

Energy and Climate Change Task Force Meeting #4 Summary

December 7, 2021 | 7:00 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

Zoom Virtual Meeting | [Meeting Recording](#)
[Task Force Webpage](#)

Attendees

Task Force Members (*Present; **Absent)

Alyssa Abosompin*
Javier Bastos*
Leah Devendorf*
Mary Harris, Co-Chair*
Fiona Herbold**
Praveen Kathpal*
Raquel Nicora**
Marian Pegram, Co-Chair*
Josh Sawislak*
Marta Schantz**
Rose Stephens-Booker*
Stephen Walz*

Sangina Wright*

City Staff
Ellen Eggerton
Bill Eger
Jessica Lassetter
Amanda Dolasinski
Daniel Medina
Olivia Merritt (volunteer)

Public
Alexander Clark (EPC Non-Voting Proxy)
Patrick Wise
Kara Venditti
Darryl (No Last Name Registered)
Arthur Impastato
Tatiana Gutierrez
Kathie Hoekstra
Scott Barstow
Kathy Ansell

1) Welcome and Introductions

The meeting commenced at 7:00 p.m. with Ms. Marian Pegram sharing the required electronic meeting notice. Ms. Mary Harris went through the meeting agenda and highlighted three goals for the evening: (1) discuss updates on GHG emissions analysis and mitigation planning and review the November community workshop, (2) discuss regional climate vulnerabilities, and (3) look at impacts of increased precipitation on Alexandria and other climate vulnerabilities.

The meeting 3 summary was approved, with the suggestions that Mr. Steve Walz asked for: the link on page 2 is not the correct link, and his last name was not spelled correctly on pages 3 and 4. Not all of the questions from the Q & A in Meeting 3 were answered, and Mr. Bill Eger and Ms. Ellen Eggerton said they would work on answering those.

Action Item: Make changes that Steve Walz suggested to the Task Force Meeting #3 Summary.

Action Item: Ensure that all questions from Task Force Meeting #3 were answered.

2) Updates from Staff

Mr. Bill Eger gave updates to the Task forces on the ECCAP progress. The final steps of contracting ICF are being worked out, where ICF will help develop the updated Environmental Action Plan (EAP) in FY

2022. With the budget constraints for FY2022 to the EAP, the City is looking at two additional sources of support: the George Mason University Institute for Sustainable Earth and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG). He noted that even with additional support not all the EAP scopes will be addressed. The mapping of which scopes will be addressed and the possible data gaps will be given to the Task Force in January 2022. Mr. Eger also listed studies that will be published in the near future, which will provide current understanding of various climate actions and impacts to the region and state area. The City budget will be released in February 2022 and Mr. Eger noted two funding requests submitted to the FY22 city budget; these are: 1) a full-time energy and climate change action plan manager and additional funds to support community engagement, and 2) funding to support a more comprehensive heat vulnerability analysis, planning, and community outreach.

Action Item: Add studies onto Alexandria’s website once each is published.

3) Summary of November 16 Community Workshop

Ms. Ellen Eggerton summarized the public workshop that was done on November 16th. She reviewed some of the answers the three groups made on Jamboard that answered three questions: 1) what are the most important actions one can do individually to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, 2) what are barriers you face to reducing your greenhouse gas emissions, and 3) what actions can the city take to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Answers for the first question included reducing travel and using public transportation or a bike; answers to the second question included being renters and not homeowners and the large up-front cost of solar energy and electric vehicles; answers to the third question included decarbonizing the city’s buildings and fleet. The full Jamboard results are linked [here](#).

Action Item: Ensure all Jam boards are published on the website so they are on the public record.

3) Presentation and Discussion: Climate Vulnerabilities: Regional View

Mr. Bill Eger gave a presentation discussing the climate vulnerabilities of the region. One takeaway was that extreme heat and flooding have the highest risk and impacts according to Metropolitan Washington 2030 Climate and Energy Action Plan. He summarized Jason Samenow’s [climate presentation](#) from the November 16th community engagement meeting and stressed the importance of improving accessibility and mobility for all Alexandrians. The Task Force discussed other climate vulnerabilities such as possible train derailment due to more frequently-saturated soils, the possible increase of ice storms in Alexandria, and the health risks of seniors and Alexandrians with no air conditioning units during hotter summer days. Ms. Eggerton noted that there are cooling centers available during hot days. Mr. Eger said that the city emergency management department may consider increasing the cooling center frequency.

Action Item: Look into a higher probability of ice storms in mid-Atlantic due to climate change.

4) Presentation and Discussion: Flood Action Alexandria Overview

Ms. Jessica Lassetter and Mr. Dan Medina gave a presentation about flooding concerns in Alexandria. They noted that, when the air is warmer, more water vapor can be held in the air, leading to more precipitation events. Three large rain events starting in 2019 sparked the new stormwater initiative, “Flood Action Alexandria”. Mr. Medina and Ms. Lassetter spoke of the ways Alexandria is working to adapt to and mitigate flash flood events, including stormwater and sanitary projects, sewer maintenance, and community outreach. A pilot program providing grants to Alexandrians was developed after a Virginia Code was changed to allow municipal funds to be used on private property. Several members of the Task Force expressed their concern that the program resources were not available in other languages besides English, and that the program is not accessible for lower income individuals due to the 50% cost share of the applicant. Mr. Medina said the city will consider translating the flooding resources to Spanish and also noted that not everyone has internet accessibility or knowledge; this should be considered also. Additionally, the Task Force asked if measures will be put in place so that, if individuals are forced out of their homes due to flooding or another natural disaster, they will get financial aid to cover the cost of living somewhere else instead of paying out-of-pocket and Ms. Lassetter indicated that the Flood Grant covers only flood mitigation measures per Virginia Law.

5) Presentation and Discussion: Increased Temperatures, Heat and Urban Heat Islands (UHI)

Mr. Bill Eger gave the final presentation discussing the causes and impacts of urban heat islands. A comprehensive study of urban heat island effects on the Alexandria community is necessary, with a focus on health and equity. The Task Force discussed the impacts of increased temperatures to lower income communities that may not have air conditioning units, and on seniors. The Task Force also discussed the importance of street trees on reducing temperatures in residential areas, but that street trees are far more abundant in wealthier areas, furthering heat inequity in Alexandria. A Task Force member noted that increasing AC units will help individuals feel cooler in warm weather but that subsequently increases greenhouse gas emissions, placing more stress on the energy grid, possibly leading to blackouts. They stated that other solutions besides increasing AC units should be considered when adapting to heat. The Task Force discussed prioritizing adaptation strategies that support mitigation, such as prioritizing bus and train infrastructure rather than road/car infrastructure.

6) Discussion

The Task Force discussed finding climate solutions based on their causes vs based on how the climate crisis affects people. They discussed the possible need for increasing municipal bonds and risks related to climate vulnerabilities. The Task Force discussed considering vectors like mosquitoes and health care mitigation strategies. They also discussed making buildings more climate resilient, such as improving insulation, instead of solely focusing on adding AC units. The Task Force discussed making climate vulnerability maps more granular so that individuals can see how the climate may affect them.

7) Task Force Meeting Summary and Next Steps

Meeting summary and next steps were reviewed.

8) Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Record of Votes

- 1) Roll call vote for the adoption of the meeting summary for October 5, 2021

| <u>Member</u> | <u>Vote</u> |
|----------------------|-------------|
| Leah Devendorf | Yes |
| Mary Harris | Yes |
| Sangina Wright | Yes |
| Praveen Kathpal | Yes |
| Alexander Clark | Yes |
| Marian Pegram | Yes |
| Josh Sawislak | Yes |
| Javier Bastos | Yes |
| Rose Stephens-Booker | Yes |
| Stephen Walz | Yes |
| Alyssa Abosompim | Yes |

- 2) Resolution to Support Virtual Meeting moved by Stephen Walz and seconded by Josh Sawislak. The resolution passed with all votes in favor and 0 against.
- 3) Electronic Participation Policy moved by Josh Sawislak and seconded by Mary Harris. The policy passed with all votes in favor and 0 against.

Meeting Chat

18:52:14 From Mary Harris Co-Chair to Hosts and panelists:

Have fun - Play the Bloomberg Climate Game - Get to net zero and still keep your job:-)

18:52:22 From Mary Harris Co-Chair to Hosts and panelists:

<https://www.bloomberg.com/features/2021-net-zero-mayor-game/>

19:02:49 From Jessica Lassetter to Olivia Merritt and all panelists:

Hi! Thanks for joining and for helping us out tonight, Olivia!

19:06:26 From Stephen Walz to Hosts and panelists:

Steve Walz, ECCTF Task Force Member

19:06:49 From Olivia Merritt to Hosts and panelists:

Hi Jessica, I'm happy to be here! Looking forward to this :)

19:07:02 From Ellen Eggerton to Everyone:

Ellen Eggerton, Sustainability Coordinator, City of Alexandria.

19:07:14 From Alyssa Abosompim to Everyone:

Hi everyone, Alyssa Abosompim here :). I'm also on the task force

19:07:30 From Alexander Clark (EPC Proxy) to Hosts and panelists:

Hi All, I'm Al Clark, representing the EPC (present in lieu of Marta Schantz, the EPC's rep on the task force, who couldn't be present today)

19:07:39 From Daniel Medina to Hosts and panelists:

Dan Medina, FloodAction Program Manager

19:07:44 From Josh Sawislak to Everyone:

Josh Sawislak, task force member.

19:07:48 From Rose Stephens-Booker to Everyone:

Good evening all, Rose Stephens-Booker, Task Force Member

19:08:34 From Leah Devendorf to Hosts and panelists:

Leah Devendorf, Youth member

19:18:56 From Mary Harris Co-Chair to Everyone:

Thank you for joining us tonight. Mary Harris, Co chair, here.

19:20:48 From Alyssa Abosompim to Everyone:

Where will these reports be posted for the public to read?

19:29:28 From Mary Harris Co-Chair to Everyone:

Bill responded to Alyssa that the reports will be sent to the Task Force when complete and then posted for public on the ECCTF city website

19:29:48 From Bill Eger to Hosts and panelists:



19:30:55 From Rose Stephens-Booker to Hosts and panelists:

Bill, I'll reach out to you regarding being on the right DOE listservs for BIL and BBA implementation information that is coming out weekly.

19:33:49 From Bill Eger to Hosts and panelists:

Thanks, Rose! Very helpful. We keep watch via email and media, but admittedly we don't capture everything that comes out. Much appreciated.

19:36:11 From Praveen Kathpal to Hosts and panelists:

they are posted: https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/tes/eco-city/info/11_16_2021%20Energy%20and%20Climate%20Change%20Action%20Plan%20Community%20Workshop.pdf

19:36:18 From Praveen Kathpal to Everyone:

they are posted: https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/tes/eco-city/info/11_16_2021%20Energy%20and%20Climate%20Change%20Action%20Plan%20Community%20Workshop.pdf

19:36:46 From Praveen Kathpal to Everyone:

Under the workshop there is a doc whose link is labeled "Breakout Room Jamboard Results" from this page: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/tes/eco-city/info/default.aspx?id=118548>

19:38:54 From Jessica Lassetter to Everyone:

125

19:49:02 From Stephen Walz to Hosts and panelists:

In Alexandria, we may face climate vulnerabilities from coastal flooding more than on a regional level. This is due to the potential effects on Old Town and Four Mile Run in particular, This may be a risk rating of 9 for Alexandria.

19:55:19 From Mary Harris Co-Chair to Hosts and panelists:

Bill, can you say what the Healthy Places Index Score for Alexandria is on previous side?

19:55:33 From Rose Stephens-Booker to Hosts and panelists:

FYI thought: Alexandria equity and environmental justice metrics should align with fed gov agency/department metrics/definitions to ensure alignment for j40 funding opportunities.

19:57:48 From Kathie Hoekstra to Hosts and panelists:

Suggestion: each time you reference a plan or report - provide a link to it so anyone can review it if they'd like to

19:59:26 From Kathie Hoekstra to Hosts and panelists:

Question: do you plan to talk about the current proposals to protect the 4 blocks of Old Town from flooding including possible costs to taxpayers?

19:59:53 From Praveen Kathpal to Everyone:

NTSB brief on May 2018 freight train derailment:

<https://www.nts.gov/investigations/AccidentReports/Reports/RAB2001.pdf>


20:00:51 From Jessica Lassetter to Everyone:

Hi Kathie - Dan does have a slide on the flood mitigation project in Old Town so we will touch on it, yes.

20:01:34 From Rose Stephens-Booker to Hosts and panelists:

@Jessica, I don't have tonight's PPT--could you please send? I have the 10 attachments from the email from Bill but I could really use the master PPT slides as we go through the meeting tonight

20:02:03 From Bill Eger to Hosts and panelists:

 Presentation slides can be downloaded from:

https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/tes/eco-city/info/ECCTF_Meeting4_SlideDeck.pdf

20:02:11 From Rose Stephens-Booker to Hosts and panelists:

thank you!

20:03:55 From Josh Sawislak to Everyone:

DC's gift to weather Hell. Freezing rain.

20:06:32 From Ellen Eggerton to Everyone:

city has cooling centers during heat events

20:06:53 From Ellen Eggerton to Everyone:

Often the City uses rec centers and the libraries

20:07:21 From Stephen Walz to Hosts and panelists:

June 29, 2021 Alexandria release on cooling centers opening in response to hazardous heat forecast - https://www.alexandriava.gov/news_display.aspx?id=123126

20:09:28 From Rose Stephens-Booker to Hosts and panelists:

Yes, I'm so sorry. I just lost connection. I'll place in chat.

20:10:11 From Mary Harris Co-Chair to Hosts and panelists:

Rose, can you type in chat your comments when you have stable connection?

20:10:25 From Praveen Kathpal to Everyone:

Heat, trees, and equity: Street trees are a nature-based solution that can help with extreme heat. Fortunately for Alexandria, this is already a funded program. However, it is disproportionately accessed by our residents of greater privilege. Giving staff the discretion to direct (native!) street tree planting to areas where they are most needed seems like a quick fix that can immediately direct budgeted funds in a more equitable manner. There are neighborhoods of the City where street trees can make a big difference, but very few currently exist. This should be an easy one!

20:10:55 From Praveen Kathpal to Everyone:

Reference: McKinsey/C40 report, How cities can adapt to climate change (July 2021) <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/sustainability/our-insights/how-cities-can-adapt-to-climate-change#>

20:18:02 From Rose Stephens-Booker to Everyone:

Happy to include my thoughts in the chat and I'm so sorry that I couldn't speak to this point more concisely earlier. Many of you may not know but I grew up in the Tidewater area. Another area that is very prone to flooding. In fact, it was just a matter of life growing up and with that came a type of respect to the power of water and the understanding that mitigation and resilience and human ingenuity can drastically improve quality of life and empower the community but can only take us so far. There was an educational and big effort that emphasized adaptation emphasizing community and business continuity planning and so forth that I really think could benefit the citizens of ALX.

20:20:09 From Jessica Lassetter to Everyone:

Rose, that is such a helpful perspective. I'd love to learn more about continuity planning for communities and businesses. That sounds like it would really benefit us here in Alexandria.

20:30:58 From Praveen Kathpal to Everyone:

What is the City doing to make the flood mitigation grant program more accessible to residents who may not be familiar navigating administrative processes? Or who may not have the time, knowhow, education, language skills, etc to successfully apply? Is it only available to property owners (not renters)?

20:31:39 From Bill Eger to Hosts and panelists:

Rose, I imagine a lot of life lessons from your time growing up in Tidewater and experiencing the issues of flooding and climate vulnerabilities to the community. A few thoughts; it might be great to capture your lived experiences to contribute to a personal story to the ECCAP. Also, this would be a perfect pairing with the ResilientALX initiative which is working with the business community and individuals to understand and promote individual and organizational resilience planning. Let's think about how to promote your and others' experiences to communicate these important experiences.

20:31:55 From Praveen Kathpal to Everyone:

FYI the APEX links are broken on the quick start guide and the submission guide

20:32:00 From Mary Harris Co-Chair to Everyone:

Are grants available to renters? A concern I heard from neighborhood residents is the health impact of mold from flooding or infiltration as well of the cost of remediating and resealing basements and poor landlord clean-up response

20:32:07 From Praveen Kathpal to Everyone:

(from here: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/tes/stormwater/info/default.aspx?id=121974>)

20:32:58 From Jessica Lassetter to Everyone:

The pilot program is currently only open to property owners which does not include renters.

20:33:02 From Rose Stephens-Booker to Hosts and panelists:

Yep. Norfolk, VA born and raise. Bill, I love that idea and I'm super super super into it and would absolutely being willing.

20:33:36 From Jessica Lassetter to Everyone:

Praveen - Thank you for pointing that out. I will take a look at it!

20:33:53 From Bill Eger to Hosts and panelists:

Other's on the task force, we could also consider a quote or profile or story that could communicate your experiences to the broader community.

20:40:39 From Jessica Lassetter to Everyone:

The program doesn't cover remediation for flooding, such as mold issues. The law focuses on flood mitigation only.

20:41:44 From Jessica Lassetter to Everyone:

I think it's possible to seek other sources of funding to support communities for flood impacts beyond our flood mitigation program.

20:42:04 From Stephen Walz to Hosts and panelists:

I understand that the City's Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C- PACE) program that can offer lower cost financing for energy efficiency also can fund stormwater and flood mitigation. Can the City staff confirm?

20:42:14 From Mary Harris Co-Chair to Everyone:

Waterfront Tidal Flooding Mitigation: is the City looked at the climate fate of the entire waterfront with projected sea level/riverine rise and land sinking? The NOAA forecast I think is 16 inches to 4 foot rise on the Potomac within next 50-75 years which could endanger our Park system.

20:42:44 From Jessica Lassetter to Everyone:

Confirmed! Yes, Steve. We have yet to see it used in this way but it is available.

20:43:24 From Ellen Eggerton to Everyone:

the building code requires an window correctly sized to have any bedrooms in the basement. One cannot modify a home to allow sleeping in a basement without egress windows

20:43:27 From Jessica Lassetter to Everyone:

C-PACE link: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/tes/eco-city/info/default.aspx?id=123234>

20:45:32 From Javier Bastos to Hosts and panelists:

Can we overlay the heat island map with demographic data, house prices, renter density...etc?

20:46:26 From Javier Bastos to Hosts and panelists:

What % of playing fields are using turf instead of grass and what is the difference in temperature between the two?

20:47:22 From Jessica Lassetter to Everyone:

Praveen - Would you be able to have your renter contact email me their situation so I may be considered as we transition out of the pilot phase? We can bring it up with the City Attorney or try to see what options there might be as we move forward.

20:49:04 From Stephen Walz to Hosts and panelists:

Javier - The map Bill Pug created (see handouts posted for the meeting) showed high heat areas overlaid with social vulnerability. See https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/tes/eco-city/info/8a_ECCTF_Meeting3_PublicCommentsRecieved-Pugh_ALX%20climate%20vulnerable%20neighborhoods.pdf This may partly get to your question. Certainly more is needed to address your request.

20:49:58 From Mary Harris Co-Chair to Everyone:

Can we consider adding Tree canopy and our Park system to our critical infrastructure which can be severely affected by heat?

20:50:20 From Rose Stephens-Booker to Everyone:

Thanks Jessica, I totally understand that the program doesn't cover remediation but I think the assumption is that if "priority is being given to property owners who have documented flood issues from storms dating back" there is an assumption of remediation that is going to happen (i.e the unknowns once projects begin). Furthermore, I shouldn't have used the word remediation because that distracted from my actual point regarding mitigation techniques that would protect the property and the true need to assist owners and tenants with sunk costs associated with improvements that need to be made.

20:50:40 From Jessica Lassetter to Everyone:

Javier - RPCA would be better suited for the turf issue but I know it is something the City is transitioning into (turf). We can follow up with them but here is some background:

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/budget/info/default.aspx?id=103141>

20:52:25 From Jessica Lassetter to Everyone:

Thanks for the clarification, Rose.

21:01:59 From Stephen Walz to Hosts and panelists:

We have not talked about, other than cooling centers, the interface between emergency response. Assessment of climate adaptation should consider the co-benefit of reducing emergency response needs.

21:02:31 From Stephen Walz to Hosts and panelists:

Interface between emergency response and mitigation. (left something out above)

21:03:03 From Stephen Walz to Hosts and panelists:

One more time - interface between emergency response and adaptation actions.

21:05:49 From Rose Stephens-Booker to Everyone:

coastal flooding, for sure.

21:06:45 From Rose Stephens-Booker to Everyone:

Please clarify for me, I just assumed that increased precipitation was due to extreme storms

21:06:59 From Rose Stephens-Booker to Everyone:

are those two different categories?

21:09:33 From Stephen Walz to Hosts and panelists:

Rose - I understand coastal flooding is typically from tropical storms coming up the Chesapeake Bay and Potomac River. It also is tidally influenced and made worse from sea level rise. Extreme storms are more of an issue with the overland flooding and riverine flooding where water flows exceed stream and stormwater system capacity.

21:09:40 From Josh Sawislak to Everyone:

@Rose, I would defer to staff on how they are defining, but generally we talk about coastal flooding as related to tidal water bodies (such as the Potomac) and inland riverine and stormwater flooding as non-tidal.

21:11:47 From Praveen Kathpal to Everyone:

@Ellen - or by shading the structure with more trees!

21:12:24 From Rose Stephens-Booker to Everyone:

Sorry all. My comments weren't clear. I was listing coastal flooding as one point. And then, wanted to clarify the difference between how we are defining extreme weather and increased precipitation.

21:12:56 From Rose Stephens-Booker to Everyone:

Bill answered my question perfectly. Thanks all. And, so sorry for the lack of clarity in my comments.

21:13:56 From Josh Sawislak to Everyone:

@Rose, The National Climate Assessment talks about increases in "more frequent" as well as "more severe" storms.

21:14:29 From Rose Stephens-Booker to Everyone:

@Josh 👍

21:19:15 From Rose Stephens-Booker to Everyone:

excellent point Josh

21:19:23 From Praveen Kathpal to Everyone:

+ on @Josh's point + A difficult application process is a different type of (inverse) means test

21:20:43 From Josh Sawislak to Everyone:

@Praveen, the last round of FEMA BRIC funding awards is a good example of your point.

21:22:23 From Stephen Walz to Hosts and panelists:

Thanks Olivia. And particular thanks to the staff for the presentations.


21:22:44 From Praveen Kathpal to Everyone:

Thank you staff and co-chairs for the effort that goes into these meetings! And Olivia for taking notes.

21:22:52 From Josh Sawislak to Everyone:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/03/climate/climate-change-infrastructure-bill.html>

21:24:07 From Bill Eger to Hosts and panelists:

 Please give us your feedback on tonight's Energy and Climate Change Task Force meeting:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Y93FRKC>

21:24:49 From Stephen Walz to Hosts and panelists:

Bill - Please email the SurveyMonkey link. Thanks!

21:25:18 From Bill Eger to Hosts and panelists:

@Steve. Will do.

21:25:34 From Jessica Lassetter to Everyone:

The Ad Hoc Stormwater Group is meeting tomorrow night if anyone is interested in attending.

21:26:10 From Jessica Lassetter to Everyone:

<https://apps.alexandriava.gov/Calendar/Detail.aspx?si=38390>

21:27:11 From Josh Sawislak to Everyone:

Thank you to the co-chairs for keeping us on time.