

Fairfax County Community-Wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP) Votes on Goals & CECAP Report Discussion Meeting Notes

Monday, May 10th, 2021
Held electronically via WebEx and Mural

Fairfax County held a CECAP Working Group Meeting on May 10th from 6:00-8:30pm. 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 (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.

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

- Provide an overview of public feedback from February and March public feedback sessions.
- Discuss and vote on the 2040 interim year goal.
- Discuss and vote on sector-based goal(s).
- Discuss feedback on the Draft of Part I of the CECAP.
- Decide on whether a May Public Feedback meeting Part II is needed on May 13th.

Michelle Paul Heelan then reviewed tips for using the WebEx chat function, and Maya Dhavale provided additional context for the meeting and how it fits in with upcoming steps in the CECAP process.

Slides are available here: [CECAP Working Group Meeting - May 10, 2021 | Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](#)

Summary of Public Feedback from February/March (Maya Dhavale, Fairfax County)

Maya Dhavale provided an overview of results from the most recent public survey. She noted that respondents emphasized financial incentives and rebates as the most important tools to influence climate action for individuals and that development and infrastructure were key issues for County action. Additionally, a need for more public education and outreach on climate issues was identified.

2040 Interim Goal Discussion & Verbal Vote (Adam Agalloco and Michelle Paul Heelan, ICF)

Adam Agalloco provided an overview of the goals that have been set so far as part of the CECAP process (a 2050 goal of carbon neutrality, with at least 87% coming from emissions reductions from a 2005 base year, and a 2030 interim goal of a 50% reduction from a 2005 base year). He also provided context for a potential 2040 interim goal.

A verbal vote was taken in support of a 75% reduction from a 2005 base year as the interim goal for 2040.

Sector-Based Goals Discussion & Verbal Vote (Adam Agalloco and Michelle Paul Heelan, ICF)

Adam Agalloco provided a review of the Working Groups' previous discussion of the need for sector-specific goals, and identified potential sector goal types:

- Goal for Energy Efficiency
- Goal for Renewable Energy
- Goal for Electric Vehicles
- Goal for Public Transit
- Goal for Transportation Sector
- Goal for Tree Canopy

He also reviewed discussion from the March meetings on considerations for making goals most effective, which included regular data collection and reporting on metrics, a focus on low- and moderate-income populations and affordable housing, and a preference to connect activity data with GHG progress. He noted several best practices for goal setting, including the idea that fewer goals can indicate stronger priorities, and more goals means more resources are required to produce regular tracking reports, which could take resources away from implementation efforts. Finally, he reviewed sector emissions from the 2018 GHG Inventory, and modeling results of sector reductions compared to BAU through 2050.

Next, Michelle Paul Heelan facilitated a discussion on potential sector-based goals for buildings and energy efficiency, transportation, and forestry and land use. See the slides for more detail: [CECAP Working Group Meeting - May 10, 2021 | Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cecap/working-group-meeting-may-10-2021)

The verbal discussion is summarized below. The full WebEx chat transcript is [available online](#).

Buildings and Energy Efficiency

Comment: Both residential and commercial energy efficiency are going to be critical to achieving our goals. I wonder why we would focus on 100,000 residential homeowners, when we can accomplish the same or more energy reductions by focusing on far fewer commercial building owners.

Comment: There is already money available from joining RGGI, much of which is directly targeted at upgrading energy efficiency of low-income families in Virginia. Much of that money is directed toward low-income residents in Virginia.

Comment: You can use the number of children eligible for free and reduced lunch in our County as a proxy for low-income residents and see that there is a large low-income community in Fairfax.

Comment: There are groups the County could partner with to get data on retrofits and energy efficiency in construction.

Transportation

Comment: It is important to call out electric buses, if you are going to spend money purchasing new buses, they should not be diesel. The County needs to lead by example.

Response: One potential way of framing that would be to ensure by X date that all County bus purchases are electric.

Comment: Are we talking about commercial buses in addition to school buses?

Response: We are talking about all buses in the county.

Comment: Does this goal include everyone coming into Fairfax or just people living in Fairfax?

Response: Work from home is not reflected in that 9.7 percent, if you add work from home we're closer to 14 percent. Adding things in like biking and transit help people regardless of where they are coming in from, it's more about transportation options in the region not about strict boundaries. The goal would be defined the same way the census tracks it, which is including the commuters in Fairfax County and what their transportation mode is, not necessarily people coming in.

Comment: The County's Joint Environmental Taskforce (JET) put a recommendation in to go all electric on the County school buses by 2035 and the County public transit by 2030. If you put an aggressive statement here it would only add support to the pressure the Board is already facing. We need to be aware of other strong climate recommendations being made to the Board.

Comment: We will have a section the report the existing policies and plans the County has that fit under the umbrella of greenhouse gas emissions reductions and climate mitigation. When you do that part of the review, please ensure that we have captured the linkages and where there is additional support from the Working Group.

Prepare for Review of Draft CECAP (Michelle Paul Heelan, ICF)

Michelle Paul Heelan facilitated a section-by-section of Part I of the Draft CECAP Technical Report, including the background and introductory material and two examples of strategy sections. Part II of the Draft CECAP will be discussed in the June CECAP Working Group meeting and will include the full suite of strategy sections. Feedback from the Working Group will be incorporated into the second draft of the CECAP.

Feedback on Draft of Part I of CECAP (ICF)

Michelle Paul Heelan provided an overview of each section of Part I of the report (Introduction, CECAP Process & Methodology, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, GHG Reduction Goals, and Emission Reduction Strategies) and facilitated a discussion on the content.

The discussion was focused on the following four questions:

- Does the report accurately reflect the process, the discussions, and the decisions of the Task Force/Working Group?
- Are there any areas that need additional emphasis or explanation?
- Was anything important left out?
- Are there any areas that could be cut or deemphasized?

Verbal Discussion (The full WebEx chat transcript is [available online](#)):

Introduction

Comment: From the very beginning, what we have been looking for is an equal involvement of County government, businesses, and individual actions. At no point did we ever say that this is going to require bold action, it is going to require both voluntary actions and County regulations. On page 8 and page 9 you are saying the things we should be focusing on all along. We need to unify that this is not only a voluntary action plan.

Comment: It says it is a community plan, but you include county actions so clearly there needs to be some re-writing. There is also a line that says there will be significant consequences from climate change no matter what, which seems too negative. We also need to get away from jargon and visioning and focus on actions.

Comment: I was impressed overall with the tone at the beginning of the report. There is a section on implementation best practices, and this section should focus on what can be done now, and hope there is a discussion about exactly what the

County can do, what we need to go to the state for, and what we depend on state and federal for.

Processes and Methodology

Comment: One thing that perhaps is missing is a very clear and concise articulation of what the Board's expectation for this product, and what they put aside this pot of money to accomplish, and how what we are delivering is actually accomplishing that. It should be a plan of action rather than another set of goals.

Comment: I agree that it should be clearer to the reader how ICF came to understand this document as a vision statement.

Comment: The one million dollars for the plan did not all go to creating this plan, it also added eight new staff positions to the Fairfax County climate and energy effort, and then part went to fund ICF to create this report.

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

Michelle Paul Heelan reviewed meeting objectives and noted that the discussion will be resumed at the next meeting on Thursday, May 13th from 6-8:30pm. A vote will be taken to set sector-based goals at that meeting.

Maya Dhavale reviewed upcoming steps in the CECAP process, including finalizing the report in June and presenting the final draft to the Board of Supervisors in July. She also reviewed ways to stay informed, reach out, and stay involved in the CECAP process.