



AIR AND CLIMATE PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ACPAC)

March 18, 2024
5:30 P.M. – 7:30 P.M.

Webinar information provided to members via email.

Chair: Julie Kimmel

DRAFT TELECONFERENCE MEETING SUMMARY

ACPAC ATTENDEES: Julie Kimmel, William Marsh, James Wang, Jacqueline Norris, Peter Mecca, Mark Rodeffer, William Washburn, Herb Simmens, Deborah Shprentz, Ian Marcus, Chris Tandy, Greg Farley, Jack Lyman, Matt Gravatt, Deeohn Ferris, Audrey Nwaze

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES: Tad Aburn

COG STAFF: Leah Boggs, Kelsey Boatwright, Jeff King, Sunil Kumar

5:35 P.M. 1. CALL TO ORDER, INTRODUCTIONS, MEETING SUMMARY APPROVAL AND ANNOUNCEMENTS
Julie Kimmel, Chair

The meeting was called to order by Chair Julie Kimmel. The meeting had a quorum (16 members) and the January 2023 meeting summary was approved. An amendment was called by Deborah Shprentz to move Agenda Item 4: Climate and Energy Recommendations Discussion up to Item 3 and move New Member (Re-) Orientation to the last agenda item. Motion to move Item 4 (Climate and Energy Recommendations Discussion) up for the March meeting agenda was made and seconded. There were 15 in favor and 1 no.

Leah Boggs gives two announcements about the 2024 Climate and Energy Leadership Awards Program and the EJ (Environmental Justice) Toolkit Update.

2024 Climate and Energy Leadership Awards Program:

- Campaign will begin in April on Earth Day
- Program has been in effect since 2014.
- Exploring the possibility of sponsorship to be able to give a tangible award, potentially monetary, to an awardee. COG is exploring the legalities of this but most likely won't take effect until 2025.
- Applications close end of June and ceremony for winners is held at the COG board meeting in October.

EJ Toolkit:

- In January, Leah reported COG issued a task order to secure consultants on three projects.
- Items included a task for the EJ Sub-committee, the EJ Toolkit update and for Clean Air Partners.
- The EJ Toolkit was initially created in 2017 by ACPAC as a resource to help better serve communities and promote environmental justice.
- ACPAC has decided to create an update to the original 2017 toolkit. (Note: This priority has already been approved. The 2017 EJ Toolkit will be updated in the 2024 year.)
- There were no responses to the task order COG put out in January for the EJ Toolkit portion– COG is now looking to add the EJ Update to the task for the EJ Subcommittee.
- They would still be two different tasks, but they could potentially be worked on simultaneously.

5:45 P.M. 2. STAFF UPDATES
Julie Kimmel, Chair
Jeff King, COG Staff

Jeff King provides updates on the regional Tree Canopy Subcommittee (RTSC) and the EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) Program.

Tree Canopy Subcommittee:

- **Background:** Tree canopy work previously started in 2008. In 2009, the Climate, Energy and Environmental Policy (CEEPC) Committee was formed and set up the tree canopy working group. In 2019, a formal subcommittee was formed and began to determine a tree canopy goal for the region.
- **Update:** New data from the Chesapeake Bay program has provided strong satellite data that has allowed COG to analyze robust datasets for 2017-2018, allowing COG to understand tree loss and gain in the region to be just below 50%.
- **COG seeks to adopt a regional goal to maintain 50% tree canopy coverage – will take to CEEPC and the COG Board of Directors for approval.**
- **Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) Update:**
 - COG, with help of consultant, has performed vast work on this grant program between October-February
 - The Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP) was submitted March 1, 2024.
 - All four climate action plans are available for the region. Links shared.
 - COG is now working on the Implementation Grant proposal with consultants and coordinating with two institutions in VA, DC, and MD.
 - COG is committed to submitting the proposal to EPA by April 1st.

PCAP Links:

COG PCAP: <https://www.mwcog.org/documents/2024/03/01/priority-climate-action-plan/>

Maryland PCAP:

<https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/air/ClimateChange/CLIMATE%20POLLUTION%20GRANTS/State%20of%20Maryland%20CPRG%20Priority%20Climate%20Action%20Plan%20%28PCAP%29.pdf>

Virginia PCAP:

<https://www.deq.virginia.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/22732/63845147622279080>

DC PCAP: <https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-03/dc-cprg-pcap.pdf>

Discussion:

- Question from member if there will be an opportunity to assist in climate planning for the Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP) – next deliverable of CPRG.
- Answered that there will be a lot of opportunity but will defer to chair and staff on how.
- Suggestion that members may need to split time between Toolkit update, Action Plan and CCAP.
- How can region engage with and solve climate issues related to data centers?
- Built environment, hydrogen and renewable gas may be part of solution.

6:05 P.M. **4. CLIMATE AND ENERGY RECOMMENDATIONS DISCUSSION**

Julie Kimmel, Vice Chair

Leah Boggs, COG Staff

Members from the appointed Climate and Energy Recommendations working group present and discuss opportunity to form recommendations. Discussion held among members and staff.

Presentation:

- Workgroup recently met to discuss the recommendation of a stronger climate goal recommendation.
- Members emphasized climate may be getting out of control as temperatures continue to rise - wildfires are just one example.
- Climate change both a climate issue and environmental justice issue.
- Members expressed call for COG staff to reassess business the past year, including agendas, plans, budgets, etc.
- Committee requests COG to examine latest climate trends and report back within short period of time.
- Stated that as regional climate planners, responsibility of staff to be more aggressive on taking climate action for the nation's capital, even if it includes bypassing regulations and/or other formal processes.

Discussion:

- COG staff notes that committee would need to specify what recommendation would be advanced to CEEPC. CEEPC would then decide to take to the COG board.
- Current climate COG climate goals were reaffirmed to members by COG staff.
- May be important to analyze both last year's temperate trends along with previous years.
- Comment that there is enough justification for COG to adopt stronger mitigation goals regardless of previous years' trends.
- Discussion on whether last year's temperature trends should be the main focus for recommendations or to look at previous years.
- Important to look at zip codes and create a definition of targets.
- Discussion of whether to reach targets within specific sectors or make more general.
- Member would like to see general health data in addition to zip code data included in the report.
- Need an overall framing of what ACPAC intends to put forward with some defined goals/targets of what to put forward to CEEPC.
- COG staff notes that they could give CEEPC a general idea that ACPAC intends to frame up recommendation before next CEEPC meeting.

Subcommittee in agreement on the following statements:

1. Pace of climate reductions is insufficient in region given rising global temperature trends
2. Air quality in region is getting worse due to external factors - especially wildfire smoke.

3. Some parts of region are more vulnerable than others due to specific pollution sources' presence in specific neighborhoods
4. Need to create common definition for: "carbon neutral", other terms?

Agree on specific recommendations:

- a. Aggressively increase GHG reductions in region
- b. Something about air quality
- c. Some specific recommendations:
- d. Outreach to transportation planning board about WMATA bus storage

Discussion of continued Subcommittee Members:

- Committee member Herb Simmons concerned that some thoughts from other members are different than initial vision of the climate recommendations – which may cause his resignation from subcommittee.
- Intent was to raise level of action to mitigate climate change, not be hyper specific to target sectors. Feedback inconsistent with goal of recommendation and may not be as effective.
- Chair inquires other subcommittee members intention to stay or resign.
- William Washburn stated commitment to stay on subcommittee, William Marsh undecided, James Wang will volunteer as replacement if necessary.

Next Steps:

- COG staff affirms CEEPC and MWAQC meet in May, should prepare recommendations before then for Julie as Chair to present then.
- William Washburn will lead the climate recommendations subcommittee - (not formal vote)
- COG staff recommends rolling out Climate Recommendation drafts before May.
- Since agenda was not followed this meeting, May will go into overflow of COG structure and planning framework.
- Vote to move orientation and air quality presentations to May meeting.
- Members will still receive presentation via Dropbox and should review before then.

7:20 P.M. 5. NEXT ACPAC MEETING AND ADJOURN

Chair Julie Kimmel adjourns the meeting.

- **2024 Meeting schedule** (*Virtual meeting only):
May 20, 2024*
July 15, 2024*
September 16, 2024 (Potential hybrid meeting)
November 18, 2024*

Meeting Documents:

<https://www.mwcog.org/events/2024/3/18/air-and-climate-policy-advisory-committee/>