

DC-CCCR 2023 Strategy Session: Notes

January 20, 9:00-12:00

Introductory Remarks by Chair Uwe Brandes

Remarks by Council Member Allen:

- CM Allen is new Chair of the Committee on Transportation and Environment, which oversees the Climate Commission.
- \$3.5 billion coming into the District over the next several years focused on transportation, energy, and environment.
- CM Allen described climate priorities for the year ahead:
 - o Embed climate priorities across the District in all decision-making, including economic development and project development. There needs to be a standardized baseline of climate expectations, not merely “add-ons.”
 - o Develop a workforce within the green economy, as a part of social, economic, and environmental justice.
 - o Waterways as a uniting and democratizing space in our city that can be assets to reimagine our future.
 - Waterways should be:
 - Accessed equally by all
 - Resilient in the face of changing climate
 - Economic engines
 - Recreational spaces
- Climate Commission Questions:
 - o Transportation requires so much physical infrastructure and coordination with neighboring Maryland/Virginia, as well as the federally owned property in the District. How do we reduce/eliminate the transportation emissions in an equitable manner?
 - CM Allen: I am also the Vice Chair of the Transportation Planning Board, where I work alongside the transportation officials in Virginia and Maryland to work on the issue regionally. We recognize that the actions of Maryland/Virginia have immediate downstream effects on the District and our transportation patterns.
 - CM Allen: Locally, I am working with DDOT to navigate any potential pushback of changes to our public spaces (especially parking spaces) and think transformatively about how we use our public rights of way. Similarly, we are pushing our transit systems with new efforts such as our recently introduced legislation that makes buses free to residents and makes new investments in improving service.
 - CM Allen: Lastly, we are building out our EV infrastructure to help folks move to electric vehicles. This is especially important to help residents take full advantage of the federal incentives for electric vehicles.
 - CM Allen: We have an important moment with the influx of transportation resources. I am working to point those dollars toward EV charging infrastructure and transit.

- Building emissions are responsible for roughly three-quarters of the District's emissions, with gas as an especially potent source of greenhouse gas emissions. Council passed a law that prohibits new buildings after a certain year from installing new gas infrastructure. But harder yet is decommissioning the existing infrastructure. What are your thoughts to achieving the Climate Commission's recommendation to phase out fossil gas.
 - CM Allen: I will be reintroducing a bill to add a permit fee for any project that adds or replaces gas appliances. And allow residents at a certain income level to voluntarily switch to electric appliances cost-free, which leverages the federal incentives further. Lastly, we are going to make sure that public housing that is rebuilt with electric appliances. Electrifying is especially important for our public housing because of the negative impacts on air quality and public health caused by methane from gas appliances.
 - CM Allen: From the health perspective, renewable gas, bio gas, and fossil gas also have negative outcomes. Transition to electrification is about emissions and health.
 - CM Allen: The transition to electric and efficient appliances – stoves, water heaters, heat pumps etc – is also an opportunity to build an equitable workforce with good paying jobs. But we need a vision that connects these dots.

Review of Ongoing District Activities (see slides)

Commission Member comments:

Visioning the District's Climate Future

- Significant influx of resources flowing into the District from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act with a lot of flexibility which presents a rare and critical opportunity to define community infrastructure for several decades.
- Most of the funding will be managed by the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) through plus-ups to existing programs and new project funds. Both can be strategically deployed to achieve "big picture" goals or run the risk of falling into "business as usual".
- Much of "visioning" sits in MoveDC, Clean Energy DC, or the Comprehensive Plan. But each requires implementation to be effective (zoning, legislation, funding etc)
- The District's effort to rebuild the downtown region is an opportunity to fully reimagine a climate future.

Resilience Hubs

- Concern that other organizations are unable to proceed with resilience hub development because a protocol or program has not been formalized.
- Community leaders in Wards 8 and 6 are ready to move forward with resilience hubs, but have not been able to work in coordination with District agencies or the existing pilot.
- Its unclear how potential community-led resilience hubs can coordinate with District agencies or who defines the resilience hub program.
- In an emergency scenario, resilience hubs are considered "mass care sites" which falls under the jurisdiction of the Department of Human Services

Embedding Climate Priorities

- Climate priorities need to be embedded across all of the District's planning and investment decisions.
- Capital investment plans and regular appropriations to manage physical assets should be reviewed with a climate lens.
- Budgeting for the city has an existing criterion for prioritizing and allocating. Climate should be incorporated in that criteria.

Next Stage of Climate Commission Activity:

- To advance recommendations, the Climate Commission intends to establish a clear message and strong presence among stakeholders, agency partners, and Council on a select number of timely initiatives identified in the 2022 Report.
- Climate Commission should review legislation and lobbying guidance; and review procedures/protocols for comment letters.
- Chair moved 2 resolutions for vote.
 - o Resolution to acknowledge and appreciate designated staff executive, Sarah Edwards, for her service to the DC Commission on Climate Change & Resiliency
 - Jim Dougherty seconded the motion.
 - Unanimous vote in favor.
 - Resolution is adopted.
 - o Resolution to acknowledge and appreciate commission member, Molly Rauch, for her service to the DC Commission on Climate Change & Resiliency
 - Anthony Kane seconded the motion.
 - Unanimous vote in favor.
 - Resolution is adopted.