Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

AIR AND CLIMATE PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

September 17, 2018
5:30 - 7:30 P.M.

DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY

ACPAC MEMBERS (*VIA PHONE)
Ron Rodriguez*
Kelsey Crane*
Sarah Mazur*
Natalie Pien*
Hyon Rah
Rodney Sobin
Gabriel Thoumi*
Glenna Tinney
Tamara Toles O'Laughlin*

GUESTS
Gary Allen
Michael Knapp
Gayle McCowin*

STAFF
Amanda Campbell
Tim Masters
Steve Walz

1. CALL TO ORDER, AGENDA, MEETING SUMMARY APPROVAL
Tamara Toles O'Laughlin, ACPAC Vice Chair

2. COASTAL STORM RESILIENCE STUDY
Gayle McCowin, US Army Corps of Engineers – Baltimore District

After Superstorm Sandy in 2012, Congress charged the US Army Corps with investigating current and future flood risks along the north Atlantic coast. This prior study, known as the North Atlantic Coast Comprehensive Study (NACCS), designated the Washington metro as one of nine areas that warranted further flood risk and hurricane/coastal storm preparedness studies.

COG and several cost share partners are coordinating with the US Army Corps to develop a *Metropolitan Washington Region Coastal Storm Risk Management Study* which will investigate flood risks in the region's tidal areas. The study will identify appropriate, cost-effective solutions to protect the communities and infrastructure potentially affected by current and future coastal flooding. This study will:

1) Utilize existing information to determine flood inundation expected under 'future' storm scenarios (ex. such as the types of recent coastal storm patterns observed in hurricane Florence and Superstorm Sandy) and everyday nuisance flooding worsened by sea level rise. Riverine flooding and overland runoff contributions will be factored in to the coastal analysis. The study will examine the performance of current and planned flood mitigation projects under 'future' scenarios.
2) Develop a Bayesian network of critical infrastructure interdependencies to generate failure thresholds and cascading impacts for given flood elevations.
3) Generate cost-benefit analysis for a variety of flood mitigation measures, both policy, structural, and natural (ex. wetlands, natural shorelines, and green infrastructure)
4) Develop a comprehensive, peer-reviewed report that summarizes findings and recommends both Corps-specific projects (such as levees or a levee system) and additional actions that could be implemented by cost share partners or other agencies to enhance the region's coastal flood resilience following this study.

This summer, the northern Virginia partners gave approval for the Army Corps re-scope the study. The study will now focus on coastal flooding near the northern Virginia side of the Potomac and is expected to take about three to four years and cost $3 million, with 50/50 federal cost-share.

ACPAC members inquired about how low-income, minority community impacts are considered and how environmental benefits are quantified in the study and its recommendations. Ms. McCowin said that the US Army Corps examines socioeconomic, demographic, and environmental data. The study partners will have the opportunity to rank solutions based on their values as a community. The benefits of nature-based solutions are difficult to compare to structural solutions but their team is working to improve their ability to capture it. In addition, there will be opportunities for public input on the analysis and recommendations as the study proceeds.

Mr. Walz said that COG will help ensure that this type of feedback is considered.

3. REGIONAL TREE CANOPY REPORT

Michael Knapp, Montgomery County

COG's Tree Canopy Strategy, developed by COG's ad hoc Tree Canopy Workgroup, lays out the benefits of trees, covers the history of tree preservation programs in the region, lists the common threats to trees, and recommends next steps for regional efforts to preserve forests and tree canopies. Trees are valuable for air quality, water quality, health, urban heat island, and quality of life. Tree conservation laws and programs have been active in our region for a long time, dating to 1885 for Falls Church village. See the report for a detailed table of Urban Forest Programs in the region. In 2013, Chesapeake Bay Program data was used to establish a new tree canopy baseline, since the prior USGS land cover data had lower resolution. There is currently ~45% non-fragmented forest (> 1 acre); not very different from the 40-50% canopy cover in post European settlement. Some of the major threats to trees include development/redevelopment; pests, diseases, invasive species; deer; storms; and insufficient space and species diversity. The Tree Canopy Workgroup recommended the establishment of a standing subcommittee that would focus on supporting tree protection and management throughout the region.

Collaboration could help the region's local governments share strategies to address challenges such as managing the risks of trees, engaging the public, protecting and planting trees on private property, and identifying funding sources for local tree and forestry programs. Mr. Walz added that

the 2019 Climate, Energy and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) chair, Dan Sze, has made tree canopy a priority. Such a subcommittee would need to include representation from the forestry, climate, water and air sectors.

4. COMMENT LETTERS

All

ACPAC members reviewed and voiced support for the Affordable Care Act comment letter and the SAFE act comment letters.

5. EJ DISCUSSION

All

ACPAC members discussed revising the Case Studies and Finance sections of the toolkit. The Georgetown Climate Center was mentioned as a potential speaker on EJ topics.

6. UPDATES

- November meeting date – is **now November 13** due to Veteran's Day November 12. We may have a Climate Action Plan 10th year anniversary event that week.
- Ozone Season Update: This summer the region experienced 8 code orange days and 1 code red day for ozone. The preliminary design value is at 72 ppb again this year. The 2015 standard is 70ppb.
- What We Can Do Project: COG staff is developing an outline of activities to address the top 3 or 4 priority air quality measures identified through the project (energy efficiency – such as net zero buildings -- and renewable energy, heavy duty vehicles, planning for and facilitating alternative modes of travel, and education and outreach).
- Climate and energy Request for Proposals (RFP): COG issued an RFP and received bids to conduct greenhouse gas emission inventory and mitigation work as well as climate resilience work for the region.
- Virginia, Maryland, and DC's VW Settlement fund plans are all published:
    - https://www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/Air/VWMitigation.aspx
    - https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/Air/MobileSources/Pages/MarylandVolkswagenMitigationPlan.aspx
    - https://doee.dc.gov/page/volkswagen-settlement

ADJOURN.