

Draft Meeting Highlights

COG Climate Change Steering Committee

April 23, 2008

Attendance

The Honorable Nancy Floreen, Montgomery County Council, Chair
The Honorable Paul Ferguson, Arlington County
The Honorable John Foust, Fairfax County
The Honorable Redella S. (Del) Pepper, Vice Mayor, City of Alexandria
The Honorable Judith “J” Davis, Mayor, City of Greenbelt
The Honorable Andrea McGimsey, Loudoun County
The Honorable Mary Cheh, District of Columbia
Harriet Tregoning, District of Columbia Office of Planning
Mark Rawlings, District of Columbia Department of the Transportation
Jack Werner, District of Columbia Department of the Environment
Robin Snyder, District of Columbia Department of the Environment
Tad Aburn, Maryland Department of Environment
Bob Grow, Board of Trade

Staff/Others present include:

Bob Owolabi, Fairfax County DOT
Colleen Mitchell, District of Columbia Office of Planning
Patrick Leibach, Councilmember Mary Cheh’s Office
Zach Fields, Fairfax County
Bhesh Dhamala, Fairfax County
Collen Turner, Michael Baker
Kanti Srikanth, VDOT-NOVA
Eulalie Lucas, COG, DTP
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
Elizabeth Entwistle, MD Dept of the Environment
Ron Kirby, COG DTP
Monica Basal, COG DTP

1. Call to Order

Chair Nancy Floreen called the Climate Change Steering Committee to order at approximately 11:00 a.m.

2. Approval of Meeting Summary

The meeting summary was approved as submitted, with one exception. Supervisor Frost was added to the attendance list.

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

- **Montgomery Carbon Tax proposal** – A resolution to include a carbon surtax in the fuel/energy tax rates to reflect carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas generation, sponsored by Councilmember Floreen, is scheduled to be introduced on April 15, 2008. This resolution would increase the rates currently in effect to produce \$11.1 million more revenue. Specifically, this resolution would increase the tax rates on electricity, fuel oil, and steam by 10%, coal by 20%, and natural and liquefied petroleum gas by 5%, to generally reflect relative rates of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas generation. A public hearing is scheduled for May 6.
- **Montgomery County Policy on Energy Star Homes** – Councilmember Roger Berliner's proposed bill will require new homes built in the County to meet the Environmental Protection Agency's "Energy Star" standard.
- **District of Columbia "Green Week" activities** – Green DC Week, which is scheduled for April 21 through April 27, is a citywide, collaborative effort to educate the people who live, work, and learn in the District of Columbia about energy and environmental sustainability. One of the objectives is to educate residents about simple yet effective actions that reduce energy consumption and climate change emissions. COG's DEP has organized Green Building Tours in support of this week of activities.
- **Cool Capital Challenge Action in Loudoun County** – Loudoun Board of Supervisors voted to have the county take part in three "green" programs, including the COG Green Building program recommendations and joining the Cool Capital Challenge initiative. The county also participates in the Virginia Municipal League's Green Government Challenge.
- **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 held a meeting on April 22, 2008. The Commission is in the early stages of developing its direction. The April meeting focused on discussion of GHG Reduction Goal; Voluntary actions undertaken by industry and incentives; Industry experience with actions taken by other states and regions to address climate change.
- **METREX Conference** – COG co-hosted, along with NVRC and NARC, the first international – U.S. and European -- Conference of Regions to address the problem of climate change. There was a great deal of enthusiasm regarding the leadership role of metropolitan regions in mitigating and responding to this problem. Regions agreed they wanted to stay in close contact to share best practices and strategies, including inventory software tools. Mayor Davis, who attended the conference, mentioned COG staff suggestion to encourage tax payers to use their economic stimulus refund for energy efficiency/greenhouse gas reduction activities.
- **ULI Growing Cooler Event and Book** – The ULI has recently published a new book – *Growing Cooler* -- which identifies public policies that support sustainable development patterns and building practices can have a substantial impact on curbing climate change. The book promotes the thesis that the key to making substantial greenhouse gas reductions and stemming global warming is to encourage smarter development patterns rather than sprawl.
- **Legislative Update** -- COG sent letters to Appropriations Committee, and Subcommittee, leadership asking for full funding for Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants. A copy of this letter, with a shorter note and our best practices guide, will be sent to COG's Congressional delegation.

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

The Committee discussion of recommendations was preceded by a presentation by Ron Kirby summarizing the Transportation Planning Board's Scenario Study Task Force plan for analysis of the "What Would IT Take?" scenario.

Ron Kirby discussed the use of the proposed CO₂ reduction goals as determined by the COG Climate Change Steering Committee as a starting point for the What Would it Take Scenario. He went on to discuss that the scenario will examine a range of possible mobile emissions reduction strategies, such as VMT reduction, fuel efficiency, and less carbon intensive fuels to meet the CO₂ reduction goals. He stressed that because the effects of climate change are global and not local or regional as they are for ozone or particulates, it will be important to analyze these strategies in the global context of cap and trade programs. This will likely serve to set a cost-effectiveness threshold, which

will be a component of the scenario analysis. Mr. Kirby provided the examples given in a recent McKinsey and Co. report, which has ranked abatement strategies according to cost-effectiveness.

Mr. Kirby also stated that the scenario will address the various recommendations provided by the Committee, such as analyzing VMT reductions, clean vehicles, ridesharing, and reducing idling. He stated that the TPB can return to the committee with a cost-effectiveness analysis of these measures in terms of CO2 reduction for the region. Due to the conflicting timeframes for the TPB Scenario Study and the Committee's report, the scenario analysis will not be included in the Committee report.

After Mr. Kirby's presentation, Mr. Freudberg began the discussion on staff recommendations for the Committee's report (*see Committee discussion draft dated April 23, 2008*).

A synopsis of the comments and suggestions made during the discussion and on the proposed recommendations include:

- Greenhouse gas emission analysis should occur whenever COG/TPB analyzes a project.
- Specifically, the report should take note of this region's uniqueness (e.g. strong metro system, considerable pedestrian access) and develop a goal that reflects this uniqueness.
- The goals should also address existing buildings -- such as retrofitting buildings, improving energy efficiency or obtaining Energy Star performance standards for a specific percentage of buildings, or performance benchmarking of existing buildings.
- Policy positions should be distinguished from actions necessary to accomplish the goal.
- Cost-effectiveness of recommended policies is missing from report and should be included.
- There needs to be more involvement of other stakeholders. MWAQC and TPB may deserve automatic participation as a stakeholder. Meeting frequency of the recommended structure should be carefully considered. Meeting should be a big deal. For example, meeting could occur on a quarterly or bi-annual basis, with something big to report -- meeting a goal, etc.
- The report should include a recommendation on structure which may be addressed at the COG retreat.
- There may be a need to extend our process by one month.

Guidance: *Update recommendations per committee discussion; Convene conference call of Policy Subcommittee on May 20 to discuss recommendations for presentation at May 28th meeting.*

5. Summary, Next Meeting and Adjourn

The next meeting is scheduled for May 28th at 11:00 a.m. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 2:00 pm.