Questions and Answers

Neelam Patel: What I'd like to do now is put up the agenda and have Lauren from ICF ask a few questions to each of the presenters. And again, if you've submitted a question and can't stay on the line, you will be provided with the answers in writing.

So, Lauren, if you can ask the first question, please.

Lauren Pederson: Sure. This first question is for Timothy from Berkeley, California. Does Berkeley have a separate citywide greenhouse inventory as opposed to a community-wide greenhouse gas inventory?

Timothy Burroughs: Hi. Yes, we have a greenhouse gas emissions inventory that measures community-wide greenhouse gas emissions. And then we also have an inventory for municipal operations, so I think – I think that's what the question was if I understand it correctly.

So we have an inventory of our city-owned fleet and buildings and of our community-wide emissions, our community transportation, building energy use in each of those major sectors.

And then as I mentioned in my presentation as well as having those big picture inventories, we drill down and measure lots of other progress metrics - about 50 different progress metrics that are more granular than the – than the emissions inventory.

Lauren Pederson: Great. Thank you Timothy.

The next question is for Zach from Austin, Texas. What are the pros and cons to doing 28 separate climate plans as opposed to an overall plan? And to what extent do the individual departments work together?

Zach Baumer: Well, I'm sure you probably need both. I mean if you really want to get full implementation, you've got to have an overall overarching plan, but you – it's hard to get in to too much detail into specific actions.

Having 28 plans is a pain. But in our structure and in many city government structures, it's almost necessary. I mean, silos are something that we love to, you know, hate but they're real and, you know, our departments function as their own organizations.

And they, you know, a lot of this – because of budgeting and they have their budgets and they spend their own money on what they want to spend their money on. So, it's almost essential that they're able to implement within their silo.

The challenge for us and this is where it's useful to have a centralized group, like our Office of Sustainability or our Climate Protection group is that we work across those department to

connect those groups, so we have monthly meetings. We have – our team has liaisons and we basically connect with each of the departments.

And it takes a lot of work to stay on top of the tracking, but we recognize that we can't implement it all ourselves and we need them to come along with us.

Lauren Pederson: Great. Thanks Zach.

And then the last question is for Shannon. A participant asked if the bus line was renewed, will there be an increase in the VMT in Michigan?

Shannon Parry: Well, that's one of those – yes, which is why in the real world we certainly wouldn't choose to close our municipal bus line. But the way that VMTs are measured in our air regions, there wouldn't be as dramatic an increase in VMTs from reducing the bus line.

And it's just one of those places where data is collected in different ways by different agencies. And for a lot of data, whether it's jobs, housing balance, or VMT or others, we end up with consistent data that is reported in the same way every year.

But because of the way the data is collected or the way that it's aggregated, it's not – it's not as relevant at the scale of an individual jurisdiction, especially for a jurisdiction of our size because we're only 90,000 residents – about 8.3 square miles. But some of the data, particularly transportation data and some housing data that we get, is done at the scale of the county. It is hard for our – for us to see the effects of our individual actions in that data.

Neelam Patel: Great. Thank you Shannon and thank you Lauren for asking the questions.

You know, as we close out on today's Webinar, I just want to remind you that we've had some leading national experts in local government on climate action evaluation and measurement. And so, as you reflect on today's Webcast, I would just ask you to remember that you can take pieces of information that these presenters have shared as you develop your own plans, as you implement your own plans and as you develop your measurement systems and gather and analyze your data.

So we hope that this information will help you advance your climate mitigation programs at the local level and please look out for written answers to the questions that we were not able to cover on today's Webcast.

Thank you for joining us and we look forward to having you on our next Webcast, January 18th, a joint Webcast between EPAs Greenpower Partnership and our program, your host today – the EPA Climate and Energy Program.

Thank you.

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