Fairfax County Community-Wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP)
May Public Feedback Session #2
Meeting Notes

Thursday, May 20th, 2021
Held electronically via WebEx

Fairfax County held a CECAP Public Feedback Meeting on May 20th 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)

Candace Blair Cronin, the meeting facilitator, welcomed attendees and noted that the meeting would be recorded. She then reviewed the meeting purpose and 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, the OEEC website, Facebook

To what extent are you personally concerned about climate change?

- Very concerned, extremely concerned

How familiar are you with the CECAP process?

- Not familiar at all, somewhat familiar

Where do you live within the County?

- Providence, Mount Vernon

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

- Nextdoor, email

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.

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: Where does emissions from new construction of housing/commercial real estate, etc. fall under process and fugitive emissions?

- With construction, you'll have some on-site emissions and waste accounted for. What we don't account for is the embedded emissions associated with materials used for construction – insulation, or wood, those are a different scope and different way of measuring emissions which at this point we haven't really looked at but are considering looking into particularly for specific strategies such as the Green Buildings strategy.

Question: What assumptions are you making to achieve this dramatic decrease in GHG? The CECAP as I understand it is entirely voluntary – so how will these changes be implemented?

- CECAP is a voluntary plan but it is also meant to demonstrate what can be done – if we are looking at energy efficiency, for example, the modeling shows very robust actions and policies, all of which will be included. We do want to emphasize the voluntary actions because we want to educate people and let them know what they can do.
- The County has been doing a variety of things on the County level and is also looking at what can be done with the state. The CECAP gives individuals and businesses potential actions and provides voluntary actions that can augment policies being put in place at the County, State, and Federal level.

Question: Did you all use an existing plan/s to model this one off of, and if so, can you please share what they were?

- When the CECAP is published there will be descriptions of assumptions and the methods and sources used to reach that final modeled pathway. We are looking at best practices and will explore things that have been modeled successfully in other places, but some things are specific to Fairfax County and Virginia.

Question: Are there going to be recommendations for County requirements to mandate certain activities?

- Great question. It is something the Working Group has asked about. Virginia is a Dillon Rule state, which means that if a jurisdiction does not have the express authority to do something it cannot do it. There won't always be an option to mandate everything, however the County may choose to seek authority on the state level to mandate some things, may provide some incentives, or may provide guidance or leadership to help influence behavior change in other ways.

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.

Finally, Adam discussed emissions reductions 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:

Does power to gas (P2G) mean generating methane?

- Yes—P2G 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

Shouldn't we be moving away from methane?

- Yes we are, and that is part of what the electrification strategy is about. There is also a recognition that some things are very hard to electrify, and renewable natural gas (RNG) and power-to-gas can help make it a lot easier to achieve a low carbon future.

How can renters help push for on-site renewable energy production where they live?

- There are a couple things renters will be able to do in VA, and it is one of our recommendations in Strategy #5. Where renters have the option, they can choose community solar, otherwise they can work together to make the business case to develop a community solar project. The hope is with costs coming down it could be a net benefit to all involved.

Transportation, Waste, and Natural Resources:

In old home like ours, the electrical box can only handle 60amp and we are already experiencing issues. Are there incentives and support for people buying an electric car and having a charger at home?

- There are some incentives for electric cars, depending on the model and the make there is a federal incentive available until a certain number of vehicles are sold. CECAP recommends a broad set of EV strategies a different levels to incentivize both chargers and vehicles.

I thought there would be incentives towards planting trees.

- I'd have to go back to the actions list to see if that was a recommendation. We talked a lot about tree planting and preservation of existing trees and will definitely take a look at that. {*Multiple incentives, including incentivizing or requiring conservation of tree canopies in development projects, are recommended in the implementation best practices section of Strategy 12*}.

Does encouraging broadband adoption fit in anywhere? It can decrease vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

- That's a good suggestion. We did talk about making remote work practices more sustainable as that can impact VMT.

How can we support CECAP at the "telling the people in charge that we support these initiatives" level?

- The best way to let the people in charge, or Board of Supervisors, know that you support these initiatives, is to get in touch with your supervisors and the chairman. Let your neighbors know and pass on information.

I know that you wanted buy-in and feedback from the community, but were there discussions and participations from businesses and industry at some point?

- We did reach out to businesses and asked them to participate in the Working Group and do have several businesses participating in that group. We also did some targeted outreach to the business community in February and learned how they might be partners in the CECAP process and will continue to work with businesses during the implementation phase.

Will you notify us when the final report is ready?

- Yes, we will notify you when the final report is ready. It will go up on the website, it will be on our social media, and we will put it in our newsletter. We are targeting the end of June/beginning of July.

Surprised to learn the low percentage of emissions from waste sector!

- There are two ways to approach inventories: activity-based and consumption-based. Activity-based inventories are more straightforward and is the approach COG took with Fairfax County's greenhouse gas inventory. Consumption-based inventories are a bit more complex and include more of the energy that it takes to produce materials. A consumption-based inventory will try to understand everything being consumed within a specific boundary and the emissions associated with that.

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. 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