

Metropolitan Washington Air Quality  
Committee  
Strategic Planning Assessment Report

December 18, 2019

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee Background .....	4
<b>Emerging Next Steps to Identify Strategic Directions and Priorities .....</b>	<b>54</b>
1) <i>Lead the region through a commitment to science and data, best practices, technical support, and effective partnerships. ....</i>	<i>65</i>
2) <i>Communicate the importance of air quality its connection to human health to the public, to stakeholders, and to policymakers in order to drive individual behavior change, shift cultural norms, and advocate for sound policy. ....</i>	<i>76</i>
3) <i>Continue progress on the mandated work of MWAQC towards reducing ozone levels in the region through the program areas already delineated in the work plan.....</i>	<i>87</i>
4) <i>Improve internal operations to ensure that MWAQC best meets the needs of its diverse members.....</i>	<i>87</i>
<b>Appendix A: The Strategic Planning Assessment Process .....</b>	<b>109</b>
<i>Preliminary Survey for MWAQC Members: November 2018.....</i>	<i>109</i>
<i>Presentation to MWAQC General Membership: December 2018 .....</i>	<i>124</i>
<i>Presentation of Initial Strategic Planning Assessment Draft to MWAQC: February 2019 .....</i>	<i>131</i>
<i>Ad Hoc MWAQC General Membership Meeting: July 2019 .....</i>	<i>141</i>
<b>Appendix B: Strategic Planning Assessment Survey Responses .....</b>	<b>181</b>

## Introduction

For almost three decades, the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC) has succeeded in attaining significant improvements to the region's air quality. Solutions at the local, state, and federal levels have spanned the gamut from policy changes resulting in fewer emissions from power generation, service and manufacturing businesses, on-road and off-road vehicle emissions. Additionally, shifts in consumer behavior that encourage greater building efficiency and use of mass transit, walking, and bicycles have also resulting in fewer emissions. The result can literally be seen by all—the cleanest air since MWAQC was established in 1992.

Not every challenge has been eliminated, however, as ozone levels remain a requisite area of concern. Additionally, MWAQC members are looking to the future as the region grows. Planned and enacted changes to federal environmental standards, ~~as well as the growing impact of climate change,~~ suggest the need for fresh thinking to ensure that MWAQC's contribution to cleaner air and improved public health remains vital and relevant.

As a result of meeting many of its original mandates—and recognizing that there is still work to be done to improve the region's air quality—MWAQC members (including elected officials, regional air management and transportation experts, and representatives from local governments and organizations) engaged in a Strategic Planning Assessment process as part of its FY 2019 Work Plan to:

- Improve MWAQC operations ~~and processes~~ to better meet the needs of its members.
- Identify ~~members' interest and take action~~ on potential new directions, strategies, and priorities for MWAQC.

This process included several phases, conducted over a 10-month period.

- A preliminary survey was conducted in November 2018 to gather early input from members as efficiently as possible.
- Survey findings were shared, and additional input was gathered at the December 19, 2018 general membership meeting. During this meeting, consensus was achieved on recommended improvements to meetings, logistics, and other processes; questions regarding MWAQC's future strategy remained.
- An initial assessment report was drafted and shared with members in January 2019 for review and comment.
- A revised assessment report reflecting findings to date was presented on February 27, 2019 during the general membership meeting. Initial progress towards improvements to meetings and processes was noted, as was a commitment to return to the discussion of future direction.
- An ad hoc meeting was held on July 25, 2019 with facilitated discussion to address these outstanding issues.
- An updated assessment report was developed to reflect findings from this discussion, and it was shared with members for review and comment in early September 2019, with a second revised report shared in October 2019.

**Commented [KS1]:** This falls under CEEPC's purview, and while it's mentioned later in the report in the overlap of MWAQC/CEEPC/TPB, it should not be in the introduction of a committee that has no jurisdiction over that area.

**Commented [KS2]:** While improved operations were agreed on, there are still process improvements needed at MWAQC, and we should not say that consensus has been reached on those.

**Commented [KS3]:** As we are not "taking action" on this document, that should be a future activity described in this report. This is particularly important as staff has indicated that this document will not have any impact on the work program, which is where action is identified.

- A revised version of the Strategic Plan Assessment Report incorporating comments received since the September draft was shared, was presented at the December 18, 2019 general membership meeting.

This Strategic Planning Assessment Report summarizes members' interest in directions and priorities for MWAQC's future work. It provides guidance but is not in itself a mandate; all actual work of the committee must be approved through the annual work program.

A description of each phase of the Strategic Planning Assessment Process, including discussion findings from December 2018 and July 2019, can be found in Appendix A. Complete survey results from November 2018 are available in Appendix B.

## Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee Background

MWAQC was established in 1992 pursuant to Section 174 of the Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA) of 1990<sup>1</sup> through certification actions by the governors of Maryland and Virginia and the Mayor of the District of Columbia. The membership on MWAQC, consistent with the bylaws, includes local elected officials, state air quality and transportation agencies and a representative of the regional transportation planning body, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board.

MWAQC's charge is defined in federal law and augmented through federal (EPA) regulations governing state implementation planning and air quality conformity. This approach provides for consistency across metropolitan Washington as actions to reduce air pollution are more effective when implemented across the region. Since its inception, MWAQC has led the way in preparing all required plans as well as many supplemental actions, which has resulted in dramatic improvements in the region's air quality. These positive changes have helped ensure that the region's residents breathe healthier air.

MWAQC members are charged with developing regional air quality plans for criteria pollutants including ozone, fine particulate matter, and carbon monoxide, as well as voluntary recommendations and initiatives<sup>2</sup>. This work reflects regulatory requirements and best practices while recognizing the need to address both cost-efficiencies and the unique requirements of MWAQC members. Significant regional progress has been made, with levels for five out of the six pollutants articulated in its original mandate now falling within the levels established by the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS).

The work continues, however. The region continues to experience unhealthy air days, and committee members are mindful of future challenges to the region's air quality. For these reasons, MWAQC conducted a Strategic Planning Assessment process in 2018-2019 to identify opportunities to improve internal operations, identify potential priorities for the coming years, and ultimately deepen engagement among its members.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/42/7504>

<sup>2</sup> MWAQC Bylaws are available at <https://www.mwcog.org/documents/2016/07/11/bylaws-of-the-metropolitan-washington-air-quality-committee/>

## Emerging Next Steps to Identify Strategic Directions and Priorities

MWAQC's future strategic directions and priorities are grounded in a compelling set of priorities that emerged throughout the 13-month Strategic Planning Assessment Process<sup>3</sup>. This planning process laid the foundation and was an important first step for MWAQC's future decisions on the committee's strategic direction. Consensus still needs to be reached with all MWAQC board members regarding future direction, before any actions, strategies, or policies are incorporated in the annual work program.

Knowing that future challenges to the region's air quality will require breaking down silos to work across multiple systems, members expressed ~~clear commitment to~~ interest in exploring work that will:

- Be grounded in scientific findings to protect human health and the public welfare.
- Support environmental projects, programs, and policies at the local, regional, and national level that lead to air quality improvements.
- Lead and convene the necessary partners to address the challenge of how regional growth will affect air quality.
- Through collaborations, communicate the importance of this work to all audiences at every age to drive change.
- Support the work of local/state government in becoming a national model.
- ~~Improve the quality of life for families today — and for the next generation.~~

**Commented [KS4]:** This is too expansive and goes far beyond MWAQC's purview and purposes as stated in the bylaws.

While the above considerations describe the importance and value of MWAQC's work going forward, additional member input from July 2019 discussions suggest four possible directions for accomplishing this work:

1. ~~Continue to~~ lead the region through a commitment to science and data, best practices, technical support, and effective partnerships.
2. Support Clean Air Partners (CAP) in their role of ~~Coordinate with partners to~~ communicating the importance of air quality and its connection to human health to the public, ~~to~~ stakeholders, and ~~to~~ policymakers. ~~CAP aims in order to~~ empower drive individuals and organizations to take simple actions to reduce pollution and protect human health ~~behavior change and expand implementation of projects, programs, and policies that lead to air quality improvements.~~ through education, marketing, and outreach.
3. Continue progress on the mandated work of MWAQC towards reducing ozone levels in the region through the program areas already delineated in the work plan.
4. Improve internal operations to ensure that MWAQC best meets the needs of its diverse members. ~~;~~ adheres to its bylaws, and operates collaboratively and transparently.

[We recommend deleting the detailed information laid out in the 4 points (pages 6-9) and describe how we will develop a strategic direction from those 4 points through interagency consultation, coordination, and a consensus-based process in the future. If not, we would like clarification that Maryland, both

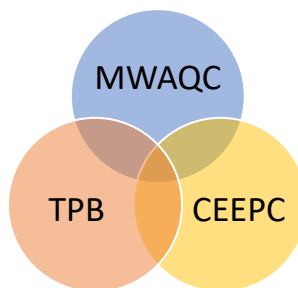
<sup>3</sup> See Appendix A.

MDOT and MDE, does not agree with the process and outcome of this Strategic Planning Assessment Report. The details and directions were not developed through consensus and believe that activity could happen in CY 2020, but without such we would like it on the record that do not support the report moving forward in its current state.]

1) Lead the region through a commitment to science and data, best practices, technical support, and effective partnerships.

Recent and pending federal environmental policy changes, coupled with regional growth, may result in a negative impact on air quality and public health. By grounding its air quality work in science and data, MWAQC can act as a trusted regional authority to support actions that ensure the region’s prosperity in a livable and sustainable manner, and ultimately protecting the health of all residents so they can breathe easier. This work can be furthered in a number of ways:

- Recognizing the diverse nature of its member jurisdictions that call for varied and customized actions, MWAQC will provide technical support to local and regional members to assist in selecting viable and voluntary solutions to improve air quality (e.g., green development, transportation solutions, EV, bike infrastructure). Additionally, MWAQC will help translate the science behind these solutions to help make the case for implementation to constituents and other decisionmakers.
- MWAQC will work with the Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) and the Transportation Planning Board (TPB) to better identify opportunities to work together on projects, programs, and policies that are mutually supportive. This “Venn diagram” may evolve based on a myriad of factors (e.g.: policy change or new air quality/climate data), and MWAQC members will be kept apprised of this collaborative work.
- Because the work of air quality and environmental health requires contribution from different sectors (utilities, buildings, transportation, etc), MWAQC will proactively seek opportunities to convene new partners across sectors and the region to address specific opportunities. For instance, preparing the region to take full advantage of electric vehicles requires a collaboration between a number of sectors such as utilities and public works. This creates an opportunity for MWAQC, in collaboration with CEEPC, to convene area utility providers and policymakers to identify a regional approach that includes sharing the short-term cost burdens—as well as the long-term economic rewards—together.
- MWAQC will continue to identify and support new air quality projects, programs, and policies that move beyond sustaining current air quality, towards making further improvements in regional air quality.



- As important regulation changes are proposed at the federal level, MWAQC will, on behalf of members, communicate either its opposition to actions that would result in worsening air quality, or its support for actions that will improve air quality.

2) Communicate the importance of air quality and its connection of human health to the public, to stakeholders, and to policymakers in order to drive individual behavior change, shift cultural norms, and advocate for sound policy.

MWAQC is well-positioned to “move the needle” on the issue of air quality and related environmental health issues, but this can only happen in tandem with proactive targeted outreach that meets audiences where they are with sound messages that effectively translate the science into appropriate calls-to-action. In this way, MWAQC can become a trusted resource to both the public and policymakers.

MWAQC members recognize, however, that their work as change agents would not happen easily or overnight. For instance:

- ~~People—and the policymakers who respond to public demand—tend to address those problems which are immediate and salient. Accordingly, a number of MWAQC members noted during the July meeting that the general public does not yet broadly understand that transportation-based emissions can have a significant effect on metropolitan Washington’s air quality.~~
- Transportation emissions are a significant contributor to regional air quality. The region needs to invest in solutions, policies, and programs to reduce transportation emissions to improve air quality.
- ~~Some MWAQC members noted however, that transportation-based emission will have a smaller effect on future regional air quality conditions as modeled data show a significant decrease in transportation-related emissions through 2040, but that modeling finds that such emissions may slightly increase from 2040 to 2045.~~
- In fact, the region continues to make investments in transit, pedestrian and bicycle, carpooling, and other congestion mitigation infrastructure and systems to expand options to use of single-occupancy vehicles for transportation. Changing consumer behaviors, however, will be a challenge due to the multiple factors affecting consumer’s choice of transportation.
- Science also suggests that Washington region’s ozone levels may be significantly related to wind-driven movement of ozone and its precursors (referred to as transport) from areas outside of our Region.
- There will need to be additional reductions in ozone precursor emissions from up-wind areas, including from electric generating stations and other large point source emitters for the Washington region to see further improvements.
- Federal actions that affect a broad market segment also can affect our region’s air quality and can affect implementation of state or local actions. For example, in September 2019, NHTSA and EPA took action to withdraw the federal waiver granted to California that allowed the state to set tougher GHG standards. Without this waiver, if the federal agencies finalize their proposed roll back of GHG emissions standards for passenger cars and light duty trucks,

California and other states, including Maryland, who have already adopted California's Advanced Clean Car (ACC) program, would no longer have the ability to set tougher GHG emissions standards for passenger cars and light duty trucks. This action would negatively affect the reductions in emissions of VOC and NOx that this region will need to meet federal National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ozone.

- There appears to be a conflation of air quality and climate change in many minds. While they are intimately related, they are not the same thing; this further points to a need for a more informed public.

With the region's anticipated growth, the need for this work becomes more urgent—and this is an opportunity to help policymakers and the public understand the role that MWAQC/MWCOG plays through clear and consistent messages. Simply put, sound transportation, development, and infrastructure policies across all sectors (point, area, off-road, on-road)—coupled with healthy individual behaviors lead to healthier air—and, as one participant noted consistent with the Committee's discussion, “a better way to live.”

### 3) Continue progress on the mandated work of MWAQC towards reducing ozone levels in the region through the program areas already delineated in the work plan.

Even as MWAQC considers future directions, the work on its primary mandate must continue unabated. MWAQC may provide for reallocation of resources as needs and priorities shift, and member input is welcome at any time on these six areas of focus:

- a) Develop and adopt air quality plans.
- b) Address designations and data for the federal ozone standard.
- c) Track data for federal standards.
- d) Review and respond to TPBs transportation conformity analysis.
- e) Facilitate resolution of inter-jurisdictional policy issues.
- f) Provide for a public participation program, which includes the Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee.

### 4) Improve internal operations to ensure that MWAQC best meets the needs of its diverse members.

Member satisfaction rises (and meeting attendance increases), when all members are better able to “connect the dots” between the work of MWAQC and their own work. Content of both meetings and materials must better meet the needs of members, including elected officials whose missions are broader, and technical members whose work is more sharply defined in air quality or transportation. To that end, the following practices have already been or will be implemented:

- To assist members in understanding MWAQC's core issues, staff will develop and provide an annual orientation session for members to be delivered early in the calendar year. This “MWAQC 101” will include an easy-to-understand briefing book and at-a-glance one-sheets.



Representatives from CEEPC and TPB will be invited to help MWAQC members understand how each committee's work aligns and complements the others. In addition to grounding new members in MWAQC's work, this annual session will be helpful to existing members who would like a refresher on MWAQC's mission, priorities, committee structure, etc.

- Presentations to MWAQC members will be regularly reviewed to increase comprehension and clarity for all.
- Knowing that elected officials, in particular, will benefit from additional tools that can help them convey information to their respective constituents and colleagues at the local and state levels, MWAQC staff will periodically provide at-a-glance action sheets to members that mirror presentation content. These may be provided at meetings and/or via email after meetings.
- Technical work will remain at the subcommittee level as much as possible. If needed to help with committee decision-making, MWAQC may choose to set aside time in general meeting agendas to dedicate to technical work.
- To provide members with an ongoing opportunity to provide valuable feedback, MWAQC will periodically send meeting participants a link to a brief and voluntary online survey. Input will be used to continue to improve both meeting logistics and content.

Additionally, *logistical* improvements to general MWAQC meetings and materials have already been, or will be, implemented based on available staffing and resources.

- Each January, MWAQC staff will email the full year's calendar invitations for all meetings to membership.
- MWAQC staff will provide meeting materials at least one week in advance of meetings.
- If budget/staff resources become available, MWAQC will investigate options for conducting meetings using a web-based video conference platform for members who are unable to attend in person.
- MWAQC staff will work with IT staff to streamline the hosting of MWAQC documents on MWCOG's website. Members will be alerted to changes and improvements as they happen.

This Strategic Planning Assessment Report summarizes members' interest in directions and priorities for MWAQC's future work. It provides guidance but is not in itself a mandate; all actual work of the committee must be approved through the annual work program.

## Appendix A: The Strategic Planning Assessment Process

In late summer 2018, MWAQC released a request for proposals for an experienced outside facilitator to guide the Strategic Planning Assessment process. In September, Jean Synodinos of Synodinos Consulting (Austin, TX) was engaged.

To gather member input as efficiently as possible, a preliminary survey was conducted in November 2018. Findings from this survey were shared and additional input was gathered at a membership meeting on December 19, 2018. During this meeting, consensus was achieved on several issues regarding improved operations, but questions regarding the future direction of MWAQC remained open. This collective input, however, formed the basis for an initial draft Strategic Planning Assessment. This was shared with membership on January 23, 2019 for review and comment, and the subsequent revision was presented to members at its meeting on February 27, 2019.

Based on the outstanding issues raised in the December 2018 meeting and reflected in this early version of the assessment, MWAQC staff surveyed members and worked with the Executive Committee to schedule an ad hoc meeting of members in July 2019. This meeting focused exclusively on addressing the committee's interest in potential future strategic directions and was again facilitated by consultant Jean Synodinos. A revised Strategic Planning Assessment was drafted and shared with MWAQC members for review and comment in early September 2019 to reflect the diverse voices and expertise of MWAQC members. A revised version of the Strategic Plan Assessment Report, incorporating comments received since the September draft was provided to members for additional comment and then presented to members at the December 18, 2019 meeting.

### Preliminary Survey for MWAQC Members: November 2018

A voluntary survey was launched on Wednesday, November 7, 2018 and remained open to all members through the November 21. Members were invited to participate in one of three ways: online via Survey Monkey; in a Word document; or, over the phone with the consultant. Periodic reminders were emailed to members to encourage participation.

The survey was divided into three sections. The first section gathered information on participants<sup>4</sup> (e.g., name, organization, length of time on MWAQC). Next, voting and alternate members of MWAQC, its Technical Advisory Committee, and the Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee were invited to share their thoughts on MWAQC operations, meetings, and processes. In the final section, participants were asked their thoughts on MWAQC priorities.

Twenty-nine individuals (51% of members and alternates), participated in the survey and provided a strong representative sample:

---

<sup>4</sup> Identifying information on participants was collected to ensure that responses reflected a representative sample of MWAQC's diverse membership. A commitment was made to all participants that their comments would remain anonymous when findings were shared with wider membership at the December 19<sup>th</sup> meeting and in this assessment.

- Responses included representation from the State of Maryland, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the District of Columbia.
- Respondents included elected officials, environmental/air quality agencies, and departments of transportation.
- The length of MWAQC participation among respondents ranged from less than one year all the way to 30 years.
- Twenty-one respondents reported serving on one or more MWAQC subcommittees.

While full quantitative and qualitative responses to the survey's questions on operations and priorities are available in the Appendix B to this assessment, key themes/findings that emerged specifically from the survey include:

#### *Operations*

- In-person meeting attendance is considered the most effective way to participate/communicate, but it is not always possible.
- More than 2/3 of survey respondents find agenda topics relevant and useful.
- Meeting materials are often too complex and difficult to understand for the policy-level committee members.
- It would be helpful to have more time with meeting materials prior to meetings.
- Members are unsure if/how they can suggest agenda items and/or comment on meeting materials.
- Finding materials on the MWCOG website can be challenging.
- Four out of five survey respondents believe that joint Climate, Energy, and Environmental Policy Committee (CEEPC) meetings are beneficial.
- There is a desire to improve the consensus-building process among members.
- Members would appreciate the opportunity to offer feedback/input on what is working well and what might work better.
- Members would appreciate hearing about MWAQC accomplishments as well as the Committee's connection to the wider mission and work of MWCOG.

#### *Priorities*

- Approximately 2/3 of survey respondents believe that MWAQC's work strongly or highly aligns with their organization's work.
- Survey respondents prioritized the six core program areas from the FY 2019 Work Plan<sup>5</sup>. Those program areas receiving the highest ratings included:
  - Develop and adopt air quality plans.

---

<sup>5</sup> This question was included in the survey as a way of identifying how and where resources might best be allocated to meet members' needs. Each area is a fundamental core element of MWAQC's mission and will continue to be addressed. Full responses and analysis can be found in the Appendix to this assessment.

- Address designations and data for the federal ozone standard.
- Track data for federal standards.
- Survey respondents prioritized eight potential priorities and opportunities for future work<sup>6</sup>. Those receiving the highest ratings included:
  - Communicate to leaders and public on actions to improve air quality.
  - Support the transition to cleaner diesel equipment.
  - Implement anti-idling campaign for trucks and buses.
  - Advocate for federal clean air policies.
- When survey respondents were asked to share the areas of focus in which their organizations are engaged and might be considered by MWAQC, three categories emerged:
  - Energy and sustainability.
  - Communication and policy.
  - Transportation.

#### Presentation to MWAQC General Membership: December 2018

Comprehensive survey results, including representative qualitative comments from survey respondents, were shared with MWAQC’s general membership during a well-attended general membership meeting on December 19, 2018 in the Kirby Training Center at MWCOG’s offices in Washington, DC.

Facilitated discussion collected additional insight on improvements to operations, program priorities, and additional opportunities or challenges. As with the preliminary survey, key themes emerged:

#### *Operations*

Meetings will be more valuable—and participation will rise—if they are better able to meet the needs of MWAQC’s diverse membership, particularly elected officials. Some of the opportunities for improvement discussed include:

- Reinstitute an orientation to MWAQC’s work for members.
- Ensure that presentations are appropriate for audiences; keep technical work at the subcommittee level.
- Delivery of meeting materials in advance of meetings.
- Distribution of calendar invites.
- Web-based video conferencing (in addition to conference calls).

#### *Priorities*

There was agreement that reducing ozone levels in the region through the program areas already delineated in the FY 2019 work plan should continue as a primary mandate. While all of the FY 2019 program work areas would continue to be addressed, MWAQC staff agreed to look at November’s survey findings as a baseline for prioritizing efforts, bearing in mind that prioritization may also impact

---

<sup>6</sup> Please see the Appendix to this assessment for comprehensive responses and analysis.

allocation of available resources going into FY 2020. Survey respondent preferences for all six areas, in order, were:<sup>7</sup>

1. Develop and adopt air quality plans.
2. Address designations and data for the federal ozone standard.
3. Track data for federal standards.
4. Review and respond to TPBs transportation conformity analysis.
5. Facilitate resolution of inter-jurisdictional policy issues.
6. Provide for a public participation program (Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee).

Beyond mandates, an effort to identify future priorities achieved progress, but not consensus. Members saw an important opportunity to redefine and clarify MWAQC's purpose and mission. In addressing this opportunity, MWAQC would be better poised to address forthcoming challenges to the region's air quality with the broad support of MWAQC members. As one member noted and representative of discussions, the work of MWAQC is "a moral imperative." Core questions emerged, and participants universally agreed that they warrant future discussion:

- What role does MWAQC play, and what are its core functions?
- What specific roles set out in the bylaws should MWAQC spend its time on to improve air quality and public health going forward?
- In what ways does MWAQC's work align with the work of CEEPC and TPB? Are there duplicative efforts that can be eliminated? Are there gaps in the work of these committees that need to be filled?
- How can representatives from different and unique jurisdictions be best-served by MWAQC—and how can those needs be met?
- How might MWAQC benefit from collaboration with others (e.g., Clean Air Partners)?
- Are there funds and resources available for any recommended changes to MWAQC's work?
- Should MWAQC's bylaws be updated to reflect this revised consensus?

### Presentation of Initial Strategic Planning Assessment to MWAQC: February 2019

Based on both the survey findings and December discussion, an initial Strategic Plan Assessment was drafted and shared with members in January 2019 for review and comment. The revised assessment was then presented during the February 2019 general membership meeting. At that time, MWAQC staff identified those operational goals which had been implemented and/or could be implemented in short order, including:

- An annual orientation session ("MWAQC 1010," also presented at this meeting).
- All meeting times/dates for the calendar year emailed to members in January.
- A commitment to providing meeting materials at least one week in advance of meeting.

---

<sup>7</sup> Please see Appendix B for full survey findings.

- Regular review of meeting materials for MWAQC staff to improve clarity and comprehension for all members.
- A commitment to providing members with feedback opportunities in order to best meet members' needs.
- A commitment to investigating the viability of web-based meetings and improvements to the MWCOG website.

Staff also agreed to identify a preferred method for addressing the outstanding issue of MWAQC's future direction. Following this meeting, MWAQC staff surveyed members and worked with the Executive Committee to schedule an ad hoc meeting of MWAQC general membership to discuss strategic direction.

#### Ad Hoc MWAQC General Membership Meeting: July 2019

An ad hoc, half-day meeting of MWAQC general membership was held on July 25, 2019 for the express purpose of discussing future directions and priorities. It was again facilitated by strategic planning consultant Jean Synodinos. Throughout this well-attended meeting, key points were captured on flip charts, and comprehensive notes were captured by MWAQC staff.

#### *Scenario Planning*

The morning hours were dedicated to discussing "best case/worst case" scenarios. This is a common model in strategic planning that allows participants to consider the future with a focus on relevant external factors—and how they believe their organization should prepare for and respond to them.

An important recurring theme emerged: future challenges cannot be solved in isolation, and solutions—data-driven and science-based—will need to come from de-siloing the work of MWAQC members, MWCOG committees, and different public and private systems across the region. Several takeaways from scenario planning include:

- The region continues to grow and brings with it several challenges:
  - More roads and construction, less green space.
  - More traffic.
  - Amazon will bring 20K jobs.
  - The region is not prepared for EV conversation, and regional energy companies are not at the table together.
  - Infrastructure/utility upgrades are expensive and disruptive to local residents.
  - Local jurisdictions want—and compete for—economic development and growth, and this may be seen as at odds with improved air quality.
  - Environmental justice issues will likely emerge, disproportionately impacting those who most need support.

- Virginia, Maryland, and the District function in unique ways. For instance, Virginia’s Dillon Rule approach requires that jurisdictions may only adopt rules that are expressly permitted by the Virginia General Assembly while Maryland’s Home Rule approach provides broader authority for local action unless prohibited by the Maryland General Assembly.
- The data on air quality are excellent relative to the region’s historical data—and is worth celebrating—but this has not been effectively conveyed to/understood by audiences.
- The high cost or inconvenience of public transportation can be a disincentive across the region; it is often cheaper or more convenient to drive.
- The general public perceives transportation as a way to get to work or for other movement — not as a driver of air quality.
- Science suggests that Washington region’s ozone levels may be significantly related to wind-driven movement of ozone and its precursors (referred to as transport) from areas outside of our Region.
- The public conflates air quality and climate change/greenhouse gases. When MWAQC’s work began, the region’s air was literally a visible reminder of the urgent need to address air quality. Today, however, climate change dominates the conversation. Any outreach to the public or policymakers must clearly connect air quality and human health.
- Constituent and stakeholder priorities may not always match with MWAQC’s priorities. For instance, health care professionals care about the number of Code Orange or Red days, and area residents want what they believe will make life easier now, e.g.:
  - Another lane on a highway
  - No localized flooding in a heavy rain.
- Policy change/legislation is often driven by public demand for action.
- Behavior change campaigns can work by driving people to take new action, but change takes time.
- While it will be important to push back against federal rollbacks in air quality standards, local governments can step in as collaborative problem-solvers.
- Local jurisdictions need assistance in identifying solutions that work *for them*.
- Data and science should drive decisions, but data is not always easy to get, particularly local data.
- Emerging technologies may mitigate some of the anticipated challenges around area growth, federal regulation rollbacks, climate change—but we have yet to see what the “down side” might be.
- Affects on economy and workforce should also be considered in decision making.
- All residents can’t afford to make changes that are needed.

#### *Mapping MWAQC’s Why, What, and How*

The afternoon’s facilitated discussion allowed participants to build on the morning’s scenario discussion to map their intended “why,” “what,” and “how,” i.e.:

- Why is MWAQC’s work important?
- What does MWAQC and its members do?
- How does MWAQC and its members do it?

By distinguishing between these three questions, participants were able to move from a “40,000-foot view” to the “close up shot” to consider potential strategic directions. Notes were again captured by MWAQC staff and on flip chart, and a summary of highlights for each section includes:

MWAQC’s Why (Our work is important in order to...)

- Be grounded in scientific findings to protect human health and the public welfare. Respond to federal regulatory or policy changes that may negatively impact air quality.
- Support local jurisdictions/regional governments to lead the way and influence the nation.
- Address the moral imperative of air quality needing to be provided for to protect public health.
- Fulfill mandated requirements/receive funding through transportation conformity.
- Improve the quality of life for families today—and for the next generation.
- Improve the economic competitiveness of the region.

MWAQC’s What (Going forth, we will/would like to...):

- Ground our work in science and data.
- Continue the work of air quality attainment and transportation conformity.
- Act as agents for translating science and data.
- Provide education to the public (all ages), stakeholders, and policymakers to drive behavior change.
- Take a leadership role in environmental advocacy for sound policy and legislation.
- Support voluntary local measures.
- Use the force multiplier of collaborative and cooperative purchasing.
- Become a trusted source of information.
- Evolve and adjust in a changing world.

MWAQC’s How (We can accomplish this work in these ways):

- Proactively communicate to the public, stakeholders, and policymakers to share air quality successes to date, and:
  - Clarify the distinctions and links between air quality and climate change.
  - Demonstrate how clean air leads to a better public health, which in turn leads to a better way of life for everyone.
  - Drive individual behavior change.
  - Drive policy change at the local level (e.g., development and infrastructure policy).



- Deepen existing partnerships between technical staff and local jurisdictions/regional representatives by providing:
  - Technical support on specific and viable solutions to improve local air quality.
  - Tools for communicating this work to their constituents and peers.
  - Regular local jurisdiction updates during membership meetings to identify needs, solutions.
- Improve coordination of the work of other MWCOG Committees (CEEPC, TPB, ACPAC) to de-silo and complement efforts.
- Convene needed partners in this work beyond those already at the MWAQC table (e.g.: developers, utilities).
- Respond to policy shifts (including federal rollbacks), that may have a negative impact on regional air quality.
- Identify new opportunities for air quality policies and practices that move beyond current policies and politics.
- Continue the force multiplier of collaborative purchasing in ways that improve air quality, environment (e.g., scooters, LED streetlights).
- Continue work on mandated air quality attainment.

A revised draft of the Strategic Planning Assessment was then developed to reflect these discussions and was shared with MWAQC members in early September 2019 for review and comment. A revised draft report was shared in October for additional member review.

This current version was presented at the December 18, 2019 MWAQC meeting.

## Appendix B: Strategic Planning Assessment Survey Responses

This Appendix includes full responses to the preliminary survey offered to MWAQC members from November 7-21, 2018 as a first step in the Strategic Planning Assessment process.

*Note: Identifying information from respondents was collected to ensure that responses provided a strong representative sample of MWAQC's diverse membership. No identifying information is offered in this Appendix.*

### Questions Regarding MWAQC Operations and Processes (questions 8 – 15)

#### Q. 8: Which do you find to be a more valuable and effective way of participating in MWAQC meetings?

Answer choices	Responses
In-person	43%
Via teleconference/webinar	30%
No difference	26%

#### Comments:

"I find in person to be a better way to communicate but having the other options is valuable for those who can't make the meeting."

#### Q. 9: On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is "Rarely" and 5 is "Always," how often do you find the agenda topics relevant and useful?

Rarely 1	2	3	4	Always 5
0%	1%	26%	48%	22%

#### Comments:

"If it is possible to get the documents farther in advance of the meetings that would be helpful, as they are often somewhat lengthy."

"Not sure whether any of our input is used or considered."

#### Q. 10: How would you describe your current level of involvement with MWAQC? Please consider attendance at meetings (in person or remotely), review of materials, participation in committees, etc.

Answer choices	Responses
Extremely involved	13%
Very involved	35%
Somewhat involved	44%
Not very involved	9%
Not at all involved	0%

#### Comments:

"My level of involvement has diminished due to my workload, but I still attempt to attend all meetings in person and contribute where I can."

**Q. 11: If you answered “Not very involved” or “Not at all involved” to Question 10, can you tell us why? Please check all that apply.**

Answer choices	Responses
MWAQC’s current focus does not align with the priorities of my agency/organization	0%
There is currently no time in my schedule to participate	25%
I would participate more, but MWAQC meetings are currently held at times that conflict with other responsibilities	50%
Other (please specify)	25%

**Other:** Health issues

**Q. 12: Thinking about participation in the MWAQC meetings (full membership meetings, not subcommittees), please indicate whether the following meet your needs as a member. If you respond “Does Not Meet Needs,” please tell us why in the comment box below.**

Answer choices	Meets Needs	Does Not Meet Needs
Number of meetings	100%	0%
Meeting materials	77%	23%
Presentations/briefings	86%	14%
Accessing materials/information on COG website	95%	5%
Meeting technology (A/V, teleconference system)	95%	5%

**Comments:**

“As noted earlier, more time for review would be helpful, as would notification in advance of the materials being prepared so committee members would have an opportunity to suggest content.”

“Meeting materials have sometimes been provided last minute without time for adequate review. In addition, leadership should strive to develop positions/materials that are acceptable to the entire committee.”

“Over the last year or two, meeting materials have not been provided in a timely manner to allow thorough prior review. Another troubling aspect of recent meetings is the lack of emphasis on expressing a viewpoint within MWAQC documents that is acceptable to all members. Given the tri-state nature of the area and the many local jurisdictions that are involved, leadership should strive to develop positions that are satisfactory to all members.”

“Virtually impossible to find meeting materials if you start with the MWCOG website. I can only find them if I use the link in Sunil Kumar's emails.”

“When participating remotely it is a challenge to have materials in front of me and participate as well.”

“We seem to focus on what others are doing.”

“Meeting materials should be sent as early as possible. COG Staff and Exec. Cmte should ask other members for their opinions on potential presentations/briefings.”

“I’ve never been to a full meeting.”

“Website is very user friendly and a valuable resource.”

**Q. 13: Thinking about any subcommittees on which you serve, please indicate whether the following meet your needs as a member. If you respond “Does Not Meet Needs,” please tell us why in the comment box below.**

Answer choices	Meets Needs	Does Not Meet Needs
Number of subcommittee meetings	94%	6%
Subcommittee meeting materials	83%	17%
Subcommittee presentations/briefings	94%	6%
Accessing subcommittee materials/ information on COG website	94%	6%
Subcommittee meeting technology (A/V, teleconference system)	100%	0%

**Comments:**

“Same issues as noted above; sometimes MWAQC TAC meeting materials are not distributed in a timely manner.”

“Again, materials are not provided in a timely fashion to allow review and if necessary consensus building prior to the calls.”

“Generally, the TAC meetings are very good, but they could probably be shorter and possibly less frequent. We don’t need as much detail every meeting on the ozone season and PM2.5. The slides are valuable, but we don’t need to go through each one. As a DOT rep. I feel I get caught up in some exhaustive conversations on both TAC and the emissions subcommittee that would probably be better had off-line. As an example, I recall a rather lengthy conversation relating to crematoria. Also, funding agencies, such as MDOT, are not permitted to attend the Executive Committee meetings where much of the direction for MWAQC and the Subcommittees is discussed.”

“My experience has been with email. Difficult to find [materials] on website.”

“The meetings and associated resources are well done.”

**Q. 14: Are joint meetings with the Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee beneficial to supporting MWAQC priorities?**

Answer choices	Responses
Yes	82%
No	18%

**Comments:**

“These two areas are directly linked.”

“Not really sure.”

“I haven't participated in these but believe it would be beneficial as these issues definitely impact Clean Air issues.”

“While there is some overlap for staff purposes, the missions are different, and the efforts of the committees should remain separate. The primary function of MWAQC should be to ensure that the region is meeting federal air quality standards and associated requirements.”

“I serve on both committees and I feel that there is definitely some common ground that requires collaboration.”

***Q. 15: Do you have any suggestions to improve general membership meetings, subcommittee meetings, meeting-related communications from MWAQC, and/or other relevant MWAQC operations and processes?***

**Comments:**

“More reporting on federal and international developments and more advocacy on public policy.”

“They do tend to be long and often seemed geared towards members that don't follow air quality on a daily basis as part of their job.”

“Early morning meetings or later afternoon meetings would better suit more who work full time outside of elected positions.”

“Presentations are too technical.”

“At the beginning of the year and perhaps at other times offer an opportunity (not during the meetings under new business) for members to suggest other topics for review or consideration.”

“Allow adequate time for meeting material review prior to each meeting. Strive to seek consensus on important issues, and ALL viewpoints should be represented, and not just those preferred by staff. Maintain a transparent process, and it is notable that the Chair's early departure at a recent MWAQC meeting without notifying committee members or rearranging the agenda so key topics could be addressed is a good example of the current lack-of-transparency.”

“Materials should be provided ahead of time with a reasonable review period based on the material content. If divergent opinions are noted, additional subcommittee meetings should be held to identify a consensus viewpoint prior to MWAQC meetings or TAC meetings.”

“Somehow a greater sense of urgency and import is needed for all MWAQC and related meetings.”

“Potentially having periodic reviews of MWAQC successes and opportunities at member jurisdiction meetings.”

“would like to see a direct connection or link to what the overall COG committee is doing. Don't see a thread to the main committee's work”

“In addition to the suggestions above, please send calendar appointments for all meetings. It is hard to keep track of all of the changes for MWAQC and all subcommittees. COG is great about doing this for Clean Air Partners. Boost membership participation. Use tools, like this survey, to better understand what members are looking for in terms of interesting meeting content.”

“While I know that scheduling is difficult, perhaps a better effort could be made in advance to confirm attendees and participants. This would help avoid using time at the beginning of meetings scrambling for a quorum. I understand this is unavoidable at times due to unforeseen circumstances and I do appreciate the effort.”

“Too many presentations involve reading power points to us. We can read power points ourselves -- and in half the time.”

“The earlier materials can be shared in advance, the better.”

“The meetings and associated resources are well done.”

*Questions Regarding MWAQC Priorities and Opportunities (questions 16 – 21)*

**Q. 16: On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is “Not a problem at all” and 5 is “A very big problem,” how do you rate the current state of the region’s air quality?**

Not a problem at all					A very big problem
1	2	3	4		5
0%	21%	50%	25%		4%

**Q. 17: On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is “Does not align with my organization” and 5 is “Highly aligns with my organization,” how does the current work of MWAQC align with your organization’s air quality priorities or mission?**

Does not align with my organization					Highly aligns with my organization
1	2	3	4		5
0%	17%	21%	21%		42%

**Comments:**

“Recently I have been pushing for MWAQC to take stronger stands. As a result I find that MWAQC aligns with my council's goals and my own goals.”

“NASEO is concerned about energy-emissions nexus; both criteria and greenhouse gases are pertinent (add in HAPs too).”

“The direction that MWAQC took this year to focus on veritably unachievable goals at the behest of the Chair (like zero ozone action days) was troubling.”

**Q. 18: MWAQC’s FY 2019 Work Program includes the following program areas: emissions inventory development; SIP/multi-sector strategy development; local measures; transportation conformity/mobile emissions analysis; and, public participation. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is “Low importance” and 5 is “High importance,” how would you rate each action that supports the core areas?(NOTE: The FY2019 Work Program and Budget can be found as Item #3 in the May 24, 2018 meeting materials on this page: <https://www.mwcoq.org/events/2017/5/24/metropolitan-washington-air-quality-committee-mwaqc/>)**

	Low importance		3	High importance	
	1	2		4	5
Review and respond to TPB’s transportation conformity analyses.	4%	4%	21%	38%	33%
Develop and adopt air quality plans including emissions inventories and budgets.	0%	0%	0%	38%	62%
Address designation and data for the federal ozone standard.	13%	0%	4%	58%	25%
Track data for federal standards for fine particles, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, and lead.	13%	0%	8%	58%	21%
Facilitate resolution of inter-jurisdictional policy issues.	8%	0%	33%	29%	29%
Provide for a public participation program (Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee).	0%	0%	58%	33%	8%

**NOTE:**

To assess the true value of these findings, scores of “4” and “5” were combined to identify members’ highest priorities. In this manner, the following preferences emerge:

**Percent of responses listed as a “4” or “5”**

1. Develop and adopt air quality plans.	100%
2. Address designations and data for the federal ozone standard.	95%
3. Track data for federal standards.	92%
4. Review and respond to TPBs transportation conformity analysis.	70%
5. Facilitate resolution of inter-jurisdictional policy issues.	60%
6. Provide for a public participation program (Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee).	42%

**Q. 19: In addition to core areas of focus, we are interested in identifying additional priorities/opportunities to improve regional air quality that are of value and interest to members. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is "Low importance" and 5 is "High importance," how would you rate each of these potential priorities/opportunities?(NOTE: Some of these may have already been identified in the July 2018 What We Can Do draft plan. If you wish to review this document, it is archived as Item #2 in the July 25, 2018 meeting materials and can be found on this page: [https://www.mwcoq.org/events/2018/?F\\_committee=120.](https://www.mwcoq.org/events/2018/?F_committee=120.))**

	Low importance			High importance	
	1	2	3	4	5
Promote regionwide electric vehicle infrastructure and electric mobility.	0%	12%	25%	21%	42%
Expand green electricity generation and storage through battery incentives and green power purchasing programs.	0%	18%	18%	36%	27%
Support enhanced land use, tree canopy, building efficiency and renewable energy programs.	0%	17%	22%	26%	35%
Support the transition to cleaner on-road and non-road heavy-duty diesel equipment.	0%	13%	13%	22%	52%
Implement anti-idling campaign for trucks, tour buses, and school buses.	4%	9%	17%	26%	43%
Facilitate community monitoring initiatives (citizen science projects using low-cost sensors).	17%	12%	38%	29%	4%
Advocate for federal clean air policies.	0%	4%	29%	25%	42%



Communicate to regional leaders and the public on the need for actions improve air quality.	0%	4%	13%	52%	30%
---	----	----	-----	-----	-----

**NOTE:**

To assess the true value of these findings, scores of “4” and “5” were combined to identify members’ highest priorities. In this manner, the following preferences emerge:

	<b>Percent of responses listed as a “4” or “5”</b>
1. Communicate to leaders, public on actions to improve air quality.	83%
2. Support the transition to cleaner diesel equipment.	74%
3. Implement anti-idling campaign for trucks and buses.	70%
4. Advocate for federal clean air policies.	67%
5. Expand green electricity generation and storage.	64%
6. Promote electric vehicle infrastructure and electric mobility.	62%
7. Support enhanced land use, tree canopy, building efficiency and renewable energy programs.	61%
8. Facilitate community monitoring initiatives such as citizen science.	33%

**Q. 20: Is your organization addressing any other air quality issues that MWAQC is not currently addressing or are not listed in either question 18 or 19? If so, would you recommend that MWAQC consider addressing them?**

**Comments:**

“More time with public and alternative regional transit.”

“Transportation is the main issue in the DC area, particularly public transit. How MWAQC could address this is unclear but should be discussed.”

“Takoma Park has identified working to ensure that development projects are more environmentally sustainable as a priority. It’s a topic that WMAQC should consider working on.”

“Some overlap but some differences: 1. We’ve worked on promoting recognition/consideration of end-use energy efficiency in SIPs and other CAA planning and compliance; 2. We work to enhance communications between energy offices, air quality regulators, and PUCs; 3. We’ve worked on RE-grid integration; 4. we’re increasing working on grid-interactive topics (building-to-grid, EV charging), distribution planning, distributed energy resource interactions (EE, DR/load management, DG, storage, microgrids)—which impact both onsite and EGU emissions. Also linkages among energy efficiency, distributed energy resources, and energy resilience (reducing grid and system stresses and providing service and survivability during outages).”

“The DC Council is currently working to pass the CleanEnergy DC Omnibus Amendment Act of 2018. This would make the District a national leader in the effort to fight climate change. I

encourage MWAQC to review the legislation and work with other member jurisdictions on advancing similar policies: <http://lms.dccouncil.us/Download/40667/B22-0904-Introduction.pdf>”

**Q. 21: What else would you like to share that might help shape MWAQC’s Strategic Planning Assessment?**

**Comments:**

“MWAQC should make sure the science is right and then engage fearlessly in public communication, public education and advocacy.”

“Transportation is the biggest contributor to air quality issues in the area and we need to be strong on that subject.”

“Stay focused on existing core functions and advocate for more local actions in the transportation sector. Work closely with the State’s/District’s air agencies on their federal and Clean Air Act mandates to realize synergies from their work, and to avoid duplication of effort (by COG/MWAQC) for maximizing the value of scarce financial resources.”

“Where needed and appropriate, MWAQC should focus their efforts on obtaining COST-EFFECTIVE emission reductions EQUALLY from ALL emission sources (point, area, mobile, and non-road).”

“Linking environmental sustainability and resilience will continue to grow in salience.”

“No major or significant pieces of advice. Keep up the good work!”

“MWAQC should be more of a resource for jurisdictions. A place where new ideas and best practices are gathered and researched, and information made available to the regional jurisdictions and the public.”

“Develop strategies for localities to reduce area sources of emissions for criteria air pollutants.”