



MEMORANDUM

TO: COG Board of Directors
FROM: Clark Mercer, COG Executive Director
SUBJECT: Executive Director's Report – June 2024
DATE: June 5, 2024

POLICY BOARD & COMMITTEE UPDATES

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) – In April, the TPB approved funding for nine Transportation Land-Use Connections projects and received updates on Visualize 2050, the National Capital Region Transportation Plan—including a summary of comments received during the March public comment period. At the May meeting, the TPB made a key decision in the development of Visualize 2050 when the board approved the scope of work and project inputs for the plan's Air Quality Conformity Analysis. The board opted to remove one project, I-495 Southside Express Lanes, from the list of project inputs, agreeing to discuss further its inclusion during the June 20 meeting. In addition, the board approved six projects in MD and VA for the TPB Regional Roadway Safety Program.

Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC) – At the May MWAQC meeting, COG Environmental Engineer Sunil Kumar provided an update on ozone season and COG Air Program Chief Jen Desimone presented MWAQC's FY 2025 Work Program and Budget, which the committee approved. In addition, members provided input on their jurisdiction's environmental justice priorities as their feedback will be used to assist with the development of the environmental justice action plan.

Chesapeake Bay and Water Resources Policy Committee (CBPC) – At the May CBPC meeting, members focused on water workforce diversity, with presentations by WSSC Water and by Defensores de la Cuenca. CBPC members also prepared to issue proclamations and social posts for Chesapeake Bay Awareness Week, the week of June 1-9.



Food and Agriculture Regional Member Policy Committee Spring Initiatives

The COG Food and Agriculture Regional Member Policy Committee (FARM) had a productive spring, engaging leaders in several key initiatives to support local and regional food systems. These included hosting a third annual forum at USDA headquarters, organizing an all-day Regional Food Aggregation and Distribution Summit, and sending letters to Congress to advocate for regional priorities in the 2024 Farm Bill.

[Learn more about the farm-related initiatives](#)

Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) – At the May CEEPC meeting, staff presented the FY 2025 Work Program and Budget for the Regional Environment Fund, which the committee approved. The committee also received a briefing on Solar for All, a program that expands the number of low-income and disadvantaged communities primed for residential solar investment. Members also learned about SolSmart, a no-cost technical assistance program designed to help local governments and regional organizations accelerate the growth of clean, affordable solar energy in their jurisdictions. To conclude the meeting, members were briefed on Metro’s environmental sustainability performance.

Human Services Policy Committee – At the May meeting, Committee members reviewed the preliminary results of the annual Point-in-Time enumeration of people experiencing homelessness. Members were also briefed on the collaborative community work in Prince George’s County to end youth homelessness. Speakers included representatives from the county leadership, a youth service provider, and a youth who had served previously as Co-Chair of the community Youth Advisory Board and who now provides housing services to youth who are unstably housed or experiencing homelessness.

Region Forward Coalition (RFC) – In April, the RFC meeting centered around accessibility in the metropolitan Washington region. Members received a briefing on improving accessibility through placemaking, promoting accessibility through the Transportation Land-Use Connections (TLC) program, and enhancing accessibility through the National Capital Trail Network. To conclude the conversation, the NoMA BID talked about how the Metropolitan Branch Trail has helped shape NoMa’s design and connections to other neighborhoods and beyond.

OUTREACH & PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Public Safety - On May 4, COG DHSPS held the 32nd Annual NCR Wreath Laying Ceremony and Honor Guard Competition at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial to recognize corrections officers who have fallen in the line of duty. COG Board Vice Chair Rodney Lusk provided remarks at the event. On May 16, COG hosted a meeting of the National Security Council’s NCR Security Interagency Policy Committee and NCR law enforcement, emergency management, and homeland security stakeholders.

Air Quality - COG’s Clean Air Partners launched their summer campaign with a gas-powered lawn tool equipment exchange. Residents registered to bring gas powered equipment into participating Ace Hardware stores in exchange for new electric equipment. It was accompanied by Clean Air Partners backyard bubble events, which includes an exhibit to educate the public about ways to reduce emissions related to lawn and gardening.



2024 Bike to Work Day

On May 17, City of Alexandria Mayor Justin Wilson and COG’s Commuter Connections Director Daniel Sheehan kicked off Bike to Work Day at the Alexandria pit stop. This year’s event featured more than 100 pit stops throughout the DMV.

Institute for Regional Excellence – Applications for the COG Institute for Regional Excellence are now open until July 1, 2024. This year-long program is in partnership with the George Washington University’s Center for Excellence in Public Leadership. Nearly 500 local government employees have graduated from IRE, becoming certified public managers. Apply at: mwkog.org/ire

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Homelessness Report – The regional homelessness report received coverage from the Washington Post, Fox 5, Axios DC, MyMCM, ARLnow, Center Square, FFXnow, Inside NoVa, Gazette Leader, Washington Blade, and the Connections Newspapers.

[Washington Post](#) – quotes COG Housing Manager Hilary Chapman

[Fox 5](#) – quotes COG Human Services Policy Committee Chair Rodney Lusk

Go Recycle Battery Management Campaign – The COG battery management campaign was covered by WTOP, Fox 5, and ARLnow.

[ARLnow](#) – [story on battery management campaign](#)

Regional Tree Canopy Goal – The regional tree canopy goal and report received coverage from Virginia Mercury, MoCo360, the Washington Informer, and ARLnow.

[Virginia Mercury](#) – quotes COG regional tree canopy subcommittee chair and tree specialist Michael Knapp and COG Principal Environmental Planner and Regional Urban Forester Brian LeCouteur.

[MoCo360](#) – quotes COG regional tree canopy subcommittee chair and tree specialist with the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services Michael Knapp.

Street Smart Virtual Reality Campaign – The Street Smart Campaign received coverage from WTOP, WUSA 9, and DC News Now.

[WTOP](#) – [story on Street Smart Campaign](#)



Joint COG/WMATA meeting – The first ever joint COG/WMATA meeting was covered by the Washington Business Journal, WTOP, NBC 4, 7 News, and WUSA 9.

[NBC 4](#) – quotes COG Board Chair Charles Allen and COG members

[WTOP](#) – quotes COG Board Chair Charles Allen and COG Executive Director Clark Mercer