

## Draft Meeting Summary

### COG Climate Energy and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC)

July 21, 2010

#### Members and Alternates

Hon. Mary Cheh, Vice Chair, DC Council  
Hon. "J" Davis, City of Greenbelt  
Hon. Jay Fiset, Chair, Arlington County  
Hon. Penelope Gross, Fairfax County Council  
Hon. Del Pepper, Alexandria  
Hon. Roger Berliner, Montgomery County  
Hon. Jonathan Way, Manassas City

Howard Simons, Maryland Department of Transportation  
Luke Wisniewski, Maryland Department of the Environment  
JoAnne Sorenson, Virginia Department of Transportation

Kambiz Agazi, Fairfax County  
Allison Bishins, World Resource Institute  
Kanti Srikanth, Virginia Department of Transportation  
Mike Barancewicz, Loudoun County Public Schools  
Kara Reeve, District Office of Planning  
Melissa Adams, Washington Gas  
Lise Van Susteren, MD, Chesapeake Climate Action Network  
Caroline Petti, ACPAC  
Adam Ebbin, Virginia House of Delegates

#### Others Present

Howard Ways, District Office of Planning  
Rick Dooley, Arlington County  
Joan Kelsch, Arlington County  
Dave Molchany, Fairfax County  
Bob Owolabi, Fairfax County Department of Transportation  
Tim Stevens, City of Falls Church  
Erica Bannerman, City of Alexandria  
Rusmir Music, Washington Gas  
Robert Clarke, M-NCPPC  
Diane O'Grady, Consultant  
Monica Thilges, The Climate Trust

#### COG Staff Present

Monica Bansal, Transportation Planner, Department of Transportation Planning  
Ron Kirby, Director, Department of Transportation Planning  
Leah Boggs, Environmental Planner, Department of Environmental Programs  
Jeff King, Sr. Environmental Planner, Department of Environmental Programs  
Sunil Kumar, Air Quality Planner, Department of Environmental Programs

Anne Mariani, Environmental Planner, Department of Environmental Programs  
Jen Desimone, Environmental Planner, Department of Environmental Programs  
Joan Rohlf, Environmental Resources Program Director, Department of Environmental Programs  
Daivamani Sivasailam, Department of Transportation Planning  
Nicole Hange, Policy Analyst, Executive Office  
Dave Robertson, Executive Director  
Jeannine Altavilla, Intern, Department of Environmental Programs

## **1. Call to Order**

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

Chair Fisetto started the meeting with several announcements. He provided an update on Stuart Freudberg's, Director of the Department of Environmental Programs, condition. Stuart had emergency surgery in June and is recovering well. Mike Barancewicz is filling in for John Lord for Loudoun County Public Schools. Caroline Petti is filling in for Deron Lovaas for the Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee.

## **2. Approval of Meeting Summary for May 26, 2010 and Amendments to the Agenda**

The meeting summary and agenda were approved without any changes.

## **3. Proposed Carbon Offset Program, Monica Thilges, Climate Trust**

Howard Ways of the District Office of Planning introduced a program that the District is close to launching for a carbon offset and climate benefits program. They issued an RFP for technical assistance and The Climate Trust was selected to help them design the program. They are at the midpoint of a 3 phase process: 1) Identify best practices. 2) Come up with applications for DC. 3) Put a price tag on the operations for a program. The presentation today is an opportunity to open a regional conversation on this topic.

Monica Thilges of The Climate Trust continued the presentation. The Climate Trust is helping to design the program and would help to fund applicable projects in the program. The project would be located within the District and would be a voluntary market. It would have an offset component and a climate benefits component. The offsets would be difficult within the District because of stringent requirements and transaction costs that are generally challenging in urban areas. The climate benefits component is generally much easier to implement in urban settings. She discussed that offset projects are not allowed in a sector that is capped under cap & trade. Half of projects are in the Climate Action reserve pipeline, such as landfill gas to energy. It is hard to find projects for offsets. Out of 300 projects examined in a similar Colorado program, only one was funded. The Climate Trust recommendation is for a regional hybrid where offsets could be regional in nature, but the climate benefits would all be within the District. Without regional collaboration, the project would only be climate benefits within the District.

Mr. Simons asked if transportation infrastructure for electric vehicles could be an example of an offset program. Ms. Thilges replied that there is no methodology developed to monitor such a project, so it is unlikely that this would work in their model.

Mr. Agazi asked if a regional offset could be a forestal or wetland bank, with the local benefit being tree planting. Ms. Thilges replied that the area would have to be a new area designated for preservation. The offset must represent something that would not have been saved if the offset program was not put into place. So Rock Creek Park would not qualify because as a National Park, it is already preserved land.

The program could be run by a government agency, a nonprofit agency, or a regional partnership. The nonprofit agency is preferred because donations are tax deductible.

Ms. Bishins asked about the CDM method and whether Climate Trust has looked at a systems-based approach instead of technology based projects, such as the BRT in Mexico and Bogota. Ms. Thilges responded that an offset program with this approach would be too costly until it is proven and has regulations established.

Mr. Berliner asked how the program works without a cap & trade bill passed by Congress. Ms. Thilges responded that this is not a problem because it is a voluntary program.

Ms. Petti asked about a quality insurance process. Ms. Thilges responded that a 3<sup>rd</sup> party certification is required for climate benefits, but it is less stringent than the certification required for carbon offsets.

Jonathan Way asked if this is a DC funded project, and Mr. Ways responded that it is funded by the District.

#### **4. Energy Outreach Pilot Program Update, Joan Rohlfs**

Joan Rohlfs reported on the progress of the energy outreach pilot program. The Committee is being asked to vote on top name choices for the campaign, and approve a letter of support for the EPA Climate Showcase Communities Grant that would fund the marketing and competition elements for a region-wide program next year. The outreach program is aimed at generating interest and action from people to reduce their residential energy use. The concept for the program was approved by CEEPC in May and a pilot will run in the fall. An ad hoc group was formed to lead planning efforts for the program. An RFP for a website platform that contains an energy monitoring tool was sent out in June and applications were due earlier this month. A selection committee will meet after the meeting today to select a company for the contract.

Mr. Fisette described the outline of the program. Community members would sign up for the online platform that would automatically gather their utility bills so that they can compare their current use to their historical use. The website would contain information on energy savings tips and local rebates that they could use to help make their home more energy efficient. There is currently a goal of 50 households in each of three pilot communities selected, one in each of the main jurisdictions: the Cascades community in Loudoun County, VA, the Brookland neighborhood in DC, and Greenbelt, MD. 50 is a low number of households; Mr. Fisette hopes that the program is able to gather an even greater number of participants. Caroline Petti, representing ACPAC, will be helping with the Brookland neighborhood, where she lives.

Mr. Fisette directed members and those present to look at a ballot list that contains some possible campaign names. The committee will be asked to vote on their top three choices.

Ms. Bishins proposed an amendment to the ballot list: Promoting Energy Efficiency in the Region- PEER. She asked about whether the impact of a lack of internet access in low-income communities was considered. She also commented that she thought a better program for the Showcase Communities grant that is more holistic could be considered in the future.

Mr. Ebbin would like to see the word “neighborhood” or “neighbors” in the name.

Ms. Rohlfs asked for members to reach out to their jurisdictions to sign a letter of support for the grant application. These letters are due by Friday afternoon. The grant is due on Monday, so there cannot be an extension.

Mr. Way asked if this pilot program was funded by the EPA grant. Ms. Rohlfs responded that it was funded by COG. He asked if the energy monitoring tool was expensive, and Ms. Rohlfs replied that the budget in the RFP was \$30,000. It is an online tool that uses utility bills, not a physical device. Mr. Way asked if energy savings were not a sufficient incentive, and why we had to provide other incentives. Ms. Rohlfs responded that research has shown that other incentives help as a marketing strategy; the incentives will be small prizes and coupons, not high cost items.

Dr. Van Susteren said that it is proven that the word neighborhood is very effective. She liked that the energy use would be compared to others. She also mentioned that the Wattson has been successful in the UK. [It is a device that glows according to your energy use, and could break into the US market.]

Ms. Davis asked if the pilot would go forward regardless of the grant. Greenbelt is very excited. She likes the word neighborhood, and using something that suggests money. The pilot program will go forward, regardless of the grant.

Mr. Simons suggested that cost savings is worked into the title.

Ms. Gross would like to keep Capital in the title, showing that it is a regional program.

Ms. Bishins suggests that Washington is avoided. She also suggested Capital Region Energy Savings Today- CREST and Neighborhood Energy Savings Today- NEST, both of which have acronyms with additional meanings. CREST could represent the peak of energy use in the region, and NEST could represent that the program is taking place within the home.

The committee and all present voted on their favorite three campaign names. Additionally, they voted on whether they preferred the campaign name to include "Capital Area" or "Neighbors."

The CEEPC letter of support for the EPA Climate Showcase Communities grant was approved.

At the end of the meeting Ms. Rohlf announced the results of the campaign name vote. The top choice was "Wise Energy by Capital Area Neighbors (WE CAN)". In second place was "Energy Saver Neighborhood Challenge." In third place was "Capital Area Energy Challenge. Your home, your impact." There was a tie amongst those who had a preference between "Capital Area" and "Neighbors." Mr. Fissette announced that the ad hoc workgroup would select the final name for the campaign considering the committee's input.

## **5. Advocacy Agenda, Ron Kirby and Roger Berliner**

Mr. Kirby presented the current advocacy agenda topics. He referenced his presentation from the May 26 CEEPC meeting with the What Would It Take (WWIT) scenario. Fuel pricing and fuel economy are integral to achieving the goals and require federal action. He reviewed the last three slides of this presentation that show some potential action items for TPB. Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards are required and should be issued by 2012 and go into effect by 2017. They are critical. Current standards say that light duty vehicles must be 30-35 mpg by 2016, but do not increase after that. Continuing to increase the standards is necessary to reach our goals. WWIT examined tightening standards to 55mpg by 2030. There is uncertainty in Congress' actions, but fuel efficiency standards are sticking. Senator Lugar's bill (S3464) increases CAFE standards by 4% annually, includes tightened standards for heavy duty vehicles after 2017, and encourages a feebate program to be instituted. Such a program would be cost neutral and provide rebates to those with the most fuel efficient cars, while requiring those with the least efficient cars to pay a fee. Feebates are currently used in California.

The transportation sector has not been thrilled with the pricing structures promoted for carbon intensive fuels. In the Lieberman bill only a small portion of the money collected returns to the transportation industry. Due to advocacy from the industry, the section has been removed from the Kerry-Lieberman bill and a transportation component is not expected. The DOT is only an observer in the climate debate over fuel pricing and standards. Such pricing is critical in raising funds for transit needs.

The Waxman-Markey and Kerry-Lieberman bills require MPOs to develop strategies to lower greenhouse gas emissions. They use similar language to the program in California (SB375) that is beginning to see results. The targets are tied to federal money; however, even though there are requirements to set targets, there are no fines if targets are not met.

This language is starting to disappear from the bills. A program like this seems like a reasonable approach. It is possible that it could be included in a transportation bill down the road.

Mr. Kirby reported on other updates. The Department of Transportation Planning (DTP) is submitting a TIGER 2 grant application to expand the bike sharing program, which includes greenhouse gas emissions in the cost-benefit analysis. The HUD Sustainable Communities Planning Grant is available for regional planning efforts that integrate housing, land use, economic and workforce development, transportation, and infrastructure investments.

Mr. Berliner said that climate change legislation will not happen in this session because it will not get the 60 necessary votes in the Senate. He does not believe that a utility-only cap and trade bill will pass. A clean energy bill is possible, because it will help the Senate to address the oil spill.

The PACE program designed for Montgomery County would have approximately 5.5% interest for up to \$20,000 over 15 years. The program would be for energy efficiency and renewable energy measures that are certified to be cost effective by an energy auditor. The loan is paid back through a property tax assessment. Historically, local jurisdictions have used this approach for things like water and sewer improvements. The property tax has priority status over mortgages, and it would transfer to the next owner. Such a program for energy efficiency and clean energy would allow homeowners to save on energy bills, provide opportunities for contractor jobs in the local markets, and would decrease their greenhouse gas emissions.

The mortgage industry in the US is \$5.6 trillion. Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac are controlled by the independent regulatory agency, the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA). The FHFA does not support the PACE method, which effectively kills the program. The DOE issued guidelines, which jurisdictions have followed. The White House is also on board. Congress needs to help reconcile the need for a secure mortgage market with the greater public interest. There is a draft letter to urge them to find the solution included in the meeting materials.

Ms. Gross commented on her recent trip to the National Association of Counties (NACO) conference. There was an emergency resolution to take action on PACE in the Environment, Energy, and Land Use Committee. Counties, especially in the West in areas like California and Colorado, are already using it and have had great success. DRCOG is already running a program in northwest Colorado. Mr. Fisetto added that Charlottesville has a program. This is an extremely important issue, and the COG action would follow nicely with the NACO action.

A motion to send a letter supporting PACE legislation was placed on the table. The committee voted unanimously to send the letter. Chair Fisetto encouraged any local government wishing to send a letter independently to use the provided form letter.

Mr. Wisniewski asked how a gasoline tax would work with a cap on carbon. Mr. Kirby responded that a cap and trade system would help with the gas tax. We need the tax but there are currently no proposed bills that contain this tax. Mr. Way said that a cap and trade system does not imply a gas tax. Ms. Bishins said that there is an agreement in the transportation community that a gasoline tax would be effective. The concern that came up in Congress was where the money would go after it was collected; the transportation industry expects that the revenue from such a tax should fund transportation.

## **6. Annual Progress Report**

Mr. King spoke about the current status of the annual progress report. The 2009 baseline will be established this year. The report will be released next year. COG is collaborating with the utilities to gather this baseline information. Mr. King showed a slide with a potential template design for the progress report.

Chair Fissette asked about the process. Mr. King responded that there would be a template this year for the calendar year 2009. The report discussing progress on the 2012 Action Plan objectives would be released the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2011 to address progress in the year 2010.

Mr. Agazi commented that he receives a large number of survey requests from various agencies asking for the same data. It can be confusing about who is asking for this data, and how they want it reported. However, it is important to gather this information in order to get a full picture, even if that means contacting them several times. The public schools are a completely separate entity, and they should be contacted as well.

Mr. Way commented that he does not believe that results should be reported by jurisdiction. There was a previous meeting about Region Forward where it was expressly discussed that results would not be reported in this fashion.

Ms. Davis commented that there was only a 50% feedback response on the Street Light survey. She guessed that smaller jurisdictions have a much harder time gathering the data on their own, and that this would have to be addressed. The question arose whether or not counties were including data from the smaller jurisdictions in their reporting.

Ms. Gross added that sidewalks and trails should be included in the green infrastructure. In Fairfax County there is a disconnect between the sustainability manager and the sidewalk manager. Trees have been removed to accommodate sidewalks, and new plantings have not replaced those trees that were removed.

## **7. Other Business**

### **a. Streetlight Work Group Update, J Davis**

Ms. Davis reported on the Street Light Work Group meeting from July 19<sup>th</sup>. The group heard the results from the most recent street light survey. Utility pilots will release results by the end of the year. There are issues with lumens standards and LEDs because the LEDs are perceived as brighter than they are. The group heard a presentation about plasma induction technology. This technology can be retrofitted into existing fixtures. The next meeting will be in September.

### **b. Directory of Energy-related Contracts, Diane O'Grady**

Ms. O'Grady reported on the progress of collecting energy-related contracts data from COG's region and the surrounding jurisdictions. The request is to collect information about any energy-related contracts that exist or are being bid, as well as whether or not the contracts have a rider clause that other jurisdictions could use. It will be an inventory and serve as an online directory. The request for information was sent to over 50 counties, cities, schools, and airports. There have been 21 responses so far; Rockville, College Park, the City of Fairfax and Montgomery County are the COG jurisdictions who have responded.

Mr. Berliner noted that Montgomery County has assisted nonprofits to buy green power that was less expensive. The nonprofit community saved \$140,000 by purchasing wind power.

### **c. 30% Solution, Energy Building Code Update, Leah Boggs**

Ms. Boggs reported on the 30% solution discussion from the IGBG meeting July 8. The ICC national meeting to vote on this solution will be October 25-31 in Charlotte. COG has received a \$30,000 grant to sponsor the travel costs of jurisdictions who would like to participate. The 30% solution will make national codes 30% more stringent. Initial applications for the scholarship are due by August 2. The deadline to register for the conference is October 15.

### **d. HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant application, Dave Robertson**

Mr. Robertson reported on the HUD Sustainable Communities Grant application. The COG Board has authorized COG staff to lead a multi-jurisdictional, multi-sector grant application. It will not just be transportation and land use, but also

the environment and health, allowing COG to integrate its work. The end product will be a regional plan for sustainability. There will be a planning piece and an implementation piece that are two separate grants. COG is applying for the planning piece. Jurisdictions can apply for the implementation pieces.

Ms. Gross is concerned about the level of County staff involvement. She wants to ensure that we are not re-inventing the plan that COG has already created and endorsed.

Ms. Bishins offered her help with the application.

**e. Other- Members**

Ms. Van Susteren mentioned that attendees were comfortable wearing sweaters and jackets inside in the middle of July, and that we could start saving energy by moving the temperature in the room up a few degrees.

**8. Adjourn**

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:40.

---

*The next meeting will be held on **September 22, 2010 from 9:45am to 12:00pm.***