

Energy and Climate Change Task Force Meeting #1 Summary

May 4, 2021 | 6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

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

Attendees

Task Force Members

(*Present)

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

Public

Sarah Bagley
Steve Banashek
Scott Barstow
Sean Beckett
Eldon Boes
Paul Brown
Matthew Charpentier
Betty Forman
Shelly Giannini
Jennifer Gillyard
Christina Hagemeyer
Kathie Hoekstra
Arthur Impastato
Paul Kaplowitz
Stephanie Lavey

Frank LeBlanc
Holly Lennihan
Laura Leussing
Jolene Mafnas
David Peabody
Tiffany Porter
Bill Pugh
Tara Smith
Fran Vogel
Elizabeth Wright

City Staff

Ellen Eggerton
Bill Eger
Jessica Lassetter

Summary of Discussion

The Co-Chairs welcomed the Task Force members and the public. Members and staff did introductions.

City staff presented background slides and information on Eco-City Alexandria, overview of inventories and trends, drivers, metrics, achievements, and leveraging regional efforts. Presentation slide deck in on the [ECCAP web site](#) for meeting #1.

The group discussed the impacts of the COVID-19 global health pandemic on the data energy use and information coming out of the [Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments](#) (MWCOG). MWCOG data for the region and specific to Alexandria was further discussed.

The group discussed the City's legislative authority, impacts from "Dillon's Rule" [the Commonwealth of Virginia is a Dillon Rule state which limits the governing authority localities have to what is expressly granted to them by the legislature, by state statute, or written in their municipal charter. Localities in Virginia request legislation every year to grant them enabling authority for specific powers they do not have already. These requests generally originate from the City Council, City staff, and boards and commissions. Visit [National League of Cities webpage](#) to learn more], and how to advocate for clean energy standards at the state and federal level. The [City's 2020-2021 Legislative Package](#) was shared with the group. Washington, DC's climate change actions were discussed by the group as an ideal scenario and the [plan for carbon neutrality \(2020\) for Ann Arbor, MI](#), was shared for information.

The group discussed the number of proposed meetings and concerns with achieving the expectations of the Task Force as outlined by [Resolution No. 2958](#). The group discussed new Green Building staff support in the

General Services division and its impacts on the operations of the Task Force. The process of hiring a consultant to support the City in the development of the updated Energy and Climate Change Action Plan (ECCAP) was also discussed. In summary, the Task Force is subject to the Virginia Sunshine Laws (see [Freedom of Information Act](#), or FOIA) which require a public meeting to be held when two or more Task Force members meet to discuss “policy” as it relates to the ECCAP [*Action Item: Public meetings are legally required to be noticed **three working days in advance***]. The group suggested the first public “Open House” even be sooner than October as to engage the public earlier on in the process.

The group discussed regional cooperation with National Airport and [Metropolitan Washington Airport Authority](#) (MWAA). The MWAA Sustainability Plan was published September 2020 and is available at <https://www.mwaa.com/about/sustainability-plan>.

City staff presented on the ICLEI Integrated Climate Action Planning Cohort and the group discussed the role this will play in developing the updated ECCAP.

Task Force members participated in a Jamboard Exercise to gain feedback from Task Force members. The first question was “What is one, specific and implemental climate mitigation action you believe the City should prioritize”. The group discussed the importance of community engagement and how to get the broader community engaged in the process via organizations and volunteer efforts.

Second Jamboard question: “What are your top three priorities for the City to consider in the ECCAP update?” and each member received three stars to place near the topic of their choice. The group discussed the items with the most votes: reducing greenhouse gas emissions; climate equity/justice and public health; and state and federal policy advocacy. Among the votes for “Other” included climate mitigation actions such as zero energy buildings; advocacy to accelerate the “Clean Grid” and the transportation sector. The group discussed the intersection of the priorities with each other (i.e., consider dense, affordable housing, near transit hubs). [*Action Item: Why did the City not achieve 100% compliance with the Green Building Policy?*]

Action item response from Ellen Eggerton:

Here are the key indicators for green building compliance. These values are being updated by planning and zoning.

Key Indicators for 2020	EAP Metric	Base YEAR ¹	Base VALUE	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
6. Development committed to green building policy ⁵	100%	FY2010	94%	PZ to provide	PZ to provide	100%	100%	94%	98%	99.90 %

Some additions to existing buildings have asked for flexibility from third party certification in the past. The new Green Building Policy has an alternate path option. The NO in the sixth column indicates the project did not meet the 2009 Green Building Policy.

First Baptist Church Expansion	FY16	2932 King St.	Expansion to an existing church	Requesting Flexibility – will achieve points for LEED Certified but not get certified	NO	Mylars Released- Construction to being Fall 2017
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There are listings on the City web site:

- [Active Development Projects Subject to 2009 Green Building Policy \(as of June 2017\)](#)
- [Green Building Policy Compliant Development Projects Under Construction of Completed from FY2010 through FY2017](#)

End of response.

The group discussed the Task Force Charter and the follow amendments were proposed (1) add “and the public” at the end of the first bullet; (2) pledge to lead by example and utilize the City’s household greenhouse gas inventory tool; and (3) update wording to “minimum of 5-meetings”.

Public comment was received and meeting was adjourned.

Record of Votes

Adoption of the Energy and Climate Change Task Force Charter with amendment proposed by Steve Walz and proposed by Mary Harris, Co-Chair. The motion passed with 13 votes in favor and 0 against.

Technical Summary

Topic	Webinar ID	Actual Start Time	Actual Duration (minutes)	# Registered
ECCAP Meeting #1	942 9346 2358	5/4/2021 17:44	197	25

Record of Zoom Meeting Chat

18:32:25 From Jolene Mafnas to All panelists : Will this presentation be available to attendees? Some of the graphics (like the last slide) would be helpful to have!

18:32:51 From Bill Eger to All panelists : Yes.

18:33:45 From Bill Eger to Everyone : The presentation is posted to the City's Energy and Climate Change Action Plan website.

18:33:53 From Josh Sawislak to Everyone : @Ellen, I believe I heard you say we would be using 2020 data. Why use a pandemic year (which will have higher residential and lower transport numbers) as it will be hard to compare to other base years?

18:35:29 From Marta Schantz to All panelists : Does that mean it's too late to collect 2019 data instead?

18:36:35 From Stephen Walz to All panelists : Having been with COG, I can add that the 2020 GHG inventory will also be just one of a series including 2005, 2012, 2015, and 2018. Therefore, we will have access to all of these and the trends.

18:37:14 From Praveen Kathpal to Everyone : Sharing for the group, the 2020 legislative package:
[https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/manager/info/FINAL2020ALXLegPackage122719\(1\).pdf](https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/manager/info/FINAL2020ALXLegPackage122719(1).pdf)

18:37:32 From Praveen Kathpal to Everyone : The City supports legislation to transition the statewide electricity supply to carbon-free sources.

Electricity represents 42% of Alexandria's greenhouse gas emissions according to the most recent greenhouse gas inventory performed by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. To meet the City's target of reducing community-wide greenhouse gas emissions 50% compared to 2005 levels by 2030 the City supports legislation that would establish a mandatory Clean Energy Standard for electric utilities in the Commonwealth that would require 80% of electricity to be supplied from carbon-free sources and would establish an energy efficiency portfolio standard to reduce demand.

18:38:37 From Rose Stephens-Booker to All panelists : Thank you, Praveen. Very helpful.

18:38:55 From Javier Bastos to All panelists : Thank you Praveen

18:39:06 From Jolene Mafnas to All panelists : Would you all consider community choice aggregation as a way to ramp up the use of renewables in the city? VA law allows localities to set up CCA programs

18:39:50 From Praveen Kathpal to Everyone : @Jolene good point! The next paragraph after what I pasted was "As an alternative, or in combination with the above proposal, the City would support legislation that gives local governments control over their electricity supply choices, giving the City the authority to purchase an electricity portfolio on behalf of residents and businesses that is consistent with the City's greenhouse gas reduction targets."

18:40:40 From Josh Sawislak to Everyone : Might be helpful for some of the TF members to understand that Virginia is a Dillon Rule state, so unless we have specific authority from Richmond, there are many things we can't do as a city. That is why Leg is so important.

18:40:40 From Praveen Kathpal to Everyone : Essentially saying that if the government doesn't require utilities to provide the community with clean energy then the city would seek more control over those choices.

18:42:06 From Alyssa Morin to Everyone : Who is "the state"? Which office/person?

18:42:56 From Mary Harris, Co-Chair to All panelists : The General Assembly

18:43:02 From Stephen Walz to All panelists : The State Corporation Commission is also a major policy and regulatory body

18:43:35 From Rose Stephens-Booker to All panelists : Is \$\$ associated with approvals from the Dillon Rule?

18:44:44 From Praveen Kathpal to Everyone : Request for TF members to please set your chat to Panelists and Attendees so the members of the public viewing can see some of the back and forth

18:45:02 From Josh Sawislak to Everyone : @Rose, usually not. It's similar to an authorization bill on the federal level and often comes without an appropriation.

18:45:13 From Ellen Eggerton to All panelists : Money is not associated with all legislation. It depends on the law being passed.

18:46:40 From Ellen Eggerton to Everyone : Money is not associated with all legislation. It depends on the law being passed.

18:47:30 From Stephen Walz to Everyone : State funding comes from the State Budget Bills passed every 2 years and amended in the intervening year. It can affect the City's authority to take action and raise revenue, although most authority given to the City from the State comes from the City Charter and individual topic-specific legislation

18:47:31 From Rose Stephens-Booker to Everyone : @Josh and @Ellen, thanks. understood.

18:48:45 From Marta Schantz to Everyone : I'm glad to see the Environmental Justice points in the MWCOG work too

18:50:52 From Sangina Wright to All panelists : Is there any collaboration efforts with DCA given the proximity to Alexandria?

18:53:19 From Ellen Eggerton to Everyone : We do work with regional partners, often through the Council of Governments.

18:53:30 From Stephen Walz to Everyone : Alexandria is involved with MWAA, Arlington and Fairfax on a coastal flood risk management study being completed by the Corps of Engineers in conjunction with COG

18:54:55 From Mary Harris, Co-Chair to Everyone : Hi everyone. when you use Chat please identify yourself and direct questions/comments to both panelists and attendees so we have a transparent public record for our neighbors. We'll also try to read them during the meeting.

19:00:08 From Javier Bastos to Everyone : What happens if we don't meet a 50

19:00:22 From Javier Bastos to Everyone : % reduction? Who are we beholden to?

19:00:43 From Kathie Hoekstra to All panelists : Very good discussion now

19:02:18 From Ellen Eggerton to Everyone : 50% reduction by 2030 is a goal in the EAP 2040 as a roadmap to guide us.

19:03:38 From Javier Bastos to Everyone : Thank you Ellen, but it is a good faith effort and there are no consequences that would incur, aside from the effects of global warming and the issues associated with that. Is that correct?

19:03:55 From Ellen Eggerton to Everyone : correct

19:06:41 From Ellen Eggerton to Everyone : we are working with COG to improve and verify the data

19:07:03 From Ellen Eggerton to Everyone : such as homes fueled by fuel oil

19:08:49 From Marta Schantz to Everyone : Here's the Ann Arbor MI climate action plan that Stephen mentioned: https://www.a2gov.org/departments/sustainability/Carbon-Neutrality/Documents/A2Zero-Climate-Action-Plan_3.0.pdf

19:22:45 From Marta Schantz to Everyone : Second the call for highlighting and incorporating co-benefits into this effort

19:30:56 From Stephen Walz to Everyone : Can the Task Force set up subgroups to take on a topic that would then meet with public notice in accordance with FOIA?

19:31:05 From Elizabeth Wright to Everyone : When the time is right, my question; if reducing the release of chemicals (green house gasses) that cause atmospheric warming, why is the city considering installing synthetic turf playing fields over natural turf playing fields. I understand the cost trade off between watering, fertilizer, maintenance, et al. The life cycle cost, to include disposal at the end of its life, is just one consideration. The surface temperature is of concern.

19:32:10 From Elizabeth Wright to Everyone : When the surface natural turf field can measure 90F, a synthetic turf field can measure up to 160F. This seems to be a contradiction in addition to other environmental concerns.

19:33:39 From Elizabeth Wright to Everyone : Parks and Rec is requesting permission to install a synthetic turf field at Boothe Park because the playing field surface is within the RPA buffer for Backlick Run.

19:34:49 From Elizabeth Wright to Everyone : Otherwise Parks could install a synthetic turf field wherever they plan a new playing field without asking permission, as long as the location is not in conflict with another environmental or code issue.

19:36:55 From arthur impastato to Everyone : Funding for a green building staff person was added to the budget at the add/delete meeting. Assuming City Council adds this person, can they be leveraged so as to enable having monthly Task Force meetings since it seems clear that will be necessary? When will the outside consultant be hired, which consultants are being considered for this position and specifically what will they be doing?

19:44:40 From Stephen Walz to Everyone : \While we could ask for more time, I would want to push to get this done in one year as we need to get moving on implementation as soon as possible

19:45:11 From Rose Stephens-Booker to Everyone : @Stephen, absolutely agreed.

19:45:24 From Javier Bastos to Everyone : ^^^^

19:46:05 From Marta Schantz to Everyone : ^ Agreed - would love more frequent iterative working meetings to brainstorm together and present ideas/questions to the consultant for their analysis

19:47:37 From Rose Stephens-Booker to Everyone : @Josh, absolutely. Gaining community trust early on is key.

19:51:25 From arthur impastato to Everyone : There are a number of business, civic and environmental groups in Alexandria with whom the Task Force and City staff should consider partnering for purposes of educating the public as well as getting comments from the public on climate change. Such entities include the following:

- Agenda Alexandria;
- Alexandria Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee;
- Alexandria Chamber of Commerce;
- Alexandria Federation of Civic Associations;
- Potomac River Group of the Sierra Club and other local environmental groups;
- The Eisenhower Partnership;
- West End Business Association;
- West End Coalition.

19:51:35 From Alyssa Morin to Everyone : Yes @ Praveen

19:53:24 From Kathie Hoekstra to All panelists : You could also make legislative recommendations for changes

19:53:49 From Sarah Bagley to Everyone : What about including ARHA or other housing advocacy groups in the area in the outreach?

19:54:12 From Marta Schantz to Everyone : Love including ARHA in the outreach!

19:55:16 From Kathie Hoekstra to All panelists : @sarah - yes re: ARHA - let's look at getting solar on their buildings.

19:57:46 From Rose Stephens-Booker to Everyone : @Praveen, yep that makes sense, grabbing the \$\$ earlier to help move actions \$\$ love it. thanks.

19:58:02 From Stephen Walz to Everyone : Two areas that the Task Force may want to make earlier recommendations is the 2022 legislative position for the City and input into the City budget

19:58:08 From Praveen Kathpal to Everyone : I'll complete my thought here, the rest of the answer to Rose's question - a letter from the TF could inform the city's budget, work plan, and legislative priorities.

19:58:33 From Bill Eger to All panelists :

<https://jamboard.google.com/d/1CGJyVQOFoeth1OAUU7QD9IPfVPr5O14vGgaNhKeBGok/edit?usp=sharing>

20:09:15 From arthur impastato to Everyone : The Task Force may want to consider leveraging themselves with both the Environmental Policy Commission and Transportation Commission for substantive help as well as to lobby the City Manager and City Council to get more staffing help.

20:10:12 From Alyssa Morin to Everyone : @Marta when/where are the EPC meetings?

20:10:24 From Alyssa Morin to Everyone : Thanks

20:10:49 From Marta Schantz to Everyone : Here's the EPC website - the next meeting is May 17th
<https://www.alexandriava.gov/EnvironmentalPolicyCommission>

20:11:44 From Alyssa Morin to Everyone : All 3 of my stars were other

20:13:10 From Stephen Walz to Everyone : My other is to expand data in metrics (looking forward to seeing the new report noted on the slides) to show all items in the EAP2040

20:18:09 From Bill Pugh to Everyone : Regarding community organizations, Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions is active in Alexandria. This is a forum for interfaith involvement in climate advocacy by individuals and congregations: <https://faithforclimate.org/alexandria/>

20:19:56 From Alyssa Morin to Everyone : Thanks for the tip, Bill

20:20:17 From Stephen Walz to Everyone : There may be other outreach opportunities with groups including NAACP climate initiative and Tenants and Workers United

20:22:57 From Laura Leussing to All panelists : I don't see water mentioned. We are a waterfront community. With water rise and increased severity of storms, we have to have sustainable, resilient buffer areas between the city and the river. I think this should be an item for the task force to consider and could be done in coordination with the Waterfront commission.

20:23:25 From arthur impastato to Everyone : In addition to contacting the groups I have worked with that are listed above which I estimate would reach 10,000 - 15,000 Alexandrians, publicity in these local magazines would also be fruitful:1. Alexandria Times: < <https://alextimes.com/>>.

2. Washington Business Journal:<
[3. Zebra Press: < <https://thezebra.org/>>](https://www.bizjournals.com/washington/?ana=e_wash_bn_exclusive_exclusive&j=90509988&t=Breaking%2520News&mkt_tok=eyJpIjoiTW1JNVpXWTF0VFI3Wm1aaSIsInQiOiIxMXIEZDlmaUdPN05KbnlvMIhEZ2xSR2dcl1psQlRmQlRmOVRcL0lKV0FrZFNCb1J5UTgwWDNzM1ZiZ3JGZHhmS2s5S0c5dWpxRkpwdFwvVkd0VTJQdEd5UEkraHNVbmpwNnFHVEFFeIA2NTFsbjRoZG5hZkJJZ3I4XC9JRjJ2dHBcl2I3bkpMaDFcL2xCTTFxaHZJM0wrRGhIZFE9PSJ9></p></div><div data-bbox=)

4. Alexandria Gazette:< <http://www.alexandriagazette.com/>>

5. West End Alexandria Patch:< <https://patch.com/>>

6. InsideNOVA:< <https://www.insidenova.com/users/signup/>>

7. ALXNow: < <https://www.alxnow.com/>>

20:24:09 From David Peabody to All panelists : I am so impressed by this group.

20:25:54 From Laura Leussing to All panelists : Another community news org is DelRay patch

20:29:20 From David Peabody to All panelists : We at BuildOurFuture.org are putting on a webinar tomorrow evening at 7 looking at planning for zero energy on a district wide basis and we will also have a case study presented by the developer of the largest Passive House multifamily development in the world -- at a profit and without subsidies. The purpose of these webinars is to educate all Alexandrians c on buildings and climate -- important at a time when over 73 million sf of new construction is in the pipeline for special use permits and we are trying to achieve 50% GHG reductions overall. A subsequent webinar will address the issue of retrofitting existing buildings. Please go to our website to sign up! And again, what a great group you are and what a great service you are providing ths community!

20:31:14 From Alyssa Morin to Everyone : Will the link to this recording go out on all social media and in the Mayor's newsletter next month?

20:31:53 From Stephen Walz to Everyone : • Lead by example by modeling actions individuals can take to help meet the City's climate goals. [e.g. complete and publish household GHG inventory using city recommended tool]

20:32:01 From Ellen Eggerton to Everyone : the recording will be on the project web site

20:32:05 From Mary Harris, Co-Chair to Everyone : These partnership and outreach recommendations are so helpful. Thank you.

20:33:12 From Kathie Hoekstra to All panelists : For charter -where is item #1 in the resolution?

20:34:12 From arthur impastato to Everyone : Does the Charter track verbatim what is in the City Council Resolution forming the Task Force?

20:35:47 From Praveen Kathpal to Everyone : Thanks for joining and introducing yourself, Jolene!

20:36:10 From Jolene Mafnas to Everyone : Of course! Thank you for volunteering for this Task Force!

20:37:26 From Sarah Bagley to Everyone : Thank you for volunteering to all the members of the task force. Excited to see your work and learn more.

20:38:41 From Alyssa Morin to Everyone : I am really looking forward to working with the community members on this

20:41:28 From Praveen Kathpal to Everyone : Thanks for joining, Sarah! And great comment on ARHA.

20:46:31 From Scott Barstow to Everyone : Thanks for the shout-out, Praveen, but you all are doing a great job here. I'm very impressed with the Task Force and other people on the line here. Alexandria has some great climate advocates!

20:49:03 From arthur impastato to Everyone : Alexandrians for the Environmental Action Plan 2040 is excited to see this Task Force finally in action and we look forward to participating in the process of getting a bold and cutting edge Action Plan for our City!

20:49:12 From Marta Schantz to Everyone : If possible I would love to see if different meeting start times would be possible - this one overlaps directly with my kid's bedtime

20:49:47 From Rose Stephens-Booker to Everyone : me too

20:49:47 From Alyssa Morin to Everyone : I agree @ Marta this overlaps with my bedtime too lol

20:49:52 From Rose Stephens-Booker to Everyone : Thank you @Marta.

20:50:24 From Eldon Boes to All panelists : Thank you, everyone.

20:50:40 From Rose Stephens-Booker to Everyone : Thank you for naming it @Marta.