



## AIR AND CLIMATE PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

July 20, 2020  
5:30 P.M. - 7:30 P.M.

### DRAFT TELECONFERENCE MEETING SUMMARY

**ACPAC ATTENDEES:** Tiziana Bottino, Kelly Crawford, Tara Failey, Janet Gingold, Gretchen Goldman, Raphael Isaac, Michael Knapp, Hilary Lewis, Robin Lewis, Sarah Mazur, Guillermo Ortiz, Hyon Rah, Ron Rodriguez, Rodney Sobin, Gabriel Thoumi, Glenna Tinney

**COG STAFF:** Leah Boggs, Katie Dyer, Brian LeCouteur, Tim Masters, Lindsay Smith, Steve Walz

#### 1. CALL TO ORDER, INTRODUCTIONS, MEETING SUMMARY APPROVAL

*Hilary Lewis, Vice Chair*

The meeting was called to order, introductions were made, and the May 18, 2020 ACPAC meeting summary was approved.

Steve Walz announced that the July 22 CEEPC meeting will be focused on the 2030 Climate and Energy Action Plan.

Hyon Rah will be moderating a climate resiliency session for real estate investors on August 5. Tommy Wells, Director of the District Department of Energy and Environment, and a representative with Eagle Bank will be presenting.

#### 2. REGIONAL RESILIENCY AND ADAPTATION EFFORTS

*Katie Dyer, COG Staff*

COG has historically focused on climate mitigation and emergency response coordination. Resiliency is currently being addressed through multiple avenues at COG, including the Climate, Energy and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC), NCR Homeland Security Executive Committee (HSEC), and related technical committees including the Regional Emergency Support Function (RESF) #12 – Energy.

The 2030 Climate and Energy Action Plan recommends a resilience goal to be a “Climate Ready” region by 2030 and climate resilient by 2050. Climate Ready is defined as:

- Local climate risks have been assessed and climate planning is incorporated into all government plans.
- Climate risks are being communicated across governmental offices and to the public, with a particular emphasis on engaging potentially vulnerable populations.
- Climate planning is actively being incorporated into government operations.
- All communities are undertaking implementation strategies to mitigate risks.

Regional resilience measures are delineated into 15 broad categories that include information sharing, integrated training series, regional public education and equitable energy access. Equity is integrated throughout all the categories as well.

Regional integration and education outreach are two primary examples of actionable measures that will help move us towards enhanced local and regional capacity to address climate risks and improved communication methods of climate risks to vulnerable communities. Through this process, COG recognizes that vulnerable populations are most at risk for climate impacts and that building partnerships with community groups and regional coordination on best practices would be beneficial.

Climate Risk & Vulnerability Assessment framework delineates climate hazards into 6 types:

- Coastal Flooding
- Flooding (Flash and Riverine)
- Extreme Heat Days
- Drought
- Extreme Winter Conditions
- Lightning/Thunderstorm

The two-day 2030 planning session facilitated by the GCoM experts in November 2019 resulted in assessing the climate hazards based on the degree of probability, consequence and risk. The impact of extreme heat on sectors and services including energy, public health and transport were evaluated based on magnitude of future risk.

COG continues to work with its regional partners and stakeholders to share information and to reach the 2030 and 2050 resilience goals. Currently underway is the Resilience Regional Data Collection effort to update an inventory of local resilience efforts, developing a workplan to effectively collect data and understand and address gaps in the region. The American Geophysical Union's Thriving Earth Exchange program is providing technical support to Takoma Park and Frederick and Montgomery Counties.

### Discussion

Rodney Sobin expressed the role microgrids play in resiliency. MEA issued planning grants for resiliency hubs which makes it easier for projects to incorporate microgrids and backup power storage. Another example is Montgomery County's public safety headquarters that has a microgrid.

### **3. COG'S TREE CANOPY SUBCOMMITTEE WORK PLAN**

*Brian LeCouteur, COG Staff*

*Michael Knapp, Chair, Regional Tree Canopy Management Committee*

COG's Regional Tree Canopy Workgroup (RTCW) was an ad-hoc committee formed to develop strategies, tactics and recommendations that could be used to conserve and manage regional tree and forest resources in support of environmental, land use planning and regulatory and socio-economic goals.

Initially, the RTCW efforts centered around the development of a credited tree canopy measure for air quality plans. The focus expanded to develop strategies and recommendations that support a broader set of regional environmental and planning goals. Ten recommendations and the Tree Canopy Management Strategy Report were presented to CEEPC in 2013 and 2018, respectively.

The overall goal of the 2018 strategy report was to conserve tree and forest assets in a manner that maximizes the ability of those resources to deliver vital environmental, economic, social, health and aesthetic benefits and to minimize its inherent risks. Three key recommendations of the report were extracted from the original 10 RTCW recommendations:

1. Encourage COG member jurisdictions to conserve and expand urban forests
2. Establish an on-going forest policy committee
3. Align regional urban forestry initiatives and metrics with the Region Forward

In September 2018, RTCW presented the report to ACPAC. In January 2019, CEEPC approved the resolution to take to the COG Board the formation of a regional tree canopy committee. In February 2019, the COG Board endorsed establishing the Regional Tree Canopy Subcommittee for a two-year period ending in December 2020 with the option to extend.

The Subcommittee strategies include examining local tree-related policies and ordinances for opportunities to enhance and strengthen tree preservation policies and establishing attainable canopy goals at regional and local scales using existing goals and efforts as examples.

In January 2020 the Subcommittee published The Tree Canopy Cookbook. The “recipes” are separated into two categories: “Essential Recipes” that represent the “must have” features and “Side Dishes” that represent a variety of features that localities may find useful in addressing specific conditions or concerns.

Next steps for the Subcommittee are:

- A report on the status of regional tree canopy
- Develop metrics for evaluating regional success
- Identifying strategic tree planting programs

### Discussion

Glenna Tinney asked about the level of receptivity of the VA jurisdictions. The report is intended to be a policy document that would provide examples for the local governments to use. VA jurisdictions have been very participatory in this current process, as well as in previous committee or work group iterations. The recommendations and report are made to be universal, lending itself to broad use. Glenna Tinney cautioned being overly optimistic of VA receptivity as the process has just started. Steve Walz noted that VA is less aggressive than MD; however, Arlington is leading an effort to put the recommendations and other strategies in place.

## **4. IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON FOOD AND AGRICULTURE SUPPLY CHAINS**

*Lindsay Smith, COG Staff*

COG staff has been coordinating the Regional Agricultural Work Group since 2006. It was reinvigorated into the broader Regional Food Systems Program in 2016. Based on the 2017 agricultural census, the COG region has over 480,000 acres of farmland.

Prior to COVID, there were a declining number of farmers and farms. There also was a decline in production levels in dairy and agricultural support services. The beef industry has also seen a decline while grain production is dominating. The on-farm craft beverage and agritourism industries are growing.

Sectors are experiencing varied impacts during COVID. CSAs are seeing record levels in sales, while food insecurity has significantly increased. Local and regional investments, like The Mid-Atlantic Food Resilience & Access Coalition, are supporting systemic approaches to address the food insecurity issues.

During COVID, the regional food systems program is monitoring the food supply chain through weekly and biweekly calls with local leaders. The Ag Task Force is working with an equity lens to support food banks and pantries, financial contributions and leaders of color in the ag industry.

The next step is the formation of a Food and Agricultural Ad-Hoc Committee.

### Discussion

Leah Boggs asked if the decline in the beef and dairy industry is partly due to the growing adoption of plant-based diets. A regional specific per capita consumption data level is difficult to ascertain. Milk in the metropolitan Washington region (including PA) is for fluid milk, rather than cheese, yogurt, etc. The regional consumption trend likely follows the national consumption trend for declining milk consumption and there might be some impact. The milk pricing market is a big driver that could be causing the decline.

### **5. MEMBER TIME**

There were no member presentations or comments.

The Vice Chair recognized Raphael Isaac, who presented results of his UC Davis dissertation research, which explored the costs, environmental benefits, and challenges of fuel alternatives to diesel fuel for rail applications.

### **6. MEETING ADJOURNED**

*Hilary Lewis, Vice Chair*

The meeting adjourned at 7:35. The next ACPAC meeting is September 21.