



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** COG Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Clark Mercer, COG Executive Director  
**SUBJECT:** Executive Director's Report – January 2024  
**DATE:** January 3, 2024

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### POLICY BOARD & COMMITTEE UPDATES

**National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB)** – During the November board meeting, the TPB reviewed draft highway and transit safety targets, and received updates on the Enhanced Mobility Grant Program solicitation, as well as the Visualize 2050 National Capital Region Transportation Plan. At the December meeting, the TPB approved the safety targets as well as \$10.2 million in Enhanced Mobility grants to fund transportation services supporting people with disabilities and older adults. Additionally, the board received status updates related to the TPB Visualize planning process from the Maryland Department of Transportation on its express lanes project and from WMATA.

**Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC)** - In December, MWAQC received briefings from local members and state air agencies on activities in their respective jurisdictions. Members were briefed by the Loudoun Climate Project and the District Department of Energy and Environment to discuss two initiatives that use air quality sensors and mobile monitoring to gather air quality data at the neighborhood level. Lastly, COG staff provided an update on efforts to address equity and environmental justice in air quality planning.

**Chesapeake Bay and Water Resources Policy Committee (CBPC)** – In November, CBPC members were briefed on regional stormwater fees, taxes, and trends over time as well as resources available on the Protect Local Waterways website. COG staff are reviewing the EPA's draft Lead and Copper Rule Improvements, which is out for public comment until early February.

**Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC)** – In November, CEEPC was briefed on the State of the Climate in 2023, with a focus on understanding anticipated climate change impacts. Prince William County presented information on the County's Community Energy and Sustainability



#### New "About COG" Video

COG Board Chair Kate Stewart was joined by board members Charles Allen, Rodney Lusk, Phyllis Randall, and Reuben Collins as well as Clark Mercer in a new video highlighting COG's value to the region.

[Watch the video](#)

Master Plan (CESMP). Members also discussed the EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG). COG has received \$1 million in non-competitive grants through the CPRG Program to prepare plans for the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) to be eligible for up to \$4.6 billion in new funding.

**Food and Agriculture Regional Member Policy Committee (FARM)** – In December, the committee received briefings on the Farm Bill discussing critical pieces of legislation related to the food system, the environment, and the health and nutrition of communities across the nation. The members reviewed past legislative priorities and engaged in a facilitated discussion to identify 2024 preliminary legislative priorities.

## OUTREACH & PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

**Transportation Planning** – The TPB hosted the Vibrant Communities & Safer Roads [webinar](#) on November 2 featuring recent Transportation Land-Use Connections and Regional Roadway Safety Program projects. The webinar had 140 registrants.

**Community Planning and Services** – COG Executive Director Clark Mercer and DCPS staff participated in a call with Maryland Secretary of Housing and Community Development Jacob Day and his staff on November 21 to learn about possible areas of collaboration. As a follow-up, COG Community Planning and Services Director Paul DesJardin participated in the November 28 Maryland Interagency Council on Homelessness Meeting in Baltimore hosted by Secretary Day and Danielle Meister, Director, Office of Community Services Programs at Maryland DHCD.

**Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee (ACPAC)** – COG is recruiting residents in the metropolitan Washington region with interest, knowledge, and expertise in air, climate, and environmental justice to serve on the Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee (ACPAC). The recruitment campaign is conducted from December 1, 2023 through January 15, 2024.

**Public Safety** – In November, COG Department of Homeland Security and Public Safety (DHSPS) facilitated five conference calls regarding First Amendment activity planning to support regional operational coordination and situational awareness for the COG Police Chiefs, Emergency Managers, Fire Chiefs, and Chief Administrative Officers/Homeland Security Executive Committee. In December, a third cohort completed the NCR Public Safety Training Seminar, a three-part course hosted by COG DHSPS to enhance leadership and professional development skills for public safety, health, IT, emergency management, and homeland security disciplines. [Applications are currently open](#) for the



### Planning for Equitable Development

On November 3, COG, in partnership with Race Forward's Government Alliance on Race & Equity (GARE), hosted Planning for Equitable Development, an event that brought together 80 local government racial equity officers, planning directors, and housing department directors.

[Read the news highlight](#)

two sessions in 2024. In addition, COG DHSPS, in collaboration with U.S. Department of Energy, hosted a tabletop exercise on energy disruption events in the NCR for the Chief Administrative Officers Committee.

**Housing** – COG Housing Manager Hilary Chapman presented on November 21 to the Northern Virginia Aging Network on the results of the 2023 homeless enumeration and highlighted the issue of older adults experiencing homelessness.

## MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

**Metro** – COG Chief Administrative Officers Workgroup on WMATA Cost Structure report was highlighted in stories by the Washington Business Journal and WTOP.

[Washington Business Journal](#) – quotes COG Executive Director Clark Mercer, Workgroup Chair Jim Parajon

[WTOP](#) – quotes COG Executive Director Clark Mercer

**Solar Energy Goals** – COG Board of Directors adoption of new solar energy goals was covered by the Washington Post, WUSA 9, Virginia Mercury, and PV Magazine.

[Washington Post](#) – quotes COG Climate, Energy, and Air Program Director Jeff King

[Virginia Mercury](#) – quotes COG Climate, Energy, and Air Program Director Jeff King



### Podcast: Strengthening food security for a more resilient region

In the latest episode of COG's podcast, Think Regionally, host Robert McCartney discusses strategies to combat hunger in our region with FARM Policy Committee Chair and City of Fairfax Councilmember Jon Stehle, D.C. Hunger Solutions Director LaMonika Jones, and Montgomery County Office of Food Systems Resilience Director Heather Bruskin.

[Listen to the episode/read the transcript.](#)