

Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee

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<http://www.mwcog.org/environment/committee/>

The Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee (ACPAC) is an advisory body to the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC) and the Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC)

Draft Meeting Minutes
Monday, September 16, 2013
Room 4/5
5:30 P.M.-7:30 P.M.

ACPAC members: Sarah Bunn (via phone), Bill Butler, Michael Cakouros (via phone), Blaine Collison, Gretchen Goldman, Andrew Kambour, Sally Kane (via phone), Brian McFarland, Patrick Matos (via phone), Caroline Petti, Glenna Tinney (via phone)

Staff: Jeff King, Amanda Campbell

Speakers: Ron Kirby, Senior Director, COG DTP

1. Call to Order, Adoption of Agenda, Approval of Minutes

The agenda and minutes from August 21, 2013 were approved with no changes.

2. Regional Transportation Priorities Plan (Ron Kirby, Senior Director, COG DTP)

The Transportation Planning Board's (TPB) Regional Transportation Priorities Plan was developed in response to TPB's Citizen's Advisory Committee recommendations. The Plan identifies near-term, ongoing, and long-term regional strategies that the public can support that offer the greatest potential for addressing regional challenges. The Plan identifies challenges and proposes strategies that go beyond the impact analysis (accessibility, greenhouse gases, congestion, air quality, etc.) required for the Constrained Long Range Transportation Plan (CLRP). In contrast to the CLRP, the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan identifies overall goals and strategies rather than specific projects. Strategies are broken down by near-term, ongoing, and long-term.

The proposed goals of the draft Regional Transportation Priorities Plan are:

1. *Options:* Provide a comprehensive range of transportation options for everyone
2. *Activity Centers:* Promote a strong regional economy including a healthy regional core and dynamic activity centers
3. *Maintenance:* Ensure adequate system maintenance, preservation, and safety
4. *Effectiveness:* Maximize operational effectiveness and safety of the transportation system
5. *Environment:* Enhance environmental quality, and protect natural and cultural resources
6. *Inter-regional:* Support inter-regional and international travel and commerce

Near-Term Strategies

1. Improve access around bus stops and rail stations
2. Alleviate bottlenecks
3. Alternative fuel vehicle infrastructure
4. Commute alternatives (i.e. Commuter Connections)
5. Pedestrian infrastructure
6. Bicycle infrastructure

Ongoing Strategies

1. Metro maintenance
2. Highway maintenance
3. Bus priority (i.e. give signal priority to buses)
4. Roadway efficiency (i.e. improve incident response and traffic information; coordinate signals)
5. Accessible transportation (i.e. MetroAccess and Complete Streets)
6. Update traffic laws (i.e. increase safety, enforcement and outreach)

Long-Term Strategies

- A. Express toll lanes with rapid bus transit
- B. Concentrated growth with more transit (and alternative mode) capacity
- C. Both A & B

A Public Opinion Survey was conducted that reached a representative sample of COG region residents. Although all of the measures in the Plan were rated as important to fund, priorities that arose from the Public Opinion Survey were:

1. Address metro and highway repair challenges
2. Address transit crowding and roadway congestion challenges
3. Address special focus areas such as mobility needs of people with disabilities, bus priority, enforcing traffic laws to increase safety, alternative fuel vehicles, expanding bicycle infrastructure

Next, staff will review public comments and modify as necessary. Another comment period will likely occur in October. The Regional Transportation Priorities Plan is designed to inform projects included the next Constrained Long Range Transportation Plan. The Regional Transportation Priorities Plan is available online [here](#), and the survey format (which describes the plan in a quick and visually appealing format) is [here](#).

Chair Petti expressed support for transit-oriented development but also expressed concern at the growing interest in developing parking lots at close-in Metro stations. Mr. Kirby concurred that one of the solutions to regional transportation challenges is to encourage development near transit stations, and encourage mixed use development in places such as Tyson's Corner. Chair Petti said that ACPAC might submit comments on the plan in October.

3. CEEPC Updates

a. Solar Initiatives – Jeff King, COG DEP

In order to work towards CEEPC's Action Plan targets, COG is participating in an initiative with the US Department of Energy's American Solar Transformation Initiative to reduce the administrative barriers and costs to implementing rooftop solar energy. Optony will work with local governments to set and track goals towards efforts such as streamlining permitting. Optony will also conduct a solar economic assessment for the region. Several jurisdictions have committed to participating.

Jeff King added that one way to describe the initiative is to create a 'Solar Signatories' construct similar to the 'Potomac Trash Treaty'.

b. Green Streets – Amanda Campbell, COG DEP

Last December, the Anacostia Watershed Restoration Partnership urged the Transportation Planning Board to adopt a regional Green Streets policy, parallel to the regional Complete Streets policy. Complete Streets involves accommodating multiple modes of transport within the right of way wherever feasible, including transit, automobiles, bike lanes, sidewalks, and accessibility for people with disabilities. Green Streets is less codified, but usually focuses on retaining and filtering stormwater using rain gardens, trees, and other landscape practices that bring multiple benefits to the community.

The Transportation Planning Board is expected to adopt the policy at its October or November meeting. Comments on the draft policy and policy template are welcome.

Chair Petti asked for materials to be circulated to the committee for their review.

4. Ozone Season Summary (Jeff King, COG DEP)

This year, partly due to cooler and wetter weather, there were only four ozone exceedance days, all of which were code orange—no code red days occurred. Even on the exceedance days, only one monitor exceeded the standard. Since 2006, 90 degree Fahrenheit days no longer predictably result in ozone exceedances, due to reductions in air emissions. For particulate matter, there were no exceedances.

Bill Butler pointed out that the region is seeing an overall downward trend over the last decade or so, and that even monitors that exceeded the standard barely did so.

Chair Petti said that this is a good news story that illustrates how the efforts of regulations, federal, state, and local jurisdictions makes a difference. But, she said she was concerned that these successes could be used as an argument for slowing efforts to clean the air. Chair Petti proposed to send a letter to the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee chair Hon. Leta Mach which will recommend celebrating the region's achievements, but not losing sight of the work still to be done to maintain good air quality in face of increasing

population and development, increasing temperatures due to climate change, and tightening air quality standards that EPA is expected to publish.

ACPAC members present agreed unanimously to send the letter.

5. Climate and Energy Leadership Awards Concept

Caroline Petti stated that the committee's goal is to present the draft awards concept at the next CEEPC meeting, then pull together the Task Force with a few CEEPC and ACPAC members. Chair Petti reviewed the draft concept. One question that CEEPC might help address is how to choose the topic areas for the year.

Jeff King said that the Maryland Clean Energy Center also has an energy awards program that could be valuable to learn about, and that one way to commend the award recipients is to present them at the COG annual meeting. Mr. King suggested finding three volunteers from CEEPC and three from ACPAC to serve on the Task Force.

Members discussed who would nominate the jurisdictions for the award. Most agreed that anyone could nominate them, or they could self-apply, but what matters is the quality of the application.

5. Adjourn

Next meeting: October 21, 2013 – 5:30pm – 7:30pm
