Fairfax County Community-Wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP) Transportation and Development Sub-Group Meeting Meeting Notes

Transportation and Development Sub-Group Discussion #4
Wednesday, March 31st, 2021
Held electronically via WebEx

Fairfax County held a CECAP Working Group Transportation and Development Subgroup meeting on March 31st from 6:00-8:00pm. The meeting was held electronically via WebEx and included a discussion of sector-level and interim goals for inclusion in the CECAP.

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 (Candace 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.

Welcome and Meeting Overview (Candace Cronin, ICF)

Candace Cronin reviewed the following meeting objectives:
- Discuss sector-based goals, in preparation for vote with the full Working Group at the next meeting.
- Discuss interim goals, in preparation for vote with the full Working Group at the next meeting.

- Discuss any feedback on the other subgroup's strategies and actions.

Maya Dhavale provided context on the Task 3 timeline, noting that the current step is discussion and prioritization. Upcoming steps include drafting the report and a round of public engagement in May.

Slides are available here: [CECAP Transportation and Development Subgroup - March 31, 2021 | Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (fairfaxcounty.gov)](#)

Sector-Based Goals Discussion (Adam Agalloco, ICF)

Adam Agalloco reviewed key terms for goal setting, including "reduction goal/target goal/long term goal," "interim goal," and "sector-specific goal." Adam reminded the group that Fairfax's long-term goal is carbon neutrality by 2050, with at least 87% coming from emissions reductions from a 2005 base year. Adam then reviewed the baseline GHG Inventory for Fairfax County.

He also reviewed initial GHG modeling results, providing one potential pathway towards meeting the 80% GHG reduction goal by 2050. He reviewed the potential impact of different sectors, and how much they could contribute to GHG emissions.

Adam reviewed best practices for sector goals, including that they should be specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and time-bound. He also noted that having too many goals can actually dilute the power (less is more), and that sector-based goals should be focused on areas the subgroup wants to emphasize such as efficient land use, active and public transportation and transportation demand management (TDM), and preservation and expansion of natural spaces.

Comment: I would recommend a sector-based goal (related to Strategy 8), and another that focuses on reduction of VMT.
- ICF and Fairfax County will provide specific targets or percentages for goals based on the feedback provided in the meeting.

Comment: We need to make it easier for people to re-charge their vehicles: increase the number of charging stations, % of vehicles in Fairfax County

that are electric (this does not apply to people who travel through Fairfax County, only those who live in the County).

- This is a great example of a goal that is measurable and attainable.

Comment: I would recommend adding a goal on the number of EVs *sold* in the County, not just the number registered/owned. Is it possible to track the number of public transit riders (e.g., bus, rail) that originate in the County? If so, it would be great to set a target to increase ridership – this is assuming that pre-pandemic norms are reinstated.

Comment: Can we set a target that looks at increasing non-automotive mode share? (e.g., walking, biking, public transit)

Comment: I would recommend that we also set a specific sector goal that focuses on land-use, specifically related to increasing the percentage of tree cover (or decreasing the area covered by impervious surfaces). As part of this goal, we should include residential conservation (RC) areas as places to focus on conservation and increasing tree cover.

Comment: Having more frequent tree canopy surveys would make it easier to track our progress. Protecting mature tree canopy is also very important; we should make sure that these areas are protected from development/in-fill projects.

Comment: For in-fill development, trees are the very last thing considered – there may be a possibility to change this in County regulations. Fairfax County proudly claims that they have the highest % tree canopy coverage in Virginia, but there are nuances to the projects/approval process that do not always make tree coverage a priority.

- What are the actual measurable goals related to this?
  - o Increase frequency of tree canopy surveys
  - o Proportion of mature canopy to overall tree canopy
- It is important to consider trees, but also how they relate to development goals.

Comment: People in lower-income communities cannot always afford to live close to economic development areas – lack of housing density causes problems with access to public transportation and quality of life (such as lack of natural spaces available nearby). The equity aspect of tree coverage, land-use planning, and transportation access are very linked.

Comment: In my neighborhood, we have a lot of large, mature trees that are aging out. As older trees age out, what system is in place to replenish

these trees? Do we have any way to ensure that replanting is consistently occurring so that there are different ages of trees? Additionally, are there targets/actions that we can enact in our public parks that address the climate issues we've discussed? Finally, providing a mix of housing (for all income levels) near public transportation is also very important to addressing the land-use/housing issue.

- Zoning question – we need to allow duplexes and other multi-family dwellings to be built instead of single-family homes.
- Also, trees are connected to one another – when one suffers, nearby trees suffer as well.

Comment: Transportation is still the single biggest contributor – any metrics related to getting people out of cars are worth tracking. Specifically, bus-related metrics are important to track (# of buses, routes, and hours). Virginia does not have the same level of access to Metro as Maryland, so access to these stations is a challenge. Increasing the number of lines/stations is a bigger question that may be beyond Fairfax County's control.

Comment: Increasing the number of bus routes is a good idea, but we need to make sure that these are EV buses, not fossil-burning.

Comment: Two ideas for improving tree canopy: 1) look at County regulations for setbacks of houses cited on in-fill lots and 2) making trees the first thing that are considered when creating site designs (not utilities or stormwater).

Comment: Some of the goals have clear, measurable metrics related to them. However, there are certain goals that aren't as easy to quantify (supporting measure that provide low-carbon fuels for aviation, "smart growth" targets for transportation and development).

Comment: GHG reductions are summarized for entire strategies but are not reported at the action-level. Why is this?

- It varies from strategy to strategy. For example, some of the energy strategies were modeled from the top-down (GHG reduction potential was applied to the whole strategy). Transportation strategies were more varied.

Adam brought up the possibility of using the green buildings strategy to also address some of the goals/actions being discussed by this group. Adam

reminded the group that we will take everyone's feedback and return to our sector-level goals to revise and make modifications, as necessary.

Adam Agalloco provided context for interim goals, including the previous consensus to develop a 50% reduction by 2030 (from a 2005 base year) and a 2040 interim goal. Adam explained why the 2030 goal was set (aligns with other jurisdictions and the IPCC Global Warming of 1.5ºC Special Report). Discussion was held to determine whether a 2040 interim goal is still needed, and what percentage reduction should be targeted.

Adam Agalloco reviewed potential goals, suggesting that somewhere around a 70% reduction from 2005 levels by 2040 would put emissions on track towards carbon neutrality. Adam also mentioned a comment from last night's working group to require a 2040 goal but wait until 2030 to set it (once Fairfax County has a better sense of their progress so far). There was a general consensus that the 2040 goal is still useful.

Comment: The IPCC recommendation aligns with Fairfax County's goal for 2030 – are there are similar recommendations for 2040 from IPCC? Without a specific science-based target for 2040 (from IPCC or other organizations), I would recommend we wait until 2030 to set the goal.
- Most of the science-based goals are focused on 2050; there aren't many established targets for 2040.

Adam said that we are currently working under the assumption that the 2030 goal is established – the 2040 goal would be an additional goal, not a replacement. Adam also explained why the 2005 baseline is used – many governments and organizations use this as a baseline, so it makes sense to use the same baseline to make the target easily comparable.

Comment: We've already made some reductions since 2005, so we would want to have a higher reduction interim goal to show additional progress.

Comment: The current modeling shows us getting close to the carbon-neutral goal by 2050, but not quite there. Does the modeling meet the 2030 or 2040 goals?
- There is room for carbon offsets or emerging technologies to close the gap between what the modeling currently shows and what targets we set.

Comment: The issue of data lag makes goal-setting and tracking a challenge.

- This is a great point, using indicators and metrics is equally important to track as we go. Additionally, as we see what direction our emissions are headed, it is possible to adjust actions/policies as needed.

Comment: Two takeaways from a book I recently read: setting policies won't necessarily get you all the way to the targets you set; modeling is also a big challenge when it comes to engaging business/individuals.

Comments on Other Subgroup's Strategies and Actions (Adam Agalloco, ICF)

Adam provided an overview of the strategies set by the energy subgroup. These strategies fall into two main categories: buildings/energy efficiency and energy supply. Adam explained the context for each of the 6 strategies decided on by the energy subgroup, including key themes and discussion points that came out of the subgroup's conversations. Adam noted that the residential and commercial building distinction will be made clear in the model and report.

The six energy strategies are as follows:
- 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.
- 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.

Comment: What sort of discussion occurred last night related to refrigerants and their use in buildings? Additional question related to Strategy 6 – what was the conversation like last night related to renewable natural gas?
- The March 24th meeting materials would be the better place to go for discussions on Strategy 6 – folks were quite apprehensive about this strategy (it was heavily de-emphasized).
- Next-generation refrigerants are a promising area of GHG reductions and strategizing. Also, it is worth nothing that the Kigali Amendment requirements were considered for the strategy modeling.

Adam shared the results of the Mural Board from the Energy subgroup meeting:
- Strategy 1 (increasing energy efficiency and conservation in existing buildings) was the highest priority.

- Strategy 6 (increasing energy supply from RNG, hydrogen, and power-to-gas) had the most votes for de-emphasizing.

Comment: You mentioned that you've been having business roundtables – what have the discussions been like at these meetings?
- We asked businesses about the programs they currently have in place and how they see themselves being able to support the CECAP process (and one another). The discussions were fairly big-picture, but very engaging.

Wrap Up & Provide Meeting Feedback (Candace Cronin, ICF and Maya Dhavale, FFX)

Candace Cronin reviewed meeting objectives, and requested feedback on communications, meeting length, meeting information, and ability for everybody to participate.

Maya Dhavale reviewed ways to stay informed on the CECAP process, as well as ways to reach out and stay involved.