



AIR AND CLIMATE PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

November 18, 2019
5:30 P.M. - 7:30 P.M.

DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY

ACPAC ATTENDEES (*VIA PHONE): Tara Failey, John Howes, Hilary Lewis*, Sarah Mazur, Jacqueline Norris, Guillermo Ortiz, Hyon Rah, Natalie Pien, Glenna Tinney

COG STAFF: Maia Davis, Tim Masters

1. CALL TO ORDER, INTRODUCTIONS, MEETING SUMMARY APPROVAL

The meeting was called to order, introductions were made, and the September 16 ACPAC meeting summary was approved.

2. WARD 8 WOODS

Nathan Harrington, Ward 8 Woods Director

ACPAC selected the Anacostia Coordinating Council and the Ward 8 Woods Program as a 2019 Climate and Energy Leadership Awardee. The [awards](#) were distributed at the October COG Board of Directors meeting by COG Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) Chair and City of Falls Church Council Member Daniel Sze, and COG ACPAC Chair Tamara Toles O'Laughlin. Ward 8 Woods was also recently featured on [NBC4 news](#), which has also raised awareness for the program. Nathan Harrington is the Founder and Director of Ward 8 Woods. The program focuses on the southeast neighborhoods of Washington DC.

The mission of Ward 8 Woods is to enhance and preserve the ecological health and public enjoyment of more than 500 acres of forest found in the area. Ward 8 is the least affluent portion of the District. There are about 80,000 people living in this area and more than 90 percent are African American. Thirty-two percent of families in Ward 8 fall below the official poverty line. Only 17 percent of residents are college graduates. There is some gentrification taking place. Ward 8 is unique with regard to its high proportion of green space, which is generally more typical of affluent neighborhoods.

There are examples of apartments in the communities that back up to green space where, for decades, residents have been throwing household trash into the woods behind the buildings instead of the dumpster. Private haulers are used and hauling fees are charged per dumpster and for each time the dumpster is emptied. So, there may be less dumpsters and less pick-ups than what is needed leading to trash piling up outside the dumpsters and out of sight into the woods.

Additionally, with gentrification there has been an increase in construction waste, which ends up in the woods to avoid fees associated with proper disposal. Car parts are also dumped in the woods to avoid disposal fees. There are a lot of tires being dumped in the woods. Ward 8 Woods aims to clean up the waste and preserve the hardwood forest that exists in these areas.

In 2018, Ward 8 Woods received grants from DC's Department of Energy and Environment and Office of Planning. Five people that were Ward 8 residents that were not already employed full time were employed part-time to clean up the woods. Long-term, the program intends to build on the workforce development aspect of the program. The goal is to train employees to be master naturalists and licensed foresters. The program also wants to do more environmental education and outreach to residents in the area. A concern is how improved green space may lead to greater gentrification. Preserving a healthy environment for residents is a major goal, and losing those residents due to gentrification is a major concern.

Discussion:

- COG has a team that focuses on the Anacostia watershed. They do trash surveys, ecological surveys, streambank restoration, education and outreach, and they also partner with community organizations to work on these types of programs. Additionally, COG has the Anacostia Watershed Citizens Advisory Committee (AWCAC), which serves as the citizen arm of the Anacostia Watershed Restoration Partnership (AWRP).
- The trash that is collected is picked up by DC's Department of Public Works and goes to the Fort Totten waste transfer station. Reducing use of disposable products is a big goal. Glass bottles and plastic bottles are the largest pieces of litter that is collected.
- With regard to funding, DC has made a big commitment to sustainability and there are a few funding opportunities from the District government. The bag law, which charges five cents per bag, funds these types of programs. Media coverage has been incredibly helpful and this is how Ward 8 Woods has received a lot of donations.
- There is a lot of wildlife in the area including deer, box turtles, copperhead snakes, wild turkeys, bald eagle, foxes, etc.
- Ward 8 Woods has had contact with other grassroots organizations. A challenge is balancing outreach and partnership with outside groups, as they do not want to shift the focus away from the communities in Ward 8.
- There has not been much focus on the impacts on air quality and the impact of climate change. People are primarily concerned about the litter.
- Currently, household waste and building material waste are not separated for recycling.
- The DC police have an environmental crime unit, which has caught some people illegally dumping waste in other wards. Surveillance cameras have been shown to help. Hopefully this can be implemented in Ward 8.
- Bridgestone has a tire recycling program and will be sending a truck to collect tires from Ward 8 Woods. With regard to metal recycling, this has not proven to be cost effective.
- Reaching out to waste management companies may be a good strategy moving forward.
- Ward 8 Woods is on [Facebook](#) and regularly host volunteer events.

3. ENERGY ACCESS AND VULNERABLE POPULATIONS DISCUSSION

Maia Davis, COG Environmental Programs

The Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy (GCoM) is an international alliance of cities and local governments with a shared long-term vision of promoting and supporting voluntary action to combat climate change and move to an inclusive, just, low emission, resilient society. GCoM has selected metropolitan Washington as 1 of 4 regions they are recognizing as US Metro-Scale Climate Leaders. In exchange for becoming a GCoM signatory, GCoM will provide guidance and support for developing the 2030 Regional Climate and Energy Action Plan.

In September, CEEPC became a regional GCoM signatory. This means that the region is going to

follow global best practices with regard to the development of the region's 2030 climate action plan. Later this week, COG will be hosting Climate Work Sessions where the draft elements of this process will be presented for feedback from regional stakeholders, including sustainable energy access and resiliency.

Sustainable energy access is a new component of this planning process and was therefore the focus of Ms. Davis' presentation. Sustainable energy access is defined as secure, sustainable, and affordable energy for all. In Europe, energy poverty is a term that is being used to describe households that cannot afford energy services, such as heating in the winter. It is important to identify who needs assistance with energy bills, where these households are located, what are the energy costs in the area, and what policies can effectively help in these cases.

There are several related programs in metropolitan Washington such as Habitat for Humanity Northern Virginia and Maryland have energy standards for homes, Arlington Energy Masters Program, and the District of Columbia's Sustainable DC 2.0, Solar for All, and DC Sustainable Energy Utility programs. ACPAC developed the Environmental Justice Toolkit to guide local governments on mainstreaming EJ into planning processes and programs. However, COG stakeholders have never discussed what collaborative actions are needed to further advance sustainable energy access.

The main question posed for ACPAC member discussion was what populations do we need to focus on supporting as we plan for sustainable energy access and resiliency? The discussion will inform how COG frame's these conversations with stakeholders at the upcoming Climate Planning Work Sessions. Existing census tract scale maps for the region were used to help jump start the conversation, including COG's Transportation Planning Board developed Equity Emphasis Areas maps and COG's Health Officials Committee social determinants of health maps.

Discussion:

- Sustainable energy access is important, but it does need to align with other important needs such as specific populations' access to other resources, access to employment, and access to transportation options. There is a lot of overlap with the vulnerable groups.
- For resiliency, we need to at both where people are impacted and who has lower adaptive capacity. Lower access to resources (income, transportation, health care) results in lower adaptive capacity through disasters. Drive resources to people/places that are impacted first and worst.
- COG should look at who are where are the marginalized communities. Marginalized communities can include low income, people of color, people with disabilities, etc. It depends on location. Marginalized communities in DC will be different from marginalized communities in another area of the country. COG should look into if and how jurisdictions in the region currently define marginalized communities.
- In our region, marginalized communities could be also be identified by looking at concentrations of older homes, aging infrastructure, low housing affordability, and homelessness.
- Areas with a high concentration of homeless people should also be a focus, as they are disproportionately affected by climate impacts. The intersection of housing affordability, exposure to extreme weather events, and homelessness would be something to look into, especially with the new Amazon headquarters.
- Areas with older housing may be where low-income populations reside. These homes may need weatherization, may have lead pipes and outdated infrastructure. Are infrastructure investments going into these communities?

- Areas where weatherization is needed should be another focus.
- Point sources of pollution are also something to look into for assessing impacts to vulnerable populations.
- There are health care impacts specific to pregnant women. Warmer climate will disproportionately impact pregnant women due to physiological changes, etc.
- Involving identified communities in the planning process is crucial.

4. 2020 CLIMATE AWARDS PLANNING

ACPAC Members and COG Staff

ACPAC members and staff reviewed the results of the 2019 Climate and Energy Leadership Awards. It seems that each year, applicants are understanding the criteria better, especially the equity component. There may be a need for even more targeted outreach in future, but for the most part it seems that applicants are more aware of what is being asked for. There is more emphasis on equity and environmental justice that has positive impacts on greenhouse gas emissions but also co-benefits such as air quality or other environmental criteria.

5. ACPAC 2020 OUTLOOK

ACPAC Members and COG Staff

This item has been moved to the next ACPAC meeting agenda.

6. ADJOURN

Meeting Documents:

<https://www.mwcog.org/events/2019/11/18/air-and-climate-policy-advisory-committee/>