



Local Energy Committee Working Group

May 21, 2010

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Present: Peter Arnold, Chewonki Foundation; Eric Carson, South Portland; Brian Cataldo, Woodard & Curran; Peter Cooke, Maine DEP; Barbara DiBiase, Maine Cool Communities and Town of Falmouth (by phone); Carl Eppich, PACTS; Chris Hall, Regional Chamber of Commerce; Ian Housel, City of Portland (by phone); Ben Lake, GPCOG & CACP; Rebecca Lambert, GPCOG; Steve Linnell, GPCOG and Maine Clean Communities; Becky Lipson, CLF; Paul Niehoff, PACTS; Emmie Theberge, NRCM; Elizabeth Trice, Cumberland County; Beth Valentine, Maine Interfaith Power and Light (by phone); Cynthia Veit, EPA (by phone); Jane West, CLF

1. Welcome, introductions and updates
2. Scope discussion/decisions:
 - a. Timeline

Rebecca presented two options for a timeline to complete an energy and climate plan: 1.5- 2 years or 2.5-3 years. She had been reassured by Clean Air – Cool Planet and ICLEI that it was possible to create an energy and climate plan within two years, even with limited resources. She suggested using the shorter time frame and viewing the plan as a living document, which can add more components and complexity over time, as data becomes available.

The group generally preferred the shorter time frame. There was some skepticism that it would take two years, but Rebecca wanted to allow the flexibility and include a public involvement process, which could be time consuming.

- b. What to include and what not to...

Rebecca presented the options for items to include in the scope of the plan:

1. All energy used here
2. All waste produced here
3. Sequestration
4. Agriculture
5. Adaptation
6. Embodied energy
7. Other?

Rebecca recommended starting with the first two (all energy used here, and all waste produced here), because we have the data for them now, but we don't know much about the others currently.

Peter Cooke asked for clarification on the area that this will cover. Rebecca said that it would cover GPCOG service area, which is similar in geography to Cumberland County.

Eric suggested that the plan include agriculture, because there's so little, and then we could track methane emissions from that source as well. Brian noted that there is data (through RGGI) regarding estimates for emissions from head of cattle and other agricultural activities. Carl added that agriculture may be increasing in the area in the future, and that development is being encouraged.

Elizabeth suggested focusing on just #1, if we're just looking at energy, but if this is also an emissions plan, then shouldn't we include more than waste?

Rebecca stressed the importance of a living document – not trying to do everything at once.

Jane asked if there are any studies on emissions/energy savings from local food production for the region. Carl said that he is not aware of them, but they may exist, perhaps for areas further north from here

Ian noted that there are 2 questions to consider: a) do we have the data; and b) what is the intent of this plan – what to we intend to accomplish by creating it. That will influence the scope of the plan from here on out.

Rebecca replied that we had talked about goals and how we intend to use the plan at the last meeting. Some of the most popular points were as follows: influencing how people use energy in the region; incorporating sustainability/conservation consideration into all policy plans; and to helping to coordinate regional energy and efficiency efforts.

Elizabeth stated that we already have a lot of good data, so let's spend our energy on focusing on reductions and implementation, rather than pursuing more data collecting.

Barbara suggested that the goal should be to influence action and policy. Ian offered that the plan might help to create a model ordinance. Elizabeth suggested the model of the transportation project – Gateway One, and getting towns to adopt a set of model ordinances.

Brian added that each town already has comprehensive plans – looking at those can help us to identify which areas that each town can help with the overall goals (eg. Falmouth is good at growing trees, good for sequestration)

Rebecca cautioned not to bite off more than we can chew. It is important to focus on things that are achievable, not too many points at once. Ian agreed, stating that the focus should be on the first two points. Peter Cooke agreed as well.

Elizabeth suggested borrowing from other areas, not reinventing the wheel. Use the framework established by others, and then we can focus on the more important details.

Eric agreed that we don't want to take on too much. In South Portland, lots of big oil shipping trucks pass through to other areas of Maine. Should the emissions from those trucks be attributed to us, or can we attribute only part of them to us? Rebecca answered that ICLEI protocol focuses on energy used within the region to avoid double counting (reusable water bottle as an example). VMT estimates were based on this model, and only included miles traveled within the region.

Brian raised an important question of how to deal with energy generators in the region. Elizabeth suggested forming a subcommittee to deal with that question and other technical details. Rebecca agreed and asked for other opinions on what should be included in the scope.

Jane noted that sequestration is a bonus (above and beyond energy reductions). It's not something to be focused on right now, but we could incorporate it later. Plus, data is in flux, so it is dangerous to rely on now.

Steve agreed with Rebecca that the plan should focus on #1 and #2. We'll probably touch on a lot of these other points through other future regional and transportation plans. This document should be focused on what we can accomplish, and help inform future planning.

Eric agreed with Jane about not including sequestration (at least right away). Maine forest service needs to "bless" local ordinances regarding forests, so including sequestration may be problematic.

Emmie agreed that the scope should be kept focused, and also that sequestration is a slippery slope, and that we should focus more on energy and emissions savings.

Beth asked if agriculture will at least be partially be covered by waste. Rebecca answered that agriculture has other emissions, particularly methane emissions that were not included in the inventory. She and Eric agreed to meet after the meeting to discuss how agriculture could be included.¹

c. How to divide research, analysis and recommendations

¹ Eric clarified that he is mostly interested in collecting data on agriculture for this phase of the plan. Rebecca agreed that they could do a review to see what information is available in order to include agricultural data in the plan.

Rebecca proposed dividing the plan based on the inventory sectors, which were: transportation, residential, commercial, industrial, and waste.

Beth suggested breaking the sectors down into end users, and making recommendations to municipalities (eg transportation recommendations for the residential, commercial, industrial activities, rather than considered by itself). She also suggested a separate sector for municipal government. Eric noted that government actions will influence other sectors.

Emmie suggested looking at the energy footprint for each end-user. So residents would each have a transportation, commercial, industrial and waste component for each individual. When separated, people don't take accountability for their own emissions. Steve felt that was a good idea – important to determine where the responsibility lies for each of these emissions.

Rebecca liked the idea, but cautioned that we need to be aware of redundancy, or increased complexity.

Brian noted that within each sector, the recommendations could be tailored to the sector, and what other sectors can do to help/influence.

Jane suggested a flow chart for each sector (or resident) presenting lots of choices/steps that people/entities could take to reduce emissions

Liz asked if we couldn't we just cut and paste a whole plan from another area.

Rebecca acknowledged that this would be appealing, but not good for public outreach and participation. If their feedback and thoughts will not be included, this could hinder buy-in from the public. Background research is important, though.

Jane asked if “buy-in” equates to better emissions and energy savings outcomes. Rebecca said that she thought that was the case. We will be discussing public outreach at the next meeting.

Rebecca summarized: we would divide recommendations by end-use groups (residential, commercial, industrial and government), and combine recommendations from transportation and waste into each of these groups.

3. Brief discussion of integration with other regional planning efforts

Rebecca described two other planning efforts. GPCOG has a Lakes Region comprehensive plan in the works that might be extended to the entire region. Also, HUD, EPA and DOT have teamed up to offer a Sustainable Communities. GPCOG, with other partners, is applying for this grant, which would address sustainable transportation, affordable housing, and other issues.

Rebecca noted that our efforts are moving faster than either of these other efforts, and we should continue at the pace that we're moving. We should consider other plans when it comes to recommendations, however. But we don't want to slow this energy and emissions planning process down just to let the others catch up

Rebecca also recommended that we have members from this process involved in the other plans, so that there will be some overlap between these processes, and we won't be duplicating efforts unnecessarily.

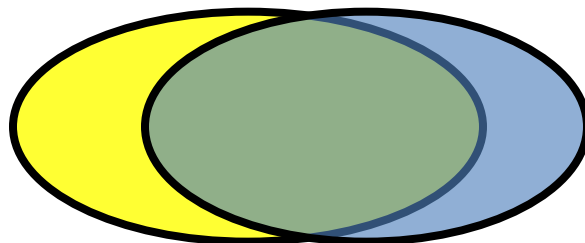
Carl added that the PACTS long range transportation plan addresses environmental quality and energy. It is due to be printed in December, so it would be good to have some incorporation from the Energy Plan into it.

Liz stated that she feels like she is missing some critical info about basic greenhouse gas accounting. How is energy and emissions all looked at in one number?

Peter Cooke recommended the DEP website as a good resource. He noted that it is hard to combine an energy policy and emissions policy together into a single plan, which is what it seems like we're trying to do here. He asked about the history of this process.

Rebecca summarized: GPCOG, in partnership with CACP are leading this process. The directive came from GPCOG board and sustainability goals/principles, and funding is coming from EECBG grant to the County to reduce GHG emissions and save energy and money. She said she would send out refresher documents describing the relationship between GHG and energy use. She noted that it is very important to include and connect emissions to energy, because it appeals to a much wider audience than each would attract on their own. Given that we don't have a lot of power, we need buy-in. To get buy-in, we need to attack this from multiple fronts. We have the energy, emissions and cost data, and the tools in place, so it makes sense to focus on all of them. So it's not just an energy plan, or an emissions plan.

She described the focus of the plan using the following diagram:



If the blue represents climate and the yellow represents energy, we want to focus where the two overlap (the green) as a starting point, because not everyone is interested in both. Some people are interested in reducing energy and energy costs, and others are

interested in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It makes sense to draw from both those interests as the starting point for the plan.

Steve liked the idea of tying transportation to end-users. Otherwise no one takes responsibility for it.

Chris noted the importance of local energy use is. Jobs (job creation) are a very good way to increase public buy-in and support.

4. Discuss next steps
 - a. More research into the creation of these plans, how and when to incorporate the public involvement process, and what will we get out of it.
 - b. Next meeting – talk about public involvement and timeline
5. Set meeting dates.
 - a. Tentatively set for last Friday of the month (June 25th) @noon