

# Environmental Sustainability Council/Energy Transition Subcommittee Meeting Agenda

September 21, 2023 ❖ 7:30pm

300 Park Ave, Council Chambers, Falls Church, Virginia 22046

- Call to Order and Roll Call

**Attendees:** **ESC Members:** Joseph Schiarizzi, (Chair), Jon Ward (Vice-Chair, ETS Chair), Michael Trauberman, John Ferris, Christopher Behr, Matthew Cunningham, **City Council Liaison;** Debbie Hiscott **Planning Commission Liaison:** Tim Stevens, **Student Representatives:** Lilja Anderson, Wendy Abstone, Clementine Kim, Ally Campbell, Katherine Holt, Serena Binkowski **City Staff:** Andrew Young (ESC Staff Liaison). **ICF:** Fiona Wissell, Susan Elliot. **Public.** Amy Crumpton (Chair-HRTG), Jeff Peterson, Jason Douglas, Matt Adams, Robin Ramey

**Written Public Comments:** Sandra Cleva, Falls Church Climate Action Network

- Community Energy Action Plan (CEAP)
  - Presentation of **draft CEAP report** – ICF and Andy Young (30 minutes)

Andy Young and ICF gave a presentation of the draft Climate Energy Action Plan. The goal of the plan is to achieve 50% reduction below 2005 levels of greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) by 2030 and 80% reduction below 2005 levels by 2050. One of the discussion items on how to focus on what the City can do. 89% of the GHG emissions come from transportation and buildings. The draft plan focusses on transportation and buildings.

Andy met with Planning Commission last night. City Council work session was moved to October 16. The plan is to have Planning Commission action in October and City Council in November.

Key milestones for transportation in the plan includes 20% reduction in vehicle miles traveled by 2030 and 50% of new passenger vehicle purchases are EV by 2030, based on California standard. By 2030, 13% reduction in building energy use and 5% of residential homes will have rooftop solar. The plan also encouraging energy efficiency and low carbon development in the City.

The Plan is based on estimates of each year 200 to 300 air source heat pumps need to be installed, 100 to 200 electric water heaters and 60 homes need to have whole home efficiency improvements.

With the assumptions in the plan, a gap remains for meeting the 2030 and 2050 targets.

Jason Douglas noted to include changing to heat pump at the time air conditioners need to be changed. Matthew recommended for the city to highlight the Federal tax incentives to convert to electric heat pump.

Joseph noted a significant portion of the reductions come from external sources. He recommended a yearly update and/or 3 year review be in the plan for the City council.

Andy presented things the City government can do to promote GHG reductions, including supporting car-free alternatives, golf carts, take action on scooters and e-bikes, and enhancing pedestrian travel (including more crossing guards). In addition, supporting the shift to electric vehicles, enhancing existing building efficiency, electrification, and minimize carbon impacts of new development (upping the game on special exception criteria) and promote rooftop solar. In addition, the plan includes strategies for measuring, tracking and reporting GHG reductions, including integrating the CAEP into the City's Comprehensive Plan.

ESC is to be briefed on the Bike Mased Plan in November.

- o Public Questions and Comments (30 minutes)

The plan does not include specific data that equates vehicle use reduction and a specific reduction of GHG. Potential metrics in the future could include measuring bicycle use/scooter use and there impacts on GHG. It was also recommended to look at cities where bicycle use is more prevalent to model.

Jeff Peterson, from Climate Action Network. The written comments were submitted to the Planning Commission and made available to the ESC. In general, a tremendous amount of value in the plan. It is clear from the presentation that the plan will not meet the City's goal. Recommends revision at 3 year mark which would be the half way point. Next steps should include more explanation of what new staff would do to address the plan. Hoping to reconsider the use of solar outside of the city. Would like to see tracking metrics, the sooner we have the metrics in place the better. Requests better estimates of costs. It is not clear why some potential action items were not included, including reduction in idling.

Andy noted that the intent was to have the plan focus on the items that would have the greatest impacts.

Fiona noted the reason Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) were not included is that the City paying for RECs that Dominion is building anyway is likely not the best use of money.

Debbie noted that the plans will be presented to the Council in October. There will be additional opportunity for public comment. The Council will vote on the plan. Then

when the Council begins work on the FY25 Budget, it will prioritize and make decisions regarding the City budget.

Debbie noted that golf carts need to be registered and licensed in the City of Falls Church. There are currently no golf carts registered in Falls Church. It could be beneficial as the speed limits on a number of streets will be lowered to 20 mph.

One of the student reps asked whether the “one stop shop” would have a physical location. Andy noted that there would not be a dedicated, separate location at first; initial efforts would focus on information sharing via website, social media, etc. on GHG reductions, including tax incentives, solar projects and other outreach materials. Debbie stated the idea to link the “one-stop shop” to the sustainability academy at the high school.

- o ESC Work Session (30 minutes)

Mike asked if the Plan includes any direct financial incentives from the City. Andy responded that there are not any such direct financial incentives in the draft plan. Mike discussed potential incentives and whether such incentives can be in the plan.

Mike noted a recent article on the use of including the social cost of carbon into decision-making. Mike recommended using the estimated social cost of carbon.

Debbie asked if the ESC could incorporate public comments by reference.

Mike further commented that the science notes we need to be carbon neutral by 2050. The plan is working with an old set of goals to achieve 80% rather than carbon neutral.

Jon asked if the City Council needed more information to include in the budget. The approval of this plan does not obligate any funds of the City budget. Debbie noted that any money would need to be in the City budget or Capital Improvement Plan. Debbie stated that she believed that there was enough detail in the plan for the first year.

Jon also noted that there is not room in the market for community solar off-site.

Chris noted that a culture change would need to be established. This adds to the need for a one-stop shop. But this also adds to the need for indicators. Andy noted that the number of EVs and rooftop solar are relatively easy to find. However, other data may not be practical and complicated and may not advance what is needed. Chris noted the ESC could be used to identify data and indicators.

Joseph requested that it be clarified that the goals are not aspirational but as mandates. Joseph also suggested that contractors that install hot water heaters and heat pumps and other GHG reduction technologies be certified. In addition, the Plan should not include

carbon offsets. Joseph stressed the need to get this plan approved by the end of the year and that changes can be made on the 1-year review cycle.

Matthew added the use of passive house standard in special exception would have a huge reduction and that the Plan should include such standard.

Jon noted that the next steps could include a short-term action include scooters.

Matthew noted that the **District of Columbia** government will be adding a \$2,000 tax incentive for e-bikes. Matthew recommended the bike master plan include such incentives to increase bicycle usage.

Debbie noted that City staff starts the work on the budget begins in the December/January timeframe.

Andy asked ESC members to provide comments by September 29. Andy will consolidate comments by October 3. The new draft will be available October 11.

ESC agreed that the current draft plan is “heading in the right direction.”

- Quinn/Homestretch Proposal Feedback from the ESC (20 minutes)

Joseph included the comments he received to the Quinn developers. Tim noted that the developers upped their offer of parking spaces with conduit to 50%. Tim noted that the Planning Commission is planning to vote on their recommendation to City Council on October 18. Joseph will use the ESC letter submitted for the One City Center as the base for ESC comments. Joseph will seek ESC approval via email before being sent to **Planning Commission**.

- Approval of **July 20, 2023 ESC Meeting Minutes**

Mike clarified that he wanted the minutes to reflect his request that Lonnie brief the ESC on composting and recycling. Mike moved to approve the July 20 meeting minutes with the recommended edits. John second the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- Subcommittee/Liaison Report-Outs (10 minutes)
  - City Council – Council Member Debbie Hiscott

Debbie noted that Tuesday was the vote on the T Zones.

The Bike Master Plan will be presented to a work session of Council by the end of October. It will then be presented to ESC.

The state provided an amended budget that included \$9million for stormwater projects and \$3million for Oak Street Elementary School project.

- Planning Commission – Tim Stevens

Tim provided that the solar panels could be installed on Meridian High School as early as Saturday.

- Habitat Restoration Task Group – UFC Chair Amy Crumpton

Amy reported that the Task Group will not have any public **rips** because of lack of staff support. Amy intends to have small activities during the fall.

- Education Task Group – Sarah Bayldon
- Energy Transition Subcommittee – Jon Ward

Mike and Jon discussed “environmental stewardship” the Council is allowed to factor in special use permits. Mike and Jon will work on guidance on what counts as environmental stewardship.

- Staff - Liaison – Andy Young (Cherry Hill farmhouse energy audit idea)

Andy is pursuing using Cherry Hill Farmhouse as an energy audit.

Andy will be starting a new role in the City as one of two new Deputy City Manager. Andy will continue to be the liaison to the ESC in the interim.

Debbie noted the ESC will be briefed on the Bike Master Plan in November.

Debbie will request the results of the geothermal test well.

- Adjourn