

FW: Comments from a young person on the County CAP

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To: [REDACTED]**From:** Eleanor Clemans-Cope [REDACTED]**Sent:** Saturday, February 27, 2021 8:35 PM**To:** Climate <Climate@montgomerycountymd.gov>**Subject:** Comments from a young person on the County CAP**[EXTERNAL EMAIL]**

Hi!

I'm Eleanor Clemans-Cope, a junior at Richard Montgomery High School and climate activist with Sunrise Rockville and MoCo on Climate.

I read the entire CAP, from beginning to end. Its goals are excellent, a 100% emissions reduction by 2035 is exactly what we need. It also does a very good job outlining the areas where we should reduce emissions. The CAP is a good step forward for Montgomery County. But it's also a step that took two years, and in that time, we saw little to no actual action to go with the planning. My biggest comment is that we need action on climate, and we need it now.

Here is a short list of my comments on the CAP:

1. The plan is **vague**, with significant information gaps, missing data, and very few details. The vagueness means that the plan is ultimately **unactionable**.
2. The plan
3. **does not reach net-zero carbon emissions**, it stops at an 83% emissions reduction.
4. 6.
5. 6.
6. The plan
7. **lacks relevant background or urgency**.
8. 10.
9. 10.
10. Within the plan,
11. **priorities are difficult to interpret**
12. and high-impact actions are discussed with the same (low) level of detail as low-impact actions.
13. 15.
14. Overall, the
15. plan is **difficult to read**,
16. and there is no usable summary provided.

19.

Here's more details on each of these concerns:

PART 1: VAGUE & UNACTIONABLE

1.

N. There is no

l. timeline by year of what the county will do, how much it expects to spend and what the results will be

4. 5.

O. There are no

K. planning specifics on the correct order of magnitude

8.

a.

b. No estimate

c. or range of overall public or private costs to implement d.

e.

f. No proposed

g. financing strategies

h.

i.

j. No plan to

k. address staffing-- the County is going to bring a lot of new employees on to work on climate priorities

l.

9.

MS. 3/4 or more

MM. of the key actions the county has identified require action of some sort from other levels of government or private entities. Yet these actions are not specified and no plan is laid out to get them to happen.

12. 0.

a. There needs

b. to be discussion of how the county can use their leverage to make other groups (private companies, the state, the federal government) move on climate c.

d.

e. There also

f. needs to be discussion of how the county can leverage its citizens' political and business connections-- lots of MoCo residents are lobbyists, political actors, and business leaders, and they can use their influence to accelerate Climate Action at the state g. and federal level.

h.

i.

j. It's also essential

k. to describe what the county can do if other entities refuse to act l.

13.

MJ. The CAP doesn't

MT. include changes in systems -- there's no analysis of how the market might have to change in order to offer electric vehicles, low carbon electric power, etc.

16. 17.

ML. Lacks plans,

MU. alternate plans, and flexibility

20. 0.

- a. There is no
- b. specific "best case scenario" plan for what policy the county wants to implement c.
- d.
- e. There are no
- f. alternative plans in case anything in the "best case scenario" plan is blocked or delayed
- g.
- h.
- i. No sensitivity
- j. or *'what if' analysis*.
- k. For example, what if faster than expected cost reductions in electric vehicles and efficiency improvements in electric charges occur or, alternatively, what if these efficiency and economic benefits fail to materialize? l.
- m.
- n. There's no
- o. thought about monitoring or evaluating the proposed actions in the CAP, so the plan lacks accountability.
- p.
- q.
- r. Very little
- s. talk about procurement
- t.

PART 2: FAILS TO REACH NET-ZERO CARBON EMISSIONS

1.

N. There is no

l. actual plan for full emissions elimination. The plan only reaches 83% emissions reduction by 2035.

4.

5.

O. A couple of

K. the proposals for "emissions reduction" should not be counted as true reduction, as they are merely mitigations. A future CAP must realize that:

8.

a.

- b. Sequestration
- c. of carbon cannot be an offset to emissions.
- d.
- e.
- f. Carbon offsets
- g. should be taken off the table.
- h.
- i.
- j. Carbon emissions
- k. must be eliminated entirely.
- l.

PART 3: LACKS BACKGROUND AND URGENCY

- 1.
- N. There's no
 - 1. explanation of the climate emergency or carbon budget -- county residents are not climate scientists. Most probably haven't researched the climate crisis. The CAP needs to teach people about the climate crisis so that they can understand the premise of the J. plan.
- 5. 6.
- K. There's no
- L. reasons why county residents and businesses should support the enormous changes that need to be made
- 9.
 - a.
 - b. There is nothing
 - c. in the CAP that explains to the public that unless action is taken with emergency speed and scale, the world will face unfathomable tragedy within a couple of decades – that is within the lifetime of most everyone now living in the county. d.
 - e.
 - f. We acknowledge
 - g. that some of the actions taken will be disruptive and require people to change the way they live. They are still necessary, and it is necessary to explain to the public why we must take them.
 - h. 10.
- MM. Lacks urgency!
- 12.
 - 0.
 - a. Currently,
 - b. we must accelerate the pace of emission reductions about seven times faster each year over the next seven years. Every year we wait makes this far more difficult. The CAP must communicate this urgency.
 - c.

PART 4: PRIORITIES ARE DIFFICULT TO INTERPRET

- 1.
- N. Lacks focus
- l. on the most necessary actions
4. 5.
- O. There are
- K. lots of sub-actions, which are numerous, overlapping, and unclear.
- 8.
- a.
- b. Lots of times,
- c. these sub-actions are more significant than actions that are given their own section. d.
- e.
- f. Sub-actions
- g. are not analyzed for their cost, priority, impact, co-benefits, etc, even though they are critical to the implementation of the plan
- h.

PART 5: DIFFICULT TO READ

- 1.
 - N. In addition
 - l. to a far more detailed, actionable Plan, we need a summary of less than five pages with no technical language and a clear picture of the timeline, reasoning for, and effects of implementing the CAP for county residents
 4. 5.
 - O. There needs
 - K. to be specific explanations of what the plan means to various groups of people (young people, elderly people, rural residents, small businesses, Black people, Latinx people, etc.)
 8. 9.
 - MS. There needs
 - MM. to be a much more efficient and effective way to display data. There is no one place, for example, that highlights the key strategic actions the county is recommending along with cost, benefits and more.
 - 12.
- I hope that you choose to implement these comments and other comments from the community, especially youth, BIPOC communities, and other major stakeholders in the climate crisis. We need to see a County climate policy package by Earth Day this year, ready to be signed and implemented. We must start to act, instead of only planning. If we start now, MoCo could become a climate leader, and an inspiration. My generation depends on it.

Thank you,
Eleanor

Also -- This isn't related directly to the CAP, but I think it's necessary to include in my comments. I went to the Youth Town Hall on the CAP, and it absolutely felt like it was talking down to young

people. I thought that I would have space to comment on the CAP, instead, the public chat was off in the main room and in breakout rooms, and most of the questions in breakout rooms did not directly address the CAP at all. The presentations that were given about what was in the CAP focused on parts of the CAP that are not central to the critical goal of emissions reduction. The whole Town Hall felt like an experience that was meant to tell us what to do, and not an experience that was meant to solicit our comments.



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