**Tips for local groups who want to contact politicians**

**Identify a goal you want to reach**. When you engage with your municipality, you should think about what you want to reach. All our demands are also relevant on the local level. From our demands, the demand to tell the truth is the easiest to implement since it does not require specific policies and is not expensive. In Amsterdam, we decided we want to lobby for a declaration of a climate emergency. But this is only one step. For example, you can lobby for the municipality to make a risk assessment for climate-related damages to the municipality. Think of increased health care costs due to heat waves, rising sea levels, damages due to extreme weather etc. You could also lobby your local government to start educational programmes for their citizens on climate change and biodiversity loss.

The second demand is trickier since a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions to net 0 by 2025 requires an unprecedented transformation of the economy on all levels. But you can try to make your city council draft a plan to become climate neutral as soon as possible. For the short term, the 40-steps plan by Urgenda, to realize the 25% CO2-reduction target by 2020 can be a useful tool: [https://www.urgenda.nl/40puntenplan-maatregelen-voor-co₂-reductie](https://www.urgenda.nl/40puntenplan-maatregelen-voor-co₂-reductie/). It contains concrete policy measures, although not all are fully within the mandate of the municipality.

The third demand is also possible on a local level. Citizens’ assemblies can also be set up for cities. For more information about citizens’ assembly you can reach out to the national Political Strategy&Change circle, and read the Citizens Assembly resources section on the website : <https://rebellion.earth/wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/The-Extinction-Rebellion-Guide-to-Citizens-Assemblies-Version-1-24-June-2019.pdf>

**Engage with the city council and/or the executive board.** No matter what you want to reach, it is the city council that ultimately decides. There are two ways in which you can influence what the city council decides. Firstly, you can contact the factions/parties in the city council and secondly, you can speak for a few minutes at meetings of the city council. To find out at which meetings of the city council (general meetings or commission meetings) you can speak and how to register for that, check out your municipality’s website. To achieve your goal, both ways of interaction will probably be necessary. In order to speak to one of the wethouders or the mayor, you can try to make an appointment with them.

As Extinction Rebellion stands above party politics, it is of importance that you do not create the impression that you have a preference for any party even though some parties are more in agreement with our demands than others. If you send out e-mails or call the fractions, try to contact all the fractions that are in the city council even if you know they are not interested. This way you can always prove that you were not partisan.

If they are open, meet up with the members of the city council. Prepare for the meeting so that you have all the arguments and information you need to make the case for the demand you are pushing. Explain why you are active in XR and that although cities are just small in comparison to the whole country, their actions still matter. For example, you can mention the [list](https://climateemergencydeclaration.org/climate-emergency-declarations-cover-15-million-citizens/) of cities that already declared a climate emergency and that your city will benefit from being on it as well.

Go to the city council to speak as a citizen. You can do that with many people so that the city council members see that many people care. Go and use every possibility to speak. In Amsterdam people went to a meeting of every commission to demand the declaration of a climate emergency. Repeat, repeat, repeat, even if the city council members have heard you already 100 times. Make it concrete, be emotional, angry, disappointed to show how deeply you care. Emotions are more likely to be remembered by the people that listen to you. Say that you are from XR and that we are growing. Mention what XR is doing, the rebellion and that people are ready to be arrested.

After you have spoken in the city council, you can directly approach the members and invite them to a meeting or ask for their contact details so that they know your faces.

**Go to the meeting where the important decision is made.** If for example a motion for a declaration of a climate emergency is on the agenda, go to that meeting with as many people as possible. You can even take banners (even if they are not allowed inside) and display them. You could also plan an action inside the city council (even though you might be kicked out then). Check and maybe doublecheck with city council members when the motion will be voted on. Sometimes meetings are long and agenda items are postponed to the next day.

**Remember XR is non-partisan.**

**Don’t get dragged into the system.** Some parties might invite you to discuss your ideas for concrete policies. Although this can be useful, it might also feel and look like you are making progress, while ultimately no changes are made. Speaking to politicians and parties is good, but make sure that you don’t get involved in a slow process of policy making. After all, this is what we alreadt assigned parliaments for, which have failed us in the past. A good thing to do is stepping back to the XR demands all the time, and remember that we are an action focussed organisation. Contact with politicians should always have one or more demands on the table, with the consequence of action knocking on the door when progress is too slow. Balance between building relationships and being dragged into the systems is however very difficult.

**Communicate and share your successes.** When you have reached a goal, make sure everyone hears about it to motivate people to join XR and to signal to society that change is underway. Use social media and press releases to show that *you* pushed for this outcome.

**Keep up the pressure with actions.** Even though you are in the process of talking to politicians, our demands are not all fully met yet. That means it is legitimate and necessary to keep doing actions that pressure municipalities and the government to adopt reasonable policies in line with our demands.