

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

Region Forward is COG's vision to create a more prosperous, sustainable, livable and accessible region. It is a map of where we want to go as a region and everyone (government, business, philanthropic, civic communities) has a role to play. At COG, various groups are working to help the region achieve these goals.

Since its adoption, the COG Board has made the fulfillment of the Region Forward prosperity goals a primary focus. Issues of economic competitiveness, job creation and doing more with less will continue to be at the forefront of the Board's work. Bodies like the Transportation Planning Board will take the actions necessary to move the region forward on our accessibility goals. COG's environmental committees (MWAQC, CEEPC, and Chesapeake Bay) are similarly responsible for helping to achieve the region's sustainability goals. The Region Forward Coalition is the group that measures progress, prioritizes needs, and will jumpstart projects that will help us meet our goals.

This Work Plan will outline, using Region Forward as its framework, the COG Board's priority activities for 2012. We know that our region's prosperity depends upon our ability to adapt to changes in the economy. The COG Board will launch an economic growth and competitiveness plan in response. The Board will also ramp up its advocacy and outreach efforts to ensure that state and federal officials are engaged in this process.

2012 COG Board of Directors Work Plan



Economic Growth & Competitiveness Plan



State and Federal Outreach



Member Services



Economic Growth & Competitiveness Plan

There is growing concern that the region has not adequately prepared for fundamental economic changes that may occur from cuts to federal employment and procurement. Building upon the Brookings Metropolitan Business Plan model, the Board will embark upon an 8 month initiative to develop a Regional Economic Growth and Competitiveness Plan. This initiative will be the primary focus of the Board in 2012. This proactive regional approach will build on the region's economic and job strengths, address areas of weakness, and identify new or emerging opportunities. It will leverage regional partners' current efforts, and establish an integrated, public-private regional agenda for job creation and enhanced innovation and entrepreneurship.


- **Scoping.** A sub-set of Board members will scope the effort and identify the partnerships, roles, resources and benefits required.
- **Monthly learning sessions.** Each COG Board meeting, from March – June, will dedicate a large portion of the agenda for “learning sessions.” Various stakeholder groups, including federal, business, economic development, philanthropic etc, will be invited for a conversation on their needs for a more sustainable regional economy.
- **Economic Growth and Competitiveness Action Plan.** The July leadership retreat will be an opportunity to develop and refine recommendations for a draft action plan.
- **“Building the Region Together 2.”** In 2009, COG and the National Capital Planning Commission convened a “Building the Region Together” meeting with the Obama Administration to better position metropolitan Washington to receive the limited resources directed at regional initiatives. It is time for additional dialogue and action to sustain progress in the region. COG will use a similar public-private-federal forum, “Building the Region Together 2,” as an opportunity for a high-profile release of the regional action plan in September ahead of the general election.



State and Federal Outreach

Strengthening COG's relationship with state and federal legislators continues to be a priority for the COG Board. The region cannot achieve its Region Forward vision without an equal commitment from, and strong partnerships with, state and federal governments.

- **Advocacy.** COG will continue to advocate the priorities of our region through outreach to state and federal leaders. We will renew efforts to convene an annual caucus of the National Capital Region Congressional Delegation.

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- **Develop a Strategic Plan for advocacy and outreach.** COG's current advocacy and outreach efforts would benefit significantly from a formalized process that includes greater committee and member engagement. Staff will look to other regional councils and state and national associations for a model that could be replicable at COG. A recommendation will be brought to the Board for review and adopting prior to the 2013 legislative sessions.



Member Services

Building and maintaining strong partnerships with member officials is a critical component to achieving COG's vision. Ensuring that all jurisdictions, large and small, are aware of COG programs and activities that leverage resources and help them meet their goals will be a priority. Additionally, COG must also look to non-traditional partners to support programs historically funded by the federal government and organizations like the Freddie Mac Foundation. The following initiatives will be undertaken by COG staff in 2012 to improve member services.

- **Improve communication and transparency through new technology.** COG will procure the software necessary to enable live video streaming of COG meetings and events. Many of COG's member governments have this capability and find it an essential public transparency and accessibility tool. Additionally, the ongoing video conference pilot program will be assessed in the Spring for its effectiveness. This capability allows members, specifically those from the outer jurisdictions, an alternative method of Board meeting participation.
- **Develop tailored member service reports.** As a member association, COG must be able to clearly articulate a member's return on investment. Staff will develop tailored member service reports that highlight both shared benefits of COG membership as well as jurisdiction-specific benefits like grants, technical assistance and cost savings.
- **Engage non-traditional partners.** COG will engage the philanthropic, business, and civic community in a series of workshops aimed at supporting programs and initiatives that have traditionally depended on federal funding.