

Draft Meeting Highlights

COG Climate Change Steering Committee

May 28, 2008

Via Conference Phone

The Honorable Roger Berliner, Montgomery County

In Attendance

The Honorable Nancy Floreen, Montgomery County Council, Chair

The Honorable Redella S. (Del) Pepper, Vice Mayor, City of Alexandria

The Honorable Judith “J” Davis, Mayor, City of Greenbelt

Zack Dobelbower, District of Columbia Office of Planning

Mark Rawlings, District of Columbia Department of the Transportation

Jack Werner, District of Columbia Department of the Environment

Tad Aburn, Maryland Department of Environment

Staff/Others present include:

Bob Owolabi, Fairfax County DOT

Bhesh Dhamala, Fairfax County

Monica Backmon, Prince William County

Rick Rybeck, District of Columbia Department of Transportation

Kanti Srikanth, VDOT-NOVA

Paul Desjardin, HSPPS

Daivanani Sivasailam, COG DTP

Stuart Freudberg, COG, Director, Department of Environmental Programs

Naomi Friedman, COG, Assistant Executive Director

George Nichols, COG, Principal Environmental Planner

Leah Boggs, COG, Environmental Planner

Joan Rohlf, Chief COG Air Quality Planning

Jeff King, Environmental Planner, COG Air Quality Planning

Ted Graham, COG

Monica Basal, COG DTP

1. Call to Order

Chair Nancy Floreen called the Climate Change Steering Committee to order at approximately 11:45 a.m.

2. Approval of Meeting Summary

The meeting summary was approved as submitted.

3. Chair’s Remarks , Staff and Member Announcements/Updates/Advocacy

- **Federal Climate Change Legislation** – COG staff provided Steering Committee members a status report on the Lieberman-Warner Climate Security Act, slated to go to the Senate floor during the week of June 2. Environment and Public Works Chair, Barbara Boxer, introduced a

manager's amendment of S. 2191, which would be the bill presented on the Senate floor. The revised bill had several additional provisions favorable to local governments, including a total (over the lifespan of the bill) of \$136 billion to fund the local government energy efficiency block grants (approved in the 2007 federal energy bill), and \$171 billion for mass transit funding, over the lifetime of the bill. Additional money would be available for adaptation to climate change, at the state level. The new funding for local government activities indicates our outreach, advocacy and coalition work was successful! Senator Cardin hoped to introduce an amendment to further clarify that some mass transit money could be used for transportation planning, VMT reduction, and land-use activities on the local and regional levels. However, after limited debate, and filibuster, the bill lost in a motion to invoke cloture on June 6. The vote was 48 in favor to 36 opposed; 60 votes were needed to move forward on the bill. A total of 54 senators, some not present for the vote, spoke in favor of moving the bill forward.

- **District of Columbia Energy Legislation** – The District of Columbia Energy legislation is scheduled for hearing in late May and early June. The bill has been modified from its original version, but still includes a Sustainability Energy Utility which would be managed under the supervision of the DC Department of Environment and a new advisory board.
- **District of Columbia Green Jobs Study** – The District of Columbia has initiated a Green Collar Jobs Program. The Green Collar Jobs initiative is a cooperative effort among the District of Columbia Government, for-profit entities, non-profit organizations and academic institutions to help prepare District residents and businesses to take advantage of the growing green sector of the economy. The goals of the initiative are to link existing small and local businesses to this growing market, meeting the demand for “green services through District Certified Business Enterprises and First Source contracting. This initiative also responds to the Green Building Act of 2006 by training a green labor force. An RFP has been issued and work has begun.
- **Maryland Legislature and Climate Commission** – The next meeting of the Maryland Climate Change Commission is scheduled for April 25, 2008. The meeting will include discussions on mitigation working group policy options that will be considered for the June report.
- **Virginia Climate Commission** – The Virginia Climate Commission's next meeting is scheduled for June 17th in Blacksburg. The June meeting will focus adapting to climate change impacts, actions to address climate change being undertaken by Virginia localities, and transportation choices to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Virginia Eco-Summit** -- The City of Alexandria hosted the Eco-City Summit at the T.C. Williams High School on May 10th. This Summit, part of the City's Eco-City Alexandria Initiative, provided an opportunity for residents to provide feedback, input, and discussion on the City's draft

Eco-City Charter; and to assist in the creation of a draft Environmental Action Plan.

4. Committee Discussion of Climate Change Steering Committee Recommendation to COG Board of Directors

Stuart Freudberg presented the staff recommendations for the Draft Report on Climate Change, highlighting how the report is structured, what's new in the report, and what else needs to be completed. Based on committee feedback and guidance in March, staff prepared the draft report for consideration by the Committee. (Please see separate listing of all comments received and handling of comments.)

The following is a synopsis of comments discussed and subsequently received:

- On p.23 We mention that the volume of electricity imported into the region will increase as we cap our power plants. Therefore, we need to include working with other jurisdictions, as users, we have a responsibility for their greenhouse gas emissions.
- On p.28, State Climate policy and p.24, *Localities Are Expanding Their Purchase of Green Power*. As you know, I would like to see some specific targets here rather than just say *Potential Advocacy Positions*. Possibly to address concerns from the Mayor Davis from Greenbelt and possibly others, we could suggest that 20 % be the goal of all localities participating but acknowledge that due to budget constraints, some localities may not be able to reach this goal.
- On p.27, change "Evaluate feasibility and cost of setting regional green power utilization goals for local governments" to "Establish goal of 20% green power purchase by 2015 by local governments." Fairfax recently signed a contract to increase our wind power purchase from 5% to 10%. With a larger purchasing pool I believe it would be feasible to double that purchase in the next round of contract negotiations, particularly because of the expanding supply of wind power in our region.
- On p. 28, change "Examine feasibility of expanding RGGI to DC and Virginia" to "Advocate for adoption of RGGI by DC and Virginia." Last year the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors endorsed a Board Matter of mine that added advocacy for RGGI to the County's legislative agenda, and I have communicated my support for RGGI to the Governor.
- On p. 27, under "Reduce Energy Consumption/Demand Management," add "Advocate for adoption of Cool Schools by local school boards" to the text referring to partnership with school systems. Cool Schools is a program NVRC developed in partnership with Fairfax, and it has been adopted by our School Board.
- On p. 36, change "Consider developing specific targets for shifting modes from SOV to transit, walking, and bicycling" to "Develop specific targets for shifting modes..." There is ample literature from the US and abroad on mode splits that can be achieved with the proper infrastructure; we should set specific targets based on global best practices.
- P. 35 Delete the ... "Conformity" Process for Greenhouse Gas Emissions' section and replace with
Regional Transportation Planning Process for Greenhouse Gas Emissions.
-Collaborate with TPB to make greenhouse gas reduction a stated goal of regional transportation planning activities, including the newly launched multi-stakeholder Greater Washington 2050 Initiative, poised to generate additional growth scenarios, a growth compact, and quality growth strategies.

-Collaborate with TPB to develop a process to assess how regional transportation planning activities may achieve Greenhouse Gas Reduction goals.

- On p.35, under "Conformity Process...", add "quantify projected greenhouse gas emissions from major new transportation projects, taking into account induced sprawl." The Board recently directed staff to conduct a pilot project on this topic; it would be valuable to undertake this effort more systematically across the region.
- On p.35 - "*Conformity' Process for Greenhouse Gas Emissions*" Some members of the Steering Committee and others have suggested a language change for this section. DDOT supports the existing language because a process similar to the existing air quality conformity process would require mandatory action if GHG emission reduction goals are not met.
- On p. 35, change "Consider establishing Transit Oriented Development as the region's preferred growth strategy" to "Establish TOD as the region's preferred growth strategy." Given TOD's ability to reduce VMT, ghg, and congestion, I don't understand why we would not have this as our preferred growth strategy.
- On p. 26, under the heading "Energy Conservation and Efficiency," add "Develop regional program for utilities to pay for home weatherization and recoup investment costs through utility bills."
- On p. 28, under "State Climate Policy," add "Support establishment of and funding for statewide farms to schools programs."
- On p. 28, switch "revise local building codes" from local to state action. In Virginia, localities administer but do not write the building code; the state Building Code officials write the code and it is adopted at a statewide level.
- On p. 39, change "Coordinate with the Statewide Farms program" to "Coordinate with statewide Farms to Schools programs." This is a textual correction.
- Emission impact chart, p.48. need to include in Executive Summary.
- Prioritize measures by low-hanging fruit, "best bang for buck"
- McKinsey abatement curve—put it on separate page, enlarge p.21
- Connect CC Report to Best Practices. Include links to local government programs.
- Need quick action list. Need to add options to the Individual Actions list.
- Need separate section on Financing Mechanisms.
- In Financing Section, Recommend examination of feasibility of establishing carbon offset fund (not done by ctte).
- Identify cost effectiveness from homeowner improvements
- More focus on taking action in Transportation section—increased focus on mass transportation.
- On p.33: Important to focus on alternative modes of transportation.
- Transportation section recommendations (p.35): give Reduce VMT actions highest priority.
- Add industrial processes and manufacturing (e.g., DC wastewater treatment) - opportunities for EE.
- Add more information on carbon sequestration and carbon sinks, tree canopy.
- Separate section on Outreach & Education.
- In Energy section, provide more information on specific sectors and link actions.
- Provide more details on Clean Energy options (biomass, waste water treatment, methane capture, wood waste, geothermal, recycling, composting).
- Discuss Cost of Inaction.
- Discuss economic benefits from energy efficiency.

- On p. 6 needs to reference the fact that there is competing credible scientific evidence that disputes some of these findings; however, it is the view of the committee that measures must be taken to protect the environment.
- On p. 8 (It says page 5 at the bottom) I respectfully disagree with the concept of Global Warming. We have had a cooler spring than usual this year for example. It needs to be stated somewhere that the earth's temperature is cyclical.
- On p.26, the report suggests that local governments "identify best practices to support reducing overall local government energy use by 15% by 2012." As with question 1, it would be helpful to clarify whether MWCOG means to put this specific reduction target forward as its recommendation as a policy to be adopted by each local government.
- On p. 32, the report states that "The region's VMT declined by 50% between 2004 and 2007 because of teleworking." Is this true? My understanding is that VMT has risen significantly over the past few years.
- On p. 35, the report suggests as a means of reducing VMT "consider establishing transit-oriented development as the region's preferred growth strategy." We would recommend that the report be a bit more forceful on this, and simply "establish transit-oriented development..."
- The COG Board Climate and Energy Policy Committee should consider and recommend action steps to help individual jurisdictions meet the regional goals, including: A regional standardized reporting mechanism for baseline emissions data, on a jurisdictional basis, Voluntary agreement by individual jurisdictions for targeted reductions, Annual report to COG of progress toward the declared reduction targets by individual jurisdictions.
- The introduction is missing a sense of urgency. The report makes the argument well about why we need to reduce emissions, but a sense of timing is missing.
- On p. 22 We mention that gas prices may decline in the near future. If we are going to say that, I think we should also mention concern of peak oil.
- The market is clearly expecting oil to keep going up overall. Or you just might want to cut out any guessing about this issue by cutting that sentence.
- Under Federal Climate Policy: Organize a consortium of local governments to lobby for the grants? The funding is not available yet for application.
- In the cap-and-trade point, we should include something about lobbying for local governments to be a recipient of funds – Climate Communities has good language for this. Barbara Boxer talked about local governments several times in her closing comments.
- Population and VMT growth are discussed. Percentage of growth should be used for VMT, to make the point clearly that VMT has outpaced the % growth of population.
- Please add a very strong Executive Summary that very concisely captures the topic-related issues, challenges and our recommendations.
- Page 18 – List of Individual/Household Actions to Reduce GHG Emissions can be extremely valuable in our efforts to inform decision makers and the public what choices they can make to help reduce GHG emissions. List should be expanded at a minimum to also include the following: Add under Transportation: Page 18 – List of Individual/Household Actions to Reduce GHG Emissions can be extremely valuable in our efforts to inform decision makers and the public what choices they can make to help reduce GHG emissions.
- Page 21 – Costs of meeting targets – This section should be expanded to include additional measures such as "land use" "parking fees" and "congestion pricing" that can be used to help reach GHG emissions goals.

- Emphasize working to facilitate connections like the VA Tech, Pepco Energy, Hannon Armstrong (exact name?) so that organizations who don't have capital can make energy retrofits.
- Note throughout report: this is a period of uncertainty. Mode of transportation being affected by market, not sure how people will respond to higher energy prices - recent data shows declines in VMT.
- Show a wider range of VMT reduction in the report.
- Consider dividing the Climate Change Report into two phases. The first phase would include the background information and goal setting (Sections 1 through 6, 11 through 14). The second would include the Mitigating Actions/recommendations structured into a work plan, reinforced with additional research and information.

Several key sections of the Climate Change Report will be particularly valuable at this stage to establish baseline knowledge of the issues and impacts of climate change on our region, and achieve regional buy-in on agreed-upon goals for emission reductions. However, I have concern regarding the inclusion of the laundry list of mitigating actions/recommendations in sections 7, 8 and 9 and the coordinating summary table on page 48. The somewhat equivocal or vague language of many of these actions and lack of information regarding responsible party, prioritization and their potential impact on the bottom line dilute the value of the recommendations and the document, and may lead to misinterpretation of responsibilities and next steps.

For example, a recommended action to *Increase Fuel Efficiency* is “Identify locations of significant recurrent congestion and prioritize investments to reduce congestion” (page 34). This could be interpreted as a need to widen key arterials which is likely to conflict with regional goals to reduce VMT. Another recommended action on page 27 is to “encourage participation in Cool Capital Challenge” but it does not indicate the level of importance of this action compared to others, or who is primarily responsible for gaining participation.

- The first phase of the report clearly establishes baselines and targets for moving forward as a region. It may also be appropriate for the next steps section of the first phase of the report to include some of the research actions or other initiatives that can inform development of a work plan, but the next steps should clearly distinguish COG actions versus actions expected of other entities.
- The second phase clearly sets out strategies, implementation actions and responsible parties. The outcomes of the TPB Scenarios Study and efforts of the Greater Washington 2050 Committee will significantly inform the Climate Change Committee's work. It is recommended that the findings of these efforts (in addition to new research) be integrated into a complete work plan of recommended actions to reduce emissions (the second phase of the report). This work plan should specify the best options for meeting each of the 2012, 2020 and 2050 targets and include more detailed information regarding emission impact, cost and economic benefit and responsible party.

Overall, the draft received favorable comments. Chair Floreen complemented staff on the hard work in a short turn around period. The Committee looks forward to the revised report in late June. The Committee also noted that there would be a 60 days comment period once the COG Board took action for additional comments.

Guidance: *Update recommendations per committee discussion; Prepare draft report for Committee consideration at the June 24th meeting.*

5. Next Meeting and Adjourn

The next meeting is scheduled for June 24th at 11:30 a.m. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 2:00 pm.