



MEMORANDUM

TO: COG Board of Directors
FROM: Clark Mercer, COG Executive Director
SUBJECT: Executive Director's Report – September 2026
DATE: September 2, 2026

POLICY BOARD & COMMITTEE UPDATES

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) – In May, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) approved 12 Transportation Land-Use Connections (TLC) and Regional Roadway Safety projects. The board also reviewed congestion analysis tools.

In June, the TPB approved a Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) amendment that continues the I-495 Southside Express Lanes study. The TPB also approved performance targets for peak hours of delay and non-single occupancy vehicle mode share.

In July, the TPB approved \$2 million in Transportation Alternatives Set Aside Program funds for a Montgomery County shared-use path. Additionally, the board published five resilience case studies, set emission targets, and released the 2026 Congestion Management Process (CMP) Report.

Chesapeake Bay & Water Resources Policy Committee (CBPC) - The CBPC received updates in May on federal and MD/VA state legislative actions. The committee also reviewed a presentation on water responsibility and opportunities for localities to get corporate funding for water projects as well as a presentation on a Stormwater Flood Resilience Plan, including a roadmap to assess risk and implement optimal, equitable, and actionable flood mitigation solutions.

Climate Energy & Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) - At its July meeting, CEEPC received briefings on Fairfax County's clean energy successes, solar market strategies and balcony solar, and Virginia's development of a 2026 Energy Plan. CEEPC provided a comment letter on the draft plan applauding the state for rejoining the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) and encouraging



COG Retreat convenes area leaders

In June, COG held its annual gathering to build stronger regional connections. The retreat featured in-depth discussions on economic development, housing, and water quality and Chesapeake Bay goals, which also included a tour of the Horn Point Laboratory.

aggressive energy efficiency, solar deployment, affordability, energy storage, grid modernization, and regional coordination.

Food and Agriculture Regional Member Policy Committee (FARM) - Staff worked on follow-ups from a FARM Work Group meeting at the end of June, and a listening session on the Local Food Procurement Challenge with farmers and food distributors of a range of sizes. Staff is preparing for FARM's joint meeting with HSPC in September, fall Work Group meetings, and a to-be-relaunched NationalCapitalFarms.org website promoting local food and farms in the region.

Human Services Policy Committee (HSPC) - The committee met in July to discuss Guaranteed Income Pilots in the region. Leaders from the Greater Washington Community Foundation, Arlington Community Foundation, and CASA shared pilot results and strategies for local government support. Members also helped shape the draft update to COG's Regional Compact to End Homelessness alongside the Homeless Services Committee.

OUTREACH & PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Regional Cooperation – In June, COG Executive Director Clark Mercer met with a State Department delegation of global leaders to discuss regional cooperation. The session highlighted cross-jurisdictional collaboration, public engagement strategies, and the critical role of local government partnerships as America celebrates its 250th anniversary.

COG Recognized at NARC Annual Conference – COG staff presented the Transportation Planning Board's Visualize 2050 plan at the National Association of Regional Councils conference and also received a Regional Achievement Award for Talent Capital, an AI-powered workforce platform building a resilient regional economy.

Commuter Connections Employer Awards

– The COG Commuter Connections program recognized five organizations at its 29th annual Employer Awards in June. These regional leaders were honored for implementing outstanding commute programs that reduce single-occupant vehicle trips, cut greenhouse gas emissions, and promote sustainable transportation across metropolitan Washington.

[Learn more about the awardees](#)



Collaboration in Action: Making biking a top travel option

The latest episode of Collaboration in Action explores the regional bike network, featuring the 25th Bike to Work Day hosted by COG, a tour of the Capital Bikeshare warehouse, and an upgraded trail in the City of Hyattsville.

[Watch the episode](#)

Data Center Forum - COG held its third and final forum on data centers in May, which examined land use, economic, and infrastructure impacts. Sustained regional collaboration remains essential to balance economic development with community needs.

[Learn more about the series](#)

Public Safety – The COG Emergency Preparedness Council hosted a series of informational briefings regarding America 250 and other major events this summer, including the Salute to America July 4th celebration. These briefings are provided by the Director of DC Homeland Security & Emergency Management Agency to share information and enhance the situational awareness of the region.

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Regional Drought Watch Announcement

– COG’s Regional Drought Watch declaration was covered by more than a dozen area news outlets, including DC News Now, FOX5, FFXnow, NBC4, WTOP and WUSA9.

[NBC4](#)

Air Quality Alerts – COG’s Air Quality Alert due to the July 4th fireworks show was covered by various outlets, including DC News Now, NBC4, FOX 5, 7News, WUSA9, WTOP, Washington Examiner, and CBS News. Later in July, COG’s Code Purple Alert due to wildfire smoke from Canada received dozens of stories on all regional outlets and some national outlets.

[WAMU](#)

Commuter Connections 29th Employer

Awards – The 29th Employer Awards ceremony at the National Press Club and an award recipient were covered by Patch.

[Patch](#)



COG Regional Fire Chiefs Promote Fireworks Safety

Fire officials from the COG Fire Chiefs Committee shared safety warnings, legal reminders, and conducted a live demonstration highlighting the dangers of illegal fireworks in late June. The conference was covered by Alexandria Brief, DC News Now, and WTOP.

[WTOP](#)