



MEMORANDUM

TO: COG Board of Directors
FROM: Clark Mercer, COG Executive Director
SUBJECT: Executive Director's Report – March 2025
DATE: March 5, 2025

POLICY BOARD & COMMITTEE UPDATES

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) – In January, the TPB discussed its 2025 focus areas: Visualize 2050 National Capital Region Transportation Plan approval, roadway safety, implementation of climate change recommendations, and bolstering the region's transportation resilience. The board approved nearly \$3 million for DC transportation projects, including \$2.1 million to rehabilitate the Capital Crescent Trail. In February, the TPB approved final 2025 regional transit asset management targets for revenue vehicles, including bus, rail, and service vehicles rail track, systems, and signals and staff presented results of the 2024 TPB Intercity Travel Study.

Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) – At its January meeting, CEEPC discussed the 2025 outlook for the committee, including discussing focus areas and legislative priorities. CEEPC also had in depth discussions on priorities for the new projects, including a climate goals mid-course review, a potential regional climate outreach and education initiative, and engagement for the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant comprehensive climate plan development.

Chesapeake Bay and Water Resources Policy Committee (CBPC) – At its January meeting, the committee received a federal legislative update covering the new Congress, committee assignments, and the upcoming reconciliation package. The committee also received an overview of key legislative issues in Maryland and Virginia, focusing on budget concerns and specific bills that could affect local wastewater, drinking water, and stormwater management. Additionally, there was a presentation on



Building Bridges for a Stronger DMV Region

Partnership is at the heart of the Council of Governments' work, and in 2024, COG launched some of its most ambitious collaborations yet, such as the DMVMoves transit initiative, a major backup water supply study, and new efforts to enhance public safety coordination.

Learn more about this collaborative work and how COG is building on these initiatives in 2025 in COG's annual report and corresponding video.

[View the annual report & video](#)

the Potomac Secondary Source Study, highlighting the project's goals, its current status, and next steps.

Food and Agriculture Regional Member (FARM) Policy Committee – At its February meeting, the committee received a presentation on Avian Influenza by Maryland's State Veterinarian and MD's State Public Health Veterinarian. The MD Secretary of Agriculture and Virginia's Deputy Commissioner of Agriculture also provided comments. Staff prepared a handout of key messages in consultation with the speakers. Staff also developed and distributed two comprehensive memos on federal and state food and agriculture legislation.

Human Services Policy Committee (HSPC) - At the January HSPC meeting, committee members were briefed by representatives from the District of Columbia, Prince George's County, and Virginia Social Services on Kinship Care for families, which focuses on moving from a child welfare system to a "child and family wellbeing system." Members also received an overview of the District of Columbia's Office of the State Superintendent of Education and the Low-Income Investment Fund research detailing childcare infrastructure in the District of Columbia.

OUTREACH & PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Federal Workforce – On February 20, Clark Mercer participated in a meeting of public, private, and philanthropic partners to discuss joint actions to support area federal employees impacted by changes to the workforce. On February 22, Mercer joined a panel of speakers to address the Emergency Committee on the Impacts of Federal Workforce and Funding Reductions of the Virginia General Assembly. He discussed federal workforce cuts and associated impacts to the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Transit/DMVMoves – On February 24, COG's Clark Mercer, Kanti Srikanth, and Eric Randall briefed the Transit Caucus of the Maryland General Assembly on the DMVMoves transit initiative. On February 28, the DMVMoves Community Partners Advisory Committee and Government Partners Advisory Committee met jointly to discuss Metro's updated funding needs and receive updates on DMVMoves' working groups.

Economic Development – On February 5, ULI-Washington hosted the Third Annual Future Forum: Creating a Playbook of Resilient Housing and Economic Development Solutions at the National Building Museum. COG was a partner in helping organize the event, which drew more than 400 commercial real estate professions and local government officials from around the region.



Collaboration in Action: Roadway Safety

In the latest episode of COG's Collaboration in Action video series, Clark Mercer spoke with officials across the region, including District of Columbia Councilmember and 2024 TPB Chair Christina Henderson, on several initiatives to create safe streets for all road users—highlighting COG/TPB roadway safety programs.

[Watch the episode](#)

Electrifying the Future Forum – On January 30, COG and the Greater Washington Region Clean Cities Coalition hosted a forum, Electrifying the Future: Strategies for Climate Pollution Reduction, at the Washington Auto Show. This event, which brought together more than 100 participants, including elected officials, environmental planners, and fleet managers, examined the current state of vehicle electrification in the region and provided an outlook to sustain growth and further expand EV usage.

Point-in-Time Count - On January 29, COG housing staff joined with volunteers in the District of Columbia to participate in the Point-in-Time (PIT) Count of persons experiencing homelessness. On January 22 and 29, area jurisdictions conducted their annual counts, which are required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and will inform COG's regional report on homelessness that is released in the spring.

Allies in Action - The Transportation Planning Board joined nearly 200 organizations around the country in pledging to be part of the federal Allies in Action initiative. By becoming an ally, the TPB is committed to increasing roadway safety in the District of Columbia, suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia, while providing \$480,000 in technical assistance grants and continuing to sponsor and implement the Street Smart safety campaign.

Winter weather coordination – In January and February, the COG Department of Homeland Security and Public Safety (DHSPS) held conference calls to support regional coordination and collaboration to prepare for, respond to, and recovery from the significant snowfall that widely impacted the NCR. Setting a record high for engagement on COG's snow calls, 1,000 stakeholders from across the region participated.

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

DCA mid-air collision - Stories referencing COG and the region's Mutual Aid Agreement appeared on outlets like the NBC national news as well as local news sites like FFXNow. COG and area governments also coordinated messaging encouraging residents to call 911 if they found debris from the accident, which was shared widely on social media as well as media outlets like the Washington Post, WTOP, Inside NoVA, DC News Now, 7 News, CBS News, and several wire stories.

[DC News Now](#)

Return-to-office & commuting - Recent stories on NBC4, DC News Now, and WTOP about employees returning to work have featured COG's Commuter Connections program as a free service and valuable resource for area residents.

[NBC4](#)



Federal workforce changes and impact

Clark Mercer's presentation to the VA General Assembly and COG data analyses have been cited by various outlets, including the Washington Post, AP, Axios, Virginia Mercury, WAMU, and VPM, on the topic of the federal workforce changes and the potential impact to the metropolitan Washington region.

[Virginia Mercury](#)