

Montgomery County Healthy and Sustainable Communities Workshop
June 26, 2008
Universities at Shady Grove, Rockville, MD

Goal and Indicators Break-Out Session: Draft Notes

Draft Goal: Clean Air: Protect and improve air quality and public health by attaining federal standards, using smart growth land use planning, and supporting environmentally preferable travel alternatives.

Draft Indicators: Vehicle Miles Traveled, Montgomery County Residents - Commuting Patterns (in general), Montgomery County Residents - Commuting Patterns Specifically for Single Riders, Number of Days with Code Orange Air Quality or Higher

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Draft Goal: Clean Air: Protect and improve air quality and public health by attaining federal standards, using smart growth land use planning, and supporting environmentally preferable travel alternatives.

Major Theme of Discussion on the Goal:

1. The goal needs to be modified to allow all possible options for improving air quality.

Comments on Major Theme #1:

- The goal should be to improve air quality by, at a minimum attaining federal standards.
- The group recommended that the Sustainability Working Group take the modified goal into consideration.
- The goal seems regional, but the solution is held locally.
- The goal and solution should be viewed through a regional lens since community members visit places outside of Montgomery County and they enjoy clean air everywhere.
- Accordingly, the group recommended looking at solutions in other counties that may serve as a benchmark for Montgomery County.
- There is a strong desire to improve air quality since it also impacts water quality and health quality.

Draft Indicators: Vehicle Miles Traveled, Montgomery County Residents - Commuting Patterns (in general), Montgomery County Residents - Commuting Patterns Specifically for Single Riders, Number of Days with Code Orange Air Quality or Higher

Major Themes of Indicators Discussion:

1. More attention should be given to the use of code orange days as an indicator
2. The sources of air pollutants need to be further explored.

Comments on Major Theme #1

- Since air does not restrict itself to jurisdictional boundaries, measurements must not be narrowed to air quality monitors.
- Only one air quality monitors do not have to be code orange in order for a day to be code orange.
- Code days are not actual pollutant measures. They simply help communicate a complicated statistical idea with the public about what measures or precautions to take on days when the air is bad.
- Progress is being made in the number of health days. In 1997, the ozone standard set was .084 parts per million (ppm). Currently, ppm is .091 and progressively declining in an effort to meet the standard, .084 ppm, set in 1997.
- The Federal Ozone standards have been raised and the ppm rate is set to .075, which is to be attained by 2015.
- Code orange and red days are above the standard.
- Federal standards have recently changed, causing color coding to shift, which will cause an increase in red days.

Comments on Major Theme #2

- Ozone and Particulate Matter are the two health standards for ambient pollutants.
- In the case of ozone there are two sources that create ozone in the presence of sunlight, volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxides.
- These compounds and oxides include biogenic, area, mobile, off-road, and point sources.
- Approximately 17% of area sources are contributing to ozone. Area sources include but are not limited to paints, solvents, cleaners, gas stations and auto shops.
- Area sources are the fastest growing segment of ozone contributors because they are most responsive to population growth
- The area sources are not as easily regulated.
- Approximately 33% of ozone is produced from mobile source contributions. Mobile sources include on-road and off-road.
- Mobile sources include but are not limited to on road, such as cars and trucks and off road, which involves anything that uses combustion, e.g. marine engines and airplanes.
- Mobile sources have decreased due to cleaner fuel & diesel. However, needs to be more controlled for greater decrease.
- Approximately 33% of ozone is produced from point source contributions, generally from power plants.

Additional Comments on the Indicators

- An infrastructure needs to be created so that new and improved behaviors among citizens can be facilitated. These behaviors can contribute to more quality air.
- Red and orange codes can be based on particulates and not just on ozone.

Prioritized Factors, Action Strategies, and Partners

Factor #1: Lack of understanding among citizens about how to improve air quality

Potential Strategies/Actions:

- Increase environmental awareness via the school system
- Public outreach via retailers

Partners:

- MCPS
- Local governments
- HOAs
- Non Profits
- Retailers (Lowes, Exxon, Giant)
- Suppliers
- Employees

Factor #2: Uncontrolled exhaust from power plants

Potential Strategies/Actions:

- Grants for energy producers to reduce emissions
- Regulation (e.g. cap and trade)
- Increasing renewable portfolios

Partners:

- Congress
- Producers
- Academia
- COG/RPAs

Factor #3: Off road emissions

Potential Strategies/Actions:

- Trade-in/exchange programs (e.g. old lawnmowers for more efficient ones)

Partners:

- Manufacturers
- Retailers

Factor #4: Area source emissions are growing and are difficult to control

Potential Strategies/Actions:

- Education about an individual's actions and resulting consequences
- Better hazardous waste drop off accessibility
- Tree planting

Partners:

- Local media, especially meteorologists

- Local Chambers of Commerce
- Community Groups
- NGOs
- Local Businesses

Additional Factors, Strategies and Partners (as handed in on participant notes forms)

The story behind the data: The trend line

Factors that POSITIVELY influence the trend	Factors that NEGATIVELY influence the trend
Power Plant Retrofit	Population Growth
Electricity Correction	Point sources like power plants
Reducing Vehicle Miles Traveled	Off road vehicles like planes
Federal regulation of point sources & fuels	Mobile on road vehicles like trucks and cars
Businesses assist	Area sources like dry cleaners & gas stations
Free travel on public transportation	Hot weather
	Federal standard change
	Allowing polluting

What are the most important Factors to address? What works?

Priority Factors	What Works (to do better)?
Limit point source emissions	Point controls
Conserve travel	Low emissions vehicles
VMT efficiency	Trade-in vehicle
Lawn mowers	
Power generation	
Tailpipe emission	
Vehicular travel	
Area sources	
VMT – single occupant trips	
Temperature – shading – Urban Heat Island	
Existing infrastructure	
Off-road sources	

Partners who can contribute and assets they can bring to the table

Utility companies & energy producers
Congress and regulatory clout
Academia
Local media-include in weather reports
County government
Non-profits
Regional governments

Mid-Atlantic Northeast Visibility Union
Montgomery County – wind power purchase; use of low voc paint, low voc consumer products; reduce locomotive idling
Clean Air Partners: www.cleanairpartners.net ; Rebecca Davis: Science Education Coordinator

Ideas on what works including some no cost solutions

Grants to utility companies
Regulation
Wind power choice
Telecommuting initiatives
Tree Canopy Program
Urban Heat Island
Competition to build best green roof