

Fairfax County Community-Wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP) May Public Feedback Session #1 Meeting Notes

Tuesday, May 18th, 2021
Held electronically via WebEx

Fairfax County held a CECAP Public Feedback Meeting on May 18th from 7:00-8:30pm. The meeting was held electronically via WebEx.

Recordings of the meeting and meeting materials, including the full WebEx chat transcript, [are available online.](#)

These meeting notes capture the general activities conducted and discussions that occurred during the meeting. These notes should be viewed in conjunction with the presentation and meeting materials, found at the link above.

Welcome and Overview (Candace Blair Cronin, ICF and Maya Dhavale, FFX)

Legal requirements: A script was read to cover several legal requirements for holding electronic meetings. The script included conducting a roll call identifying all CECAP working group members in attendance and where they were attending from. It was noted that to conduct this meeting electronically, the meeting needs to be clearly audible, publicly accessible, and compelled by emergency circumstances. It was established that this meeting could not be held in person due to the COVID-19 emergency, and that therefore it could instead be held electronically via audio-conferencing. It was also established that this meeting is necessary to move forward the CECAP Working Group's functions.

The meeting purpose was reviewed, focusing on the following goals:

- Educate and inform you about the Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP).
- Understand your opinions and ideas on the products of the CECAP planning process.
- Gather your ideas to inform our Fall 2021 educational campaign and next steps.

Candace Blair Cronin then reviewed tips for using the WebEx chat function.

Slides are available here: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/environment-energy-coordination/public-engagement-cecap>

Getting to Know You - Polling (Candace Blair Cronin, ICF)

Candice Blair Cronin facilitated a polling “Getting to know you” game. Questions and responses included the following:

How did you hear about this meeting?

- Email, Twitter, Facebook

To what extent are you personally concerned about climate change?

- Very concerned

How familiar are you with the CECAP process?

- Very familiar, not at all familiar, somewhat familiar

Where do you live within the County?

- Springfield, Annandale, Sully, Lee, Braddock, Hunter Mill

In the future, how would you prefer to hear about CECAP?

- Nextdoor, email, social media

All About the CECAP Process (Maya Dhavale, Fairfax County)

Maya Dhavale provided an overview of the CECAP process, from the project initiation in January 2020 to the current stages of community engagement planning and development of the Final CECAP Technical Report, and finally the upcoming education/outreach and implementation stage which will begin in Fall 2021. She also provided an overview of community engagement and public input opportunities, as well as the role of the CECAP working group. She reviewed the two previous sets of public feedback sessions, one in August 2020 and one in February 2021.

Question: Is there a draft of the CECAP available for review?

- Yes, the first part of the draft is available for review on the [Working Group meeting materials webpage](#). The Working Group will get the full draft in advance of the June Working Group meetings.

Section by Section Review and Discussion (Adam Agalloco and Candace Blair Cronin, ICF)

Adam Agalloco reviewed and defined key terms used in the report such as greenhouse gas, GHG inventory, sectors (sources of greenhouse gas emissions categorized by economic sectors), strategy (a broader set of actions that can be modeled to understand emissions reductions), and action (a project or specific technology that impacts emissions within a strategy or sector). He provided an overview of the Fairfax County 2018 GHG Inventory, and the share of emissions coming from different sectors. He noted that transportation and commercial energy were the largest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions in Fairfax County in 2018. He also discussed the Fairfax County Business as Usual projections, which show a small increase in greenhouse gas emissions from 2018 to 2030, and a larger increase through 2050.

Adam presented the modeled GHG Reduction Pathway (2005-2050), which shows reduction potential for a set of strategies that could help Fairfax County reach the 2050 target of carbon neutrality. He also gave an overview of the percent of reductions that could come from different sectors.

Question: How do the estimated reductions compare to other urban jurisdictions? Are these ambitious?

- These reductions align with the goal of carbon neutrality by 2050 and several interim goals that align with science-based targets. These are extremely aggressive goals.

Question: Is Fairfax County coordinating with VA universities?

- Not for this project, although Fairfax County does work with universities such as George Mason on climate. When we move into implementation, we will be looking for community partners and universities and students will be part of that.

Next, Adam defined terms for goal setting including long term goal, interim goal, and sector specific goal. He reviewed the goals set by the Working Group, including the 2030 Interim goal, 2040 interim goal, and 2050 long-term goal.

- 2030 Interim goal: 50% reduction by 2030 from a 2005 base year.
- 2040 Interim goal: 75% reduction by 2040 from a 2005 base year.
- 2050 Long-term goal: Carbon neutrality by 2050, with at least 87% achieved with emission reductions from a 2005 base year.

He then reviewed the following sector-based goals which were set at the May Working Group meetings:

- Buildings & Energy Efficiency: All new, eligible buildings will have a commitment to green building.
- Buildings & Energy Efficiency: Retrofit at least 100,000 housing units with energy efficiency measures by 2030.
- Transportation: Increase transit and non-motorized commuting to 30% (including telework) by 2030.
- Transportation: Increase plug-in electric vehicles (PHEVs) and battery electric vehicles (BEVs) to at least 9% of all light-duty vehicle registrations by 2030.
- Natural Resources: Goal is currently under discussion. The current draft goal is focused on tree canopy.

Comment: IEA's new report calls for EVs being 60% of all new car sales by 2030. For that to be achieved worldwide, the U.S. will have to do better.

- Right now, Fairfax County is around 1%. There is a lot of hope that EVs will become wildly popular, but it is a little uncertain that point, and when we think of vehicle turnover even if we get to a high percentage of new car purchases being EVs in 2030 there will still be a lot of older cars on the road.

Question: For the retrofits, do you mean you hope that homeowners voluntarily convert to solar? Is this something you want to implement yourselves in subsidized housing?

- That's a great question. In general, the plan is meant to encompass all manner of potential retrofits. If we are not having a large percentage of energy retrofits by 2030 it will be challenging to meet Fairfax County's goals.

Question: Do efficiency retrofits include replacing fossil fuel heating with solar or other renewables?

- Efficiency retrofits is specifically focused on efficiency; we have another strategy that is focused on electrification and one on renewables as well.

Question: The building codes are changing to address facility CO₂. How are you does your plan address this?

- There is a lot of work happening looking at carbon dioxide within buildings and specifically for building performance standards in certain jurisdictions which require carbon reductions.

Comment: Suggest using different term than non-motorized commuting that would include all micro mobility such as e-bikes and e-scooters.

- The tracking methods we have would include those, but that's a good point to make sure we are using specific language when we talk about those.

Finally, Adam discussed emission reduction strategies included in the CECAP draft across the following sectors:

- Buildings and Energy Efficiency
 - Strategy #1: Increase energy efficiency and conservation in existing buildings
 - Strategy #2: Pursue beneficial electrification in existing buildings
 - Strategy #3: Implement green building standards for new buildings
- Energy Supply
 - Strategy #4: Increase renewable energy in grid mix
 - Strategy #5: Increase production of onsite renewable energy
 - Strategy #6: Increase energy supply from renewable natural gas (RNG), hydrogen, and power-to-gas
- Transportation
 - Strategy #7: Increase electric vehicle (EV) adoption
 - Strategy #8: Support efficient land use, active transportation, public transportation, and transportation demand management (TDM) to reduce vehicle miles traveled
 - Strategy #9: Increase fuel economy and use of low carbon fuels for transportation
- Waste

- Strategy #10: Reduce the amount of waste generated and divert waste from landfills and waste-to-energy facilities
 - Strategy #11: Responsibly manage all waste generated including collected residential and commercial waste, wastewater and other items
- Natural Resources
 - Strategy #12: Support preservation, restoration, and expansion of Fairfax County's natural systems and public spaces

Discussion

Buildings and Energy Efficiency:

Will the "strategies" talk about the incentives to make these efficiency things happen?

- Yes, we will have a place for discussion of incentives and best practices for implementation.

What is power to gas (P2G)?

- It is a process converting electricity to gas. It typically uses a biologically derived carbon molecule (from either carbon capture or biologically available) and joins it with electrically generated hydrogen to make a methane molecule (the basis for natural gas). When P2G is combusted, it releases carbon dioxide, but the source of carbon is from within the natural carbon cycle, meaning that there is no net increase in carbon emissions. This can be compared to the combustion of a fossil derived gas, which is sourced from fossil fuels sources outside the natural carbon cycle.

Who might we speak with regarding the different options, meaning companies that explain the options and what they cost?

- As we move towards implementation, we will work on connecting folks to resources that can help explain the work and different options. There are some resources for this available on the Fairfax County webpage to help with this: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/environment-energy-coordination/energyactionfairfax>

How do you use the "power to gas" gas?

- You do lose some efficiency by turning electricity into gas by a power to gas process, but once the grid is cleaner it may make more sense to use excess renewable energy to generate usable gas. Some of these gas alternatives are really meant for things that are more challenging to decarbonize such as commercial food processing plants that require really high heat processes.

Transportation, Waste, and Natural Resources:

In general, I'm concerned about the timeframe given the lack of detail on some of the strategies, and particularly strategy 8. What is the timeframe between when more detail is available in June to when they are reported to the Board?

- The Working Group will see the report in the beginning of June and will discuss them June 8th and 10th. After those meetings we will make revisions recommended by the Working Group, and the Board will review the report at the July 20th meeting, and the final report will be published to the website. After that any changes from the Board will be implemented.

It is a little hard to find the report, I'd suggest a link on the main CECAP page to the draft reports for easier access. On Strategy 8, a prioritization table showed that bike commuting would be increased to 3% by 2050. Those don't seem very ambitious; I think micro mobility is a huge opportunity. One way for the County to encourage people to use those modes is something like Bike Arlington, where they have three full time staff encouraging people to commute by biking.

- The implementation of some of these strategies and actions, and the best practices we will use, are going to be the part where these comments are most relevant and may interest you the most.
- These goals are set to be responsive to the situation in Fairfax County and based on national trends. We benchmarked these with what we've seen completed in other areas and what we see as achievable, although micro mobility falls under that area of emerging technologies where it's hard to say what will happen because it is changing in unprecedented ways (with e-bikes, bikeshares etc.).
- CECAP is a snapshot in time and will be revised as new information becomes available. This is rapidly evolving area, and we will continue to look for new best practices and actions we can take.

Is curbside composting included at all?

- We do talk about composting as an option in the CECAP. In terms of where the County goes with that, that's a decision that will be made after the CECAP is adopted – whether it is voluntary programs or curbside composting, there is a lot that can be done.

The strategies are fine. The devil is in how you incentivize them. Where/when will that information be available to the public?

- There will be a lot of information within the CECAP plan, and we will provide a robust set of what can happen, but the implementation is the next step after the CECAP.
- When the Board receives the CECAP report, they will determine how to use the report, where to focus efforts, and how to approach implementation.

What is the best way that we (the public) can show our support for CECAP to the Board and pertinent county agencies?

- Thanks very much for that, it is great to hear you want to show your support. The best way to get in touch right now is to email the Board - email the chair and the different supervisors to let them know this is important to you. You can also tune in to the Board meeting in July and reach out to individual supervisors who say things that are of interest to you.

What Do You Want to Know More About Now? (Candace Blair Cronin, ICF)

Candice Blair Cronin facilitated a discussion on what people want to know more about, what information was new, and what resources are needed. Discussion included the following questions:

What is something new you learned today that your neighbors don't know?

- That Fairfax County has a GHG Inventory.
- The comprehensive list of strategies.
- Learned about power to gas.

What resources do you need?

- The Board should try to publicize this on-going effort more in order to let folks know this active process is underway.

Q&A:

If we have an idea for implementing part of a strategy, how can we submit that?

- Email the CECAP outreach email (cecapoutreach@fairfaxcounty.gov) with your ideas. Sometimes there are conflicting ideas, and the report is a product of the Working Group, so if there is not support for the idea from the Working Group it will not go into the report.

Are you working with any "anchor" companies to model sustainability behaviors and practices?

- As we move into implementation, we are looking for community partners, and are working with companies to learn about what they are doing. There was a Working Group business group that met and the recording of that is on the CECAP website. We had a closed meeting as well to protect private information of the business.

Wrap Up & Next Steps (Candace Blair Cronin, ICF and Maya Dhavale, FFX)

Candice Blair Cronin reviewed meeting objectives and facilitated a poll to close out the meeting. The poll included a question asking participants what strategy they are most excited about and responses included the following:

- Strategy 8
- Strategies 4 & 5
- Strategy 1

- Strategies 10 & 11
- Strategies 1-5

Maya Dhavale reviewed upcoming steps in the CECAP process, including the upcoming educational campaign and implementation of the CECAP in Fall 2021. She also reviewed ways to stay informed, reach out, and stay involved in the CECAP process.

Slides available here: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/environment-energy-coordination/public-engagement-cecap>