

Fairfax County Community-Wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP)

Public Feedback Meeting | Meeting Notes

Transportation, Development, and Waste

Thursday, February 25th, 2021

Held electronically via WebEx

Fairfax County held a Public Feedback session on Transportation, Development, and Waste on February 25, 2021 from 7:00-8:30pm. The meeting was held electronically via WebEx.

Recordings of the meeting and meeting materials [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 \(Michelle Paul Heelan, ICF and Maya Dhavale, FFX\)](#)

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.

Michelle Paul Heelan reviewed the meeting agenda and purpose, focusing on the following four goals:

- Educate and inform you about our climate energy action plan
- Invite your individual feedback via our community surveys
- Understand your opinions, preferences, and ideas about transportation, development, and waste-related strategies and activities the Fairfax County community could undertake to reduce our carbon footprint.
- Gather information to improve outreach and community engagement efforts going forward.

Additional ways to provide feedback were reviewed including the community surveys, which are open until March 14th. [Click here to respond to the surveys](#).

Finally, Michelle Paul Heelan covered WebEx tips including how to use the chat box.

[Slides are available here.](#)

Getting to Know You (Polling) (Michelle Paul Heelan, ICF)

Michelle Paul Heelan facilitated a poll to get to know the meeting attendees, asking the following questions:

- How did you hear about this meeting?
 - Responses included email, the CECAP working group, and Facebook.
- To what extent are you personally concerned about climate change?
 - Responses included very concerned and somewhat concerned.
- How familiar are you with the CECAP process?
 - Responses included somewhat familiar and very familiar.
- Where do you live within the County?
 - Responses included Dranesville, Sully, Springfield, and Providence.
- In the future, how would you prefer to hear about CECAP?
 - Responses included email, Twitter, HOA newsletters, and NextDoor.
 - [Follow this link to sign up for the CECAP email newsletter.](#)

CECAP Overview (Maya Dhavale)

Maya Dhavale provided an overview on the CECAP. The CECAP is a community-wide plan to reduce GHG emissions in Fairfax County through voluntary actions. The County is soliciting feedback from the Working Group as well as all members of the public, and the CECAP's success relies on community participation. The Working Group members are members of the public from all over the County that are working with Fairfax County and consultants to develop recommendations that will be provided to the Board. We are currently in stage 3 of the planning process, focused on climate mitigation planning and support.

She also reviewed ways to get involved as a member of the public. Fairfax County is looking for your input on how public engagement is going, how the plan and process is moving along, and feedback on the plan itself.

Transportation, Development, and Waste-Related Actions (Michelle Paul Heelan and Adam Agalloco, ICF)

In this section, actions for reducing emission from transportation, development, and waste were introduced and discussed. These actions included:

- Public transportation and other transit options
- Connected and sustainable communities
- Electric vehicles and mobility
- Waste reduction, recycling and composting
- Green spaces and natural resources

Public Transportation and Other Transit Options

Public transportation typically offers a lower carbon transportation source compared to single-occupancy vehicles, and often compared to multi-occupancy vehicles as well.

Meeting participants responded to the following questions in the WebEx chat. [See the WebEx transcript for a comprehensive list of comments.](#)

- What would encourage you?
 - More frequent non-rush hour bus service
 - Faster commutes
 - Ease of access
 - Reach more locations
 - More routes for buses
 - Better bike parking at metros
 - Better connections
 - Cleanliness and upgraded fleet
 - Electric buses
- What would stop you?
 - Lack of shelters at bus stops
 - COVID safety concerns
 - Unreliable bus schedules
 - Long transit time
 - Waiting in inclement weather
 - Not being available late at night
 - Too long of time between trains
 - Inconvenient for grocery shopping
 - Perception of safety issues

Connected and Sustainable Communities

This includes a wide variety of things such as bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and paths and trails that connect areas. It also includes hubs of areas that make it easy to do things in one area without needing to drive. A lot of it is related to the zoning and planning of spaces.

Meeting participants responded to the following questions in the WebEx chat. [See the WebEx transcript for a comprehensive list of comments.](#)

- What benefits do you see of these communities?
 - Reduced energy consumption/greenhouse gas emissions
 - Traffic reduction
 - Better health from walking and biking
 - Less pollution
 - Increased safety

- Increased sense of community
- Improved accessibility/quality of life
- Youth self-sufficiency
- Opportunity for public art and small businesses
- What drawbacks do you see of these communities?
 - Potential loss of green space, particularly native flora
 - Potential overuse of concrete
 - If you don't live in one it can be hard to get there
 - Inclement weather/safety on pathways
 - Potentially drives up cost of housing
 - Could be siloed from surrounding communities

Electric Vehicles and Mobility

Today's transportation is heavily reliant on gasoline and diesel, and electric vehicles provide a way to move away from that. To reduce carbon most effectively, a transition to electric vehicles would be paired with efforts to clean the grid.

Meeting participants responded to the following questions in the WebEx chat. [See the WebEx transcript for a comprehensive list of comments.](#)

- What would encourage you?
 - Access to more charging stations
 - Green charging options
 - Requiring home chargers in all new construction, and in multi-family housing real estate.
 - Better performance than gasoline in terms of acceleration, quiet operation, low maintenance
 - Electric taxis, Ubers, Lyfts
 - Incentives to businesses to have charging in their parking/garages
 - Faster charging times
 - Some type of credit to offset initial costs
 - Reduced registration fee for EVs
 - Lower cost electric vehicles
- What would stop you?
 - With parking on the street, the permissions and permitting, chargers are too costly to install
 - High initial cost
 - Lack of charging infrastructure
 - Range anxiety
 - Long recharge time
 - High energy and greenhouse gas emissions from car production
 - Non-universal chargers
 - Waste from batteries

Waste Reduction, Recycling, and Composting

This includes all waste management strategies, including reuse and reducing consumption in addition to recycling and composting.

Meeting participants responded to the following questions in the WebEx chat. [See the WebEx transcript for a comprehensive list of comments.](#)

- What would help you support this path forward?
 - Price signals – an upcharge for using plastic, styrofoam, etc.
 - Knowing that recycling actually got recycled.
 - Better communication
 - Easily accessible recycling/compost centers
 - Assistance with resource-intensive DIY recycling options.
 - Seeing more people recycle properly.
 - Policy change
 - HOA recycling centers
 - Free composting bins
- What might get in the way of this path forward?
 - Lack of understanding of what is recyclable.
 - Changing rules of recycling
 - Lack of recycling access
 - Inconvenience
 - Relative size of bins (trash container is larger)
 - Food containers are hard to clean

Green Spaces & Natural Resources

There are contributions to climate and resiliency from green spaces and natural resources. This includes restoration, land management, tree planning, and urban greenspaces.

Meeting participants responded to the following questions in the WebEx chat. [See the WebEx transcript for a comprehensive list of comments.](#)

- What would help you support this path forward?
 - Cleaner air and water
 - Improved mental and physical health
 - Entertainment
 - Encourages walking/biking
 - Preserves mature trees
 - Carbon sequestration
- What might get in the way of this path forward?
 - Increased cost of housing
 - Crowded trails
 - More maintenance

- Less density

Open Discussion on the Public Feedback Process (Michelle Paul Heelan, ICF)

Given the County's constraints (i.e. budget, COVID), what is working well in this process? What could be improved?

Some responses included:

- Virtual sessions can be easier to attend; it can be hard to make it to a physical location after work.
- Most attendees are very concerned about climate change – we need more perspectives.
- Need better messaging/outreach that this process is ongoing.
 - Incentives for those who wouldn't otherwise bother to attend, such as "door prize"
 - Social media campaign
- Session was well organized and engaging.

Wrap Up & Next Steps (Michelle Paul Heelan, ICF and Maya Dhavale, FFX)

Michelle Paul Heelan facilitated a brief poll asking the following questions:

- Do you intend to respond to one or both surveys (Energy, Transportation/Development)?
 - Responses included yes and already responded.
- Will you share the survey with at least three other people?
 - Responses included yes and already did.
- Is the next set of public meetings in May 2021?
 - Yes

Maya Dhavale provided an overview of the CECAP timeline and upcoming events, including monthly Working Group meetings, and the next round of Community Feedback meetings in May 2021. She also reviewed ways to stay informed and get involved, including the Community Surveys and CECAP outreach email:

- [Community Surveys](#)
- Email: cecapoutreach@fairfaxcounty.gov