses by the end of 2024 that has keynote speaker/interview panel with Gina to promote Climate Action Plan and learn new environmental practices

- Tactic: Effective marketing on social media for an event like this would attract college students in the Dubuque area. Marketing should be done about a month in advance to create a positive buzz. Having more interactive events will engage youth to actively participate in their community.
- Increase social media presence
  - Objective: Create a well-established Instagram presence by the end of 2024 by creating relevant, informational social media posts associated with holidays and yearly events
    - Tactic: Develop a social media editorial calendar to help organize posts, captions and important links. Creating social media posts around Christmas and Valentines Day that list sustainable gifts or date ideas would encourage this public to implement small acts of environmentalism. Back to school time is another opportune time to post information regarding sustainable back-to-school supplies and clothes shopping. These posts scattered throughout the year will encourage youth to engage in environmental practices and promote Sustainable Dubuques core values.