

COG Climate Change Steering Committee

Revised Draft Scope of Work

6/14/07

Overview

On April 11, 2007, the COG Board of Directors adopted Resolution R31-07, thereby establishing COG's Climate Change Initiative, one the priority areas of policy focus for FY 2007. The resolution reflected the recognition that local governments in the Washington metropolitan region and across the country are taking action to reduce greenhouse gas emission to protect the local and global environment. It further stated that COG intended to build on a wide range of existing programs that benefit the environment and reduce greenhouse gases, both at the regional and local scale. COG intends to take a leadership role on this issue and establish a model for other regions across the United States.

A new "Climate Change Steering Committee" (CCSC) was established under R31-07 to take the lead on the development of COG's regional climate change policy and strategy. The CCSC was provided a specific charge and given a one-year tenure (May, 2007 through April, 2008) to conduct its business. On May 9, 2007, the COG Board Chair formally appointed the membership of the CCSC. Its first meeting is scheduled for May 23, 2007.

This document provides an annotated outline of the CCSC work program. A complete work program document will be developed for the June meeting of the CCSC.

1. Steering Committee Support, Organization and Management

A Climate Change Steering Committee (CCSC) has been established to take the lead on the development of a regional climate change policy strategy. The CCSC will have one-year tenure and will consider a wide range of potential actions to enhancing our region's contributions to greenhouse gas reduction. CCSC deliberations will reflect input from an interdisciplinary body of existing policy and committees, including the COG Board of Directors, the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC), the Transportation Planning Board (TPB), the Chief Administrative Officers Committee (CAO), the Chesapeake Bay and Water Resources Policy Committee, the Human Services Policy Committee, the Public Safety Policy Committee, the CAO Energy Advisory Committee, and the Intergovernmental Green Building Group. The CCSC reports to the COG Board of Directors, and is charged to provide briefings to the Board on an approximately bi-monthly basis.

The CCSC will meet on a schedule of its own determination. It is anticipated that at the outset meetings will take place on a monthly basis, with a bi-monthly schedule anticipated later in the year. Work sessions may be scheduled in addition to, or in replacement for regularly scheduled meetings. In addition, the CCSC will also network with other regional and national climate change initiatives, including exploring opportunities for partnership, collaboration, and joint efforts.

The CCSC will from time to time provide information that may be used by the media including fact sheets, data compilations, strategy documents, etc. The work program includes development of a media strategy and associated information materials.

The CCSC is specifically charged with making a recommendation on “any need for a long-term structure for the regional Climate Change initiative.” This action is anticipated toward the end of the one-year tenure of the CCSC.

Outcome

The infrastructure for generating and reviewing the greenhouse gas reduction strategy is established. Regular meetings will be scheduled for the group. Additional funding sources will be identified and a refined project scope of work will be completed. The CCSC will be the focus for coordinated action at COG.

Deliverables and Timeline

- Meeting Schedule – May 2007
- Work Program – June 2007
- Regular Meetings And Work Sessions – May 2007 - April 2008
- Networking – Ongoing
- Forum for Information Exchange on Local and National Climate Change Initiatives – Ongoing
- Support for Media Briefings and Other Media Relations – Ongoing
- Grant Preparation – Ongoing
- Recommendation on the Need for an Organizational Structure for Climate Change within COG – February 2008 (Draft), April 2008 (Final)

Anticipated Committee Key Action Items

- Review/Comment/Approve of Work Program – June 27, 2007
- Develop and Approve CC Organizational Structure Recommendation – February 27, 2008 (Draft) – April 23, 2008 (Final)

2. Regional Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory

A preliminary regional emission inventory is currently being developed by COG’s Department of Environmental Programs in cooperation with COG’s Department of Transportation Planning. The inventory will inform efforts to develop a well-defined regional strategy for achieving greenhouse gas emissions reductions.

The inventory will be developed using the following steps:

1. Establish Inventory Framework
 - a. Determine Relevant Emission Source Sectors (CO₂ and other greenhouse gases (GHG)).

- b. Identify Appropriate Methodology for Calculating Emissions for all GHG. Examine and incorporate as appropriate methodologies of established national organizations and the U.S. EPA.
 - c. Establish the Appropriate Timeframe for Estimating Emissions (e.g., baseline year(s) and projection years).
 - d. Establish the Appropriate Geographic Boundaries for the Washington metropolitan region to include in the regional emission estimates
2. Collect Data Needed to Complete Inventory
 - a. Collect Necessary Activity Data
 - b. Establish Appropriate Emission Factors
3. Complete Draft Inventory
 - a. Use Established Emission Inventory Models to Calculate Emissions

As part of this effort, COG staff will share information on available data and emission factors, discuss appropriate baselines, centralize data collection efforts to avoid duplication of effort with on-going local efforts, and strive to establish protocols to ensure a consistent regional and local inventory approach. It is anticipated that the MWAQC Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will have the lead role for producing the GHG emissions inventory. For this purpose, the MWAQC TAC will be augmented with local and state government specialists in the areas of energy, wastewater, solid waste, and other fields as necessary. Consultation with other national experts is also planned.

Outcome

The outcome of this task will be one (or more) baseline greenhouse gas inventory(ies) for the region, as well as projection inventories for selected future years. A regional inventory will enable the region to evaluate impact of emissions reductions from various programs being implemented to reduce emissions in the region. The regional inventory will also be a key consideration in the development of regional greenhouse gas emission reduction targets.

This task will also include an examination of methodologies for measuring and tracking implementation of greenhouse gas reduction actions. The Climate Registry system will be specifically reviewed for this purpose.

Deliverables and Timeline

- Complete “Ballpark” GHG Inventory – June-July 2007
- Identify Baseline Year(s) – July-Sept. 2007
- Identify Projection Year(s) – July-Sept. 2007
- Draft Baseline Inventory(is) – October/November 2007
- Draft Projection Inventory(ies) – December 2007
- Final Baseline and Projection Inventories – January/February 2008
- Identification of Methodologies for Measuring and Tracking GHG Reduction Actions – December 2007
- Recommendations on Methodology for Tracking GHG Reductions in the Metropolitan Washington Region – March 2008

Anticipated Committee Key Action Items

- Receive Briefing/Comment on Transportation Greenhouse Gas Inventory – June 27, 2007
- Discuss and Approve GHG Benchmarks and Projection Years – September 26, 2007
- Review/Comment/Approve Draft Baseline Inventory Report – November 28, 2007
- Review/Comment/Approve Baseline/Projection Inventory Report (Final) – February 27, 2008
- Discuss and Comment on Methodologies for Tracking GHG Reductions – February 27, 2008
- Review/Approve Methodologies for Tracking GHG Reductions – April 23, 2008

3. Catalogue of Local and State Government Greenhouse Gas Reduction Activities in the Metropolitan Washington Region

There are a number of programs and policies in the metropolitan Washington region that have a “co-benefit” of providing GHG emissions reductions. While these programs were designed to address other energy, environmental, transportation or land use issues, they also help reduce the level of GHG emissions in the region. Staff will develop a catalogue of regional climate change mitigation activities and greenhouse gas management activities and quantify, to the extent possible, the emissions reductions resulting from these programs and policies. The focus of the catalogue will be on actions taken, underway, or planned by COG member local governments as well as in Maryland and Virginia that affect the Washington metropolitan region.

Outcome

This catalogue will be an important reference document for the Steering Committee, serving as a starting point for further identification greenhouse gas management activities. The catalogue will ensure that existing efforts are not overlooked as a regional strategy is developed.

Deliverables and Timeline

- Draft List of Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Options – May/June 2007
- Draft Catalogue of Greenhouse Gas Reduction Activities by COG Members and States – July 2007
- Final Catalogue of Greenhouse Gas Reduction Activities in Washington Region – October, 2007

Anticipated Committee Key Action Items

- Review/Comment Draft List of Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Options – June 27, 2007
- Review/Comment/Approve Draft Catalogue of Member GHG Reduction Activities Report – Sept 26, 2007
- Final Action – Approve Member GHG Reduction Catalogue of Activities Report – November 28, 2007

4. Local Climate Change Impacts

The Metropolitan Washington region is rich in natural resources. This task will focus on potential/forecast climate change impacts on the region based on available research data. Among the climate change factors to be examined are: higher temperatures, changing landscapes,

wildlife at risk, increased risk of drought, fire and floods, stronger storms and increased storm damage, more heat-related illness and disease, disease vectors, economic losses and possibly other factors. This work will consist primarily of an examination the existing body of scientific data and, where available, specifying the Metropolitan Washington region, e.g., Mid-Atlantic Climate Change Assessment, studies by the U.S. EPA, states, international organizations, national organizations, and others.

Outcome

The outcome of this task will be an evaluation of the potential impacts of climate change on the Washington metropolitan region. The report will provide a local impact perspective on climate change.

Deliverables and Timeline

- Complete research – November, 2007
- Prepare research report summary – February, 2008

Anticipated Committee Key Action Items

- Review and Comment on Local Impact Report – February 27, 2008

5. Identification of Best Practices to Achieve Greenhouse Gas Reduction

Staff will research best practices (BMPs) to achieve greenhouse gas reduction and methods of measuring progress. The research will include both national and international practices. A concerted effort will be made to collaborate with existing organizations, e.g. WRI, National League of Cities, Conference of Mayors, etc. to ensure the most comprehensive view of strategies and techniques. Where practical, field visits and presentations by leaders who have developed model strategies will be made. Best practices underway among COG member governments identified during the catalogue task (see above) will be included as appropriate.

Outcome

The outcome of this task will be a report containing information on best practices in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The report will enable the region to tailor existing innovative strategies to the Washington metropolitan region.

Deliverables and Timeline

- Complete Research – November, 2007
- Draft Best Practices Report – January, 2008
- Final Best Practices Report – March, 2008

Anticipated Committee Key Action Items

- Review/Comment Draft Best Practices Report – February 27, 2008
- Final Action - Approve Best Practices Report – April 23, 2008

6. Identification and Feasibility of Alternative Funding Mechanisms for Greenhouse Gas Reduction Activities in the Metropolitan Washington Region

As the region becomes increasingly engaged in greenhouse gas reduction and energy efficiency, it will be increasingly important to identify ways in which localities/the region can fund these efforts. Potential new funding mechanisms include utility fees, carbon fees/taxes, loans/grants, and carbon offset programs. A number of “carbon offset” funds, for example, have been established by private organizations and public agencies where contributions can be made that are used to implement energy conservation, alternative energy, transportation emission reduction actions, and other efforts. On an individual basis, there are a number of organizations that enable individuals to contribute to greenhouse gas reduction initiatives to offset driving, air travel, or other activities that contribute to greenhouse gas emissions.

This task will involve an examination of alternative funding mechanisms, including carbon offsets, both public and private, with consideration given to the potential for creating a carbon offset fund in the Washington metropolitan region to which both public and private entities might contribute on a voluntary basis to support regional greenhouse gas initiatives and the regional climate change program.

Among the models to be examined are: Chicago Climate Exchange, California Climate Change Challenge and Registry, the European Union Trading System, and other carbon sequestration market practices/techniques. A preliminary feasibility assessment will be made.

Outcome

The outcome of this task is an assessment of the feasibility of establishing a funding mechanism for implementing or offsetting regional greenhouse gas emissions. This will enable the region to consider the establishment of an on-going funding mechanism for implementing climate change activities.

Deliverables and Timeline

- Complete Research – November, 2007
- Draft Feasibility Study Report – January, 2008
- Final Feasibility Study Report – March, 2008

Anticipated Committee Key Action Items

- Receive and Comment on Draft Report – February 27, 2008
- Approve Final Report – April 23, 2008

7. Regional Greenhouse Gas Reduction Goal or Target

Staff will develop recommendations for potential regional greenhouse gas emission reduction goals or targets. The recommendations will also include information on methods for measuring progress in meeting reduction targets. A review of goals/targets already established by COG member governments, as well as goals/targets established elsewhere will be conducted. A special focus will be made on how greenhouse gas reduction targets have been developed for fast-growing jurisdictions vs. slower growth areas. The analysis will cover goals/targets for COG member local governments as well as the community at large.

Outcome

The outcome of this task will be recommendations for potential regional greenhouse gas emission reduction goal(s)/target(s).

Deliverables and Timeline

- Review of Options for Regional Reduction Goals/Targets – October 2007
- Recommendations on GHG reduction Goal(s)/Targets for the Metropolitan Washington Region – March, 2008

Anticipated Committee Key Action Items

- Review/Comment on Goals/Targets – November 28, 2007
- GHG Goal/Target Recommendation – April 23, 2008

8. Regional Climate Change Policy and Potential Advocacy Positions

Staff will monitor federal, state, and local legislative initiatives, as well as EPA, DOE, and other regulatory initiatives that may affect the development of the regional Climate Change initiative. This task includes preparing formal testimony, as appropriate, on national legislative initiatives that have direct impacts on climate change for this region. Staff will prepare position papers and other support materials, as needed.

Outcome

The outcome of this task will be targeted communication on specific policy actions that could affect the regional climate change initiative. This will enable the region to have a voice in shaping policies that will have both local and national impacts.

Deliverables and Timeline

- Various – ongoing

Anticipated Committee Key Action Items

- Discuss and Approve Various Advocacy Positions, as Required – May 2007 - April 2008

9. Education and Outreach

An outreach and education plan, and associated region-specific draft material will be developed. Staff will develop a strategy to disseminate the information gained and strategies devised to address climate change. The purpose of the education and outreach is to heighten the awareness among regional governments on issues relating to climate change. Among the materials will be pamphlets focus on individual actions for both public and private sectors.

A Climate Change program web site will be developed and implemented on the COG web site. The web materials will enable COG members and others to access data and information developed by the CCSC effort, as well as to share information among the COG membership and potential with outside agencies and organizations.

Opportunities for collaboration with existing public education programs currently operating within COG, such as Clean Air Partners, Commuter Connections, and other efforts will be examined as part of the development of the outreach and education effort.

Once a regional strategy is development, the Committee may elect to conduct a workshop. The workshop would be designed to educate various regional government and quasi-government environment, energy, air quality, economic development and health agencies on the impacts of climate change and the policies and programs for GHG management. The workshop could serve as a forum to bring together representatives of various agencies and will provide a foundation from which an inter-agency and intra-regional working group on climate change can be developed for both the stakeholder process and GHG management plan implementation.

A natural extension of this is to increase awareness among the regions citizens on climate change related issues and solutions. As part of this effort, COG will develop a communication plan and public relations campaign, including press releases. As part of this, COG may engage or partner with other organizations involved in climate change activities, to increase capacity and reach.

Outcome

The education and outreach will raise awareness and understanding of the regional climate change strategies and responsibilities for both private, public and individuals action.

Deliverables and Timeline

CCSC Greenhouse Gas Primer and Frequently Asked Questions Document – Sept. 2007

Regional Climate Change Workshop – Fall/Winter 2007/2008

Flyer and Pamphlets – July 2007 through April 2008

Web Site Development/Implementation – ongoing

Outreach – ongoing

Anticipated Committee Key Action Items

- Review, Comment, Approve Outreach Strategy – September 26, 2007
- Review/Approve GHG Primer and Frequently Asked Questions Document – September 26, 2007
- Workshop Program and Content – June 27, 2007 (Review and Comment); September 26, 2007 (Approve)