

CAP 30-Day Public Comment Period
Virtual Meetings

Attachment #5-Public Comments-Virtual Meetings

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November 9th, 23th, 30th, 2021

Table of Contents

Last Name	First Name	Type of Comment	PAGE NUMBERS	
1.	Bartolomeo	Kathy	Chat	14
2.	Bearden	Barbra	Chat	11
3.	Bellina	Jeanie	Chat	12
4.	Boozer-Strother	Pamela	Chat	11 - 12, 14 - 15
5.	Burns	Christine	Verbal, Chat	2, 4
6.	Buscaino	Mark	Verbal	7 - 8
7.	Bush	Kaelyn	Verbal, Chat	7
8.	Campbell	Valencia	Verbal	22
9.	Carter	Dion	Verbal	16
10.	Fine	Maureen	Verbal	8
11.	Fountain	Lily	Verbal	10, 13
12.	Frazier	Christine	Chat	12
13.	Gingold	Janet	Verbal, Chat	2 - 4, 6, 21, 24 - 25, 27
14.	Gudderra	Nithin	Verbal	10
15.	Hartwell	S Robinson	Verbal, Chat	16 - 17, 23, 25 - 27
16.	Hollingsworth	Catherine	Verbal, Chat	9, 11
17.	Hurwitch	Carol	Verbal	17
18.	Jakuta	Joseph	Verbal	1, 22
19.	Johnson	Taylor	Verbal, Chat	2, 4
20.	Lawson	James	Verbal	17, 26
21.	Makila	Tommi	Verbal, Chat	18, 24 - 25, 27
22.	Marsh	Irene	Chat	11
23.	McCaughey	Ken	Verbal, Chat	2, 4 - 5
24.	McCave	Rupert	Verbal, Chat	13
25.	Mezger	Mia	Chat	13 - 14
26.	Milanian	Arman	Verbal, Chat	6 - 7, 11
27.	Miller	Melanie	Chat	27
28.	Plummer-Welker	Jenny	Chat	12
29.	Pluntke	Kurt	Verbal, Chat	11 - 12
30.	Pugh	Bill	Verbal	18 - 19
31.	Roberts	Robin	Verbal	9 - 10
32.	Robinson	Jon	Verbal, Chat	20, 23, 25 - 27
33.	Rose	Fred	Verbal	19 - 20, 23 - 24, 26
34.	Schweisguth	Melissa	Verbal, Chat	8 - 9, 12 - 15
35.	Smith	Dan	Verbal	1, 3

Attachment #5-Public Comments-Virtual Meetings

November 9th, 23th, 30th, 2021

	Last Name	First Name	Response ID	PAGE NUMBERS
36.	Smith	Joanne	Chat	11 - 14
37.	Smith	Greg	Verbal	21
38.	UNK	Robert	Verbal	9
39.	Walker	Kitra	Verbal	7
40.	Warren	Cleaster	Verbal	7
41.	Weber	Sarah	Verbal	19
42.	Woodruff	Woody	Chat	14
43.	Wright	Marlene	Chat	14

NOTE: The transcripts and Zoom chats in this document are abridged to focus on public comments directly related to the draft CAP. Each meeting started off with a brief presentation from County staff and included a review of select CAP Priority Recommendations. These County facilitated breaks are summarized in italics. Likewise, the Zoom chat excludes County reminders and recurring CAP references. No comments by the public, either verbal or chat, have been augmented. The only exclusions include comments related to process or technology check (e.g., can you hear me, I am here, you are muted, etc.) or comments not related to the draft CAP (e.g., hello, thank you, goodbye, etc.). Full audio transcripts were provided by scribe.com.

CAP 30-Day Public Comment Period-Virtual Meeting: November 9, 2021

Abridged Transcript

0:00:07.9 Brandy Espinola: *Agenda, meeting recording, and ground rules.*

0:00:55.7 Andrea Crooms: *Welcome, background on the County's Climate Action Plan (CAP) development process, review of the County's commitment to leadership and transformational change, and goal of inclusive and equitable implementation.*

0:08:04.9 Dawn Hawkins-Nixon: *Summary of CAP and highlights from the Plan. Presentation included County's greenhouse gas emissions, climate hazards and impacts, CAP guiding principles, focus on just and equitable implementation, strategies, and recommendations for taking action to achieve a low-carbon resilient Prince George's County.*

0:19:22.3 Brandy Espinola: *Introduce the public comment portion of the evening - Everyone will be given two minutes to speak, folks who signed up to speak at the time of registration are called on first, anyone else interested in providing public comment can raise their hand or use the chat to be called on, if there is more time at the end attendees can provide additional comments.*

0:22:10.6 Dan Smith: Alright, so a just couple of things. One, I'm interested in how the Prince George's county Environmental Justice Commission report of January 2020 has been included or referenced, and whether its recommendations have been integrated and built up on... It's a pretty strong things about environmental justice and the need for substantial reform and planning and zoning, and all that relates to climate just or climate issues as well. There was a new stormwater sustainable storm water report put out by the state... Like last week, November 1st, I think the state Department of the Environment gave it to the legislature would be great to look at that. It has some recommendations for things that may be coming down in the next couple of years, if there are some credible recommendations that are gonna take a while to occur, is there a way that this report can encourage more rapid adoption instead of waiting for things to come down from the state to the county. Can we just go ahead and try to meet some of those standards, so I think it's saying we'll have to move to a 3-inch on-site mitigation for storm water is coming up, so how do we look at those things faster.

So then I don't know if my time is up, but the other... I just would say, if there's a way to discourage practices now not wait two years for implementation, but somehow development practices that flood plains, loss of forests, halt those now, while we figure out better development practices, so that's it for now, because otherwise we're gonna be paying for those damages later. There's a big report in the past couple of days go about the new authorities that some of the counties are doing to raise money to pay for huge infrastructure things, Climate Action authorities raising fund. So let's not make it worse by the practice as we're doing in the coming few years, that we're gonna have to make it worse to take yourselves out of those... With funds. So those are sort of my comments. Thank you.

0:26:01.7 Joseph Jakuta: Thank you, Joseph Jakuta, I'm in Mount Rainier, Maryland. I just wanted to say that the county is doing excellent work to move forward with Climate Action. We're seeing all the reification of Climate Action needed now. And nothing is ever perfect. I'm reading this plan makes me, as they say, Prince George is proud. And I hope to see it adopted and enacted. And your efforts to do community engagement has also been very positive.

0:26:57.6 Ken McCaughey: Good evening, I appreciate this opportunity to provide some comments. I left a note in the chat. I did a search about bicycling and changes of mode share. I was pleased to see that there was a lot of recommendations of trying to increase bicycling mode share and walking

as well. I noticed that the plan really didn't talk about bicycle parking at all. And I live in Boise. And my experience with using bicycling for transportation, I do almost all my local shopping by bike, is that bike parking is just all over the place, from pretty good, to nice try, to pretty ugly, to just not existent. So, there needs to be some way to address it. And it's not just as simple as saying, "Hey, people provide bike parking." 'cause my experiences, like I said, people have the best of intentions.

Often the people who cite these things and install them don't use them. And either the wrong kind of rack gets deployed, or something gets installed incorrectly and effectively becomes unusable. So, I see all of these combinations of things all within the three miles radius of my house. So, if it's gonna be addressed effectively, there needs to be somebody who is in charge of this who knows how to do it, or there needs to be some sort of an ordinance that lays down a style of rack, and a spacing, and quantity, and where you cite them on a property, kind of best practices sort of thing. So, I hope this doesn't get overlooked in the final draft. Otherwise, people get on the road on the bike and it's like, "Okay, now what do I do?" So, thank you.

0:31:22.4 Taylor Johnson: Excellent, thank you. So I live in Hyattsville, and I know that Prince George's county is composed of many municipalities like Mount Rainier or Hyattsville, but also many unincorporated areas. And so, often it's the case that some of the communities are maybe a little ahead of the county in terms of what they're doing or trying to do, or environment and density and building codes and the work. And sometimes it feels as though the county is not supportive of what the municipalities are doing. So, I guess what I'm saying or urging or suggesting is that whatever this plan is, if there is a municipality within the county that has stronger provisions or more faster moving or whatever, that the county should do whatever it can to support those, because it makes at least that area ahead of the county. So, things like building codes that not only require more energy efficiency, but even how much the roof overhangs or what types of trees are planted or whether it's pervious or impervious surface, all of those make a difference. And I don't know where we are in all of those things, but my feeling is, they can be improved, so that's what I have to say.

0:33:53.3 Christine Burns: So, I haven't fully read everything yet, but I was excited to see that there was a lot in the Climate Action Plan about addressing the residential component since that's a pretty big part of our emissions and that there would be mechanisms in place for homeowners to get solar or whatever. But I am a renter and I looked up a quick stat and it looked like about one-third of the county is renters, and so, I'm curious if there will be mechanisms that non-homeowners will be able to take advantage of to sort of whether it's working with their landlord or whatever, I'm not willing to invest a lot in retrofitting this house, for example, because I don't own it, but if there are ways to sort of incentivize either landlords or help residents who are renters take advantage of some of the options for improving their home spaces, whether it's for flood mitigation or reducing emissions through those kinds of things?

0:40:40.0 Brandy Espinola and Mary Abe: *Introduce the Priority Recommendations section and what is included in each priority recommendation, highlight several Priority Recommendations as an example of what can be found in the CAP, answer questions from the Zoom chat box about Public Comment process.*

0:56:29.1 Janet Gingold: Hi, I'm Janet Gingold, and I'm one of the Commissioners. And I feel so happy to hear that there are people studying our plan, and I hope that we'll find a lot of people supporting it, because I think it's a really good step in the right direction. I did talk to somebody today though who had some trouble with the survey, she told me that when she was filling out the survey, she wanted to go back and redo something and she couldn't go backwards. And anyway I was just wondering whether anybody else on the call had problems with the interface with the survey, because that's definitely something we want to troubleshoot, and make sure it's easy for people to fill out the survey. And the more people we can have chime in through that survey, the better the County Council folks will be able to understand that this is something that our residents

feel strongly about, and...

We want people to be able to easily weigh in on the importance of this issue to them. So I was just wondering if there is a mechanism that people can use to go back, either enter the system a second time to give a second comment, or is it possible to go back and revise your comment when you're the middle of it. And how can I help that person who's having trouble.

0:58:03.8 Brandy Espinola: *The County will review the survey and explore options for addressing concerns.*

0:58:49.0 Janet Gingold: Yeah, okay, great, thanks. That helps me understand it a little better. I think people also should understand that if they have issues that they can't express through the survey, they should feel inspired to use a different method, maybe send an email to clarify what you meant, or come to one of these sessions and speak orally so that we can hear your concerns, if they don't get picked up by the questions that happened to be on the survey.

0:59:52.7 Dan Smith: Alright, so I just wanna clarify what I heard, I think about comments. And so did I actually hear that there will be no integration of any of these comments and feedback into the report... The report has done... Is that what I heard?

1:00:14.2 Mary Abe: *The County Council will be provided the draft CAP as is, a supplemental report summarizing public feedback, and a package of all public feedback. The Council will be responsible for determining how to advance the draft CAP and address the public feedback.*

1:01:03.0 Dan Smith: No, I understand what you're saying, but... No, it does not make sense. I think you're giving away... The Commission is the one who's taken the deep dive, and if there are comments and feedback that, Oh, after all this work we've missed that we didn't think about that, that's a great point. Some of that should be integrated into the final report, that's the power, if it's in the final report otherwise it goes to the County Council, and this County Council will just say, Oh, people have different views. Here's one over here, here's one over there. And they'll just water it down, and I think the power comes from the voice of the Commission saying, and maybe there's not a lot that would be added in. However, I really employ you all to try to do that, you're just... Otherwise, I guess you've...

1:02:03.5 Dan Smith: It's just marketing now. It's just marketing.

1:02:51.8 Dan Smith: Well, the power is gonna come on, the more that they can take as much intact is possible of this report, kinda say adopt it as guidance and then start hammering out the ordinance, as in changes that have to occur. The better. So I just... You guys have done a great... A lot of work. Great effort. I just want it to be this impactful and successful as possible. So thanks.

1:03:39.1 Janet Gingold: Just wanted to say that... Yeah, I hear your pain on that, because one of the things that is so important about this process is we have to start somewhere, and we have to get started now, and we have to not wait for it until we have every single possible thing in there. This is one step. And part of what's gonna happen is that we will learn from what we put into place and we will collect all these new ideas about what else has to happen, and those ideas are gonna be incorporated into the next iteration of this. Okay, so think of this as a living document where our public engagement process, as we implement it, will incorporate new ideas and we're gonna adapt this plan for our adaptation as the years go on. So if you don't see it in this plan, that doesn't mean it's not gonna happen, that just means that we need to work to get it into the next iteration, so I think all of the... The more we can get good ideas on the public record through this comment period, then when that stuff is all packaged and presented to the County Council, they will see, okay, let's start with what we can do immediately, and then we're gonna work on this other stuff too. So keep the

ideas coming in, both through this process and through direct communication with the County Council.

And just one other thing, these comments are actually incorporated in that they are collected and sorted in a way and summarized, and that becomes part of the package that the County Council considers, you can think of it as another appendix where these things are... It becomes part of the package. So even if it doesn't change what's currently in the Commission's report, it is still part of the package.

1:16:04.7 Brandy Espinola: *Thank you for attending and providing public comments, please share information about the public comment period with your networks, goodnight.*

Abridged Zoom Chat

18:40:22 From Taylor Johnson: building codes can do a lot to reduce energy consumption on new construction and also requiring developers to incorporate green and common space can also reduce transportation needs.

18:54:02 From Ken McCaughey: I see the plan advocates for increases in bicycling mode share. This include E-bikes. But the plan is silent on bicycle parking. I find bike park to be very poor if it even exists. As a very practical matter, people will not shift to bicycling if there is no place to park. E-bikes are expensive and require secure parking. Can this be addressed in more detail?

19:04:49 From Christine Burns: I would add to the bike comment that in addition to good bike parking we need good connectivity between bike trails (and road with good bike lanes) and our neighborhoods. I have to bike down route a very busy road for about 1 mile to get to the my local bike trail and I'm always quite nervous in the evening during rush hour traffic when cars are not being careful.

19:07:09 From Ken McCaughey: In general, the barriers to walking and biking in order of importance are; safe access (walking and biking), safe and secure place to park a bike, distance, the ability to carry stuff, weather and terrain. The County cannot address all of these, but I believe they can impact the first two, and most important, barriers. In my opinion, addressing these are necessary conditions to start changing traveling habits.

19:09:28 From Taylor Johnson: good point Christine

19:13:40 From Taylor Johnson: The majority of the intersections I have seen are not pedestrian friendly.

19:16:54 From Christine Burns: Can you speak to the balance between how aspirational these recommendations are vs how feasible they are? Is it likely that many or most of these recommendations would be adopted by the county?

19:27:52 From Ken McCaughey: Will any of our comments result in any changes to the document?

19:29:41 From Ken McCaughey: So the council will see some sort of a summary of the comments?

19:36:38 From Ken McCaughey: It would be good to reach out to your council person and advocate for changes to the doc and process.

19:38:23 From Ken McCaughey: I share Dan's concerns about the comments not getting incorporated.

CAP 30-Day Public Comment Period-Virtual Meeting: November 23, 2021 Abridged Transcript

0:00:32.1 Brandy Espinola: *Agenda, meeting recording, and ground rules.*

0:01:56.7 Dawn Hawkins-Nixon: *Welcome, background on the County's Climate Action Plan (CAP) development process, review of the County's commitment to leadership and transformational change, and goal of inclusive and equitable implementation. Summary of CAP and highlights from the Plan. Presentation included County's greenhouse gas emissions, climate hazards and impacts, CAP guiding principles, focus on just and equitable implementation, strategies, and recommendations for taking action to achieve a low-carbon resilient Prince George's County.*

0:20:20.9 Janet Gingold: *Introduce the public comment portion of the evening - examples of what public comments could look like and share the various methods for weighing in on the draft CAP.*

0:26:00.4 Janet Gingold: Anyway, I was given a tremendous privilege of going first tonight, so I'm gonna tell you that I Janet Gingold, whole heartedly support, adoption and implementation of this Prince George's County climate action plan. We need to do as much as we can, as fast as we can to avoid the worst impacts of a changing climate. This plan provides recommendations for systemic changes that we need to decrease our communal carbon footprints and protect the health and well-being of people of Prince George's County. Implementing the priority recommendations laid out in the climate action plan will provide county decision-makers with data and tools for better evidence based climate conscious decisions.

We will see acceleration of a just transition to renewable energy with more solar installations on county property and in the private sector. And development of a more resilient power grid. As we replace gasoline-powered vehicles with electric vehicles, we'll see less of the particulate air pollution that contributes so much to our health disparity. We'll see land use decisions that focus development in activity centers near transit hubs to decrease people miles traveled and spare our forested areas and agricultural lands. We will see more conservation landscaping and rain gardens and less development in flood prone areas. We'll see county resources that enable residents and businesses to decrease their greenhouse gas emissions, through building retrofits for energy efficiency.

We'll see easier access to data about deforestation and agricultural land, tree coverage and urban heat islands, as well as building performance and power consumption and EV chargers. We'll see opportunities for our young people in new green business, and we'll see our county investing first in the communities that need it most. And every small change in the right direction matters. This plan provides a framework that we can build on in the decades to come, and we can't keep pretending that climate change won't happen here. It's already happening, and we need to do all we can to decrease the impact. We need to adopt this plan and get to work. Okay, who's next?

0:28:16.8 Brandy Espinola: *Public comment portion of the evening ground rules - Everyone will be given two minutes to speak, folks who signed up to speak at the time of registration are called on first, anyone else interested in providing public comment can raise their hand or use the chat to be called on, if there is more time at the end attendees can provide additional comments.*

0:29:04.2 Arman Milanian: Okay, great. Yes, so I mean, the county definitely has to implement the climate action plan because we definitely need resilience against the climate change. Climate will change... It will change. And I really wanna see changes in how we treat our backyards, our lawns, our trees. I would like to see less trees being cut in the county. And I want a better future for our kids, and this action provides the guidelines to do so. Yeah, that's sums it up. Yeah. We can't... I can't hear you.

0:30:10.9 Cleaster Warren: So looking at the recommendations, I see A6, there's expand information and assist the public regarding both impacts on climate risk and opportunities to implement climate action. Obviously, I'm on this meeting so I'm for any action that we can implement, but the first thing that I would like to see is the information and education expand. We shouldn't be doing this by word of mouth, I think the county has an obligation to use media, to use anything at it's disposal to let people know about our plan going forward. And to let them know that there's things that we can do, that will move along the plan and to actually help with reducing carbon emissions. I know this is just a draft. We have a starting point. It's a good starting point, but I wanna see more education upfront.

If and... By means of media, circulation publication, anything that we can, because we should be getting the word out to everyone in the county, not just those of us who are passionate about this, who see this as our future, I mean, it is our future. So that's all I have to say.

0:31:44.9 Cleaster Warren: Sure, I'm in Bowie, Maryland, and I'm in the Togs community.

0:32:11.2 Kaelyn Bush: Okay, so basically, my comments are from a teenager's perspective. I go to Wim Clark High School, I'm in the FFA Maryland chapter of this year, and I just think it would be good to implement different resources that teenagers can look at and educate their parents on as well.

0:32:52.2 Kitra Walker: Yeah, just some comments. We could also maximize, improve forest management for carbon sequestration, I submitted comments to build residential and commercial with as much timber as possible, we can, if there's... I'm not sure about the solar limitation, if we can just move any restriction as a percentage of your electricity usage and encourage homeowners to sell electricity to the grid, that would be great. So just a lot of policy tweaks and changes. Thank you.

0:33:33.7 Kitra Walker: Colmar Manor.

0:33:44.3 Mark Buscaino: Yeah. Hi, thank you, Brandy. My name is Mark Buscaino. I'm with Casey Trees, we're in the District of Columbia, and we're also very active and Prince George's County primarily planting trees within the areas close to the district now we're near Cheverly and in areas such as that. I just wanted to comment first to say thank you and second... What a great plan. Of course, my comments are geared more toward the tree issues and anything else, and I just wanted to say, between 2013 and 2018, preliminary unreleased data from the Chesapeake Conservancy shows a drop of about a quarter percent canopy in Prince George's County and the census shows of course, a concurrent increase in about 100,000 people, these trends are most likely gonna continue in terms of the climbing of population and the development to accommodate that, so that's not unusual, but I applaud the plans efforts to maintain "no net loss."

And I just wanted to emphasize a couple of the strategies, the first being the regulatory, establishing a strong regulatory framework. And you look at the district of Columbia for that, will be successful in trying to slow the loss of that canopy as well as creating fees for the removal of trees that will go into fees and funds that you perhaps can create or have already, that would allow for the planting of more trees. And in particular, strategically planting them on public lands, 'cause that is where most canopy expansion can occur in almost any jurisdiction, including Prince George's County. And then finally, I just wanna emphasize the land preservation piece, the establishments of easements to preserve lands for canopy in particular, of course, as well as a sequestration that that provides are all fantastic things to have. So I appreciate the ability or the opportunity to comment today. I'm happy to speak more at a later time and I will provide written comments as well, so thank you very much.

0:36:02.7 Maureen Fine: Yes, thank you. I'm from Bowie, Maryland, and I ditto everything everyone said so far, it's all been great. I wholeheartedly support the adoption and the implementation of the Prince George's County Climate Action Plan. It clearly and comprehensively charts a path for the county

to play a bold and decisive leadership role in the global climate response. I ask the council to please accept this leadership role, and I ask residents to work along with our leaders to change the way we live, work and play, and to bring about the transformation we need to fight the worst effects of climate change. After I... The Climate Action Plan, I think makes a great suggestion when it talks about focusing on county operations. It so clearly states the need to build internal capacity to plan and implement climate action by increasing the climate-related skills and knowledge of our elected officials, agency directors and staff, I say yay to that.

And of course, of utmost important to strengthen land use regulations, sprawling development is undermining our resilience, we must incentivize protection and monetize the benefits of our remaining natural areas. Preservation and restoration must be prioritized. Thank you, commissioners, county personnel and consultants for an excellent climate action plan. Now, will the county invest in an infrastructure that includes renewable energy, low carbon transportation, smart growth communities and resilient water systems? I hope the answer is resoundingly, yes, and that they adopt and implement the climate action plan. Thank you.

0:38:16.0 Melissa Schweisguth: Yeah. Hi. I'm Melissa Schweisguth, Hyattsville, thanks for the opportunity to comment. I still have to dig into all the details, but I certainly support the decision to have a climate action plan, I was really excited to see that our county is doing this and appreciate the work that has gone into it.

It's essential. It should've been done 10 years ago. I mean kudos to the teenager, you said I have a high school comment, but that's totally awesome that you're here, so anyway, just a little digression. But I... So a few specific comments is really integrating equity, so when I look at the eight recommendations, I see that equity is a separate... It's a separate thing. And I work in international development, and we've seen in many cases where particularly like gender women's inclusion is kind of set out as a separate thing and you get into the separate but equal thing. So all of those recommendations you're talking about green transit, green businesses, education, equity and inclusion needs to be baked into all of those. So I appreciate that it's a standalone, but think about how you can articulate equity and inclusion in all of those, and in the headline where appropriate.

Second thing is, is I love the idea of green transit but we also need safe and accessible transit, safe and accessible roads. It is not safe to bike on many roads in our county, particularly roads that get us to workplaces or to key shopping centers. You know Riggs Road, East-West Highway, Queens Chapel, there are some in my areas that it's not safe, it's not even safe to across those roads, cars don't stop at the crosswalks, there's no traffic calming. So safe and accessible transit need to be I think highlighted not just green, but again, that it's safe for people who use it and it's accessible to people of all ages and all modalities. And I certainly agree with the comments on the tree canopy and I would like to see water and ecosystems, the preservation, the restoration of our ecosystems, of our water, of our forest, of our native environments, get their own headline. They're a little buried in resiliency, a little buried maybe in community health, but they're critically important as you know that to have those healthy ecosystems not just the tree canopy but in our homes how are we afforesting, how are we promoting more native landscapes.

So kind of going beyond addressing future development, but again also restoring, and improving current ecosystems on our public lands as well as our homes. And I feel like that that really needs a headline recommendation as opposed to being buried but again I think. And it is a little confusing also, there's the eight recommendations but then the three action areas, so if I were someone trying to operationalize this I think I would get a little confused to that respect. So again, I can look at the details and the action areas, but then I have the recommendations, and how am I lining those up? So maybe streamlining them in some ways but thank you for the plan. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

0:42:09.0 Catherine Hollingsworth: Hi My name is Catherine Hollingsworth. I live in Lanham but I'm the publisher of The Bowie Sun for Bowie, Maryland readers. And I'm asking if you could consider doing a media roundtable so that the media could ask more probing questions beyond the two minutes. Someone mentioned education and also I think in that comment they said that part of the education they wanted to see is outreach to the media. I hope I am paraphrasing that comment correctly but I'll let the record speak for itself. So if my interpretation is correct, I would like to chime in with that comment and say that it would be very helpful for the media, especially since there is a lot of jargon that is thrown around. I think with the climate issue when we talk about carbon and greenhouse gases, although I feel like I have a basic understanding of it, I think for the general public that could contribute to the reason why they may be stand off-ish in putting their... Giving you their input if they immediately feel intimidated by the information because of the language that is used. And the media is there to put things in everyday language, so I think that it would be helpful at least for me to have that access to the experts, and ask them plain language questions. Thank you.

0:44:52.9 Robert: Hi, good evening, and thanks for the presentation. I think it's a great idea to support climate change, and I think, from what I've seen so far, I think it's a good start, but I do agree with the two previous speakers that... I'm an architect and also LEED certified consultant, and so I do understand most of the technical aspects of the presentation, but I think going back to if you can take all of this 200-something pages and maybe come up with one page or two pages of a simple analogy that says to the average homeowner or renter that, "Here's what I can do from my own home or apartment that will affect climate change." Whether it's changing a light bulb to use an energy saving lightbulb, to using low VOC paints or to using rain barrels, things like that, or rain garden, I think simple things like those.

If you can quantify in a way so that the average homeowner, who is not so technically induced with this language we are talking about in the 200-something pages, I think would go a longer way, so that at the end of the day, that homeowner or resident can say, "You know what? Hey, I can go to Home Depot or Lowe's and buy a energy saving bulb, I'm helping climate change in a very small way." And so I think that's what's missing from just the big picture. I know you're speaking from a higher level above in terms of the technical pieces, but I do believe at the end of the day, you have to break it down in small quadrants so that the people could understand how they can play a role, a simple role, it doesn't have to be an expensive role, to get the big picture. So those are my general comments and that's what I see, thank you.

0:47:34.7 Robin Roberts: Good afternoon. This is Robin Roberts, and I appreciate the ability to come to these platforms so we can voice our opinions, and I do agree with the climate change plan. And I was also gonna piggyback on the guy who talked about education. I think it's a good idea also. If we can incorporate some kind of... Like the other guy said about making it plain and simple and we can include it in to our PG County school system too, so that we teach the kids about this, 'cause kids are so open to this kind of stuff, they can also bring it home to their parents. And there's just little things that they can do to make their parents aware of what they've learned in school about climate change and what Prince George's County... What the plan is and how to implement it within our own homes. And I think using children is a really good way of kinda inserting it into everyone's home. That's all I have. Thank you.

0:50:14.7 Brandy Espinola and Mary Abe: *Introduce the Priority Recommendations section and what is included in each priority recommendation, highlight several Priority Recommendations as an example of what can be found in the CAP.*

1:02:49.6 Lily Fountain: Hi, thank you. I'd just like to say that I would like to see this adopted and especially implemented. I am very depressed about whether the current council will truly implement this. There are many good things in here. I'm especially concerned about the tree preservation and

conservation as you've been talking about, and evidently, other people have been asking about, as well as composting, both of which I think are critical for our county at this time, as far as things that are happening, but... I don't know if you've discussed the interaction with the zoning changes that are going on with the county also. I don't know if you can talk about that, but I certainly hope this gets implemented. I hope it gets adopted, and I hope that we can even make some improvements as we learn more over time. Thank you.

1:03:55.7 Mary Abe, Dawn Hawkins-Nixon, and Brandy Espinola: *Highlight several additional Priority Recommendations as examples of what can be found in the CAP.*

1:48:52.9 Brandy Espinola: *The County Council will be provided the draft CAP as is, a supplemental report summarizing public feedback, and a package of all public feedback. The Council will be responsible for determining how to advance the draft CAP and address the public feedback. Help feedback for the Council includes, is there interest from residents to take action here.*

1:50:10.9 Nithin Gudderra: Hi, my name is Nithin Gudderra. I heard this earlier and as a student in PDCPS, I can't emphasize it enough that there definitely needs to be an increase of education in the classroom. I personally didn't learn about climate action in my classrooms. And the main reasons I've learned and become aware about topics related to the climate action is largely because others introduced and made effort to inform me. So, I feel like that leads me to say that when education happens and more students become informed, opportunities not only exercise climate action, but also learn about and discover pathways to careers that will definitely be vital in our futures will also occur. And that's personally what's happened to me because as I've become educated and more aware. I've discovered more about myself, and it's led me to my own pathway and on my own journey.

1:51:41.6 Mary Abe: *Asked Nithin to share his written quote.*

1:52:29.0 Nithin Gudderra: Alright. Sure, so back in October, I wrote that the fate of our world depends on the leaders around the world today. And as a young person, it often feels like those who have contributed the most towards climate change really don't care about the implications it has on our future, on our futures. We are going to face worse consequences, even worse than what we face presently. I'm personally unsure what my future will look like. I wanna have children, but in a few years even that idea may be morally and ethically wrong. So taking a look around the world, back in October, but even now, California is burning. Sea levels continue to rise, and the oceans continue to warm as glaciers melt. So the fact of the matter is that we people of all ages today are responsible for protecting our world and ensuring that there's a safe future for the billions of people that will come tomorrow. I can't pass laws and policies. But I can and will continue to use my voice to advocate and fight for a better and brighter future for all because I care. Now, for those who read this and or hear this: Do you care?

1:53:57.9 Brandy Espinola: *Thank you for attending and providing public comments, please share information about the public comment period with your networks, goodnight.*

Abridged Zoom Chat

18:47:20 From Catherine Hollingsworth to Everyone: What can cities, insurers and property owners do right now to prepare for the next extreme weather event based on the plan? And how costly will these preparations be for homeowners?

18:49:40 From Kurt Pluntke to Everyone: Everything seems to be on the table. As they say this is uncharted territory.

19:01:25 From Pamela Boozer-Strother to Everyone: Janet- thank you for your endorsement! I know that you convened many climate action advocates throughout the entire process and represent the voice of many.

19:02:42 From Catherine Hollingsworth to Everyone: Could commenters please state which part of the county they are from?

19:04:34 From Arman Milanian to Everyone: we also need accountability on companies and create calculated prohibition to plastics within the country

19:05:38 From Barbra Bearden (s/h) to Everyone: +1 from Capitol Heights, MD to a HUGE EFFORT for outreach about available programs, infrastructure, plan and benefits.

19:07:34 From Barbra Bearden (s/h) to Everyone: and making sure people have access to, understand, and feel the benefits of actions.

19:11:14 From Joanne Smith to Everyone: We need to not only publicize the plan but also what incentives there are to individuals to implement parts of the plan as homeowners and renters alike.

19:13:35 From Irene Marsh to Everyone: Melissa, good points!

19:13:59 From Kurt Pluntke to Everyone: The County can follow the District's policies: restriction on leaf blowers, idling cars, solar incentives. However municipalities such as mine is really lacking on enforcement, vision.

19:17:51 From Christine Frazier to Everyone: How do you get municipalities to enforce the plan? how much leverage do we have?

19:18:54 From Joanne Smith to Everyone: not truly a part of this plan, but what about enforcement? Several new trees were planted on community land in Kettering and then some of them were vandalized and killed -- cut off at the ground -- this was very disturbing and how do we educate folks before these actions are taken (folks said they had no idea new trees would be planted near their homes).

19:20:18 From Kurt Pluntke to Everyone: Maybe it can be citizen/homeowner -driven with pictures, letters, warnings and such. As far as the tree issue, our mayor had a homeowner remove a planting since it was on municipal property nearby. Go figure.

19:21:11 From Jeannie Bellina to Everyone: Brandy, I will look at this Climate Action Plan in more detail before December 1 and provide some additional recommendations to the plan. Thanks to all who helped in this plan's development. Jeannie

19:25:09 From Jenny Plummer-Welker to Everyone: How will the verbal comments be transmitted to the County Council?

19:25:28 From Pamela Boozer-Strother to Everyone: Thank you, Robin! The PGCCPC Board of Education Climate Change Action Plan Work Group is dedicated to alignment with the County Action Plan and will have a major component of student education, action and community outreach. Current students and recent Alumni serve on the Work Group. We are grateful to Donald Belle for representing PGCCPS on the Commission and Work Group. See our work here: [PGCCPS.org/climate](https://www.pgcpc.org/climate)

19:27:40 From Jeannie Bellina to Everyone: If you buy a tree-based offset today, you're sponsoring a reduction that won't be fully effective until perhaps 2040. Article:
<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/planting-a-tree-offset-your-carbon-footprint/>

19:43:17 From Melissa Schweisguth to Everyone: Thanks Irene Marsh! Glad to see HVL hopers here!

19:48:54 From Joanne Smith to Everyone: Definitely support. I haven't had a chance to read more than the first few pages but this looks good. We need to encourage infrastructure for moving to EVs and other alternative energy uses.

19:51:33 From Melissa Schweisguth to Everyone: +1 on Joanne's comments about incentives for homeowners. Not do we need to promote but we need to implement new incentives such as rebates to switch from gas to electric (can be 100% clean). Empower Maryland does not incentivize energy switching, just reduction. I'm converting from gas heat and water to electric, it's not cheap but getting off fossil fuels is worth it to me and I am able to save for it. We need funding to incentivize less climate minded folks and help lower income households afford energy switching

19:53:38 From Lily Fountain to Everyone: Will there be a quantifying of the direction of public support (e.g. X % of commenters recommend approval and adoption), as well as delivering hundreds of pages of text to council members? Will qualitative analysis of public comments also be done?

19:54:43 From Rupert McCave to Everyone: I did not see in the plan the United States Green Building Council (USGBC) as a resource for GREEN and Sustainable Initiatives. USGBC is the entity that certifies buildings through LEED, which has very good climate change design guides for buildings and the environment. This should be a good resource guideline to use. Thank you

19:54:53 From Joanne Smith to Everyone: Electricity generation is critical too -- moving to sustainable methods to generate electricity before we switch off natural gas.

19:59:36 From Melissa Schweisguth to Everyone: Mary, solar potential on my property is limited. I'll be grid dependent. I'd love to see rebates for switching from gas heat to electric like a mini split system. That requires advocating at state and federal levels that provide rebates for energy conservation now, in addition to those funding rooftop solar

20:01:27 From Joanne Smith to Everyone: Agree with Melissa, some of our homes are not suited to rooftop solar (I'm in Kettering and have trees and face in wrong direction to get much sun) but would use solar or wind generated electricity and hope to move to EV when the infrastructure improves.

20:02:44 From Mia Mezger to Everyone: Hi, I am a junior at Gwynn Park High School in Brandywine Maryland. My school is starting this project where we collect food waste during lunch time, sort it, and compost it rather than send it to landfills. We noticed that a lot of food is thrown away and with composting it would help feed or give back to the environment that is feeding us. Maybe if more schools did this it would help the cause and make it so less greenhouse gasses would be released into the environment. Also, all the resources put into making the food such as water and biodegradable packaging wouldn't go to complete waste.

20:05:05 From Kathy Bartolomeo to Everyone: Great to hear about your school Mia.

20:06:37 From Melissa Schweisguth to Everyone: Thanks to the staff who are working overtime to do these sessions. Much appreciated

20:07:47 From Pamela Boozer-Strother to Everyone: Thanks for leading Mia and Gwynn Park HS!

20:08:20 From Melissa Schweisguth to Everyone: Great point Mia. Compostable emit methane when they degrade in landfills. Keeping compostables out of landfills should be a mitigation action

20:10:27 From woody woodruff to Everyone: engagement with the communities should not just be pre-adoption but continuously as the plan is implemented over the years...

20:11:53 From Marlene Wright to Everyone: Cameron Grove Senior Community- grateful for inclusiveness and info sharing!

20:12:42 From Melissa Schweisguth to Everyone: Thanks Mary. Does county code allow solar farms in land zones for ag or reserve?

20:16:38 From Joanne Smith to Everyone: Agree -- solar on farmland going out of use instead of building suburban homes - with fair payment to the owners? Also maintain enough agricultural land to support the healthy food initiatives.

20:18:03 From Melissa Schweisguth to Everyone: Why does the recommendation for county agencies to integrate climate resilience five years off? Is it really not possible for them to create plans in a year or two? We're already facing climate risks and they're getting worse. So we need to implement resiliency ASAP

20:20:43 From Melissa Schweisguth to Everyone: What guidance do you have for comments on funding plan implementation? Eg ensuring this is budgeted for

20:24:12 From Melissa Schweisguth to Everyone: How do you see plan addressing advocacy and collaboration across agencies and levels of government such as city to county to state and federal, and with entities like MNCPPC and WMATA? As I'm sure you're aware coordination across these entities is not easy.

20:24:42 From Pamela Boozer-Strother to Everyone: Thank you, Nithin, for your leadership in PGCPs and the County!

CAP 30-Day Public Comment Period-Virtual Meeting: November 30, 2021

Abridged Transcript

0:00:03.9 Brandy Espinola: *Agenda, meeting recording, and ground rules.*

0:00:38.0 Andrea Crooms: *Welcome, background on the County's Climate Action Plan (CAP) development process, review of the County's commitment to leadership and transformational change, and goal of inclusive and equitable implementation.*

0:01:33.7 Dawn Hawkins-Nixon: *Summary of CAP and highlights from the Plan. Presentation included County's greenhouse gas emissions, climate hazards and impacts, CAP guiding principles, focus on just and equitable implementation, strategies, and recommendations for taking action to achieve a low-carbon resilient Prince George's County.*

0:18:02.8 Janet Gingold: *Introduce the public comment portion of the evening - examples of what public comments could look like and share the various methods for weighing in on the draft CAP.*

0:27:10.1 Brandy Espinola: *Public comment portion of the evening ground rules - Everyone will be given two minutes to speak, folks who signed up to speak at the time of registration are called on first, anyone else interested in providing public comment can raise their hand or use the chat to be called on, if there is more time at the end attendees can provide additional comments.*

0:28:13.8 Dion Carter: *Okay. So my name is Dion Carter. I'm located in the Mitchellville, Maryland area near the Wegmans Plaza. I do not have any comments tonight. I'm just listening as, I guess you would say as a potential board member in my community, the Balk Hill community, and so I just want to get more information. Thank you.*

0:28:39.8 SR Hartwell: *Hi. Good evening. I'm here. My name is Stacey. I'm also the Environmental and Climate Justice Chair for the NAACP-Maryland state conference, where we focus very heavily on issues regarding environment and climate for the state, but I'm also a resident of Prince George's County, so I have a dual interest in what's going on here. I am privy to a lot of information regarding the status of Prince George's County and unfortunately, there are so many issues that are impacted by the environment and climate. So not only am I a strong proponent for us developing a climate action plan, but I'm also interested in educating our residents even more because, you know there's, I don't know if you've seen on the news lately where there's been a community near the Brandywine area that's been complaining that realtors have not been representing the true value of their homes.*

However, I have yet to hear in any of that dialogue where they are aware of all of the environmental impacts that have happened down in the Brandywine area that could very much be impacting their home values. So not only am I interested in the climate plan, I'm interested in remediation. I'm also interested in notifying people, letting people know what these health issues are. For example, we have the highest ozone levels in the state down in Brandywine. We have the highest rates of deaths related air quality here in Maryland. I could go on with a number of... I mean, Prince George's County was rated an F by the American Lung Association regarding air quality. So we have a number of issues, and I could go on, I don't wanna frighten people. But I really think that in our climate action plan, we really have to start notifying people, as to number one, what's happening in their community.

For example, there is gonna be a huge... They are proposing a huge battery storage factory over

here by Rose-croft Raceway. I bet a lot of people don't know what the impact of having this battery storage facility in their community. So a lot of education has to happen. And you know what happened to my mother's community, there was a pipeline that was put literally into the creek where she lives. And you can... I mean, you can walk there and it's probably maybe not even 500 feet away from where she lives. But she said to me, "I had no idea that this was going on in our community." So there are so many points on which we can work, but I'm feeling a little constricted by time here. But I just wanted to say that, yes, we should have a climate action plan. And I wish I had the liberty, I'm a volunteer to the NAACP, I wish I had the time to write up all of the comments that I have on the plan. And I'm just grateful for this opportunity to give voice to some of the things that are happening and just hope this plan will result in notifying the community and more proactively notifying them. Not just sending out some random email or something that goes to some website that not everyone even knows it's happening, but a more active way of engaging the community on what's happening where they live. Thank you.

0:31:54.8 Carol Hurwitch: Yes. I'm sorry. I was hitting the wrong unmute button. Yes, thank you. My name is Carol Hurwitch. I am long-time resident of Prince George's County, over 30 years, and I live in Dolphin, Maryland, concerned citizen. I have fought various campaigns to try to help preserve the trees that clean the air and help the pollution, as Ms. Hartwell just said. And I believe also that if you're going build on erodible soils and things like that, that makes flooding worse. So a lot of these things are just connected with good health, social justice, quality of life, and we have to band together and do things like this action plan, not only for the globe and future generations, but just the air we breathe here locally today. Thank you.

0:33:22.5 James Lawson: My name is James Lawson, I live in Accokeek, Maryland. I strongly support the Climate Action Plan. The Climate Action Plan is a professional comprehensive and thorough document. If Prince George's County implements this plan, it will fulfill our county's obligation to preventing climate change. Some people believe that one million people in our county is a drop in the bucket of the 7.9 billion people globally and we can have no real effect on climate change. A sizeable part of our population believe that climate change is not the most critical problem in their lives. On November the 10th, 1942 Winston Churchill said this, "Now, this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end, but it is perhaps the end of the beginning." I believe this is where we are today. The Climate Action Plan is the first step in a long journey. The Climate Action Plan is a complicated document, most of our population will never read this document. Those who have the time to read the plan and a time to work to implement the plan will have to sell the plan. We will have to convince the population that climate change is real and will have severe consequences for our population.

We will have to explain to our citizens just because we cannot see climate change, it is real, it will negatively affect the quality of life for most of us. All of us must work together to convince people that climate change is real and will threaten life as we know it. For me, the most important part of the Climate Action Plan is the section on transportation. This part of the Climate Action Plan does not require extreme sacrifice from the population. The Climate Action Plan, transportation section gives the greatest field since over 40% of greenhouse gases are produced by transportation. The Climate Action Plan recommends a transition to electric cars, trucks and buses and constructing electric charging stations. In addition, the Climate Action Plan encourages the construction of light rail Metro and expanded bus routes and replacing diesel buses with electric buses. The government should educate people about the thousands of dollars available when buying an electric vehicle. We should start slowly informing the population and gradually accelerate our pace by adopting climate change solutions. Thank you for allowing me to the speak. James Lawson.

0:36:10.9 Tommi Makila: Yes, hello, my name is Tommi Makila. I am from Upper Marlboro. I have

worked in energy efficiency of rideable energy issues for more than 20 years professionally, so I'm very happy to see a climate action plan in my home county, and I fully support it. I would like to... I have one specific item that I would like to see specifically called out and mentioned and that relates to the twice a week trash collection. We do have some of these... Our elected officials continue to talk about that they would like to return back to the twice a week trash collection, and really from the perspective of green house gas emissions, that is a very problematic item to even consider. I mean as, hopefully, most people know, that trash trucks get incredibly bad mileage that are in the five miles per gallon range, and really having them kinda buzz around the county unnecessarily, emptying half full trash cans twice a week instead of once a week, that would be... It would be, from the perspective of this climate change action plan, could be very counterproductive and really not in line with what we should be doing.

Transportation is a priority in the plan, so that would be against that. Also, the leading by example issues would obviously speak in favor of not making really counterproductive... Taking counterproductive steps. And so, I would just like to see that the plan would incorporate in some shape or form or specific mention about this topic, because it is... Especially what the Director of CRMS mentioned that, let's make this relevant for our community, that is kind of a perennial topic in the county. So I would like to us to take the kind of the right stand on that issue and specifically call it out. Thank you for your time.

0:38:20.1 Bill Pugh: Hi, good evening. My name is Bill Pugh, I'm not a county resident, but I work with the Coalition for Smarter Growth, which is an organization that's been working in Prince George's for over 20 years, helping promote more prosperous, livable sustainable communities, focusing on affordable housing and jobs close to transit in walkable areas with safe streets for walking, biking and other modes of travel. We'll submit our detailed comments in writing, but I wanted to share a few things with you all tonight. First off, there's some very commendable elements of the plan, I think it does an excellent job of showing the impacts of climate change and showing how it's... The residents who are already most socially vulnerable are the ones who are being impacted and who will be impacted the most. So I think the plan does a good job with that. It also does a great job describing and explaining the role of land use in terms of sprawling patterns of land use that drive up car emissions and the amount of driving that people have to do to get around just to meet daily needs and another area it's very actionable and focuses on action that can be done quickly.

A few areas where we think that the plan has some opportunities to be improved as it's finalized and reviewed, I think the shortcoming, the proposed strategies as modelled don't meet the 2030 goal of reducing emissions 50%, and if you look at that, transportation, which is the largest source of emissions is an area where the county can take more ambitious action and set more ambitious goals in line with national, regional best practices.

These will be goals for both, what could be a co-adoption, and for reducing the amount that households have to drive on a daily basis, and the Regional Transportation Planning Board study that will come out this month should be very informative for the county's efforts in that aspect. Also, one other area I'll just quickly highlight is also related to transportation where the plan and... Let's see. It recommends investing in infrastructure to increase transit, car-pooling and non-motorized travel, but it doesn't include any implementation steps unlike other actions.

So that's an area where there's a lot that can be built on. But overall, I think the plan's headed in the right direction. It does a great job acknowledging the role of land use and transportation in terms of climate change and also the development of areas in the county that produce tree cover and some of the resilience over time. So thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight.

0:42:16.5 Sarah Weber: Hi, sure, thank you. My name is Sarah Weber and I am a resident of Hyattsville. No particular affiliation other than being very concerned about climate change and the increasing impact that we're having on the planet.

So I have reviewed the plan, certainly from more of a layman's perspective and just overall I'm very pleased that this conversation is starting and I suppose if anything feel like it's probably too late, like it is everywhere, but very glad to see that this is getting attention now, and I'm overall happy that this will, I think, help us to draw more attention more broadly on what we need to do to begin reducing our carbon footprint.

I think the area specifically that I wanted to comment on going back, I think two speakers was around the solid waste management component of the plan, and even though I think it mentioned in the plan that, that was sort of the smallest component of contributors among the different factors that are outlined in the plan to carbon production, I did feel that there was more that could be done through the plan than what was already indicated. It felt to me that overall, while a lot of what was in the plan was, I guess I would characterize it as passive in the sense that there were changes that didn't necessarily require individual residents to necessarily make a lot of lifestyle of behavior changes, which is fine for a lot of the actions, but within waste management, I think it's an area where it's perfectly appropriate to refocus the behavior change element on residents directly and I would have liked to see more emphasis on an overall approach of waste reduction rather than just diversion from solid waste to recycling or composting.

And while those are certainly elements, I think the bigger element is going to this question of twice a week garbage collection, also reducing sizes of the bins. Where I'm from, the garbage cans are very small and the recycling bins are very big, as an example, but I think that the emphasis needs to be on the residents reduction in the waste production in the first place, rather than keeping the focus on diversion.

So that's kind of the major area that I wanted to emphasize, but overall, just very happy to see the attention on this plan, and I am fully supportive of making it as robust as possible. Thank you very much for organizing these sessions and thank you for the opportunity to comment.

0:45:30.2 Fred Rose: Yes, good evening. Thank you for allowing me to speak. My name is Fred Rose, as you said, and I'm a resident of Fairfax County, but I have interest in climate change and the impacts throughout the region. I worked for a long time in Fairfax County and I'm aware of all the neighboring jurisdictions and their effort. Prince George's County has joined the leaders in the region in preparing a Climate Action Plan, which is very commendable. I think you guys probably have done it in the fastest time I've seen so far considering the other jurisdiction who I'm aware that I have completed a plan. I just wanted to...

I haven't read through the complete draft, but a couple of things that struck me upfront was the fact that your goal, when it was advertised, it says you're reducing your carbon emissions. I would like you to consider using the terminology of eliminating and put your goal right at top. I had to read several pages to figure out what was the goal. Then I find out, "Okay, carbon neutral by 2050," which is noble and consistent with other climate action plan efforts, but to me, it's kind of buried somewhere and the sense of urgency of what this is demands that we clearly state the goal upfront, so everybody understand, "Hey, this is not business as usual or just a nice thing to do. This is absolutely essential."

And the other point I wanna make is that I've been involved with many community-wide planning

effort and we complete the plan and the population itself that supposed to be an integral part of this doesn't know anything about it. And so as government officials, we have to make an extra effort and ensure that we have a communication plan that really reaches out to the populace out there and make them understand and be aware of what's going on. We need to have strategic and deliberate effort in that regard. So the importance of this is clearly communicated across the board. And we make the compelling case of why it's necessary because people hear stuff on the news every night, but like one of the speakers said earlier, people might think this is not the most important thing in their lives, so they don't pay close attention.

So we as professionals have to be mindful that we need to make that compelling case, so people have to pay attention to this. But other than that... One other thing I wanted to mention, as I went through the equity section, which was very nicely written and really gave justice to the acknowledgment of the issues involving disparities in communities and that we need to address that. However, I did not see any mention of President Biden's executive order he signed in February called Justice 40, which is applicable and would be something to be considered significant in terms of not just Prince George's County effort, but nationwide, to tie into that whole process and have the support of the entire country effort behind what we're doing here.

So I would highly consider having that emphasis added to the plan to ensure it's integrated with other efforts and stress the seriousness of this. And again, just one other point and then I'll close. In terms of your timeline in implementing things, 0 to 3 years, I noticed on a lot of the information or the strategy that you had, action that you identified, just bear in mind that from a government perspective, it takes a couple of years to even identify budget and funding requirements to fund the things that you wanna do. So in order to make this really realistic, in terms of getting the actions and the financial part to support it, we might wanna be a little more realistic in how we highlight those timelines. And thank you for having me.

0:51:00.0 Jon Robinson: Hello, I'm Jon Robinson. I live in Adelphi, Maryland in Prince George's County. And I'm interested in... Been interested in the environment for some time. I was involved in Sierra Club for decades, I was chapter chair for three years, and my background is in biology, in particular, ecology. And so I've been following this issue for many decades and at this point, we've procrastinated for such a long time that we're running out of time and we need to act quickly as time is of the essence. And so I'd just like to make a few points. We not only have to reduce the emissions, which is addressed at various levels in the plan, but we also have to look at ways to absorb and sequester carbon that is in the atmosphere.

And toward this end, protecting mature tree cover, forest cover, would be a major contribution. This basically provides four benefits; it sequesters carbon, it improves the local environment, it provides habitat and it reduces flooding. It takes 2 to 3 decades for a cut-over area that has been replanted to start being a net sink for carbon, and we don't have 2 to 3 decades. So, actually buying up forest land to protect mature forest is more cost-effective than paying the same amount to plant samplings or seedlings as the latter will not produce any measurable benefit for 2 to 3 decades, which is long after... Things will either have been resolved and going in the right direction or not.

Other things that need to be focused on are wetlands and marsh systems, these can also sequester large amounts of carbon. And so I think focusing on protecting our existing natural areas, as well as expanding forest cover in the county would be something that should be included in it, and there should be a budget for it. And the efforts to go in this direction should have been incorporated into the new zoning plan that the county is trying to put into action. But perhaps after this next year's elections, we'll have a county council that's more amenable to doing that. Thank you.

0:54:04.5 Janet Gingold: I just wanted to... Hello. I just wanna reiterate that I strongly support Prince George's County's Climate Action Plan. I think it incorporates many things that are absolutely essential for our future health and prosperity. We desperately need systemic change to address systemic problems that are created by our current dependence on fossil fuels. And we need to do as much as we can as fast as we can to reverse the damage that we have already done. This plan includes recommendations for prudent investments for our children's future, for safeguards for our health and quality of life, for transparent governance and public participation, decision-making informed by science and good sense, equity and inclusion for more just outcomes, a just transition to clean renewable energy, smart growth and affordable, reliable clean transportation options, increased energy efficiency and reduce waste, nature-based solutions to reduce impacts of excess heat and extreme precipitation and responsible re-stewardship of our natural resources and our agricultural lands.

If they can't continue to grow our food in places like California because it's too dry, we're gonna have to grow our own food and we need to have agricultural lands upon which to do that. And by starting to think about our land use with climate resilience and climate mitigation foremost in our minds, we can do a lot to reverse the impacts that we otherwise will experience. So I strongly recommend that this Climate Action Plan be adopted and fully implemented and that we continue to work to make it better as time goes on. Thanks.

0:56:50.9 Greg Smith: Hi. I'm Greg Smith. I live in Hyattsville. I've done environmental work of different sorts for about 40 years in North Carolina, in this area including transportation and land use and zero waste and other issues. I agree with many of the comments made today, and I'm glad that the county is developing a climate action plan. I'm grateful to Janet and Hank and all the other folks who volunteered their time, for the staff who dedicated their time. That said, I have at this point, if I look at our county government, especially our elected officials, I have very little faith that those folks get it, or get it to the point and care enough to the point that they would actually speak the truth about what's going on with climate change and what it's gonna take to slow it down and then stop it and hopefully reverse some of the damage.

We need to save every acre, every square inch of arable land that's available, but the same for wetlands and flood plains and forests, so we need to expand wetlands and flood plains and forests. Instead, what we're seeing through the county planning process and decision-making process is they're constantly punching the growth button and approving developments in the flood plains and clear cutting significant forest to provide sprawl development and sometimes develop a bit closer in, but it's still unjustified or overdone. Just to put some of this in perspective, we've been talking... We commented on climate change and the need to address it in the '90s when we were fighting inter-county connector from every angle, both in terms of the need to cut emissions, but also the need to protect those systems that give us resiliency, natural and human resilience, and yet the decision-making process here continues to ignore all of those things. Putting in perspective what it's gonna take to reduce emissions, it has to be in every sector by at least 15%. It can't just be... There isn't any one sector that's gonna deliver such a massive reduction that the other sectors can coast.

So looking at transportation, which is the one that I know pretty well, I know every time I've seen transportation modeling for air emissions, whether it's greenhouse gas emissions or toxic air emissions or ozone precursors, they always rely on overly optimistic technological advances and turn over the vehicle fleet, and that's what would have to happen here if we were to try to reduce emissions from the transportation sector by 50%. On average, everybody would have to have a vehicle that has double its current gas mileage and there would need to be no increase in overall driving. Or we'd have to have a significant increase in overall driving and a significant increase in emissions per vehicle mile driven. And that's all unlikely between now and 2030. I don't mean that just to be super

negative, but that's a reality. We talk about affordable transit. Transit in this region by and large is not affordable, and Metro has been heading in the wrong direction for a long time because of massive under-investment in our transit system.

We would need a complete sea change in the thinking of our elected officials and our agency folks and our population and our business community to achieve these reductions by 2030, or anything close to them, honestly. Again, I don't mean to be a [1:00:11.9] _____. They're gonna love to see this happening, and I really respect the dedication shown by the volunteers and the staff. We need community leaders and elected officials and agency folks who are willing to speak the truth, look at the truth and speak the truth about what it's gonna take in order to achieve these emissions reductions. Thanks very much, take care.

1:00:41.6 Joseph Jakuta: Good evening. My name is Joseph Jakuta, and I live in the city of Mount Rainier, Maryland. I joined the first session, and now I've gotten a chance to read through the... Well, most of the plan, and I just wanna say hi. And first we're doing it for her. We're doing it for her and the other one in there because we really do need climate action and we need it in Prince George's County. And I support adoption and implementation of this plan. I also will say I've been impressed with how well the Commission and the staff have listened to public input. I was lucky enough to be invited to be on the Residential Advisory Group and thought you all did an excellent job considering our feedback and taking it seriously, and I know you all will take this feedback you're getting tonight seriously as well. But yeah, so back to the original point, I support adoption and implementation of this plan and thank you for your time. And she does too.

1:02:23.0 Valencia Campbell: Okay, I wasn't sure because I am Valencia Campbell. I live in Fort Washington, Maryland. And I do want to thank the Commission tremendously under the leadership of Janet. I thought that it was an absolutely excellent document, very, very thorough, and I really appreciated the breakdown of the recommendations that were there in those various areas. The operational area, the mitigation area and greenhouse emissions. And for me, in Fort Washington, we were extremely excited to see something written about the mitigation efforts, where it was stated that there should be no net loss for the trees and that it is important to expand the tree canopy and forest as a land cover because we've just gone through that whole process of trying to fight for our forest. And we know that many of the people spent a lot of time trying to identify what was important for all of us who reside in this county, and we know even the young kids know the importance of trees. My granddaughter, who is in the sixth grade knows that.

So I was just elated to see this document in written form and also the comments that were made about the 2035 document where there was an expectation that so many things would be done and the funding would be there. And so I am hoping, I have lots of other examples, but I don't wanna take over a lot of time, but I am really hoping that this measure is adopted, not only just supported, but we actually see the funding because that is the crucial piece, and as some others have said, folks have to have the interest in seeing that this happens, that we don't want to have a document that is on our bookshelf and we come back five years later, or 10 years later, and having all of this work having to be repeated or updated. So I absolutely thank you for doing this work, I think it's incredibly important and I do hope that we will get to the next step. Because I looked at...

The last thing I wanna say before others get on is I did look at some of the appendices as well, and I know that people talked about what had been done in the past many, many years ago, and we're still talking about some of these things. So I just wanna commend everyone and say that we want to see this funded in our county and people behaving as though they really care about this issue through the funding. Thank you all very much for the time to speak to you, and I'm looking forward to seeing this implemented.

1:06:00.3 Jon Robinson: Yes. I'd like to follow up on what Greg Smith said about the need to be honest. And toward that end, I would like to suggest that the term smart growth needs to be retired. At this point, there is just dumb growth and dumber growth. We need to look at having an economy that is in dynamic equilibrium. In other words, you have change, but without growth in consumption or waste or the numbers of people. So if we don't address that, we're bound to fail. And as Greg knows, years ago when he was engaged in his heroic effort to fight the ICC, I said, "If you can't stop the growth, the ICC is going to come eventually anyway, because there'll just be too much political pressure, and it'll be built regardless of how bad an idea it is." And that is what, in fact, what happened. And if we're not willing to deal with the limits to growth as a society, then we're not really going to be successful at dealing with climate change. Thank you.

1:07:28.0 Brandy Espinola: *Introduce the Priority Recommendations section and what is included in each priority recommendation, highlight several Priority Recommendations as an example of what can be found in the CAP.*

1:16:51.7 Fred Rose: Okay, so I was just writing up that very comment to give you in writing, but I can kind of tell you what I had in mind. When you mentioned the community engagement piece...

1:17:16.0 Fred Rose: Okay. Yeah, I'm from Fairfax County, but I work with the regional government, I work with COD, and so I follow this issue throughout the region. As the jurisdictions developed their climate action plan, I've inserted myself in becoming very interested and tried to provide some input where I can. So...

1:17:47.8 Fred Rose: Okay. Yeah, so the comment about the engagement with the community. I was gonna give you something in writing to make that a little... Stress that very strongly, 'cause community engagement is really important and getting the word out and getting people involved and getting the trust from the community. So I really commend you for acknowledging that, that's an important thing. I'd like to see a more deliberate thing like a communication plan developed maybe, that has specific action things that, you know, how you would reach out to the community. Not everybody will go on a website or get emails and stuff, so that's part of the tool box. But there may need to be very deliberate actions taken to just intensify the outreach to the community, I would say. That's my comment.

1:21:01.2 Jon Robinson: Yes, one of the things I've noticed is there have been thought about doing away with a single stream recycling, because people throw paper along with glass and plastic and everything all together, and in terms of being able to actually recycle paper, it degrades the quality significantly. So it kinda undermines the idea of reducing the carbon footprint, which recycled paper requires less energy than creating paper new from wood. So it seems that that would be a step that could be perhaps implemented under the current one, but you'd have to get, as was mentioned before, buy-in community. So maybe roll something out a community at a time, provide incentives, perhaps a reduction, if they get enough participation, a reduction in the tax fees that goes as support, the solid waste pickup, and I don't know if you've looked at that or not.

1:24:21.5 SR Hartwell: Thank you. I heard a gentleman earlier refer to the Biden, Harris Build Back Better Plan, in particular the Justice 40 Plan. And the Justice 40 Plan, as many of you may know, says that 40% of the funds that will come down from these monies will be used in communities "Most impacted by climate change." I was wondering whether or not the county has made any recommendations in the plan, or where I could find where Prince George's County has made in the plan how we're going to identify those most impacted communities and how we're going to prioritize the work to be done in those communities as a part of our climate action plan. That's a question,

thank you.

1:25:22.9 Dawn Hawkins-Nixon: *the plan does not specify exactly how we will identify those equity areas, but we are starting with the use of COGs equity emphasis area map.*

1:26:17.0 Fred Rose: I'm aware that Fairfax County during the COVID crisis did develop a GIS layer that they believe that sorta... They believe that it sorta typifies the typical disadvantaged or traditionally disadvantaged community. I don't know exactly what the parameters were, or the metrics were, that they measured. So the county might wanna look into something like that in developing some kinda GIS layer that would link kinda closely with the areas that were worse impacted by COVID. And maybe also, if you have data on education or income level, that you can superimpose on top of that and that would kinda give you a good start in how you define those communities, because the issues overlap, healthcare, education, low income and environmental justice.

1:27:32.4 Janet Gingold: This is Janet Gingold. And one of the adaptation priority recommendations very specifically talks about some of these GIS functions and how to identify communities at risk. In the, I don't remember what number it is, but it's the one about protecting the most vulnerable populations from the effect of heat. And that taught... There is specific actions in that priority recommendation that had to do with heat mapping studies and tree cover studies using mapping techniques to have layers that include permeable surfaces, tree cover and heat map data along with socio-economic data. And obviously, that requires a lot of complicated collection of data first and then doing the mapping.

But then it talks about using that data to sort of focus where the county would spend most of its money and how it could prioritize the communities at most, who need it most and invest first in the communities that need it most. So I think that the folks who put this particular recommendation together were very cognizant of the fact that our county is extremely diverse in lots of things. Even though our average tree canopy is about 52%, there are some places inside the beltway where there are hardly any trees and there are some places out, farther out in the exurbs where it's like one big forest.

So we have to make sure that we're using real data to identify where the vulnerability is and address the needs of the community. Is Mary there? She was part of that, putting all of that together.

1:30:45.0 Tommi Makila: Yes, thank you. Yeah, my name is Tommi Makila. I'm from Upper Marlboro. I just want to... The equity mentions prompted me to think of this as more along the lines of what I actually do for my work, related to low-income home weatherization. And I did do a quick search through the draft document for low-income and I did see that their mentions there, commendable mentions about deep energy retrofits and helping low-income people do that. And this may be getting a little bit into the weeds of low-income weatherization, but I think it might be worth mentioning that for example, the Weatherization Assistance Program, which is the nation's largest low income weatherization program, they have pretty strict guidelines for doing energy retrofits.

And one problem for, especially low-income housing a lot of times is that there are other structural issues that have to be addressed, like fixing a roof. You can't put insulation up there if your roof is leaking. And so these homes then get deferred, basically they have to wait until those issues are... Some of the structural issues are addressed. And so maybe just dimension of like, if you really wanna go after the low-income sector housing, you may need to put up some money to also help with other structural issues to kinda ensure that you can address energy issues. A little bit in the weeds, but it is actually a very significant problem when you talk about actual implementation and getting these

homes weatherized, because you can leverage a lot of money, federal money, and there's actually right now a lot of money coming through the pipes to the, yeah, infrastructure bill. Thank you. That's all.

1:32:40.7 SR Hartwell: Hi. Yes, again, I am a Prince George's County resident. And around the Capital Beltway, Prince George's County is the most... It is the county with the most environmental cumulative impacts, waste incineration, multiple coal fired plants, just a number of things that impact our community. One of the things that we're concerned about is how we will go about digging ourselves from out of the hole or how we will go about our mitigation plan. And this gets back to the funding that's coming down to The Build Back Better Plan. There is a concern that when the money comes, or is available within the state, that those funds will not be used as they are intended.

And I didn't know whether or not the plan, or where I could find in the plan, where it talks about how we can hold those accountable for distributing those funds. To see to it that we get, again, we're the most impacted county around the Capital Beltway, to see to it that we get those funds that are intended to address mitigation in our area. And I don't know where I might be able to find that. Maybe you could let me know.

1:34:15.1 Mary Abe: *The draft CAP addresses the need for increased transparency and communication, as well as the establishment of task forces that include community representatives.*

1:35:21.0 SR Hartwell: I hear what you're saying, but I think that we need a top-down and bottom-up approach to this. That yes, the state might come down with their recommendations, but we should also say what our requirements would be. And so I think the sooner we begin to think about that, when these funds are available, I think we'll be in a better position to be proactive about the results that we get, versus being reactive to the mandates that the state puts in front of us. And along those lines, when you talk about having community engagement, I would just like to have someone acknowledge that a lot of people who are doing this work are getting paid to do this work, like many of you, but the rest of us, we have full-time jobs, and then you ask us to come in and do this work and you wonder where we are in terms of our engagement.

And if you have an already overburdened community and we were faced with issues not only around the environment, but we've got issues around policing, we've got issues around COVID, we've got issues in education more so than any other county around the Beltway, that you think about some way of making it easier for the community to participate, even to the point where you would think about compensating community residents to participate and give to the level that you need in order to have it reflect the true voice of the people that you serve. Thank you.

1:37:05.5 Jon Robinson: Yes. Yeah, there's a problem with community engagement and that is, you can engage, but that doesn't necessarily mean that the community is listened too. Early on, I was very focused on the CMA process, I went to the meetings that they had around the county, I made comments and criticisms. I then started going to meetings down in Upper Marlboro and... Now that the meeting's in Upper Marlboro, every time I went the first question I'd ask the staff was, can you point to one change or modification to the plan that you're working on that's been made based on community input? And they either couldn't or wouldn't. And at some point, I just decided driving all the way down from the Delphi to Upper Marlboro and not having any impact was a waste of my time.

And recently we've had gerrymandering where over 100 people signed up, every single person testified against the gerrymandering plan, and yet it passed on six members of the council voting for it, in spite of the fact that... They didn't even hire somebody to speak in favor of the gerrymandering

plan, they just pushed it through. And so it's hard to get people to take the time, as Ms. Hartwell pointed out, they've got jobs, they've got family responsibilities, they have local community responsibilities. It's hard to get people to really participate when it looks like it's just a pro forma exercise, and in the end the political machine is going to do what it wants, and the citizens and residents of the county be, that's just the way it is.

So I think that the county needs to work on making it apparent that they really do listen. Now it looks like in this situation they've listened in the sense that the report is developed, but the question is once it's presented to the council, is it going to go any place, or is it gonna be as so many things have been in the past, something that's just put up on the shelf. I've been involved in these efforts for decades. I was involved in the Plan 2000 decades ago, really, in the 1990s, and it was the same thing. We went through the process, we all had our input, but in the end, the compromises that were made by those of us in the developed tier to try and preserve the rural tier, those compromises were taken advantage of by the developers and the traffic standards had been lowered and so they could put in more development, even though we now had D-level service on traffic.

But they still did sprawl development outside the beltway, so they got their way. And so the question is, why did I spend months going to these meetings, leaving work early? It's a problem, it's not just a problem in our county, it's a problem all across the country. But we really need to address that if you wanna have people take citizen involvement seriously.

1:40:52.2 Fred Rose: Hey, this is Fred again. And John, I support your viewpoint 100%. It's not a problem unique to Prince George's County by any means, it's a problem in general. So what I was suggesting earlier in developing a deliberate communication plan, as part of that would be like a public involvement process to not just dictate to the public what the county is about to do, but to really engage the public and do some consensus building in terms of what the community wants to see happen. It's not just the government's plan, it's the community plan. So yeah, you're right. If you're gonna have trust and support behind this, you actually need a third party to come in and with some credibility that actually provides some kind of consensus built in between folks.

1:42:01.9 James Lawson: I would like to just point out that I was heavily involved in fighting that gerrymander effort, is that 100% of the people that testified at the so-called public hearing were opposed to the gerrymander and wanted to use the redistricting map that had been developed by the redistricting commission. And basically, in spite of 100% opposition, the County Council voted to go with the gerrymandered map. So it's a question of, we get to say, we get to "participate," but we might as well be talking to a wall or to a rock in terms of the response we get. Now, that's not true of all the councilmembers, there were a few councilmembers that were responsive and did their best, but they were just rolled over by the majority.

1:45:00.1 SR Hartwell: Yes, I had difficulty logging into the Zoom due to some technical errors that you all were having, and I missed the first 25 minutes. Was it explained to everyone how these comments would be used? Is this just a listening session? Will they be documented and made part of the plan? I might have missed it if you've already reviewed it with everyone.

1:45:31.4 Brandy Espinola: *We did. Mary, do you wanna go ahead and explain how we are processing all the feedback?*

1:45:35.6 Mary Abe: *The County Council will be provided the draft CAP as is, a supplemental report summarizing public feedback, and a package of all public feedback by January 15th, 2022. The Council will be responsible for determining how to advance the draft CAP and address the public feedback. Help feedback for the Council includes, is there interest from residents to take action here.*

1:49:47.9 Brandy Espinola: *Thank you for attending and providing public comments, please share information about the public comment period with your networks, goodnight.*

Abridged Zoom Chat

18:58:02 From S R Hartwell to Everyone: There are plenty of examples here in PGC where climate change has severely impacted home values, health, and more!

19:32:29 From Melanie Miller to Everyone: Thank you for this work! Its clear leadership in our County has heard and acted on the need! As I work in the MIdAtlantic, Prince Georges County is FAR ahead of most Counties in the Region an action plan! I look forward to seeing the implementation!

19:41:29 From Tommi Makila to Everyone: Thank you for your work and listening to our comments.

19:58:00 From Jon Robinson to Everyone: Hartwell makes a great point!

20:16:14 From Janet Gingold to Everyone: That's why it is so important that you are all here tonight. Don't give up on the process. We have an election coming up