

Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee Meeting

DRAFT WEBINAR MEETING SUMMARY: MAY 27, 2020

CEEPC MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

- Hon. Cindy Dyballa, City of Takoma Park
- Hon. Matt de Ferranti, Arlington County
- Hon. Penelope Gross, Fairfax County
- Hon. Takisha James, Town of Bladensburg
- Hon. Del Pepper, City of Alexandria
- Hon. Koran Saines, Loudoun County
- Hon. Ann Wheeler, Prince William County
- Hon. Patrick Wojahn, City of College Park
- Melissa Adams, Washington Gas
- Dr. Kambiz Agazi, Fairfax County
- Austina Casey, DDOT
- Stan Edwards, Montgomery County
- John Friedman, Washington Gas
- Stephen Gyor, DC Office of Planning
- Dawn Hawkins-Nixon, Prince George's County
- Rachel Healy, WMATA
- Kate Johnson, DOEE
- Andrew Kreider, EPA
- John Lord, Fairfax County Public Schools
- Katherine Magruder, Maryland Clean Energy Center
- Gina Mathias, City of Takoma Park
- Dale Medearis, Northern Virginia Regional Commission
- Regina Moore, Virginia Department of Transportation
- Deborah Moran, City of Gaithersburg
- Ryan Opsal, Maryland Energy Administration
- Dr. Dann Sklarew, George Mason University
- Tim Stevens, Sierra Club
- Hilari Varnadore, US Green Building Council
- Luke Wisniewski, MDE
- Edward Yim, DOEE

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES:

- Dawn Ashbacher, Frederick County

- Amanda Campbell, City of Rockville
- Eric Coffman, MEA
- Maya Dhavale, Fairfax County
- Richard Dooley, Arlington County
- Akosua Dosu, Prince George's County
- Bill Eger, City of Alexandria
- Ellen Eggerton, City of Alexandria
- Adam Friedberg, BuroHappold
- Claudia Glen, WMATA
- Kimberly Goddu-Alexander, Bethesda Green
- Mikayla Hoskins, BuroHappold Engineering
- Todd House, Washington Gas
- Mathew Lee, Cadmus
- Elissa McDade, WMATA
- Corey Miles, NVRC
- John Morrill, Arlington County
- Bill Pugh, AECOM
- Matthew Ries, DC Water
- Adam Roberts, Bethesda Green
- Kate Walker, City of Falls Church
- Doug Weisburger, Montgomery County
- Jenny Willoughby, City of Frederick

COG STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:

- Leah Boggs, COG Environmental Programs
- Maia Davis, COG Environmental Programs
- Katie Dyer, COG Environmental Programs
- Jeff King, COG Environmental Programs
- Tim Masters, COG Environmental Programs
- Erin Morrow, COG Transportation Planning
- Jane Posey, COG Transportation Planning
- Kanti Srikanth, COG Transportation Planning
- Dusan Vuksan, COG Transportation Planning
- Steve Walz, COG Environmental Programs (Director)



1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Cindy Dyballa, City of Takoma Park (filling in for Dan Sze, CEEPC Chair)

Cindy Dyballa called the webinar meeting to order. Introductions were made. Meeting minutes were approved with some abstentions: Melissa Adams, Matt de Ferranti, Penny Gross, Kathy Magruder, Deborah Moran, Koran Saines, Ann Wheeler, and Patrick Wojahn.

2. FY21 WORK PROGRAM AND BUDGET

Steve Walz, COG Director of Environmental Programs

Steve Walz presented the Regional Environmental Fund Work Program and Budget for FY21. The [Draft Work Plan](#) and [presentation](#) delineate the work program and budget by program area.

Discussion:

- COG member jurisdiction dues for the next year increase slightly. The COG Board of Directors voted on this prior to the coronavirus crisis. Dues may be re-examined in the future to allow some flexibility in light of the economic impact of the coronavirus.
- There have been challenges regarding Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for solid waste collectors. COG will look into this topic.
- The primary focus of transportation planning in the work plan is focused on electric vehicles. The Transportation Planning Board (TPB) does look at other lower carbon modes of transportation, which are included in the Regional Transportation Plan. TPB also estimates greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the Long-Range Transportation Plan and there is ongoing partnership between TPB and CEEPC. There are several programs that support local alternative transportation projects. Funding for transit mode share and technical assistance grants can fund COG assistance for specific jurisdictions.
- ICLEI forestry project being expanded to additional local jurisdictions, including Takoma Park, Bowie, and Alexandria.
- Electric bikes and bikeshare programs will be considered, with recommendations for future planning.

Action Item: Review and Approve Work Program and Budget.

- Approved unanimously.

3. COVID IMPACT ON ENERGY AND EMISSIONS

Steve Walz, COG Director of Environmental Programs

Steve Walz provided a [presentation](#) on the impacts of the COVID-19 shutdown on energy consumption and GHG emissions. Since early March, energy consumption has declined due to the shutdown of businesses, institutions, and governments. There has also been a large reduction in traffic and associated energy consumption, although this is beginning to increase again.

- COG reported data showing a 30 to 50% drop in light duty vehicle (car/truck/motorcycle) counts on I-395, I-95 and I-495 in Virginia. However, heavy duty vehicles (trucks) vehicle counts remained stable, or even slightly higher, reflecting the number of trucks continuing to deliver food and other supplies.
- The drop in traffic also resulted in a near leveling of average speed on these highways throughout the day, not seeing the normal 40 to 50% drop in average rush hour speeds.

- COG reported a 7.5 to 7.9% drop in electricity use, as reported by the PJM regional electric transmission system operator. Weekday drops, with so many offices and stores closed, were greater than weekend drops.
- COG reported a nearly 70% drop in the number of commercial flights at airports across the country.
- COG then calculated the average drop in greenhouse gas emissions from these changes. They show approximately a 16% drop on average over three months of shutdowns, which equates to approximately a 4% drop in annual emissions.

This shows both how we can make changes to meet our future greenhouse gas emission goals, as well as the challenges we face to meet the deep, long-term goals we have set.

Discussion:

- Fairfax County Public Schools electricity consumption went down by about 30 percent.
- Structural changes in the economy following the 2008-2010 financial crisis led to slightly lower electricity use afterward.
- Many large commercial buildings should reflect electricity consumption decreases, while natural gas and fuel oil will likely not show any significant changes, as they are mainly used in winter.
- The rebound of emissions will need to be monitored.
- Energy efficiency investments are down.

4. UPDATE ON LOCAL AND REGIONAL CLIMATE ACTION PLANS AND METRICS

Jeff King, COG Chief of Energy and Climate

*Maia Davis, COG Senior Environmental Planner
Member Staff*

Maia Davis provided an overview of COG's regional climate work. COG is working with the Global Covenant of Mayors. Stakeholders have met to look at goals and actions for climate action plans. COG's first regional goal of a 10 percent reduction in GHG emissions below 2005 levels by 2012 was achieved. Looking forward, there is a desire to be more aggressive in some areas and simplify other areas. The 2030 goal could be 40 to 50 percent, with the goal of carbon neutrality by 2050. The proposed resilience goal is to become a "resilient-ready" region by 2030, and fully resilient by 2050. We'll need to further define this collectively moving forward. COG wants to hear from jurisdictions, with special focus on how these goals might align with local goals and actions and what members think about these goals. COG will prepare scenarios based on these goals.

Rachel Healy, WMATA

WMATA has spent time promoting mass transit as the greenest transportation choice. Similar to the building sector, they are looking into "deep retrofits" for the transportation sector. In light of COVID-19, the need for deep energy retrofits in transportation has become more apparent. Elissa McDade is WMATA's new sustainability and resiliency coordinator and will be coordinating with COG and others regarding resilience plans.

Kate Johnson, DOEE

DOEE has provided plans on achieving carbon neutrality in DC by 2050 (50 percent by 2032). They are on target to meet the 2032 goal, but still need to do more to achieve 2050 goal. They are working on a Carbon Neutral Strategy on how to achieve this goal. COVID-19 has delayed

engagement on the strategy; however, DOEE is partnering with Empower DC to continue to engage with stakeholders virtually regarding equity. We are noticing that similar communities are both directly impacted by COVID-19 and climate change. DOEE has also created an "online story map" to engage citizens through local, lived experiences. DC can't get to carbon neutrality by 2050 on their own. There is a need for regional collaboration, especially with regard to energy generation and transportation.

Shannon Moore, Frederick County

Frederick County is working closely with COG on GHG inventories. The county is working on a new iteration of Frederick's sustainability plan. The county has worked on state goals through the Maryland Smart Energy Communities (MSEC) program. The county is also working on the installation of new solar facilities and new programs for going green and "saving green". As of 2019, the electric bus system is powered by a solar array located on nearly 14 acres at the County's landfill and it is the first electric bus fleet in the state. The county needs a climate action plan to set goals and tie into the broader community plan (Livable Frederick). The County Council is weighing in on this and has paused community engagement due to the coronavirus. Transportation is an area where there is a need for improvement. The county is certified under LEED Cities and Communities, but did not attain the transportation points. There is also a need to improve energy efficiency in the existing building stock. Frederick County's Green Homes Challenge, an online challenge, tracks emissions. There was a 19 percent GHG reduction between 2005 and 2012, but reductions have been smaller since then. The program still makes a significant difference.

Jenny Willoughby, City of Frederick

The City of Frederick just passed a resolution in line with the IPCC's recommendations. The city is now working on their Climate Action Plan with COG and are aiming to have this done by the end of the year. The city also passed energy efficiency and renewable energy resolutions, a result of which will be the purchasing of RECs for 100 percent of the city's energy consumption. The city is updating their comprehensive plan and the environment and climate piece is being added into other chapters. The city is a designated LEED City, although transportation remains a big issue. The county's Green Homes Challenge has had a great impact in the city. The city will be putting on an energy efficiency workshop in the fall (this may likely be online).

Doug Weisburger, Montgomery County

Montgomery County declared a climate emergency in 2017. The county has adopted aggressive goals, but there is a need for regional goals that are also aggressive. The county brought a group of technical experts together who provided 850 recommendations for the county to achieve its climate goals. Many of these are being used for the county's Climate Action and Resilience Plan, to be finalized next year. The county has also sent out a multi-language survey to get community input. Equity is a big piece of the planning process. The county has also set up a sustainability public art project for community members to engage in. They have also established resiliency ambassadors.

Akosua Dosu, Prince George's County

The county is working on residential energy efficiency and developing renewable energy on county property. They are also working to establish a Climate Action Plan and Committee; the resolution should pass soon. The committee would include county officials, residents, technical experts, business owners and will initially focus on disaster preparedness and critical infrastructure. They are looking to fund this through grants. Equity is an important piece of this and they are working on equity and resiliency hubs. The county is also working on zero waste initiatives, one of the programs aims at food scrap collection, which recently received a COG Climate Leadership Award. The county

needs support for promoting and expanding green buildings, water conservation measures, and reducing single occupancy vehicle trips.

Ellen Eggerton, City of Alexandria

Alexandria continues to implement the city's updated 2019 Environmental Action Plan 2040 (EAP 2040) with the aim of achieving a 50 percent reduction by 2030 and 80-100% reduction by 2050. The city passed a Climate Emergency Resolution in 2019. Virginia's Clean Economy Act, which passed this year, helps efforts to make the grid more renewable. The city's goals and targets are dependent on continued changes at the state and federal level. The city is planning an EV charging strategy, which will be completed by the fall. The city is an early adopter of EVs with six percent of the city already having an EV registered, versus 1 percent at the national level. The Energy and Climate Action Plan (ECAP) update is continuing with a task force committee with public engagement and equity, but will keep the existing replacement schedule of fleet vehicles in operation for at least another year and not replace them with EVs as planned. The city continues to implement the 2019 updated Green Building Policy and updated sustainable standard development conditions. An Environmental Health assessment is on hold due to COVID-19 priorities, but there is a mold issue in schools, which needs attention. Outreach via an Eco-City Academy that would graduate Eco-City Ambassadors was pushed to the fall and planning continues. The city is also looking at creating an online story map of the sustainable features in the city for increased community education. Department staff share sustainable tips internally in the staff newsletter, which the city plans to share with the community, as communication bandwidth is available for more than COVID-19. Open space planning and transportation mobility planning projects are continuing. Solid waste has continued successfully with glass-only collection increasing each month. Virginia does not seem ready to adopt a full model energy code yet. Additional COG support is needed for regional coordination on calculating the impact of increased teleworking and increased biking that could feed into the GHG transportation calculated numbers.

John Morrill, Arlington County

In 2019, the County Board adopted a revised Community Energy Plan (CEP) with a goal of a carbon-neutral community by 2050. The new carbon neutral CEP has intermediate GHG reduction goals (from the same 2007 baseline) of: 2020 – 42 percent, 2030 – 67 percent, 2040 – 84 percent. Careful community energy modeling indicates that achieving these goals will require meeting ambitious gains in: i) energy efficiency of buildings, ii) continued rapid decarbonization of the electric grid, iii) massive uptake of renewable electricity within the community, iv) rapid and deep electrification of transportation, and more. Still, despite modeling assumptions of breakthrough progress in these areas, the county could not credibly model a carbon neutral Arlington by 2050, given existing energy infrastructure (e.g. widespread natural gas use) and realistic 'turnover' of the vehicle stock in use. The models fall about 16 percent short of carbon neutrality. The CEP acknowledges that unforeseen breakthroughs in technology and economics are needed, and/or some residents and businesses must overcompensate for other users who fall short in decarbonization. Arlington showed the political will to adopt this aspirational goal, acknowledging the exact pathway there cannot be known today, to underscore the climate imperative and a willingness to respond to the challenge. In 2012, Arlington County joined the Better Buildings Challenge (BBC), pledging to reduce the energy intensity (energy per square foot) of county government buildings by 20 percent by 2022. This was an ambitious goal since Arlington had already been making energy improvements to its portfolio of buildings for several years. Achieving this goal has only become a possibility due to white LED lighting becoming economical. Capital improvements to a few energy-intensive facilities were approved, the county designed a low-energy (near net zero) community center, and some county programs were consolidated into more efficient facilities. In 2019, the

county's BBC portfolio stood at an 18 percent aggregate improvement. The journey has not been a straight line, but the 20 percent improvement target is within sight.

Kate Walker, City of Falls Church

The local approach to climate change communications and community/stakeholder engagement (particularly post-COVID-19);

- Environment chapter of comprehensive plan was updated, with an extensive public consultation process (special public meetings, board and commission meetings, online and library survey, pop-ups at market and in parks) from August 2018 to December 2019. Adopted February 2020.
- The chapter introduction focused on three factors that are changing fast and impacting the environment: redevelopment, population growth and climate. There was no debate around the importance of both mitigating and adapting to the changing climate.

Thoughts or encouragements related to establishing aspirational goals and targets; and/or,

- The city's goal in the Comprehensive Plan for Climate, Air and Energy is to: Enhance liveability, sustainability and resilience. Protect the community from air pollution and the effects of climate change, while reducing pollution and GHG emissions in the City. Comprehensive Plan goals in the City are very general. More specific goals are typically proposed for adoption by resolution.
- COG leadership in goal-setting is very important. e.g., GHG emissions – City adopted COG regional goals in 2017. Without COG setting the standard regionally, and providing GHG emissions data, getting this goal accepted could have been a much heavier lift.

Ideas for where regional coordination and action is particularly important.

- Environment is not limited by jurisdictional boundaries. The impacts of heat and severe weather are region-wide, and region-wide coordination is essential.
- For small jurisdictions with limited resources, the regional effort is essential support. The city adopted all of the 100 percent actions from the 2017-2020 Regional Climate & Energy Action Plan into their comprehensive plan, and will probably do something similar in developing a climate action plan.

Eric Coffman, MEA

MEA just wrapped up [Resilient Maryland](#) for FY20 and awards will be posted soon. This helps with planning and design of resiliency hubs, microgrids and resilient facilities. Anticipate the program returning next year.

Matthew Ries, DC Water

DC Water is focused on three areas: Dry Floodproofing (SLR), addressing rainfall intensity (flooding), and energy resilience (biogas and solar at Blue Plains, 1/3 and 1/4 of DC Water's energy needs, respectively).

5. ADJOURN

Cindy Dyballa, City of Takoma Park

Unfortunately, the webinar meeting came to a hard stop at 12pm. The next CEEPC meeting is scheduled for July 22.