



METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON AIR QUALITY COMMITTEE (MWAQC)

February 27, 2019
12 P.M. – 2 P.M.
Kirby Training Center

Chairman: Dan Snyder, City of Falls Church

DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY

MWAQC MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES (*VIA PHONE)

Michelle Davis-Younger, City of Manassas
Tom Dernoga, Prince George's County
Michael DeMarco, City of Fairfax (Vice Chair)*
Peter Kovar, City of Takoma Park
Leta Mach, City of Greenbelt
Del Pepper, City of Alexandria
Hans Riemer, Montgomery County*
Dave Snyder, City of Falls Church (Chair)*
Deni Taveras, Prince George's County*
Brandon Todd, District of Columbia (Vice Chair)

Tom Ballou, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality*
Cecily Beall, District of Columbia Department of Energy and Environment
Paolo Belita, Prince William County*
Tamara Blake-Wallace, Calvert County*
Alex Brun, Maryland Department of the Environment*
Joshua Fleitman, District of Columbia
Dawn Hawkins-Nixon, Prince George's County Department of the Environment*
Doris McLeod, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality*
Jim Ponticello, Virginia Department of Transportation*
Kari Snyder, Maryland Department of Transportation
Ram Tangirala, District of Columbia Department of Energy and Environment*
Tamara Toles O'Laughlin, ACPAC Chair
Colleen Turner, Maryland Department of Transportation*

OTHERS (*VIA PHONE)

Alexandra Catena, District of Columbia Department of Energy and Environment*
Joseph Jakuta, District of Columbia Department of Energy and Environment*
Jean Synodinos, Synodinos Consulting*

COG STAFF

Amanda Campbell, COG Environmental Programs
Maia Davis, COG Environmental Programs

Reasonable accommodations are provided upon request, including alternative formats of meeting materials.
Visit www.mwacog.org/accommodations or call (202) 962-3300 or (202) 962-3213 (TDD).

Jen Desimone, COG Environmental Programs
Paul Desjardin, Director, COG Community Planning and Services
Sunil Kumar, COG Environmental Programs
Erin Morrow, COG Department of Transportation Planning
Jane Posey, COG Department of Transportation Planning
Kanti Srikanth, Director, COG Department of Transportation Planning
Dusan Vuksan, COG Department of Transportation Planning
Steve Walz, Director, COG Environmental Programs

1. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD, APPROVE MINUTES, CHAIR'S REMARKS

Dave Snyder, MWAQC Vice Chair; Brandon Todd, MWAQC Vice Chair

Chair Snyder called the meeting to order at 12:06pm via conference phone and deferred to Vice Chair Todd to lead the meeting as Mr. Snyder was unable to attend in person. There were no public comments. Attendees in the room and on the phone introduced themselves. The December meeting summary was approved as written.

2. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Brandon Todd, MWAQC Vice Chair, All MWAQC Members

A. MWAQC Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

MWAQC's Technical Advisory Committee advises and assists MWAQC in planning for and maintaining the region's air quality. TAC members, consisting of state environmental and transportation agencies and local representatives and stakeholders, conducts technical work related to regional air quality plans and discusses the region's response to air quality challenges and opportunities.

Brian Hug, TAC Chair

- TAC met on February 19 and discussed issues related to the development of the emissions inventory to meet the 2015 ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS).
- TAC is finalizing a suite of technical questions for EPA including which base year the region could choose to meet requirements.
- TAC provided feedback on a draft comment letter to EPA involving the Mercury and Air Toxics Standard (MATS) rule. The proposed rule contains a revised cost-benefit calculation method that does not account for particulate matter co-benefits. MWAQC's executive committee will review and approve the letter so that it can be submitted by the April 8 deadline.
- TAC also discussed anti-idling campaigns and policies, including Clean Air Partners' 'Turn Your Engine Off' campaign, Maryland's Idle-Free Maryland, and measures to reduce idling from construction vehicles.

B. Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee (ACPAC)

COG's Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee membership is comprised of environmentally engaged individuals who live or work in the region. ACPAC advises MWAQC on air quality issues and COG's Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee on climate and energy issues.

Tamara Toles O'Laughlin, ACPAC Chair

Ms. Toles O'Laughlin introduced herself as the recently elected Chair of ACPAC. The new Vice Chair is Hilary Lewis. Additional new members this year include Patrick Raheer, Guillermo Ortiz, and Tara Failey. ACPAC's priorities this year include the annual Climate & Energy Leadership Awards, which is accepting applications beginning Earth Day, April 22. ACPAC is supportive of the region's efforts in continuing to reduce air pollution, and the consideration of equity in air quality and energy policies. ACPAC plans to discuss a broad range of topics this year such as energy storage and environmental health.

C. Clean Air Partners (CAP)

Clean Air Partners is a public-private partnership educating the greater metropolitan Baltimore-Washington region about the health risks of poor air quality.

Jennifer Desimone, COG staff and Clean Air Partners Managing Director

- The CAP annual air and climate Poster Contest is open for submissions from local students in grades 4-8 through March 22.
- Again this year, CAP will be involved in ten local science fairs throughout the region. Projects relating to air quality and climate will be evaluated to win a CAP sponsored community award. Fairs include Baltimore, Fairfax, Alexandria, Falls Church and Arlington, Frederick, Montgomery, Prince George's, Prince Williams County and Washington D.C.
- CAP will launch its summer campaign with a highly visible awards recognition event on May 22. The event will feature high-level speakers and recognize student winners from the poster contest.
- The summer campaign will include street teams that will be deployed to engage with people at targeted events and educate the public on simple actions they can take to improve air quality. CAP will hold the 5th Breathe Easy concert promotion where residents are asked to take action to improve the air for a chance to win a pair of concert tickets. The Media Campaign will include paid radio advertising, in-kind advertising with transit agencies, and social media.
- CAP is planning a Residential Lawnmower Exchange event for 2020. Residents will be able to trade in their gas-powered mowers and purchase electric models at a deep discount. Stay tuned for more details.

3. LOCAL AND STATE UPDATES

Local Members and State Air Agencies

- A. Virginia: No report.
- B. District of Columbia: No report
- C. Maryland: No report

4. AIR QUALITY & TRANSPORTATION PLANNING IN METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON

A. Air Quality Planning

Steve Walz, COG DEP Director

COG's air quality program was formed to address critical pollutants and develop region-wide plans to help the region meet requirements under the Clean Air Act. The EPA defines criteria pollutant standards based on the need to protect public health and the environment. COG provides a forum for the states to coordinate on state implementation plans, emissions inventories, and maintenance plans. MWAQC contains several subcommittees that meet when needed. The [Air Quality Trends](#) report contains brief, understandable descriptions of the air pollutants relevant to the metropolitan Washington region and the region's status in meeting EPA's requirements. The [Clean Air Partners](#) website contains information on air quality data, infographics, how to sign up for Air Alerts (including an app), and additional resources.

Air monitors are located throughout the region. Air quality code levels are determined by a metric called the Air Quality Index. If one or more monitors reads in the poor air quality range, the entire region is considered out of attainment. For example, if one monitor shows code orange-level air pollution, a code orange air quality designation is issued for the region. Pollution comes from various sources including:

- Biogenic (some tree species produce volatile organic compounds)

- area sources such as dry cleaners or auto painting service centers,
- on-road mobile sources such as transportation vehicles
- off-road sources such as lawnmowers, air travel, or boats, and
- point sources such as powerplants.

The main pollutant of concern in the region, ground-level ozone, is formed when nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds react in the presence of sunlight and heat. Meteorology – temperature, wind speed and direction, and humidity – also sets the stage for whether or not poor air quality develops. In the metropolitan Washington region nitrogen oxide emissions are the main pollutant contributor to poor air quality during the summer months (known as the ‘ozone season’) and fine particles can contribute to code yellow days in the winter months.

In the last 20 years, the region has dramatically improved air quality. Code red days in the heat of summer were once common and are now rare. The region previously met the air quality standards and is in compliance for fine particles and other critical pollutants, but ozone remains an issue.

The region is designated ‘marginal non-attainment’ for ozone. Although a full air quality state implementation plan is not required, an emissions inventory must be submitted by 2020, and the region needs to meet air quality standards (staying at or below 70 parts per billion ozone concentrations) by 2021.

The ozone standard tightened in recent years due to concerns about the effect of air pollution on public health. Although the region has made remarkable progress in reducing ozone, further improvements are becoming more challenging. The region faces increasing population and more frequent heat waves due to climate change. There are increasing concerns that changes in federal standards may make reaching the standard more difficult. Given these challenges, the region may be bumped up to ‘moderate’ non-attainment for ozone, which would require the region to develop a full state implementation plan that demonstrates how additional actions will bring the region into compliance. The region could request an extension to meet the standard, but the region would still need to be showing progress. The next two summers’ air quality levels will determine which path the region will need to take.

COG’s climate and energy program supports area governments’ climate and energy work by hosting trainings, workshops, and associated committee meetings, inviting expert speakers, seeking grants, developing partnerships, advocacy, and promoting peer learning and networking. The 2020 Climate and Energy Action Plan contains goals and targets to guide the region. COG and the Air & Climate Public Advisory Committee run an annual Climate & Energy Leadership Awards program. Many actions to reduce greenhouse gases, such as increasing energy efficiency, renewable energy, electric vehicles, and smart growth also help improve air quality by reducing emissions from mobile sources and powerplants. The presentation slides contain additional information and links to resources.

B. Addressing Air Quality in Transportation Planning

Kanti Srikanth, COG DTP Director

The Transportation Planning Board (TPB) is a separate and independent organization from COG – TPB staff share offices with COG but have different administrative and financial support. TPB works closely with COG on several areas including climate change and air quality. The Climate, Energy and Environment Policy Committee coordinates with the transportation program on voluntary climate and energy policies. On the air quality side, Air Quality Conformity assessments are calculated to ensure that transportation plans are aligned with air quality regulations. TPB staff calculates the transportation contributions of regional emissions in coordination with COG air quality staff.

The TPB compiles transportation projects that state and local governments submit into Long-Range Transportation Plans and Transportation Improvement Plans. Transportation engineering staff then model future emissions to ensure they continue to remain within air quality requirements. COG's Planning and Community Services department provides the jurisdictions with jobs and housing forecasts to help with planning. In turn, every five years state and local governments estimate future development based on local Master Plans and Comprehensive Plans.

For example, in the 2008 ozone maintenance plan, TPB analysis of current and future transportation emissions helped to demonstrate attainment over the next 20 years. Emissions from the transportation sector are expected to continue to decline due to smart growth, transportation-oriented development, teleworking, commuter policies, and federal, state and local regulations, policies, and investments in sustainable transportation. If federal fuel economy standards change, it would impede the region's ability to meet air quality standards. If the region fails to meet air quality standards on an adequate timeline, federal transportation funding could be withheld.

The TPB Vision and the Transportation Priorities Plan were developed as aspirational guidance to define the region's goals including recommendations on environmental stewardship.

Discussion revolved around a few planned transportation projects and ways to influence the planning process to steer the region towards more environmentally sustainable outcomes. Mr. Walz and Mr. Srikanth advised getting involved in local decision-making earlier in the planning process. Once projects are proposed at COG, most of the decision-making has already occurred. Still, projects of regional significance are discussed at TPB meetings, and in some cases, qualified approval has been given, such as the I66 widening project. Virginia modified the plans as a result. Another example of TPB actions is that the board asked for an HOV exception on one Maryland toll road project.

Mr. Walz shared some of the potential actions localities in the region can take to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality, such as requiring buildings below the energy star score average to improve over time and incentivizing battery storage in place of diesel back-up generators. Reducing emissions from transportation is becoming more challenging as the less expensive, less difficult improvements have already been implemented. Still, opportunities exist such as increased vehicle electrification, concentrating development in accessible, high-density activity centers, and preserving urban trees and remaining forestland. There may be some ability to encourage powerplants to run emissions control technologies beyond requirements and to continue to work towards Good Neighbor activities to reduce upwind emissions produced outside the region.

5. MWAQC STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Jean Synodinos, Synodinos Consulting

As part of the FY 2019 Work Plan, a preliminary strategic assessment survey was conducted with members and alternates of MWAQC and its subcommittees. A facilitated discussion was held during the December 2018 committee meeting. The final recommendations that were developed as an outcome of the December meeting are included in the report posted on the meeting website. General operations recommendations include holding an MWAQC orientation or 101 meeting annually, ensuring that meeting materials are clear and understandable, keeping technical work at the Technical Advisory Committee- level wherever possible.

Recommended logistical improvements include sharing calendar invites, consistently providing meeting materials one week in advance of meetings, and looking into web hosting or video conferencing as staff resources allow.

The third recommendation involves responding to the need to re-define MWAQC's purpose and mission to more clearly represent current priorities and focus areas as identified by members and the region. Mr. Walz said that staff plans to arrange a meeting with MWAQC leadership to develop a process for re-defining MWAQC's purpose and role.

6. ADJOURN

Meeting Documents:

<https://www.mwcog.org/events/2019/2/27/metropolitan-washington-air-quality-committee/>