



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Wednesday, September 13, 2023

12:00 P.M. - 2:00 P.M.

WebEx Virtual Meeting (provided to members only by email)

Public livestream on website

### AGENDA

- 12:00 P.M.**
- 1. CALL TO ORDER**  
*Kate Stewart, COG Board Chair*
  - 2. CHAIR'S REPORT**  
*Kate Stewart, COG Board Chair*
    - A. COG Annual Membership Meeting – December 13
- 12:10 P.M.**
- 3. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**  
*Clark Mercer, COG Executive Director*
  - 4. AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA**  
*Kate Stewart, COG Board Chair*
- 12:15 P.M.**
- 5. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM JUNE 14, 2023**  
*Kate Stewart, COG Board Chair*

**Recommended Action: Approve minutes.**
  - 6. ADOPTION OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS**  
*Kate Stewart, COG Board Chair*
    - A. Resolution R22–2023 – Resolution authorizing COG to receive a grant to support the updated community energy strategy implementation for Loudoun County
    - B. Resolution R23–2023 – Resolution authorizing COG to procure and enter into a contract to maintain and procure HazMat type 1 team equipment for detecting hazardous materials
    - C. Resolution R24–2023 – Resolution authorizing COG to receive a grant, procure and enter into a contract to develop MSA climate plans
    - D. Resolution R25–2023 – Resolution authorizing COG to receive and expend funds from the federal transit administration for the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program

- E. Resolution R26-2023 – resolution authorizing COG to receive and expend funds for understanding the factors affecting PFAS variability in the Potomac River Watershed
- F. Resolution R27-2023 – Resolution authorizing COG to receive a grant, procure and enter into a contract to support Prince George’s County Climate Plan implementation

**Recommended Action: Adopt Resolutions R22-2023 – R27-2023.**

**12:20 P.M. 7. JOINT OFFICE OF ENERGY AND TRANSPORTATION**  
*Gabe Klein, Joint Office of Energy and Transportation Executive Director*

The board will be briefed on the work of the U.S. Joint Office of Energy and Transportation and discuss opportunities for collaboration in the region.

**Recommended Action: Receive briefing.**

**12:50 P.M. 8. REGION UNITED: SOLAR INITIATIVES TO MEET REGIONAL CLIMATE GOALS**  
*Rokas Beresniovas, Montgomery County Green Bank Senior Director of Commercial Business & Investments*  
*James Clarke, DC Sustainable Energy Utility Solar Program Portfolio Manager*  
*Robert W. Lazaro, Jr., Northern Virginia Regional Commission Executive Director*

The board will be briefed on solar energy initiatives around the region including the Montgomery County Green Bank Seneca Village Apartments, the District of Columbia Sustainable Energy Utility Solar for All program, and the Northern Virginia Regional Commission Solarize NoVA program.

**Recommended Action: Receive briefing.**

**1:35 P.M. 9. ADDRESSING METRO’S FINANCIAL DEFICIT**  
*Kate Stewart, COG Board Chair*  
*Clark Mercer, COG Executive Director*

Following up on the discussion at the COG Leadership Retreat, the board will be updated on COG’s regional coordination and efforts to address Metro’s financial operating deficit.

**Recommended Action: Receive briefing.**

**1:55 P.M 10. OTHER BUSINESS**

**2:00 P.M. 11. ADJOURN**  
 The next COG Board Meeting will take place in-person on Wednesday, October 11<sup>th</sup> from 12:00 – 2:00 P.M.

**AGENDA ITEM #2**

**CHAIR'S REPORT**

# **AGENDA ITEM #3**

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** COG Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Clark Mercer, COG Executive Director  
**SUBJECT:** Executive Director's Report – September 2023  
**DATE:** September 6, 2023

---

## POLICY BOARD & COMMITTEE UPDATES

**National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB)** – At the June board meeting, the TPB received an overview on intercity bus and rail trends in advance of an October 2023 in-depth intercity travel forum and an update on Military Installation Resilience Reviews conducted for Fort Belvoir, Joint Base Myer Henderson Hall, and Quantico. The TPB adopted a resolution to amend the FY 2023 - 2026 Transportation Improvement Program to increase funding for the Alexandria 4th Track project and add \$25.5 million for the Long Bridge Virginia-DC project as part of the Northern Virginia Core Capacity project. At the July TPB meeting, the board approved \$3.2 million for six Maryland Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside projects and received updates on the National Capital Region Freight Plan and the launch of the Enhanced Mobility grant selection process.

**Chesapeake Bay & Water Resources Policy Committee (CBPC)** – At the July meeting, CBPC members were briefed on the Resilient Fairfax Plan and members discussed the protection of communities and government assets, such as historical buildings, from urban flooding in areas not designated as flood plains, and the need for requirements to disclose flood history in advance of property sales. Members were also briefed about PFAS and the Lead and Copper rule, and about the Chesapeake Bay Program's "Beyond 2025" Steering Committee.

**Climate, Energy & Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC)** – At the July CEEPC meeting, the launch of the EV Clearinghouse was announced, including a newly published Local Government EV-Ready Checklist as well as the launch of the Regional EV Infrastructure Implementation (REVII) Strategy. The meeting featured a session called "Ask the Expert: Building Electrification" with national experts from the Building Electrification Institute, New Buildings Institute, and Rocky Mountain Institute.



### Podcast: The region then and now

Penny Gross joined the COG Board in 1996 after she was elected to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. Since then, she's been a central figure at COG as regional leaders have worked together to tackle issues such as the health of the Chesapeake Bay and local waterways, public safety, Metro, and more.

[Listen to the conversation with Penny Gross](#)

**Food and Agriculture Regional Member (FARM) Policy Committee** – In early August, the City of College Park hosted FARM, which met jointly with the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council, based in the Maryland Department of Emergency Management. The meeting included discussions on justice and equity for Black farmers and historically disinvested communities in the region, needed investments to scale and sustain regional food production, as well as the Food and Water Resilience Project and the Maryland Food Bank.

**Human Services Policy Committee (HSPC)** – At the July HSPC meeting, the committee received an overview of the workforce strategies being used in Fairfax County including career exploration, mentoring programs, and job readiness/placement opportunities, as well as an overview of common and pervasive workforce challenges.

**Region Forward Coalition (RFC)** – At the July RFC meeting, members received an overview of United Way’s ALICE Lives Here initiative, which aims to reduce health, education, and economic disparities and improve outcomes for individuals and families in the region. Members were also briefed by SAMU First Response, who outlined the support they have been giving to migrants, and the Urban Institute and DC Hunger Solutions discussed food insecurity and SNAP challenges and opportunities.



COG and Board of Trade officials meet to discuss regional priorities.

## OUTREACH & PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

**Stakeholder engagement** – Clark Mercer spoke on a Loudoun Chamber of Commerce panel on June 20 on affordable housing. COG Board leadership met with officials from the Board of Trade on June 23 to discuss Metro and other regional priorities. On July 13, Mercer participated with area leaders in the Reimagine Downtown DC Summit organized by DowntownDC BID, Golden Triangle BID, and Federal City Council.

**Commuter Connections** – COG Transportation Operations Program Director Nicholas Ramfos was inducted into the Association for Commuter Transportation Hall of Fame at the 37th Annual International Conference in Seattle. In the past 27 years that Ramfos has been working at COG, he has led our Commuter Connections program, managed and overseen various multi-million-dollar transportation programs to serve people with special needs and create innovative tools to improve people’s commutes, and helped facilitate the start-up of the Washington Metrorail Safety Commission.



Nicholas Ramfos (pictured left) receives the Hall of Fame Award at the Association for Commuter Transportation.

**Car Free Day** – Join us on September 22 to celebrate World Car Free Day. This annual event organized by COG’s Commuter Connections program encourages residents, commuters, and students to choose a greener way to travel by going car free or car lite on Friday, September 22. By taking the free online pledge at [carfreemetrodcc.org](http://carfreemetrodcc.org), participants contribute to reducing traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions, improve their health, and qualify for great prizes.

**Fair Housing** – On August 30-31, COG Housing Program Manager Hilary Chapman presented at the 2023 Fair Housing Leadership Conference to discuss the development of the Regional Fair Housing Plan.



COG Housing Program Manger Hilary Chapman (pictured right) at the Fair Housing Leadership Conference.

**Ozone Awareness Month** – Clean Air Partners, coordinated by COG, launched their Ozone Action Month campaign in August to encourage Baltimore-Washington commuters to green their commuting routines to reduce emissions and harmful ground-level ozone. The campaign promoted simple transportation related tips such as taking transit, biking, and carpooling. The campaign also featured education exhibits including a car encased inside a clear bubble to demonstrate emissions with puffs of vapor “exhaust” and show how driving habits contribute to poor air quality.

## MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

**Economy** – COG’s Chief Administrative Officers Committee sent a letter to the Office of Management and Budget noting the benefits of increased in-person work for federal employees. The letter drew coverage from various outlets, including the Washington Post, Washington Business Journal, WTOP, WAMU, Washington Times, and Politico.

[Washington Post](#) – quotes COG’s Clark Mercer

[Washington Business Journal](#) – quotes Clark Mercer

**Metro** – COG’s retreat and statement committing to focus on Metro’s financial sustainability drew coverage from the Washington Post, Axios, and WAMU.

[Washington Post](#) – quotes Clark Mercer



Outreach teams educated truck and bus drivers about the financial and environmental benefits of redcing idling in their vehicles for the COG Turn Your Engine Off campaign. The teams visited 14 locations across the region and spoke with more than 500 bus and truck drivers.

**Air Quality** – COG’s Turn Your Engine Off campaign drew coverage on WTOP, Washington Informer, Prince George’s Community Television News, and MyMCMedia.

[WTOP – quotes COG’s Jen Desimone](#)

**Water Supply** – Coordination related to drought and water supply, including COG’s regional drought plan, have been referenced in several recent stories, including the Washington Post and WAMU.

[Washington Post – quotes COG’s Steve Bieber](#)

**Transportation Alternatives Set- Aside** – The TPB’s approval of approximately \$3.2 million in federal funding for six non-highway transportation projects in suburban Maryland drew coverage from several local outlets covering Maryland, such as the Frederick News Post, MyMCMedia, and DC News Now.

[DC News Now – quotes COG’s John Swanson](#)

**Food Security** – The FARM committee drew coverage related to regional coordination efforts on addressing food insecurity.

[Washington Business Journal – quotes COG FARM Chair and City of Fairfax Councilmember Jon Stehle](#)



[washingtonpost.com](https://www.washingtonpost.com)

# D.C.-area leaders urge more in-person work for federal workers

August 30, 2023 at 6:36 p.m. EDT

By Steve Thompson

3 minutes

---

Leaders from across the D.C. area urged federal agencies Wednesday to increase the time that federal government workers spend in-person at the office, as local governments struggle to revitalize downtowns that have been struck hard by pandemic shutdowns.

Most local governments have themselves settled on hybrid plans that call for their telework-eligible workers to be in-person two or three days per week.

“We have found that this strikes an appropriate balance and provides the best level of service for taxpayers,” the leaders said [in a letter from the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments](#) to the U.S. Office of Management and Budget. “Being able to work together, troubleshoot problems, take on big ideas, and provide face-to-face service for our residents is achieved while still providing flexibility for our personnel to work from home.”

[Clark Mercer](#), the council’s executive director, said the leaders of nearly two dozen local governments wanted to weigh in because the Biden administration has [formally ended](#) the [coronavirus](#) national emergency and instructed federal agencies to increase in-person work. White House Chief of Staff Jeff Zients, stepping up pressure after similar guidance in April, [wrote to Cabinet officials this month](#) that he was looking to them “to aggressively execute this shift in September and October.”

Many federal agency headquarters remain vastly underused as federal workers stay home, according to the Government Accountability Office, Congress’s research arm, which in July released statistics showing them filled at just 25 percent capacity or less.

Mercer said in an interview that D.C.-area leaders have been “scratching their heads a little bit, because what the norm is for them and what the norm is for a lot of our folks in the private sector and in our state capitols is not the schedule that the federal government’s maintaining.”

The scarcity of in-person federal workers has big implications for the D.C. area’s economy and public transit systems. The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority faces a [\\$750 million budget deficit](#) beginning next summer in part because rail ridership was halved during the move to telework.

The local leaders’ letter, which notes federal workers constitute the majority of riders on Metro, urges coordination as federal agencies bring their workers in more, to spread ridership across the workweek.

“If you come in once a week or you come in three days a week, we still have to run a Metro system in this region, and there’s a cost associated with that,” Mercer said.

The letter comes after D.C. Mayor Muriel E. Bowser (D) has repeatedly urged the Biden administration to push more federal workers to come back to their offices or to potentially transfer those properties to the city. D.C. City Administrator Kevin Donahue signed the letter, as did officials from a wide variety of counties and cities, including Prince William, Fairfax and Arlington counties and Alexandria in Virginia and Prince George’s, Montgomery and Frederick counties, Rockville and Takoma Park in Maryland.

Unions representing federal employees have pushed to let eligible workers keep working largely from home.

A Washington Post-Schar School poll released in April found that the region’s federal workers are [not eager to return in person](#), with 80 percent of remote-capable federal workers saying they would like to work from home most or all of the time, including 59 percent who say they prefer to be completely remote.

# **AGENDA ITEM #4**

## **AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA**

## **AGENDA ITEM #5**

### **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

**METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
777 North Capitol Street, NE  
Washington, D.C. 20002**

**MINUTES  
COG Board of Directors Meeting  
June 14, 2023**

**BOARD MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES:** See attached chart for attendance.

**SPEAKERS:**

Jennifer Mitchell, U.S. Federal Railroad Administration Deputy Administrator  
Ann Shikany, U.S. Department of Transportation Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy  
Doug Carr, Union Station Redevelopment Corporation President & CEO  
Jeff King, COG Director of Climate, Energy & Air Programs

**1. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

COG Board Chair Kate Stewart called the meeting to order at 12:00 P.M. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. CHAIR'S REPORT**

A. Meeting Feedback Survey

**3. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

COG Executive Director Clark Mercer briefed the board on the following:

- Regional air quality impacted by smoke from wildfires originating in Canada, and thanked COG's Principal Environmental Engineer Sunil Kumar for his work.
- Recent episodes of the COG Think Regionally Podcast on Advancing Climate Resiliency in the DMV and Reflections from COG's longest Serving Board Member Supervisor Penny Gross.
- The Infrastructure Investments Jobs Act and Inflation Reduction Act funding page on the COG website, which contains approximately 500 programs applicable to the metropolitan Washington jurisdiction.
- A preview of the COG Leadership Retreat scheduled for July 14 – 15, 2023.

**4. AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA**

There were no amendments to the agenda.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes from the May 10, 2023 board meeting were approved.

**6. ADOPTION OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS**

A. Resolution R19-2023 – Resolution adopting the Round 10.0 Cooperative Forecasts of population, households and employment

B. Resolution R20-2023 – Resolution supporting regional public safety radio communication encryption

C. Resolution R21-2023 - Resolution authorizing cog to procure and enter into a contract to manage a regional blue-green infrastructure community engagement and planning effort

**Action: The board adopted Resolutions R19-2023 – R21-2023.**

**7. U.S. FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION UPDATE**

The board was briefed by U.S. Federal Railroad Administration Deputy Administrator Jennifer Mitchell on the regional rail systems in Union Station including Amtrak, MARC, and VRE, plans for station

expansion, and increased regional connectivity.

**ACTION: Received briefing and discussed.**

#### **8. OPTIMIZING FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN THE TRANSPORTATION SECTOR**

The board was briefed by U.S. Department of Transportation Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy Ann Shikany on federal funding opportunities available in the transportation sector in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act and discussed how local governments can optimize available funding.

**ACTION: Received briefing and discussed.**

#### **9. UPDATE ON UNION STATION REDEVELOPMENT PLANS**

The board was briefed by Union Station Redevelopment Corporation President & CEO Doug Carr on the redevelopment plans and projects currently underway within Union Station.

**ACTION: Received briefing and discussed.**

#### **10. OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

#### **11. ADJOURN**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:25 P.M. Following the meeting, COG Board Members participated in a tour of Union Station including work to upgrade Amtrak switcher locomotive engines to reduce fossil fuel consumption, greenhouse gas emissions and pollution through green modernized rail equipment.

# **AGENDA ITEM #6**

## **ADOPTION OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS**

## ADOPTION OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

September 2023

### A. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING COG TO RECEIVE A GRANT TO SUPPORT THE UPDATED COMMUNITY ENERGY STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION FOR LOUDOUN COUNTY

The board will be asked to adopt Resolution R22-2023 authorizing the Executive Director, or his designee, to receive and expend grant funds from Loudoun County, Virginia, in the amount of \$300,000 over a 3 year period. Funding will be used to support implementation of the County's Community Energy Strategy. No COG matching funds are required.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Adopt Resolution R22-2023.**

### B. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING COG TO PROCURE AND ENTER INTO A CONTRACT TO MAINTAIN AND PROCURE HAZMAT TYPE 1 TEAM EQUIPMENT FOR DETECTING HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

The board will be asked to adopt Resolution 23-2023 authorizing the Executive Director, or his designee, to receive and expend \$1,048,782 for maintaining existing equipment and procuring new equipment for HazMat Type 1 teams to detect hazardous materials in the COG region. As the Secretariat for the Urban Area Security Initiative for the National Capital Region, COG has been requested by the District of Columbia Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency to procure a contractor(s) and enter into a contract to maintain existing equipment and procure new equipment for HazMat Type 1 teams to detect hazardous materials in the COG region. This contract will accomplish the following goals: obtain reach back service, technical support, and chemical library updates for identification meters; procure meters and equipment that is technologically or otherwise outdated; replace equipment in 4 of the 11 Technical Decontamination units throughout the NCR; and procure specialized training courses based on NCR Type 1 teams needs. Funding for this effort will be provided through a subgrant from the State Administrative Agent (SAA) for the National Capital Region. No COG matching funds are required.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Adopt Resolution R23-2023.**

### C. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING COG TO RECEIVE A GRANT, PROCURE AND ENTER INTO A CONTRACT TO DEVELOP MSA CLIMATE PLANS

The board will be asked to adopt Resolution 24-2023 authorizing the Executive Director, or his designee, to receive and expend grant funds from the District Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) in the amount of \$1 million over 4 years. The resolution also authorizes the Executive Director, or his designee, to proceed with procurement for a contractor, or contractors, and enter into a contract to develop MSA climate plans under the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG) program. CPRG, a program authorized by the Inflation Reduction Act, provides grants to develop and implement plans for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and other harmful air pollution. No COG matching funds are required.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Adopt Resolution R24-2023.**



**D. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING COG TO RECEIVE AND EXPEND GRANT FUNDS FROM THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION FOR THE ENHANCED MOBILITY OF SENIORS & INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES PROGRAM**

The board will be asked to adopt Resolution 25-2023 authorizing the Executive Director, or his designee, to receive and expend grant funds from the Federal Transit Administration's Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) Program in the amount of \$10,291,085. COG and the Transportation Planning Board (TPB) are the designated recipient for the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program for the Washington, DC-VA-MD Urbanized Area. Enhanced Mobility provides funding for transportation for people with disabilities and older adults who have difficulties using public transportation. The program provides matching grant funds for non-profit organizations, local governments, transit agencies, and private for-profit providers. No COG matching funds are required.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Adopt Resolution R25-2023.**

**E. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING COG TO RECEIVE AND EXPEND FUNDS FOR UNDERSTANDING THE FACTORS AFFECTING PFAS VARIABILITY IN THE POTOMAC RIVER WATERSHED**

The board will be asked to adopt Resolution 26-2023 authorizing the Executive Director, or his designee, to partner with Loudoun Water and other regional water utilities and research organizations to receive and expend grant funds from the Water Research Foundation in the amount of \$150,000. The Potomac River is the primary source of drinking water for the entire COG region. This project will investigate the presence of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in the Potomac River, which has become a pressing challenge due to the potential adverse health effects at trace concentrations and identify mitigation options. Funding for this effort will be provided to Loudoun Water as the Principal Investigator through a grant from the Water Research Foundation and in-kind contributions from regional water utilities and research organizations. COG will provide a match of \$150,000 from the Regional Water Fund, which is available in the budget of the Department of Environmental Programs.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Adopt Resolution R26-2023.**

**F. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING COG TO RECEIVE A GRANT, PROCURE AND ENTER INTO A CONTRACT TO SUPPORT PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY CLIMATE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

The board will be asked to adopt Resolution 27-2023 authorizing the Executive Director, or his designee, to receive and expend grant funds from Prince George's County in the amount of \$3.2 million over a 4 year period. The resolution also authorizes the Executive Director, or his designee, to proceed with procurement for a contractor, or contractors, and enter into a contract to support Prince George's County Climate Plan implementation. No COG matching funds are required.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Adopt Resolution R27-2023.**

# **AGENDA ITEM #7**

## **JOINT OFFICE OF ENERGY AND TRANSPORTATION**

# Gabe Klein

## Executive Director, Joint Office of Energy and Transportation

Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy ▶ Gabe Klein



Gabe Klein is the executive director of the Joint Office of Energy and Transportation, where he oversees efforts to align resources and expertise across the U.S. Department of Energy and the U.S. Department of Transportation to support programs that seek to deploy a network of electric vehicle chargers, zero-emission fueling infrastructure, and zero-emission transit and school buses.

Previously, he served as the commissioner of the Chicago Department of Transportation and director of the Washington, D.C., District Department of Transportation, where he revamped technology platforms and government processes while focusing on putting people (versus cars) first on city streets. This included launching two of the first and largest solar-powered bikeshare systems in the country and building protected bike lanes and better pedestrian infrastructure for vulnerable citizens citywide, as well as facilitating private services like carshares and

rideshares to support city mobility goals.

He honed his creativity and leadership skills working in business as vice president at Zipcar and national director of stores at Bikes USA. He also co-founded CityFi, a consulting firm to help city leaders, chief executive officers, and others understand the complexities of 21st century challenges, facilitate people-centric solutions, and use new models and technology-based tools to deliver optimized results. Clients ranged from foreign governments to cities, states, start-ups, and publicly traded companies.

In 2015, he published *Start-Up City: Inspiring Private and Public Entrepreneurship, Getting Projects Done, and Having Fun*, a book focusing on revamping how people innovate in cities and rethinking public-private partnerships as technology shapes a dramatically different future. He received a bachelor's degree in marketing management from Virginia Tech's Pamplin College of Business and an executive certificate in transportation/mobility management from The Wharton School. He also served on the 2020 Biden-Harris Agency Review Team for the U.S. Department of Transportation with a focus on innovation, including transportation electrification and program delivery.

## **AGENDA ITEM #8**

# **REGION UNITED: SOLAR INITIATIVES TO MEET REGIONAL CLIMATE GOALS**



## **REGION UNITED: SOLAR INITIATIVES TO MEET REGIONAL CLIMATE GOALS**

The board will be briefed on solar energy initiatives around the region including the Montgomery County Green Bank Housing Development in Seneca Village, the DC Sustainable Energy Utility Solar for All program in the District of Columbia, and the Northern Virginia Regional Commission Solarize NoVA in Northern Virginia.

### **DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA SUSTAINABLE ENERGY UTILITY – SOLAR FOR ALL**

The District of Columbia Sustainable Energy Utility (DCSEU) helps District residents, businesses, and institutions save energy and money through energy efficiency and renewable energy programs. Led by the Sustainable Energy Partnership and under contract to the Department of Energy & Environment (DOEE), the DCSEU is committed to environmental preservation, community engagement, and economic development. The Solar for All program works with local solar contractors to design and install solar photovoltaic (PV) systems at no cost to income-qualified District homeowners. Read more about the program [here](#).

### **MONTGOMERY COUNTY GREEN BANK – SENECA VILLAGE APARTMENTS**

The Montgomery County Green Bank is a publicly-chartered nonprofit corporation dedicated to accelerating affordable energy efficiency and clean energy investment in Montgomery County, MD. Seneca Village Apartments is a 684-unit affordable multifamily property in Gaithersburg, MD. With funding from the Green Bank, in partnership with Virginia Community Capital and NYCEEC, Seneca Village Apartments will install new energy-efficient roofs with reflective coating and a 2.18 MW rooftop solar array by Patuxent and Solar Energy Services. The \$11.4 million project is the largest rooftop solar project on a multifamily property in Montgomery County. Read more about the project [here](#).

### **NORTHERN VIRGINIA REGIONAL COMMISSION – SOLARIZE NOVA**

Implemented in 2014, Solarize NoVA provides a one-stop shop for consumers (residential or commercial) to take advantage of reduced prices through bulk purchasing. The Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC) has partnered with the Local Energy Alliance Program (LEAP) who administers the program and issues an RFP to procure the services of local solar installers. NVRC and its local government partners help market the program through various social media, e-newsletter channels, etc. to get interested consumers to sign up for the program. NVRC program helps its local governments meet their climate goals. Read more about the program [here](#).

## Speaker Biographies



Rokas Beresniovas is the Director of Commercial Business for the Montgomery County Green Bank. He has over 20 years of experience in business to business, community, and retail environments where he managed teams, built relationships, monitored market conditions and expanded client assets. He also has numerous appointments to nonprofit boards for corporate stewardship and community building. Born in Lithuania, Rokas emigrated to the U.S. in 1998. He has worked predominantly in the financial services sector, where he served as a Vice President of Business Development and Commercial Banking for Bank of America, Eagle Bank, HSBC Bank USA, State Bank of India USA, and the National Institutes of Health Federal Credit Union.



James Clarke is a Solar Program Portfolio Manager at DC Sustainable Energy Utility (DCSEU). He works with the Department of Energy and Environment on the Solar for All program, which brings the benefits of solar energy to 100,000 low to moderate income families in the District of Columbia. James is committed to reducing the carbon footprint of the District of Columbia while cutting energy consumption for District residents. Prior to working at DCSEU, he worked at DC Water for 15 years, managing change order requests, updating patent portfolio, managing chemical facility maintenance contract and the installation of the plant's first large scale solar light project.



Robert W. Lazaro, Jr. serves as the Executive Director of the Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC). Prior, Bob served as Director of Regional Sustainability and Energy Policy at NVRC. Lazaro has a long history of public service in the community serving first as a Town Council member of the Town of Purcellville, Virginia and four terms as Mayor. During his service as Mayor the Town was recognized in a number of areas for environmental protection and sustainability winning the Governor's Gold Medal for Environmental Excellence (2010), the Historic District Design Excellence Award (2011 & 2012) and the prestigious Siemens' Corporation National Sustainable Communities Award (2012). Under Lazaro's leadership the Town placed more land in conservation than any Town in Virginia.

# **AGENDA ITEM #9**

## **ADDRESSING METRO'S FINANCIAL DEFICIT**



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** COG Board of Directors  
**FROM:** COG Chief Administrative Officers (CAO) Committee  
Clark Mercer, COG Executive Director  
**SUBJECT:** COG CAO WMATA Cost Structure Work Group  
**DATE:** September 13, 2023

---

At the COG Leadership Retreat in July, COG Board Members gathered to focus on addressing the fiscal challenges of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) and ensuring the Metro system is in a strong position to continue to serve the region. Members convened alongside other stakeholders in the region's transit network, including leadership from the legislative and executive branches of Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia, setting the stage for a multi-pronged, coordinated effort to respond to the financial challenges identified by WMATA. Retreat participants noted the importance of a safe, reliable, and efficient public transportation system operated by WMATA as central to the region's well-being and growth.

The board has agreed to convene regional groups to collectively work on understanding the nature and magnitude, and identifying a path forward to addressing the financial challenge WMATA is facing to operate its public transportation service in the immediate term (FY 2025, beginning July 1, 2024) and beyond.

The CAO Committee accepts the immediate charge of working with the WMATA staff to conduct a thorough review of its operating funding needs to identify a consensus-based amount that WMATA and the region would focus on securing for FY 2025 and propose an approach to develop and fund WMATA's operations into the future. The CAO Committee previously led a technical analysis of WMATA's capital funding budget in 2016-2017, which helped build regional consensus and lay the groundwork for the 2018 dedicated funding agreement.

The CAOs met on August 2, 2023, to discuss the process for executing this work in a timely manner. The committee agreed to establish a workgroup of its members and other decision-making stakeholders. The committee was informed by WMATA's CFO during its meeting that WMATA's dedicated capital funding borrowing capacity is projected to be exhausted in FY 2029. The CAO committee agreed to investigate this matter as well. Details of the CAOs plans to undertake and complete this work are described below.

## WORKGROUP COMPOSITION

The CAO Committee has convened the COG CAO WMATA Cost Structure Work Group to take the lead in the review and analysis of WMATA operating funding needs with assistance from COG staff. The workgroup will provide regular reports to the CAO Committee and COG Board. The Work Group will include the following members:



- Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) from each of the 24 COG member local governments (or a designated representative)
- District of Columbia Chief Financial Officer and designated staff (serving as the lead technical analyst for the workgroup and to work with WMATA)
- WMATA Chief Financial Officer and designated staff
- A representative of each of the Transportation Secretaries of Maryland and Virginia
- A representative of the Washington Suburban Transit Commission (liaison between Maryland state, Montgomery County, Prince George’s County, and WMATA)
- A representative of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (which oversees WMATA services and represents the localities of Virginia who fund WMATA)

## **WORKGROUP TASKS**

1. A detailed examination of the operating budget and associated funding deficit identified by WMATA for its FY 2025 operations to identify and understand the underlying cost factors, service, and revenue assumptions leading to the funding deficit.
2. Develop a limited set of alternative operating cost estimates corresponding to changes to the cost factors, service, and revenue assumptions in WMATA’s FY 2025 operating budget.
3. Examine WMATA’s current Capital Improvement Program to better understand the adequacy of the capital funds, particularly the dedicated capital funds for state of good repair, to meet the future capital improvement needs. Identify any issues with adequacy of capital funds and identify options to address them.

## **TENTATIVE DELIVERABLES AND SCHEDULE**

The CAO Committee recognizes that WMATA faces an important deadline at the end of 2023 to develop a draft of its FY 2025 operating budget, by which time a consensus-based operating budget amount and a funding plan for the same would have been identified.

The CAO Committee will strive to develop an interim report, by end of November 2023, which would include (1) an assessment of the operating budget amount for WMATA’s FY 2025 based on addressing the deficit amount identified by WMATA; and (2) a limited set of alternative budget levels for FY 2025 reflecting changes to the cost factors, service and revenue assumptions.

The workgroup will continue examining opportunities to change current assumptions/practices associated with the service, fare, and other cost assumptions in developing future operating budgets and develop options to revise and enhance the current sources and process of funding WMATA’s operations that would provide for reliable and predictable operating funds in the future. The CAO Committee will strive to develop this final report by the end of May 2024.

**AGENDA ITEM #10**

**OTHER BUSINESS**

**AGENDA ITEM #11**

**ADJOURN**