

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON  COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

One Region Moving Forward

September 29, 2011

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Manassas Park
Prince William County

*Adjunct Member

The Honorable Blaine Young
President, Frederick County Board of Commissioners
Winchester Hall
12 E. Church Street
Frederick, MD 21701

Dear President Young:

I would like to thank you for setting aside time on the Board of Commissioners' agenda recently to learn a bit more about COG and the important role Frederick County plays in the National Capital Region. The discussion left me with a greater understanding of the County's views on various issues which will better enable me to infuse that perspective into COG activities. I hope you and your colleagues found the presentation informative and that it provided you with greater clarity about our work and the benefits of membership in COG.

There were several comments made and questions asked by various Commissioners that I felt warranted further detail and explanation. I have enclosed additional information and provided the names of staff members who will be more than happy to further address the issues with you and your colleagues.

Again, I thank you for time and interest in COG's work on behalf of the region and I look forward to Frederick's continued participation in COG. If you have any questions or have suggestions on how we can better serve the County please do not hesitate to contact me at 202-962-3260, drobotson@mwkog.org or COG's Government Relations representative Nicole Hange 202-962-3231 or nhange@mwkog.org.

Sincerely,

David J. Robertson
Executive Director



Cc Frederick County Board of Commissioners

777 North Capitol Street, NE, Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20002
202.962.3200 (Phone) 202.962.3201 (Fax) 202.962.3213 (TDD)

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Transportation Projects in the Queue (Smith)

The following are projects currently in the CLRP that are partially or wholly in Frederick County and the City of Frederick. These however, have not been submitted by the County but by the Maryland Department of Transportation. There are no studies currently shown on our Major Studies list in Frederick County.

- The I-270/US 15 Corridor, HOV/HOT project from Shady Grove to Biggs Ford Road – 2030
- Widening of I-70 from Mt. Phillip Road to MD 144 – 2020
- Widening of MD 85 from English Muffin Way to north of Grove Road – 2020
- Three interchange projects: I-70 at Meadow Rd., US 15 at Monocacy Blvd., and US 29 at Musgrove/Fairland Rd.

Most of the projects that Frederick County has submitted for the TIP are funded with local and state funding, except for their County Capital Improvement Program for Bridges, which show roughly \$6.9 million in federal Bridge Rehabilitation and Replacement funds.

I encourage active participation in the meetings of the Transportation Planning Board which will enhance the County's ability to shape the project selection process. Below, you will find a detailed description of the project selection process.

Background: The Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP) includes over 750 regionally-significant projects and is updated annually to include new projects and programs. Projects range in size, dollar amount, and mode and include highway, transit, High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV), bicycle and pedestrian, and studies. TPB updates the CLRP annually to include new projects and programs.

Approximate CLRP schedule: TPB releases a call for projects in December of each year, and is briefed on project submissions from member jurisdictions in February. A draft plan is released for public comment in September, and a final plan is typically adopted in October.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) – spans a 6-year time horizon, is updated annually, and must conform to federal requirements such as financial constraint, air-quality conformity, and public participation.

For additional information contact: Ron Kirby, Transportation Director, 202-962-3310 or rkirby@mwkog.org

Hotel Per Diem Rates (Shreve)

Rates are determined by the General Services Administration based upon contractor provided data of local lodging properties. The current rate for the District of Columbia (which includes Montgomery and Prince George's Counties) is between \$181 and \$211 based upon the month. Frederick County's rate is \$92 for each of the twelve months.

The County may wish to ask the GSA for a special review of its rate given its proximity to the District of Columbia and role in the National Capital Region as a member of COG. You must submit a formal letter requesting review and include the following information:

- A. The geographical areas you want us to study, especially ZIP codes.
- B. The property names (including addresses, ZIP codes, and rates) where your federal travelers stay while on temporary duty travel and those properties (including addresses, ZIP codes, and rates) that will not honor the federal lodging per diem rate.
- C. The number of times actual expenses were used and/or federal travelers had to use another lodging facility to stay within the maximum allowable lodging per diem rate, which resulted in additional transportation expenses (rental car, taxi) being incurred.

All valid requests postmarked no later than 12/31 will be eligible for this review. All valid requests received after 12/31, but before 4/1 will be evaluated during the following fiscal year's annual review cycle. After all the requirements are submitted, GSA will obtain updated data from our contractor to determine whether a per diem rate should be increased, decreased or remain unchanged. We will conduct no more than one "special" review for a particular NSA annually. Letters should be sent to: Per Diem Team Leader, Travel Management Policy (MTT), General Services Administration, 1275 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20417. You can also email your request (a signed letter on agency letterhead must be attached) to jill.denning@gsa.gov.

For additional information contact: Nicole Hange, Government Relations, at 202-962-3231 or nhange@mwkog.org

Foreclosure Prevention (Shreve)

Staff will be in contact with the County's Housing Director to provide information and resources related to the impact of foreclosures on moderately priced dwelling units. Concurrently, you should be aware of the Capital Area Foreclosure Network (CAFN) a program COG and the Nonprofit Roundtable of Greater Washington administer on behalf of the region.

CAFN brings together key stakeholders to combat the region's foreclosure crisis. CAFN provides comprehensive support to front-line organizations and local coalitions working with at-risk residents, conducts regional marketing and outreach campaigns urging residents to get help and warning them of the dangers of foreclosure rescue scams, researches and analyzes regional foreclosure data and trends to better target resources and identify service delivery gaps.

For additional information contact: Alicia Lewis, Housing and Planning, 202-962-3346 or llewis@mwkog.org.

PlanMaryland (Shreve)

In adopting *Region Forward*, COG and its 21 member governments have pledged to use it as a framework to guide regional growth and development. It is not a one-size-fits-all vision and accepts the differences among our cities and counties, but also embraces something that residents of the District of Columbia, suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia understand. Our futures are interconnected.

Region Forward encourages leaders to think regionally when acting locally and strongly supports local autonomy in making those decisions. If that sentiment is ultimately reflected in PlanMaryland COG would be supportive.

We have been in contact with the Maryland Association of Counties and the Maryland Municipal League which are both actively engaged in the Plan's development. MACO has expressed its cautious support for PlanMaryland as an "important tool to foster communication and collaboration of state and local governments." MACO has also stated that such support would be retracted if Plan Maryland "seeks to supplant local land use authority and micromanage growth." I encourage the County, if it is not already doing so, to reach out to MACO's Legislative Director Les Knapp for additional information on the plan and its implications for local governments.

COG will continue to monitor the Plan's progress and the need for a formal position as appropriate. Additionally, COG has requested a briefing from the Maryland Department of Planning.

For additional information contact: Paul DesJardin, Director Community Planning and Services, 202-962-3293 and pdesjardin@mwkog.org.

Chesapeake Bay and Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) (Shreve)

COG's Chesapeake Bay and Water Resources Policy Committee will meet later this fall to discuss cost estimates for local jurisdictions to meet EPA's TMDL requirements. It is very likely that the Committee will advance a policy position for action by the COG Board of Directors in January 2012 ahead of the state and federal legislative sessions. COG's current position is that the federal government "should support policies and tools that provide local governments with greater flexibility in meeting EPA's TMDL requirements for the Chesapeake Bay."

Additionally, COG has urged the states to provide "funding support to local governments for programs and projects mandated by EPA and state governments to restore and protect the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries to meet Clean Water Act Requirements. The most critical need is funding for mandated stormwater retrofit projects in already developed areas, which are particularly costly. Policies should provide flexibility for local governments through appropriate alternative programs and support efforts to ensure that non-regulated sources of pollution, especially agricultural sources, meet pollution reduction targets through increased funding, greater regulation, and stricter enforcement."

COG staff is working with Shannon Moore; the County's acting manager of sustainability and environmental resources in the Phase II development of Frederick's TMDL Watershed Improvement Plan. Staff will continue to serve as a resource and provide support as necessary.

For additional information contact: Karl Berger 202-962-3350 or kberger@mwkog.org