

COG EQUITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

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MWAQC-TAC
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Agenda Item 3



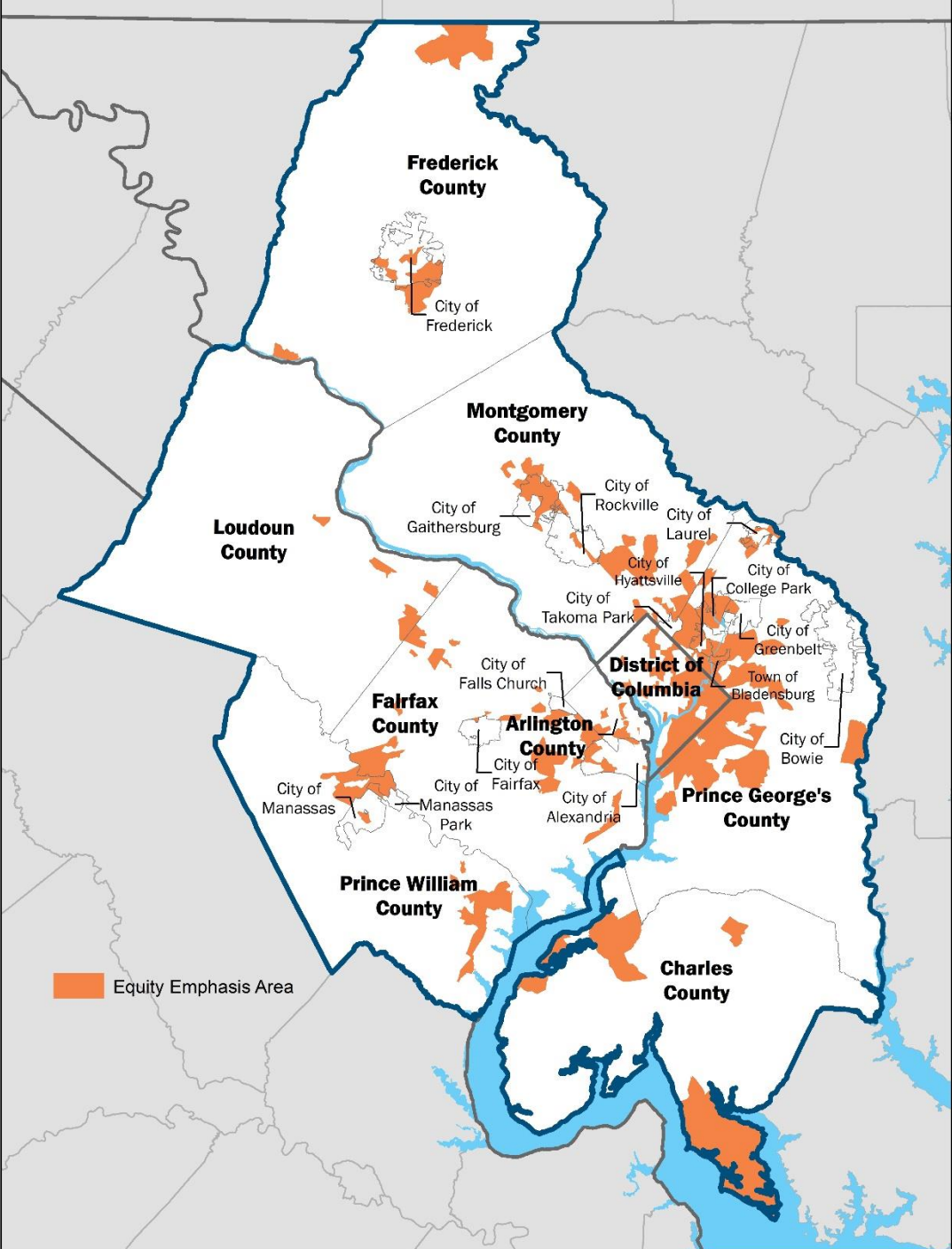
Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments

Equity at the COG Board

- In July 2020, the COG Board of Directors approved a resolution declaring equity a fundamental value.
- The Board affirms that COG's work together as the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments will be anti-racist and will advance equity; and
- The Board affirms that equity will be woven into COG's Region Forward Vision to ensure a more prosperous, accessible, livable, sustainable, and equitable future for all area residents and throughout COG's analyses, operations, procurement, programs, and priorities.

Equity at the COG Board

- [Metropolitan Washington Planning Framework for 2030](#)
 - Four planning priorities for the next decade related to equity, transit and land use, housing, and climate change
 - Planning Area: Equity Emphasis Areas (EEAs)
 - Originally developed by the Transportation Planning Board to analyze potential impacts of long-range transportation planning, March 2017
 - Represents 350 of 1,200+ census tracts with high concentrations of low-income individuals and/or racial and ethnic minorities
 - Broadened to elevate equity and inform future growth and investment decisions in other programmatic areas – housing, energy, food systems



Elevate 350 Equity Emphasis Areas (EEAs)

Areas with high concentrations of underserved residents.

mwcog.org/equityemphasisareas

Equity at the COG Board

- Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) Cohorts
 - Launched in partnership with COG, 2019
 - Regional learning cohort of local government staff to advance racial equity and opportunities
- Racial Equity Learning Series
 - Four-part training series for elected officials, May-Sept. 2022
 - Series includes an examination of policies and practices from a racial equity perspective, provides definitions of key terminology

Equity at the COG Board

- Chief Equity Officers Committee (CEOC)
 - Formed in 2021
 - Purpose: to advance racial equity within COG programs, committees, and member jurisdictions, and regionally
 - February 2021: general consensus to use the GARE definition of racial equity
 - April 2021: CEOC presented GARE definition to the COG Board – “When race can no longer be used to predict life outcomes and outcomes for all groups are improved.”

2017 Environmental Justice Toolkit

- [2017 Environmental Justice \(EJ\) Toolkit](#)
 - Guidance to policymakers on incorporating social, cultural sensitivity, and community health considerations into air quality, climate, and energy planning.
- Nine Approaches
 - EJ principles or approaches to building EJ capacity, resources, tools, and case studies to assist COG staff, local jurisdictions, and COG stakeholders to set the direction for inclusion of equity in all air quality, energy, and climate planning and policy decisions.

Environmental Justice Definitions

- **Environmental Justice:** A concept that embraces the principle that all people and communities are entitled to equal protection under environmental law. It means fair treatment of all people – regardless of race, color, or national origin – and requires stakeholder involvement in the implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2016).
- **Vulnerable Populations:** Populations identified using demographic and environmental indicators including exposure to air pollution, water pollution, and waste management. Populations with a historically disproportionate exposure to environmental hazards related to race, income, and/or language access, amongst other criteria.
- **Energy Justice:** The goal of achieving equity in both the social and economic participation in the energy system, while also remediating social, economic, and health burdens on those disproportionately harmed by the energy system (Initiative for Energy Justice).



Potentially Vulnerable Populations

Potentially vulnerable populations may include:

- Low-income
- Minority
- Marginalized groups
- Women and girls
- Persons in sub-standard housing
- People with limited English proficiency
- The elderly
- Children
- People with chronic health problems
- Disabled persons

2017 Environmental Justice Toolkit

- **Approach #1:** Identifying Potentially Vulnerable Populations
- **Approach #2:** Providing Meaningful Engagement Opportunities
- **Approach #3:** Assessing Community Impacts and Needs
- **Approach #4:** Developing Metrics
- **Approach #5:** Providing Data, Information, and Resources for Communities
- **Approach #6:** Using Citizen Science
- **Approach #7:** Developing Community Leadership
- **Approach #8:** Supporting Economic and Workforce Development
- **Approach #9:** Mainstreaming Environmental Justice into Public Planning and Programs

Existing Tools and Resources

- [Energy Justice Network Energy Justice Map](#) - features all existing, proposed, closed, and defeated fossil energy and waste facilities.
- [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\) EJSCREEN](#) - provides a comprehensive national dataset that combines environmental and demographic indicators to identify where areas of concern are located and where more robust analysis and subsequent engagement may be needed.
- [Arlington County Energy Master's Program](#) - trains community and student volunteers in energy efficiency, water conservation, and community education skills.

Next Steps

- Update 2017 Toolkit Update Development Draft Timeline
 - Update Proposal Development: November 2022 - December 2022
 - Proposal Review and Approval: January - February 2023
 - CEEPC and MWAQC
 - Toolkit Development: March 2023 – November 2023*
- New Resources and Tools
 - [Energy Equity Project](#) – a framework for measuring equity across energy efficiency and clean energy programs.
 - [ACEEE's Leading with Equity Initiative](#) - scorecards that capture progress towards equity-centered clean energy policies and program outcomes.

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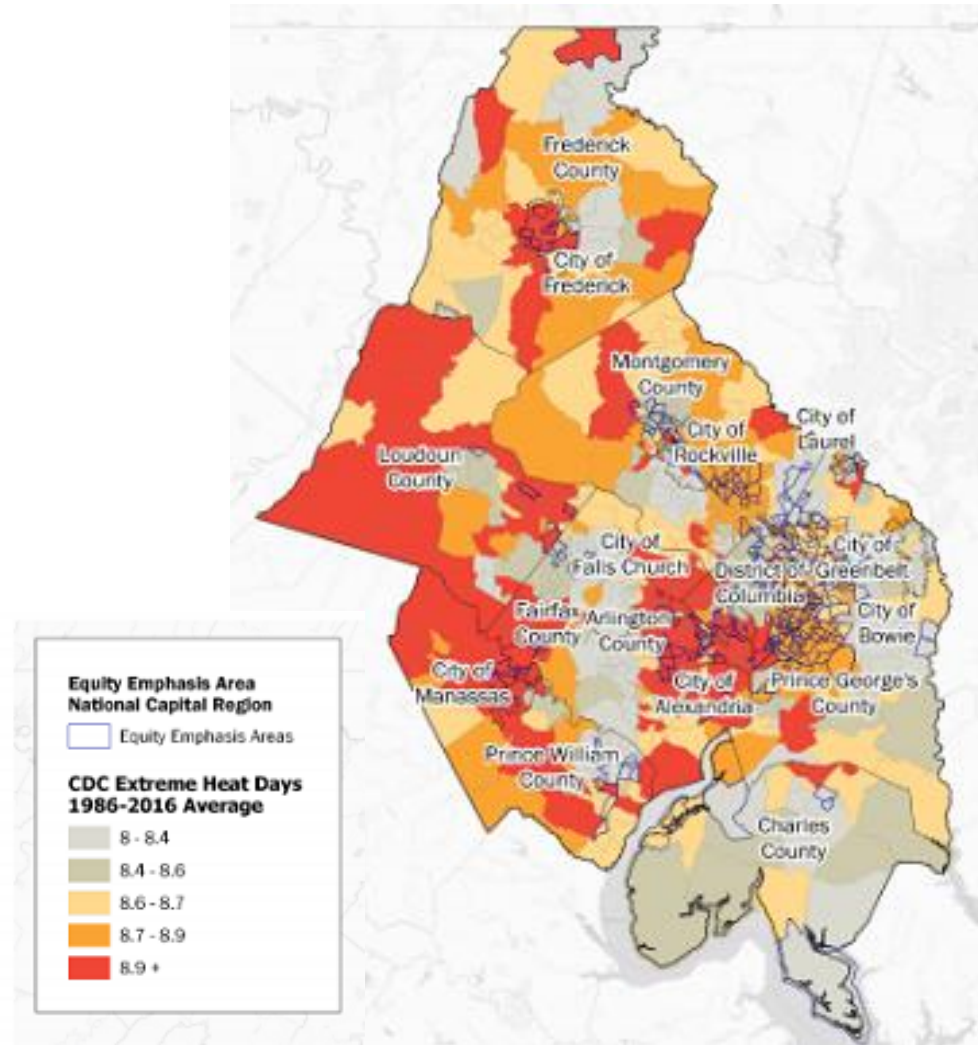
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Equity Emphasis Areas and Mapping

- COG using EEAs as part of climate planning work.
 - Energy burden/extreme heat days
 - Tree canopy
 - Flooding and Sea Level Rise



Equity in Climate, Energy, and Air

- [2030 Climate and Energy Action Plan](#)
 - 35 collaborative actions (25 mitigation + 10 resilience) for area governments and partners
 - Equity woven throughout all the actions, 4 specific “equity actions”.
 - Mapping EEAs: identify energy burden and support equitable access for EV charging in underserved communities. Address Heat Islands, Flooding, and Sea Level Rise

