



AIR AND CLIMATE PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ACPAC)

Chair: William Washburn

Draft March 17, 2025 Virtual Meeting Summary

ACPAC ATTENDEES: Greg Farley, Stacey Garfinkle, Matt Gravatt, Jack Lyman, Ian Marcus, William Marsh, Peter Mecca, Jacqueline Norris, Era Pandya, Mark Rodeffer, Deborah Shprentz, Chris Tandy, James Wang, William Washburn

OTHER ATTENDEES: Kevin Bryan (Equival Consulting), Liana Quinones (Equival Consulting), Erica Green (DC Commission on Climate Change and Resiliency), Staci Hartwell, Walkiria Pool (Centro de Apoyo Familiar), Stacy Schaefer (Resilience Authority of Charles County, Inc.), George Aburn

COG STAFF: Dan Barry, Leah Boggs, Heidi Bonnaffon, Robert Christopher

5:30 P.M. 1. CALL TO ORDER, INTRODUCTIONS, MEETING SUMMARY APPROVAL AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

William Washburn, Chair

The meeting was called to order by new Chair William Washburn. The January 2025 meeting summary was approved. The meeting had a quorum and there were no amendments to the agenda.

Announcements

- There were no Staff announcements.
- George Aburn, a member of the public, inquired if his comment letter would be shared to the full committee and posted to the committee website.
 - ACPAC does not have an official public comment period. Each ACPAC Chair may determine how to handle comments to the committee from members of the general public.
 - Official public comment is made at the beginning of each [Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee \(MWAQC\)](#) meeting. Members of the general public who wish to make an official public comment are required to register in advance of every MWAQC meeting by sending an email to MWAQCPublicComment@mwkog.org.
 - George Aburn's comment letter was sent to the ACPAC Chair and a determination was not made before the March meeting.
 - At the March meeting, Chair Washburn determined that any comments related to the EJ Action Plan sent to ACPAC by general members of the public can be shared to the full committee.

5:40 P.M. 2. DRAFT EJ ACTION PLAN

Robert Christopher, COG Staff

Robert Christopher discussed the development process of the draft MWAQC Environmental Justice (EJ) Subcommittee Action Plan and the next steps for adoption by the full MWAQC.

Presentation Summary

- Development of the draft EJ Action Plan was based on public and stakeholder engagement, as well as input from the MWAQC Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).
- Key chapters in the plan are:
 - Air Quality in the Region - provides a foundation for the rest of the plan, covering key pollutants, sources, monitoring, regulation control methods, and regional trends.
 - Equity and Environmental Justice - highlights the disproportionate impact of air pollution on underserved communities and emphasizes the need for inclusive and equitable policies.
 - Strategies to Improve Air Quality - strategies to improve air quality include improving air quality monitoring, fostering stronger partnerships and improving air quality regulation.
 - Recommended Actions - high priority actions include advocating for stronger ambient air quality standards and enhancing enforcement of fugitive dust and pollution sources.
 - A Call to Action - includes enhancing air quality monitoring, implementing targeted policies, strengthening regulations, and promoting sustainable transportation.
- Staff sent the draft plan to ACPAC in late February to provide comments within the public comment period which was extended from March 14 to March 20.
- The draft plan and comments will be reviewed by the EJ Subcommittee at its March 26 meeting.

Discussion

- Data Centers have negative air quality impacts.
 - Data center permitting is a land use issue. As a regional planning organization, COG does not get involved in local land use issues. Regional land use issue discussions would occur with COG's Regional Planning Directors committee. Within COG's climate and energy work, data centers will be included in the energy use and greenhouse gas inventory analysis.
- Members expressed
 - Concerns about the lack of action and accountability in the current draft plan and the need for bold and aggressive action.
 - The plan should have strong targets that reduce indoor and outdoor air quality emissions particularly in vulnerable communities.
 - COG and ACPAC should be leaders in climate and environmental justice in the region.
- ACPAC Member Matt Gravatt summarized his written comments that were sent to COG on March 14. He also recommended that a VMT reduction goal should be included in the action plan.
- ACPAC Member Greg Farley recommended that the air quality monitoring improvement measure designated as a low priority in Table 5 to be moved to a high priority goal.
- ACPAC Member and Vice Chair William Marsh recommended including a layered map showing census tracts, equity areas, and operational air monitoring locations.

- George Aburn's comments will be sent to ACPAC on March 18.
- ACPAC Member Chris Tandy recommended that the PM 2.5 measure be listed under health effects due to evidence of its contribution to low birth weight and pre-term death. He also recommended providing more explanation for AQL.
- It was moved and seconded that Matt Gravatt would take the lead on aggregating and organizing all ACPAC member comments, including the recommendations to move air quality monitoring to a high priority and VMT reduction goals, for the Chair so they can be submitted to Staff by the new comment deadline. Greg Farley agreed to support Matt Gravatt.

6:35 PM 3. ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE TOOLKIT: COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSION #1

Leah Boggs, COG Staff

Kevin Bryan, Equival

Equival Consulting facilitated a discussion on effective outreach and communication strategies for environmental justice issues. These recommendations will be compiled into the EJ Toolkit.

Presentation Summary

- Leah Boggs provided an overview of COG's committee structure and roles. Staff also discussed the purpose of developing a new EJ Toolkit.
- Equival facilitated discussions around the following questions:
 - How would you describe the community (communities) that you are a member of or where you live?
 - What are some topics or issues related to climate, energy, and air that are important to your community/communities?
 - What are some topics or issues related to climate, energy, and air that are important to your community/communities?
 - How do you/your organization/members prefer to receive information on climate, energy, and air quality issues?
 - What are the greatest challenges and barriers in building a sustained and productive relationship with local government staff in your city or county? What are some examples of successes in building sustained and productive relationships with local government leaders, agencies, and staff in your city or county?

Discussion

- Participants discussed the diversity and burdens faced by their communities, including food insecurity and transportation inequity.
- Topics of importance included air quality, personal and public health impacts, green jobs, and environmental health impacts.
- Participants recognized the interconnectedness of various issues and the need for comprehensive solutions.
- Lack of air conditioning in public housing is a health concern that needs attention.
- Environmental justice and air pollution are major concerns for overburdened communities.
- Successful engagement with local government requires action, transparency, and responsiveness.

7:30 P.M. 4. NEXT ACPAC MEETING AND ADJOURN

The next meeting is May 19, 2025. Chair William Washburn adjourned the meeting at 7:30.

All meeting documents can be found on the March 17, 2025 [meeting page](#).