**Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG)**

**Draft Climate and Energy Leadership Awards Program Pilot Concept**

**September 10, 2013**

**Background:** The CEEPC leadership and Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee (ACPAC) members have expressed interest in COG developing an awards program to promote the 2013-2016 Climate, Energy and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) Action Plan.

**Recommendations:** This document outlines ACPAC recommendations and options for a Climate and Energy Leadership Awards Pilot Program that could be developed in FY 2014. ACPAC recommends that a joint CEEPC/ACPAC task force will be appointed to further develop the program details. After completion, the pilot program will be evaluated for potential continuation or modification.

**Awards Program Purpose:** To motivate and recognize local jurisdictions in the National Capital Region (NCR) that implement projects and programs that work to achieve local and regional climate and energy goals.

**Proposed Program Design**

**Applicants**: All of COG’s 22 member jurisdictions would be eligible to apply. Applicants would self-nominate through an easily accessible online system.

**Categories**

Three award categories are proposed-- small communities, medium communities, and large communities (see Figure 1). One jurisdiction per category will be awarded.

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| **Figure 1. Proposed Population Breakdown for Award Categories** |
| **Jurisdiction** | **Population** |  |
| Town of Bladensburg |  9,328  | Under 50K |
| City of Falls Church |  13,229  |
| City of Manassas Park  |  15,798  |
| City of Takoma Park |  17,205  |
| City of Fairfax  |  23,461  |
| City of Greenbelt |  23,541  |
| City of College Park |  31,208  |
| City of Manassas |  40,605  |
| City of Bowie |  56,129  | 50K - 200K |
| City of Gaithersburg |  62,794  |
| City of Rockville |  63,244  |
| City of Frederick |  66,382  |
| City of Alexandria |  146,294  |
| Charles County  |  150,592  |
| Frederick County  |  173,200  |
| Arlington County |  221,045  | Over 200K |
| Loudoun County |  336,898  |
| Prince William County  |  430,289  |
| District of Columbia |  632,323  |
| Prince George's County  |  760,932  |
| Montgomery County  |  861,466  |
| Fairfax County  |  1,118,602  |

**Topic Areas**

Option 1: Jurisdictions self-nominate projects and programs related to any action found in the 2013-2016 Climate & Energy Action Plan. (Final 2013-2016 Climate & Energy Action Plan attached.)

Option 2: The Task Force will identify a topic area or topic areas for the competition.

**Criteria, Selection, and Recognition**: Metrics from the following data sources could be used: CEEPC Survey, COG utility energy survey, existing benchmarking programs such as LEED, Energy Star, ICLEI, etc. Awards could recognize achievements, improvement, or launching of new initiatives.

Awardees will be recognized at a CEEPC meeting with a press release, blog, social media and a plaque or certificate.

*Examples of Judging Criteria*

* Point system similar to LEED certification with set thresholds for green, silver, gold, and platinum [[Go Green Virginia](Go%20Green%20Virginia)]
* Award recipients demonstrated exemplary leadership in holistically advancing sustainability goals in their operations and communities. [[California Sustainability Alliance Sustainability Showcase Awards](http://sustainca.org/showcase)]
* Local governments are recognized for outstanding contributions to reduce community’s environmental footprint based on the criteria: innovation, transferability, community commitment, and measured objectives [[Atlanta Regional Commission Environmental Sustainability Awards](http://www.atlantaregional.com/local-government/management--personnel/local-government-awards)]
* Judging based on description of background, achievements and results, influence, innovative practices, and partnerships [[Banksia Foundation Local Government Sustainability Awards](http://www.banksiafdn.com/the-awards.html)]

**Proposed Implementation**

A joint CEEPC/ACPAC task force will develop the program details. As the citizen advisory committee that advises CEEPC on climate and energy issues, ACPAC members could serve as the judges for the awards. ACPAC has equal representation on the committee from across the region (6 members from the District of Columbia, 6 from suburban Maryland, and 6 from northern Virginia). ACPAC members also have a diverse set of backgrounds including business/industry, education/scientific, environmental/health and civic organizations.

**Materials:** COG would work with the CEEPC/ACPAC Task Force to develop program materials and promote the program to COG members. A key element of the program will be the development of new webpages on the COG website that would include information about the program, a simple and brief online entry form, and a page(s) to highlight awardees.

**Program Development Timeline:** The development of the Climate and Energy Leadership Awards Program could begin in the fall 2013 and the first set of awards could be recognized by summer 2014.

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| **Month**  | **Tasks**  |
| Fall 2013  | * Propose awards program pilot concept to CEEPC
* Create CEEPC Awards Committee to develop program specifics, timeline
* Feedback from ACPAC
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| Winter 2013/2014  | * CEEPC finalizes award program
* Staff develops draft program materials (flyer, power point, webpages, etc)
* CEEPC, ACPAC review program materials
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| Spring 2014  | * CEEPC finalizes program materials
* CEEPC announces launch of award program
* Host webinar for potential applicants
* CEEPC, ACPAC promote award program
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| Summer 2014 | * ACPAC judges award entries
* Awardees Announced/Recognized
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| Fall 2014 | * Evaluate Awards Program Pilot
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