



MEMORANDUM

TO: COG Board of Directors
FROM: Clark Mercer, COG Executive Director
SUBJECT: Executive Director's Report – January 2025
DATE: January 8, 2024

POLICY BOARD & COMMITTEE UPDATES

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) – In November, the TPB received a recap of the Regional Roadway Safety Summit and an update on TPB Community Advisory Committee (CAC) member recruitment. In December, the board adopted federally required transit and highway safety targets and received updates on the DMVMoves work activities and the TPB Congestion Management Process component of the TPB's planning process.

Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC) – During its December meeting, MWAQC received a briefing on the work being done to redesignate the region as now being in attainment of the 2015 federal ozone standard, which current data supports. MWAQC members discussed the development of an Environmental Justice Action Plan, informed by an extensive public feedback process. The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) also briefed members on a variety of tools that MDE has used to help mitigate air pollution in environmental justice communities.

Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy

Committee (CEEPC) - At its November meeting, CEEPC agreed to conduct a mid-course climate action plan progress review and expressed interest in COG developing an associated education and outreach campaign. CEEPC members were briefed about the Maryland Department of the Environment's plans for medium and heavy-duty freight truck EV charging sites along the I-95 corridor, and Electrify DC presented its home decarbonization program and identified some areas for collaboration which included a "one stop shop" for homeowner information and training programs. Members also received an overview of the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP) development that COG is leading for the metropolitan area.



Celebrating regionalism at revamped COG Annual Meeting

On December 11, COG celebrated regional partnership at a revamped COG annual meeting held at a new location, HQO, DC Water's eye-catching headquarters. The event consisted of two parts: a networking reception where members could socialize and an awards ceremony where leaders from across the region received COG's annual awards.

[Read the summary, view photos of the annual meeting](#)

Chesapeake Bay and Water Resources Policy Committee (CBPC) – At its November meeting, the committee received a briefing on the Local Leadership Survey conducted by the Chesapeake Bay Program's Local Leadership Workgroup (LLWG). The survey results provide valuable insights into the knowledge and capacity of local officials, helping the LLWG tailor training and resources to better support local governments. Additionally, CBPC members received updates on federal and state legislative developments related to water issues, including drinking water, PFAS (forever chemicals), and stream restoration.

Food and Agriculture Regional Member (FARM) Policy Committee – At its December meeting, the policy committee reflected on 2024 and considered several proposed amendments to its Bylaws which will be voted on at its next meeting. The committee also received an overview of the forthcoming 2023-2024 Citizen Centric Report, outlining FARM's progress against its two-year Strategic Plan, finances, and what's next for FARM.

Human Services Policy Committee (HSPC) – At its November meeting, HSPC received an overview from the Fairfax County Consumer Affairs team and the Montgomery County Police Department on their work with preventing scams, fraud, and cybercrimes and were briefed on scam and fraud awareness messaging prepared by COG staff for member government use. HSPC members also explored potential areas of collaboration with the FARM Policy Committee, considering initiatives that overlapped well with both food insecurity and human services.

OUTREACH & PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Transportation Planning – In November, the Department of Transportation Planning hosted a Vibrant Communities and Safer Roads Webinar featuring small-scale design projects funded through the TPB's Transportation Land-Use Connections, Regional Roadway Safety, and Transit Within Reach programs.

Public Safety Coordination – In December, the Department of Homeland Security and Public Safety (DHSPS) hosted a tabletop exercise for the Chief Administrative Officers Committee practicing management of active shooter situations. DHSPS also facilitated a meeting between the WMATA General Manager and the COG Fire Chief Chiefs Committee to share and discuss priorities and needs of fire/rescue in the region and Metro, including a revised policy agreement between the Committee and WMATA.

Leadership Training - Applications for the National Capital Region Public Safety Training Seminar is now live on the COG website at mwcog.org/leadership. This three-part course



Historic Preservation and Affordable Housing Roundtable

On Thursday, December 12, COG co-sponsored a Roundtable discussion on affordable housing and historic preservation with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to explore key challenges to preserving historic buildings while meeting the housing needs of residents today. The Roundtable was live streamed to an in-person and virtual audience.

[Watch the roundtable recording.](#)

hosted by DHSPS enhances leadership and professional development skills for public safety, health, IT, emergency management, and homeland security disciplines.

Loudoun Learners - The Department of Homeland Security and Public Safety is proud to partner with Loudoun County on a new exciting workforce development pilot program, Loudoun Learners. This program will officially launch in FY2025 with a team of six Loudoun residents from diverse backgrounds who will become software engineers. The program provides learners with technical training and once the initial training period concludes the learners will provide software engineering support, under mentored supervision, for critical Loudoun County IT systems.

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Union Station Funding – COG statement on Union Station funding received press coverage from WTOP and Washington Post.

[WTOP](#) – quotes COG Board Chair Charles Allen

Regional Drought Watch – The region has remained under a Drought Watch, declared by COG's Drought Coordination Committee. Recently WUSA 9, Delmarvanow, and Washington Post referenced the ongoing dry conditions and Drought Watch.

[WUSA 9](#)

Officials planning for inauguration events – The COG Board of Directors had a briefing in November on the coordination and preparations ahead of the January 20 inauguration receiving press coverage from the Washington Post and WTOP.

[Washington Post](#)

COG annual meeting – Loudoun County Chair Phyllis Randall received COG's Elizabeth and David Scull Metropolitan Public Service Award at COG's annual meeting. The award ceremony was covered by Loudoun Times-Mirror and Loudoun Now.

[Loudoun Now](#)

Return-to-Office – COG Executive Director Clark Mercer was quoted on a Bloomberg article on return-to-office policy in the metropolitan Washington region.

[Bloomberg](#)



DMVMoves Task Force

On December 2, the DMVMoves Task Force held its third meeting and considered several transit scenarios. The meeting was covered by various news outlets, including 7 News, The Center Square, Virginia Mercury, FFXnow, and The Southern Maryland Chronicle.

[Virginia Mercury](#)

[7 News](#)