

**Draft Meeting Summary**  
**COG Climate Energy and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC)**  
**May 23, 2012**

**Members and Alternates Present**

Hon. Johanna Barry, Falls Church  
Hon. Ralph Buona, Loudoun County  
Ray Bourland, PEPCO  
Hon. Robert Catlin, College Park  
Sarah Cosby, Dominion Virginia Power  
Larisa Dobrianski, Global Energy Network  
Stan Edwards, Montgomery County  
Hon. Jay Fisette, Arlington County  
Sgt. James Flynn, Bladensburg  
Hon. Penelope Gross, Fairfax County  
Robert Grow, Greater Washington Board of Trade  
Rachel Healy, WMATA  
John Lord, Loudoun County Public Schools  
Samuel Moki, Montgomery County  
Matt Orlins, DC Council  
Stephen Pattison, Maryland Clean Energy Center  
Caroline Petti, COG Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee  
Chris Randolph, DC GSA  
Brendan Shane, DDOE  
Sean Skulley, Washington Gas  
Kanti Srikanth, VDOT  
Nicole Steele, Alliance to Save Energy  
Harriet Tregoning, DC Office of Planning  
Hon. Jonathan Way, City of Manassas  
Luke Wisniewski, MDE

**Staff Present**

Julia Allman, COG DEP  
Leah Boggs, COG DEP  
Amanda Campbell, COG DEP  
Maia Davis, COG DEP  
Paul Desjardin, COG CPS  
Stuart Freudberg, COG DEP  
Jeff King, COG DEP  
Sophie Mintier, COG CPS  
Joan Rohlfs, COG DEP

## **1. Call to Order/Introductions/Chair Remarks**

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Chair Fisette called the meeting of the Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) to order at 9:36 a.m.

Mr. Fisette noted that COG has issued a press release for the 2011 Progress Report, which is posted on the website.

## **2. Approval of Meeting Summary for January 25, 2012 and Amendments to the Agenda**

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The meeting summary for the March 28, 2012 meeting was approved with no changes.

The Agenda was approved with no changes.

## **3. Region Forward: Activity Center Reformulation (Paul Desjardin and Sophie Mintier, COG Community Planning and Services)**

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Chairman Fisette noted that the Region Forward Initiative started as an Urban Land Institute effort called the Envision Greater Washington working group, and the concept of activity centers has existed since the early 2000s. The Region Forward Compact was created by the COG Board in 2010. The CEEPC work plan contains performance measures that relate to the Region Forward program, particularly around land use and transit-oriented development.

Paul Desjardin, Director of Community Planning and Services, provided opening remarks about the revised Region Forward activity center maps. Region Forward is a comprehensive plan for the region that provides specific goals and indicators. Many of these goals are regional in nature, but the Regional Activity Centers (RACs) are focused at the jurisdictional level. They indicate priority places for growth and investment.

Later this month, COG will release a progress report on Region Forward goals. The report will contain an updated map, which designates new RACs. Planning Directors of member jurisdictions and the Complete Communities taskforce of the Region Forward Coalition have been working together on the reformulation plan, which is more focused on local governments' land use planning and priorities.

Sophie Mintier, a regional planner in COG's Community Planning department, provided details about the methodology used in updating the RAC map. Previously, RACs were designated through an objective cooperative forecasting process, and did not always correspond with local governments' plans and priorities. For this reason, the Region Forward Coalition did not always have full buy-in on this part of the plan.

Going forward, RACs will be chosen in a different way. The coalition strives to define RACs that are: 1) Better aligned with transit and other Region Forward goals; 2) Better aligned with local government planning process; and 3) Allow for a more flexible process, so that new centers can be designated on an ongoing basis.

An “attribute menu” has been developed to identify RACs. Each RAC must have two core attributes and two additional attributes. Core attributes include that the area is designated in the jurisdiction’s comprehensive plan, and that it is projected to have an employment and population density within the top half of the jurisdiction by 2040. Additional attributes include intersection density, transit capacity, land use mix, housing and transportation affordability. After RACs have been identified, technical boundaries will be developed and activity center investment typologies will be created.

Ms. Mintier provided a draft RAC map that will be presented to the Region Forward Coalition, the COG Board, and to city councils and county boards for approval by the fall. Input was solicited on how CEEPC could use RACs to promote environmental outcomes.

Ms. Gross suggested that the intersections per square mile indicator may not indicate dense development or walkability in a suburban environment. She added that it is a significant and positive change to consider energy and other sustainability measures in the RACs, as they previously were not associated with environmental goals.

Ms. Rohlfs directed the Committee’s attention to a draft letter that includes the environmental strategies that could be suggested for investment.

Mr. Way noted that the new concept of a larger number of smaller activity centers is far more equitable to smaller jurisdictions, and Manassas supports it.

Mr. Fisetta agreed that the most important and effective activity centers are smaller, dense, mixed-use, and transit-oriented.

Ms. Tregoning urged the committee to consider how we could use RACs as a unit of analysis, what indicators should be used to measure progress, and how these areas could be compared with non-activity centers.

Mr. Walz noted that the Coalition may want to look with how the RAC designations match up with conservation lands and corridors, and make sure that the activity centers will not disrupt existing corridors. The available connections between RACs and open lands, however, may benefit those living in RACs.

Ms. Dobrianski suggested that the letter be broadened to include not just environmental but also energy strategies such as distributed energy resources.

Mr. Grow noted that greenhouse gas reductions should be quantified in the metrics used to evaluate RACs.

The committee reviewed, amended and approved the letter to Hon. Eric Olsen, Chairman of the Region Forward Coalition. The letter recommends the incorporation of environmental strategies for RACs into the Region Forward Investment Strategy.

**4. DC Sustainability Plan and Panel** (Harriet Tregoning, DC Office of Planning; Panel: Roger Berliner, Montgomery County Council; Bill Skrabak, Director, Office of Environmental Quality, City of Alexandria)

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Ms. Tregoning discussed DC's recently developed Sustainability Plan. The vision plan, developed over nine months, answers the "what, when, and why" of DC's sustainability goals, but does not yet address the "how." That is, the city has established its goals, and is now going into the implementation and planning phase.

The District is growing at the fastest rate since the 1950s. Those moving to the District are more highly educated and more highly paid than the average. This indicates that DC is moving toward a "knowledge economy." The City is also striving to provide opportunities to those who are coming out of the public education system without a college or high school degree. The sustainability plan is integrated with goals to diversify the workforce, providing opportunities for career advancement and making the city less vulnerable to shifts in federal spending.

The Plan contains two cross-cutting goals: to increase green jobs and increase health. Specifically, the city would like to increase green jobs by five times its current level and cut the obesity rate to half its current level. The plan also contains goals in a number of workgroup areas.

The Built Environment goal is to attract and retain 250,000 new and existing residents while making buildings net energy positive and reducing water consumption by half. The region's recent ramp-up in LEED-certified buildings has built momentum toward this goal.

The Climate goal matches COG's goal of reducing emissions by 80% by 2050, and also adds the interim goal of reducing emissions by 50% in 20 years. The vast majority of these reductions will come from transportation and buildings.

In the Energy category, citywide energy use will be reduced by 50% and the share of renewable energy consumed will grow to 50%. A key component of reaching this goal is performing home energy retrofits, which particularly benefits low-income residents.

The Food goal is to bring locally-grown food to within a quarter mile of 75% of the population. The City will explore opportunities for increased local food production in parks, on rooftops, temporarily in vacant lands, and at restaurants.

The Nature category includes goals for increasing the tree canopy cover to 40% and providing park and nature spaces that are accessible to all residents. A special attention will be paid to playgrounds and "tot lots" to accommodate the City's growing number of children.

For Transportation, the City aims to have 75% of trips originating in the District to be taken by walking, biking, or transit. Already, 50% of trips fall in this category.

Waste is one of the biggest challenges. The City aims to achieve zero waste by 2032 by increasing composting, re-capturing value, and recycling.

The Water goal is to make the District waterways fishable and swimmable, and to capture rainwater from 75% of the landscape for re-use. As the cost of drinking water increases, the incentive for achieving this goal will grow.

Finally, the Green Economy goal orients the City to develop an “export” economy where the knowledge, skills, and expertise developed in reaching the goals can be transmitted to other communities. The District is already ahead of many other cities on environmental measures, and the plan strengthens the city’s position in that regard.

The outreach effort to create this plan included 125 meetings over 9 months, a “twitter town hall,” an active website, and a successful working group process. Over 900 pages of recommendations came out of these meetings, and many are being integrated into the next phase. Legislation is being introduced to support these goals as well.

Mr. Fisetto directed the discussion to the panel, asking, What are the key elements that distinguish your locality’s efforts in sustainability from the DC plan?

Mr. Skrabak explained that the City of Alexandria did a 3-part series and vision document. The first phase documents all current environmental efforts. Next, an eco-city charter was developed. It included a section on implementation. The charter had broad principles, while the implementation section included specific short-, mid-, and long-term goals. Mr. Skrabak suggested that D.C. take on a similar strategy in terms of interim goals, as those achievements build momentum for the effort.

Mr. Berliner noted that the most important component is the “how-to” of the plan. Building retrofits are fundamental to achieving these goals, but are hard to achieve in the absence of Property Assessed Clean Energy loans and without effective commercial and multifamily building policy packages. It is critical that a successful private capital mechanism is in place. It can’t all be done with government funds. Montgomery County also has a very restrictive stormwater permit that will increase costs to consumers.

Mr. Fisetto asked each of the panelists to discuss the implementation phase of their plan.

Mr. Berliner noted that Montgomery County’s sustainability efforts have been rather piecemeal. Their stormwater plans are very detailed, and the climate strategy is being developed, but because each piece is handled by a different department, it is hard to coordinate efforts.

Mr. Skrabak explained that Alexandria’s short-term, 3-year goals were staff driven, while the middle and long term goals came out of public engagement processes. The Environmental Coordination Group was established to work on stormwater issues, but was later expanded to work on the EcoCity plan. It was an integration of existing efforts.

Mr. Berliner added that utilities must be partners in energy and efficiency retrofits. Those partnerships will be critical to meeting objectives.

Johanna Barry, Falls Church, noted that an emphasis on education is needed to build a culture of sustainability. In DC, there has been a lively conversation about culture change among those involved in the Sustainability Plan. Social media plays an important role. The Mayor provides leadership by mentioning the sustainability goals when relevant to other issues. Montgomery County is working on a bottom-up strategy to change environmental consciousness among residents. The plastic bag tax has changed awareness of an environmental issue. The County is also spreading the word on how the non-profit community can save money through collective purchase of renewable power. In Alexandria, the EcoCity process helped city government work more closely with public schools and integrate environmental issues into curricula.

Katie Peterschmidt, Cooper Cary Inc., asked if any communities were looking at the International Green Construction Code as a baseline for a code-driven green infrastructure plan or using LEED as an incentive. Brendan Shane noted that DC is a bit behind on the code system, so they are jumping ahead to 2012 codes, which include the International Green Construction Code. The plan is to adopt the 2012 Energy and Green codes adopted by early next year.

Mr. Fisette asked the panel about efforts to focus on finance for sustainability projects. Ms. Tregoning noted that one strategy is to consider the multiple benefits resulting from sustainability measures, such as reducing healthcare costs, reducing unemployment benefits, increasing property values, and attracting a high quality workforce. Mr. Berliner noted that the focus should be on retrofitting existing structures. Property Assessed Clean Energy and utility on-bill finance are important options.

Mr. Fisette proposed that COG staff plan a roundtable on innovative financing mechanisms and implementation tools.

## **5. Projects and Subcommittee Updates (COG Staff)**

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### **Advocacy Committee Report (Julia Allman)**

The Committee was presented with a draft letter to the Senate Armed Services Committee opposing an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act of 2013 that would prohibit the Department of Defense from purchasing any alternative fuel that is more expensive than traditional fossil fuels. The letter was approved by the Committee and signed by Chair Fisette following the meeting.

### **Green Fleet Expo (Leah Boggs)**

Leah Boggs attended the Green Fleet Expo sponsored by the Greater Washington Clean Cities Program. The Expo featured a first responders session. COG is working with GWCC on a regional green fleets program, and there were several takeaways that are relevant to COG's work on a regional Electric Vehicle Planning Initiative.

### **Solar Collaborative (Jeff King)**

Optony has completed its site studies that are needed for issuing an RFP. The technically feasible 32MW in Northern Virginia are not economically feasible. In Maryland and DC, projects look positive. WMATA will probably be the lead agency. Montgomery County and Greenbelt will also be involved. Sam Brooks, the DC Energy Manager is looking at projects in public schools.

Mr. Fisetto requested that Dominion Resources work with COG and other players to attempt to resolve the economic issues.

**Department of Defense Clean Energy Collaborative (Jeff King)**

This project responds to the emerging concept that energy security and “green” as a form of patriotism may be better messaging vehicles to get changes in Congress. A recent Executive Order instructs military bases to move toward net-zero, efficiency, renewables, and to work with surrounding communities. COG is starting an initiative to look at what priorities should be in this region. A meeting will be held in July and anyone interested in the issue should contact Mr. King.

**Outreach Campaign Update (Maia Davis)**

Golin Harris is the consultant helping COG to develop a regional sustainability outreach campaign. The CEEPC Outreach Committee met on April 18, where Golin Harris facilitated a focus group to develop concepts for the campaign. They will develop a brand and five-year strategy that conveys a call to action to residents of the region, incorporating messages around health, children, and saving money. They will present a draft strategy and logo in July, at which time stakeholders will meet again.

**Climate Impacts Symposium (Maia Davis)**

COG held a Climate Impacts Symposium on May 21, which attempted to address knowledge gaps about climate impacts on the Washington region. The event attracted eighty-nine attendees including local and state government officials and academics. WTOP and CTV covered the event. The panel included representatives of University of Maryland, Penn State, and Noblis. Julia Koster presented on NCPC’s adaptation initiatives. Kambiz Agazi moderated an afternoon session on the planning implications of climate impacts.

**Sustainable Leadership Academy (Maia Davis)**

The Institute for Sustainable Communities has an agreement to provide training to EPA and HUD Sustainable Community Grantees. The upcoming training is a Sustainable Leadership Academy, in Baltimore from June 18-20. COG was accepted and offered a scholarship opportunity to attend. Team members are:

- Maia Davis, COG
- Sophie Mintier, COG
- Chris Dickerson, DC Housing and Community and Development
- Laine Cidlowski, DC office of planning
- Barry Gore, NCPPC
- Janet Phoenix, Coalition of Environmentally Safe Communities
- Sam Parker, Envision Prince George’s County