



MEMORANDUM

TO: COG Board of Directors
FROM: Clark Mercer, COG Executive Director
SUBJECT: Executive Director's Report – September 2025
DATE: September 3, 2025

POLICY BOARD & COMMITTEE UPDATES

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) – In June, the TPB received updates on regional resilience efforts, including a new flood risk analysis, the 2025 Enhanced Mobility Program application, and a DMVMoves update. In July, the TPB set the fall schedule for the Visualize 2050 review, presented air quality and performance results, received a Virginia DOT Southside Express Lanes update, and approved funding for 12 projects under the Maryland Carbon Reduction and Transportation Alternatives Programs.

Chesapeake Bay Policy Committee (CBPC) – At its July meeting, CBPC heard from WSSC Water about a WRF funded project to reduce PFAS – also known as forever chemicals – in biosolids. The group also received an update from the Chesapeake Bay Program Office and heard about a recent report from the MD Pesticide Education Network on the impact of pesticides to the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

Climate Energy & Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) – At CEEPC's July meeting, members heard presentations on and discussed barometric changes impacting recent extreme weather events, the TPB's new flood risk analysis, and draft local and regional greenhouse gas inventories.



Officials gather for COG Leadership Retreat

In July, COG hosted its annual Leadership Retreat, bringing together DC, Maryland, and Virginia officials to tackle shared challenges. Discussions centered on emergency management, transportation, workforce development, and developing COG's mission statement and strategic plan.

Food and Agriculture Regional Member (FARM) Policy Committee – In mid-July, FARM held a policy forum to discuss opportunities for regional collaboration amidst rising food prices, cuts to food distribution programs, including those connecting the region’s farmers to schools and food banks, and upcoming federal cuts to SNAP and Medicaid. As one outcome, FARM Chair Friedson is working with staff to develop a challenge to encourage members to shift a portion of existing food procurement dollars to purchases from local and regional farmers to increase food system resilience.

Human Services Policy Committee (HSPC) – The HSPC met in July to discuss housing solutions for older adults. Members learned about a new and impactful Frederick County service coordination model, heard from the director of Culpepper Garden, one of the region’s oldest and largest affordable senior housing communities, and gained insights from Fairfax City on its locally funded Village in the City model as a replicable and cost-effective approach to supporting aging populations.



Collaboration in Action: Responding to Emergencies, Regionally

On the latest episode of Collaboration in Action, Clark Mercer highlights how regional public safety officials work together to prepare for and respond to emergencies in the DMV. The episode looks at the January 29 mid-air collision near Reagan National Airport and shows how the region’s mutual aid agreement enabled a swift, coordinated response.

[Watch the episode](#)

OUTREACH & PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

COG 101 Presentations – Clark Mercer made presentations to Arlington and Charles County officials to detail COG’s work in the county and regionally, as well as the Return on Investment for member governments. Mercer also made a presentation to the Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce.

Atlanta ARC Leaders DMV Visit - COG staff supported the Atlanta Regional Commission’s 2025 LINK trip to the DMV, which hosted more than 130 government, business, and civic leaders from metro Atlanta. Staff organized parts of the agenda, and Clark Mercer, Hilary Chapman, and Sam Kenney joined panels highlighting regional insights on housing, infrastructure, and innovation.

COG Economic Dashboard - COG began sending a revamped version of its newsletter on economic trends promoting its Regional Economic Monitoring System (REMS) reports and new interactive dashboard, which tracks three decades of regional data on jobs, unemployment, inflation, and housing. Early insights showed the Washington MSA lost 17,000+ federal jobs between June 2024 and June 2025, making federal employment the fastest-shrinking subsector in the region. The reports also generated strong media interest.

Go Recycle Campaign – COG wrapped up its annual Go Recycle paid media campaign in June, running from June 9 to June 27 with \$65,000 in paid media funded by sponsor local governments and businesses. The campaign theme was “WASTED – 1/3 of all food we buy, we throw away. Plan your shopping to save money and reduce waste.”

Curbside Management - COG transportation staff hosted a TPB Regional Curbside Management Forum on August 2 on managing curb space for vehicles, transit, cycling, freight, and ride-hailing.

Commuter Connections – COG Commuter Connections staff, along with partners at the Prince George’s County Department of Public Works and Transportation, participated in tabling events at NASA Goddard Space Flight Center on July 23 and 30 to educate federal employees about alternatives to driving alone in light of the Return to In-Person Work Executive Order.

Public Safety Trainings - Between June and July, COG staff conducted several key regional initiatives, including from June 2–6, the Crisis Negotiation Subcommittee held an Advanced School to further negotiator training in the NCR; and on June 3–4, DHSPS hosted the Mission Based Resilience Self-Leadership Training Course, equipping stakeholders with enhanced physical, mental, and spiritual skills to manage stress.

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Flood Risk Analysis - The TPB flood risk analysis was covered by several news outlets, including WTOP, The Washington Post, FOX 5, WUSA9, MyMCMedia, Bethesda Today, and the I Hate Politics Podcast.

[The Washington Post](#)

New Crime Dashboard – COG’s new regional crime dashboard has received coverage in various local, regional, and national outlets, including NBC4, Fox 5, 7 News, WUSA9, FFXnow, Government Executive’s Route-Fifty site, WTOP, MyMCMedia, and CTV Prince George’s News.

[Route-Fifty](#)

Homeless Encampment Response – COG data and experts have been quoted in recent stories on homelessness, including Washingtonian, Baltimore Sun, Street Sense, and Fox 5.

[Washingtonian](#)



Montgomery County Fireworks Safety Demonstration and Press Conference

On July 1, COG convened regional fire chiefs at the Montgomery County Public Safety Training Academy to do a safety demonstration on the dangers of fireworks. The press conference and demo were covered by The Washington Post, DC News Now, NBC4, Fox 5, 7 News, WUSA9, WTOP, WAMU, MyMCMedia, and Bethesda Today.

[Washington Post](#)