

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

2012 Policy Priorities

22 Jurisdictions • 250+ Elected Officials • 5 Million Residents

COG is the regional council for the metropolitan Washington area with more than 250 local, state and federal elected officials representing 22 local governments. COG also hosts and supports the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board, our region's metropolitan planning organization (MPO) and the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee, the tri-state air quality planning organization.

Comprised of small and large, urban and suburban jurisdictions, COG understands well the complexities of regional collaboration. We also know its value. There is strength in numbers. Only by working together can we tackle the complex issues of the day with greater efficiency and effectiveness.

Region Forward is COG's vision. It is a commitment by COG and its 22 member governments to create a more accessible, sustainable, livable and prosperous region. Every level of government has a role to play in achieving this vision. COG's policy priorities and supplementing issue briefs highlight what those roles are and actions necessary to strengthen the economic competitiveness of the National Capital Region and secure a better future for our residents.



PROSPERITY

A resilient economy and pre-eminent knowledge hub

- Foster job creation at all levels, attract world class businesses, and strengthen the region's economic competitiveness.
- Make strategic investments in human capital and infrastructure, sustain funding for education, and encourage workforce training.



SUSTAINABILITY

Healthy air, water, and land, abundant renewable energy and a smaller carbon footprint

- Support federal and state policies that supplement local funding capacity and provide local governments and utilities with the flexibility needed to meet wastewater, septic and stormwater requirements for restoration of the Chesapeake Bay, Potomac River and local waters.
- Support energy efficiency, energy conservation and renewable energy policies and programs that reduce energy demand and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Support EPA national rules to reduce cross state pollution-creating emissions, and help states and local governments meet the federal air quality health standard for ozone.



ACCESSIBILITY

Walkable, mixed-use communities with housing and transportation choices

- Provide a substantial increase in funding to address the current underinvestment in the region's multi-modal transportation network.
- Support and incentivize integrated land use, transportation and environmental planning.



LIVABILITY

Vibrant, safe and healthy neighborhoods

- Promote comprehensive public health policies that focus on wellness and prevention, capacity building, incorporate a host of societal risk factors, and encourage regional collaboration.
- Invest in the infrastructure, equipment, training and personnel needed to enhance the all hazards emergency response capacity of local and regional entities.



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Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

2012 Policy Brief: Economic Development

22 Jurisdictions • 250+ Elected Officials • 5 Million Residents

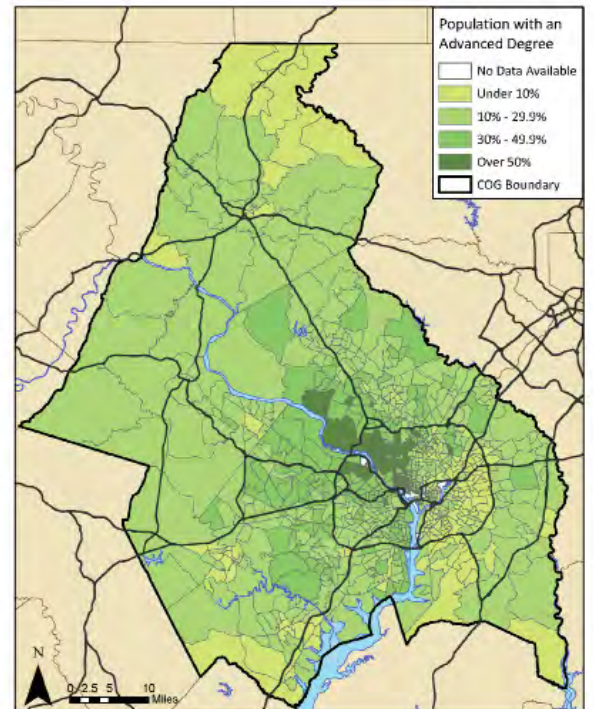


Challenge

While the presence of the federal government has largely helped to insulate the National Capital Region from the more severe impacts of the recession felt in other regions, anticipated reductions in federal spending mean that the region will need to diversify its economy to remain resilient and competitive in the coming decades.

Between 2010 and 2030, the National Capital Region is projected to add over one million net new jobs, and will require over 1.8 million replacement workers to fill new jobs and those vacated by retirees. Emerging industries for the region include health care, life sciences, information technology, and security. In addition, higher education will continue to be a major driver for economic development. Attracting and retaining employers in these industries depends on the provision of high-quality infrastructure, including transit, a highly educated workforce, and housing located near job centers that employees can afford.

The region's federal government agencies and private employers provide many high-quality jobs, making the National Capital Region a major destination for highly-educated workers from around the country and abroad. However, many of the region's residents are not equipped with the education and skills to take advantage of these opportunities. Entry-level jobs may not offer clear career paths for advancement, and given the region's high educational attainment levels, less-educated workers often can't compete for jobs even when they meet job requirements. This is a particular problem on the eastern side of the region, where educational attainment rates are lowest and unemployment rates are highest. In addition, the region's major job centers are concentrated on the western side of the region, often in locations that are not accessible by public transportation. The region needs to provide multiple pathways to high school completion and post-secondary education, and create stronger links between employers and high schools.



Educational Attainment - High, 2005 - 2009
Percent of Population Over 25 Years with a Master's, Professional, or Doctoral Degree

Regional Commitment:

Sustain an annual 1 to 3% increase in the number of new jobs.

Region Forward Prosperity Target

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2012 Policy Brief: Economic Development

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- The Region Forward Coalition has chosen workforce training as one of its priority areas for the year. Focusing on health care, an emerging industry in the region, the Coalition is currently pursuing a regional certification for home health aides to eliminate barriers to working in other jurisdictions.
- In 2012, COG and its local government and business partners will evaluate the possibility of developing a Metropolitan Business Plan. Based on models of private-sector business planning, Metropolitan Business Plans engage regional stakeholders to analyze market positions, identify strategies and policies to capitalize on regional assets, and establish operational and financial plans to achieve regional revitalization.

What We Need From You

Federal

- Support resources to grow Regional Innovation Clusters in the National Capital Region
- Maintain support for the Workforce Investment Act, TANF Welfare-to-Work, and federal work study and financial aid funding programs, and simplify rules for accessing these programs to encourage broader access

State

- Encourage the participation of State education, economic development, and transportation agencies in the Region Forward Coalition
- Target investments and technical assistance to encourage identified growth industries and support workforce development pathways for those industries
 - Support Career and Technical Education programs in high schools

Local

- Align workforce development more closely with local economic development strategies
- Encourage major private employers to develop linkages with local high schools, community colleges, and vocational programs

For more information about COG, this Economic Development Policy Brief, or any other of COG's Policy Priorities, please contact Nicole Hange, COG's Government Relations Coordinator at 202.962.3231 or nhange@mwkog.org

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Challenge

Meeting Chesapeake Bay goals for reducing pollution from urban sources in the Washington metropolitan region will require the implementation of increasingly costly pollution controls. Improvements to date in reducing the amount of nutrients and sediment that flow to the Bay have come largely from upgrades to wastewater treatment plants and the implementation of best management practices on farms. However, the federal-state Chesapeake Bay Program has determined that the Bay is still too polluted to meet water quality standards.

Under the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) regulation that EPA issued in December 2010, the Bay watershed states and the District of Columbia are required to pursue further efforts to reduce pollution. These include additional reductions from the agricultural community and wastewater plants, as well as increased regulatory (MS4) requirements for local government stormwater management programs. These include provisions to retrofit older developed areas built before the routine installation of modern stormwater controls, which is a complex, highly costly process. In comparison to reduction efforts to date, these potential new measures will cost several orders of magnitude more per pound of pollutant removed, potentially as much as \$10 billion in the COG region. Based on current budgets and technology, this will exceed local governments' ability to achieve full implementation by the current 2025 deadline.

Chesapeake Bay by the numbers:

- Largest estuary in the United States
- 200 miles in length
- 64,000 square mile watershed area
- 11,684 miles of shoreline
- 150 major rivers and streams in watershed

Regional Commitment:

By 2025, achieve 100% of Chesapeake Bay Program's Water Quality Implementation Goals;

By 2050, 50% of all sentinel watersheds will be in good or excellent condition

Region Forward Sustainability Targets

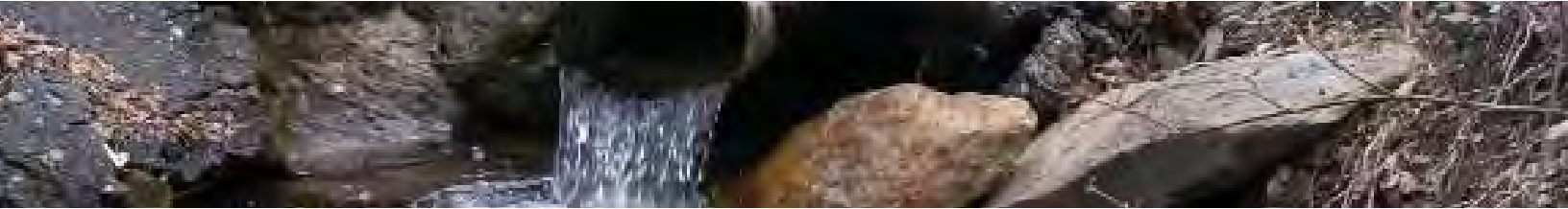
COG's members have:

- Participated in efforts to develop more detailed plans for implementing the Bay TMDL, known as watershed implementation plans (WIPs);
- Remained on schedule installing state-of-the-art controls at their wastewater plants;
- Implemented utility fees or dedicated taxes to raise additional funding and install more water quality controls under their stormwater management programs;
- Pioneered state-of-the-art stormwater technology, such as low-impact development and environmental site design techniques, as well as extensive efforts to educate the public on the impacts of urban stormwater.

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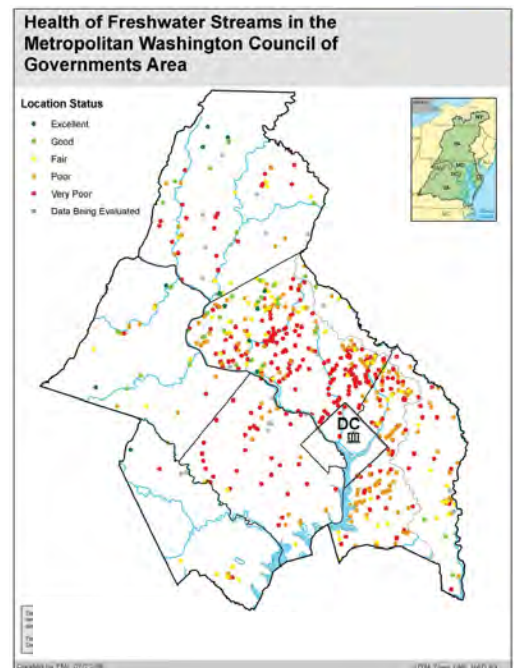
2012 Policy Brief: Chesapeake Bay & Stormwater Management

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What We Need From You

- Flexible, realistic schedules for TMDL implementation; consideration should be given to extending the 2025 deadline
- Development of alternatives to installing highly expensive stormwater retrofits of existing urban lands as a means of reducing urban stormwater pollution, such as viable trading systems between stormwater and wastewater or with agriculture
- Funding support from state and federal governments, including enhancements to existing programs that provide cost-share funds for wastewater plant upgrades, as well as new funds to supplement other local government responsibilities, such as for stormwater management and septic systems
- State and federal regulations that provide flexibility to local governments in the implementation of new stormwater standards, that favor infill development and that integrate MS4 permit and Bay restoration requirements



For more information about COG, this Chesapeake Bay & Stormwater Management Policy Brief, or any other of COG's Policy Priorities, please contact Nicole Hange, COG's Government Relations Coordinator at 202.962.3231 or nhange@mwkog.org

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Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

2012 Policy Brief: Transportation Funding

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Challenge

In 2009, the National Surface Transportation Infrastructure Financing Commission warned: “The nation faces a crisis. Our surface transportation system has deteriorated to such a degree that our safety, economic competitiveness and quality of life are at risk.”

This crisis is acutely felt in the National Capital Region where the vast majority of funds are needed just to maintain the existing system. Local and state leaders have been forced to cut or delay new projects that are necessary to meet the needs of our growing region. In order to successfully compete in the global economy, we must take steps to repair our roads, bridges and transit systems, and provide new capacity to meet new demands. The transportation funding squeeze has occurred at both the state and federal levels, including shortfalls for both roads and transit as revenue sources continue to decline.

The current structure and levels of federal and state transportation funding are ill-suited for addressing pressing needs for system maintenance, new infrastructure, and the increasingly urgent problems of congestion, rising energy costs and climate change.

Regional Commitment:

The region’s transportation system will give priority to management, performance, maintenance, and safety of all transportation modes and facilities.

Region Forward Sustainability Target

The region has achieved some short-term successes in funding pressing transportation improvements with existing resources. Funding for the Metro system has become more stable with the commitment of additional state and local revenues. Increasingly, toll revenues are being effectively used to finance road improvements. Federal stimulus funding has been used for a variety of rapid-turnaround projects throughout the region, including a major TIGER grant to COG.

In 2010, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) at COG commissioned a financial analysis of available revenues and planned expenditures for transportation in this region through 2040. While roughly \$223 billion in revenues are “reasonably expected to be available” both short-term and long-term revenue increases are necessary in order to keep up with a growing population and rising costs of maintenance and construction. States and local governments have been creative in meeting immediate transportation demands, but such short-term infusions are not enough. More systemic change is needed at the federal and state levels. *Potential sources of additional revenue include:*

- Indexing fuel taxes to inflation
- Increases in vehicle registration fees
- New tolling or pricing systems on area roadways

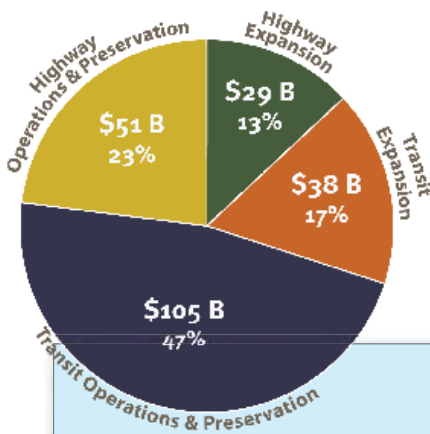
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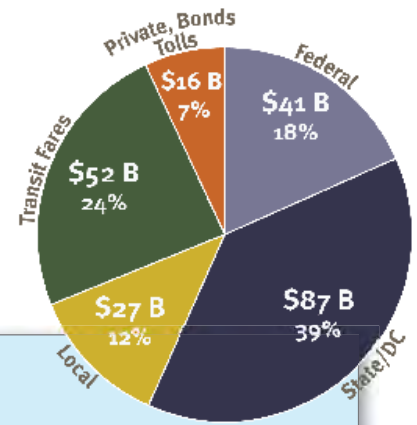
2012 Policy Brief: Transportation Funding

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Constrained Long-Range Plan Expenditures

Revenues by Funding Source



What We Need From You

While action is required by both the state and federal governments, much attention in 2012 will focus on Capitol Hill. Congressional authorization of the federal transportation programs offers an opportunity to restructure the nation's transportation policy and to substantially increase funding levels over the long term.

The policy principles below are the official position of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) at COG regarding the future of the federal transportation programs. These principles were adopted in September 2008 in anticipation of the reauthorization of the federal surface transportation legislation. The current authorization, SAFETEA-LU, was due to expire in September 2009, but has been extended to March 2012.

1. Fundamental changes are needed in the current structure and funding of federal surface transportation programs: current planning, programming, and environmental processes are overly cumbersome and inefficient, and inadequate funding levels are resulting in serious under-investment in transportation.
2. An explicit program focus is needed to put and keep the nation's transportation infrastructure in a state of good repair, and to ensure that it is operated efficiently and safely.
3. Decisions on investment in new transportation capacity should be based on a rigorous and comprehensive analysis of economic, social and environmental benefits and costs, which assesses all modal and intermodal options with uniform evaluation procedures and criteria.
4. Federal transportation policy should provide for increased federal funding focused on metropolitan congestion and other metropolitan transportation challenges, with stronger partnerships between federal, state, regional and local transportation officials.

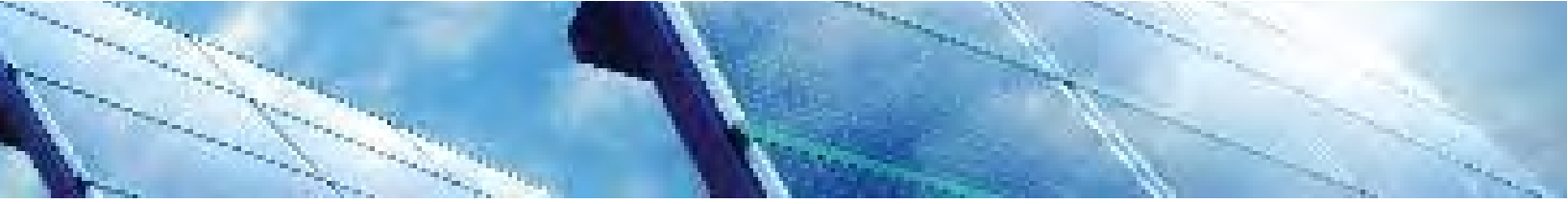
A substantial increase in federal transportation funding will be needed to address the current under-investment in the nation's transportation system, and should be sought from:

- Increases in federal fuel taxes or other user-based taxes and fees;
- Pricing strategies enabled by emerging technology for all modes of travel, including rates that vary by time of day, type of vehicle, level of emissions, and specific infrastructure segments used;
- Inclusion of major transportation investments in legislation to create national infrastructure banks or bonding programs.

For more information about COG, this Transportation Funding Policy Brief, or any other of COG's Policy Priorities, please contact Nicole Hange, COG's Government Relations Coordinator at 202.962.3231 or nhange@mwkog.org

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Challenge

The metropolitan Washington region has traditionally been heavily reliant on fossil-fuel based energy sources, including coal, oil, and natural gas. Residents, businesses, and governments are also subject to the impacts of variability of energy costs, the concerns over energy reliability and security, and the direct impact on health and the environment from combustion of fossil fuels. Reducing energy use through conservation and efficiency, and diversifying our portfolio of energy sources including deployment of new energy technologies will help improve our energy reliability and security and reduce the environmental impacts associated with our energy use. Significant capital is available for investments in new energy projects. Uncertainty resulting from inconsistent government policies can create barriers to releasing the full investment potential of the new expanding energy markets.

Regional Commitment:

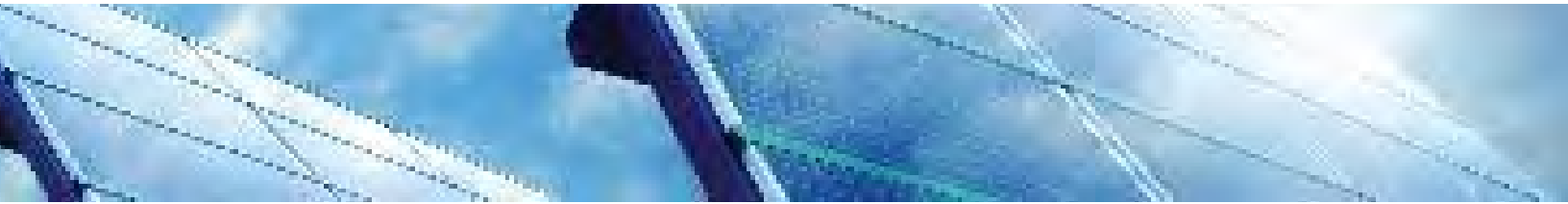
By 2020, reduce regional greenhouse gas emissions by 20% below 2005 levels. By 2050, reduce emissions by 80% below 2005 levels.

Region Forward Sustainability Target

COG members have:

- Established the Climate, Energy and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC), advisor to the COG Board, to implement the recommendations of the 2008 National Capital Region Climate Change Report.
- Adopted a 2012 Climate and Energy Action Workplan that establishes specific short-term recommendations for the region, local governments, and utilities to work towards regional energy sustainability goals. Short term goals include 10,000 solar roofs, 10% purchase of green power, and reduction in government energy consumption.
- Worked with leaders and area utilities to promote clean and efficient energy solutions such as retrofitting old buildings and constructing new green buildings; monitoring and disclosing building energy performance; installing solar cells and smart grid technology; replacing inefficient street lighting; and purchasing electric vehicles and installing supporting charging infrastructure.
- Collaborated with the federal Green Power Partnership to promote solar energy solutions and increase the percentage of green power purchased by communities. Area governments and institutions are also pursuing a large cooperative procurement effort for deployment of solar cells, currently encompassing more than 100 sites and nearly 40 megawatts (MW) capacity and \$160 million direct investment in the region if installed.

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What We Need From You

Federal

- Support continued progress to fulfill Executive Order 13514: Federal Leadership In Environmental, Energy, And Economic Performance
 - Fund the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) program
- Encourage military bases to take a leadership role in deployment of new energy solutions and extend benefits to the surrounding community
 - Continue to provide incentives for deployment of new clean energy technologies
 - Remove barriers to innovative energy project financing

State

- Support policy, incentives, and funding mechanisms to promote energy efficiency and renewable energy projects
- Support utility programs that advance energy efficiency, renewable energy, and smart grid development
 - Support deployment of new energy technologies on critical infrastructure
 - Support planning initiatives for deployment of electric vehicles
- Ensure state purchasing/procurement guidelines support energy efficient products

For more information about COG, this Energy Policy Brief, or any other of COG's Policy Priorities, please contact Nicole Hange, COG's Government Relations Coordinator at 202.962.3231 or nhange@mwkog.org

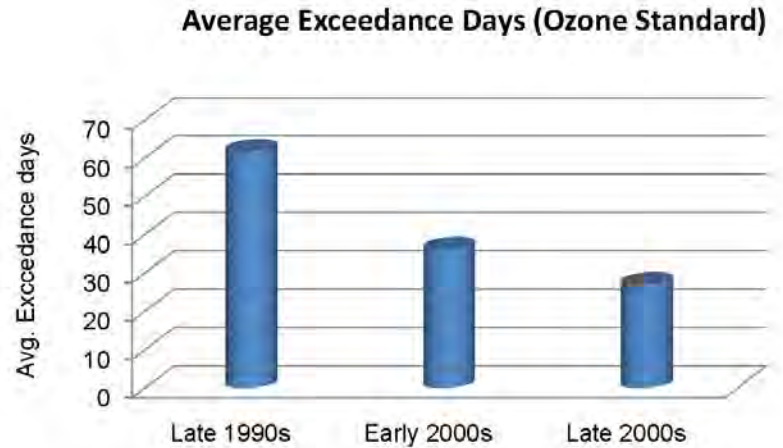
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Challenge

The Washington region is a non-attainment area for ground-level ozone and fine particulate matter (PM 2.5) according to federal health standards. In the near future there may be additional requirements impacting governments in our region, including new and tighter air standards, new air monitoring requirements (including near road monitoring) and other toxics, as well as tougher new requirements for coal and oil fired power plants to control mercury and other air toxics.

Meeting these new requirements will require adequate funding levels, controls on sources outside our region that contribute to transported air pollution, controls on sources that aren't subject to state regulation, as well as new investments in new energy technology, infrastructure, and pollution controls.



Note: 2008 Ozone standard (75 ppb) assumed to be in place through the period shown in the graph.

Regional Commitment:

Beginning in 2014, the region's air quality will be improving and ambient concentrations will be reduced below federal standards

Region Forward Sustainability Target

The region has a long history of making air quality issues a high priority, and our efforts have paid off. Our air is dramatically cleaner than 20 years ago. Region Forward includes a goal to continue to work to reduce pollutants to meet all federal air quality health standards. Through COG, under the federal Clean Air Act and in support of the states, the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC) coordinates regional air quality planning to reduce pollutant emissions. The committee has developed a series of to reduce pollution levels for the federal ozone standard which have guided our region's significant progress. The region's transportation planning program is required to meet pollution limits set by MWAQC that insure continued progress in reducing pollution from transportation sources. The region is currently developing a redesignation and maintenance plan to show that it is now in attainment of the strict small particle (PM2.5) standard. COG provides daily reports and forecasts of regional air quality and works with businesses and individuals to take actions to reduce polluting activities on days when unhealthy air is forecast.



What We Need From You

Federal

- Federal rules to reduce pollution to help states and localities meet new federal air quality standards
 - Reduce transport of pollutants across regions
- Provide sufficient funding to air agencies so that they can implement programs required to meet federal standards and mandates
 - Continue to establish standards that lead to lower mobile sector emissions, including emission standards for vehicle manufacturers
- Flexibility where needed to assist power sources that are critical for reliability meet new requirements

State

- Support pollution control strategies that improve air quality and reduce ambient concentrations below federal health standards
 - Support innovation in local programs
 - Continued support for energy efficiency and renewable energy programs
 - Foster the growth of the electric vehicle market

For more information about COG, this Air Quality Policy Brief, or any other of COG's Policy Priorities, please contact Nicole Hange, COG's Government Relations Coordinator at 202.962.3231 or nhange@mwkog.org

One Region Moving Forward



Challenge

The provision of an adequate supply of housing is a persistent challenge for the National Capital Region—one that threatens our quality of life, economic vitality, and competitiveness. Over the next 20 years, the region will add more than a million net new jobs, and will need more than 1.8 million replacement workers to fill new jobs as well as those vacated by retirees. To house these future workers, the National Capital Region will need to add approximately 731,000 new housing units by 2030. Yet local jurisdictions are planning for an insufficient amount of housing to accommodate these workers.

The region will need more housing for all income levels, but housing that is affordable to households at or below 80 percent of regional median household income (80 percent of \$85,168 = \$68,134), and between 80 and 120 percent (120 percent = \$102,201) is particularly critical to the region's economy because it provides viable housing options for a wide range of households, and helps to ensure that employers can find the workers they need. Housing is increasingly expensive; home prices and rents in the region are among the nation's highest, and rental vacancy is at an all-time low. To meet the needs of the region's future workforce, as well as changing demographics, new housing development will need to shift toward more multi-family housing, more small homes, and more rental housing. This is necessary to accommodate entry-level workers, the lower-wage workers who support all industries, and smaller household sizes.

In addition, much of the region's housing stock is concentrated on the eastern side of the region and the exurban fringes, away from transit and major employment centers, creating long commutes and the worst traffic congestion in the county. Rapid growth occurring in the outer jurisdictions of Loudoun, Prince William, and Frederick Counties will worsen this imbalance. For many workers commuting long distances from outer jurisdictions, the high commute costs erode the savings of lower-cost housing. To address this, the region's jurisdictions need to focus new housing development near existing and growing employment centers and in areas well-served by transit.

Regional Commitment:

Beginning in 2012, the region will maintain 15% of all new housing units to be affordable to households earning less than 80% of regional median income.

Region Forward Livability Target

- COG is partnering with Enterprise Community Partners and the National Housing Trust on the development of a regional housing fund that will be used to acquire and preserve market-rate affordable housing along transit corridors.
- The District of Columbia has launched a Live Near Your Work (LNYW) initiative. The LNYW initiative is designed to encourage home ownership near an employee's place of work by offering assistance on down-payments and closing costs for home buyers. The purpose of the program is to attract and retain D.C. employees while significantly reducing commuting costs.

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2012 Policy Brief: Housing

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What We Need From You

Federal

- Maintain CDBG funding to State and local governments
- Reauthorize funding for the federal Sustainable Communities Initiative

State

- Support legislation to align land use and transportation planning
- Support Region Forward by encouraging the participation of State housing agencies in the Region Forward Coalition

Local

- Remove barriers to mixed-use and higher-density housing development



For more information about COG, this Housing Policy Brief, or any other of COG's Policy Priorities, please contact Nicole Hange, COG's Government Relations Coordinator at 202.962.3231 or nhange@mwkog.org

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