

MEMORANDUM

TO: COG Board of Directors
FROM: Clark Mercer, COG Executive Director
SUBJECT: Executive Director's Report – June 2023
DATE: June 7, 2023

POLICY BOARD & COMMITTEE UPDATES

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) – At its May 17 board meeting, the TPB adopted the 2023 Update to the Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan. In addition, the TPB approved eight projects for assistance through the Regional Roadway Safety Program. The board received updates on the congestion management process and highlights from a recent bottleneck analysis and an update on the TPB's transportation resiliency planning efforts.

Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC) – At MWAQC's May 24 meeting, committee members were briefed on the 2023 ozone season, which began in April. Members approved the updated 2008 ozone standard maintenance plan for public comment and adopted MWAQC's FY24 Work Program and Budget.

Chesapeake Bay and Water Resources Policy Committee (CBPC) – Environmental education was a theme of the May 19 CBPC meeting in preparation for Chesapeake Bay Awareness Week (June 3-11). CBPC members were briefed on the Chesapeake Bay Agreement's 31 goals and a summary of successes and challenges in reaching the Bay's upcoming 2025 pollution reduction goal. Members were presented with exemplary environmental literacy programs in area schools and discussed how art is being used as a tool for teaching local residents about stormwater, with storm drain painting contests and paint the snowplow events.

Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) – At the May 24 CEEPC meeting, committee members received a briefing from staff on the FY24 Work Program and Budget for the



Loudoun County Farm Tour

On May 12, COG's FARM Policy Committee partnered with Loudoun County to host regional elected officials and other food and farm leaders for a day-long tour highlighting Loudoun's agricultural community. The tour visited four agricultural operations in Loudoun County and participants had the opportunity to meet with several business owners.

[Learn more about COG's regional agriculture initiative.](#)

Regional Environment Fund. The committee was briefed on, and subsequently approved, two joint comment letters regarding the EPA's proposed strengthening of greenhouse gas emissions standards for light, medium, and heavy-duty vehicles for 2027-2032. Staff also briefed the committee on federal climate grant and funding opportunities.

Food and Agriculture Regional Member Policy Committee (FARM) – In addition to the tour of Loudoun County, FARM also co-sponsored a webinar with the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council to learn about Baltimore County Public Schools' plan to offer free meals to all students beginning in the fall.

Human Services Policy Committee (HSPC) – At the May 12 HSPC meeting, committee members were briefed on the results from the 2023 Regional Point-in-Time Count of persons experiencing homelessness. The committee also received a briefing on the Homeland Security Executive Committee's priorities for 2023 and were presented with preliminary findings on the ongoing challenges in engaging with communities on mental health, particularly underserved communities, from a team from COG's Institute for Regional Excellence leadership program.

OUTREACH & PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Equity Emphasis Areas – At the EPA Mid-Atlantic Region's Virtual Summit on May 17, COG Deputy Executive Director Kanti Srikanth and Planning Data and Research Program Director Tim Canan gave a presentation on COG's Equity Emphasis Areas planning tool, and how it is being used across disciplines by area governments and partner organizations to elevate equity and inform future growth and investment decisions.

Fair Housing – On May 5, COG Housing Program Manager Hilary Chapman participated as a panelist on "Righting the Wrongs of the Past" at the Affordable Housing Conference of Montgomery County's annual Housing Summit.

Federal Workplace – On May 5, COG hosted a roundtable discussion on the future of the federal workplace in partnership with the National Capital Planning Commission. Additional participants included officials from the General Services Administration and local planning departments.

Public Safety – On May 6, COG's Corrections Chiefs Committee sponsored the 31st annual Corrections Wreath Laying Ceremony & Honor



Regional Leadership Training

On May 12, 36 public safety and homeland security professionals from 22 local, state, and federal agencies in the National Capital Region (NCR) completed the first session of COG's Regional Leadership Training. Using the West Point Public Safety Leadership Model, this three-part seminar applies leadership principles and NCR-specific topics to enhance motivation, satisfaction, and performance while developing leadership capabilities across multiple disciplines.

[Applications for the second session in Fall 2023 are due by August 11.](#)

Guard Competition. The ceremony, which included remarks by COG Board Chair Kate Stewart, highlighted the critically important role of corrections and honors corrections officers across the nation who have died in the line of duty.

Climate Awards – COG is now accepting nominations for the 2023 Climate and Energy Leadership Awards. Winners serve as a role model for the region, and are recognized in front of local, regional, and national officials for their innovative climate stewardship projects and programs that engage and serve the region’s underserved communities.

[Applications are due by June 30.](#)

Institute for Regional Excellence – COG is accepting applications for the 20th cohort of the Institute for Regional Excellence (IRE) Regional Executive Development Program, which will begin this fall. The 12 month program focuses on leading and managing in metropolitan Washington. IRE is ideal for mid- to senior-level managers from COG member jurisdictions and partner organizations. Upon completion, graduates earn a Certified Public Manager's designation and new connections with professionals from across our region.

[Applications are due by July 1.](#)

Transit Within Reach – The TPB Transit Within Reach Program provides technical assistance for design and preliminary engineering projects to help improve bike and walk connections to existing high-capacity transit stations or stations that will be open to riders by 2030. Any jurisdiction or agency that is a member of the Transportation Planning Board is eligible to apply.

[Applications are due by August 4.](#)

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Homelessness in Metropolitan Washington – COG’s annual report on homelessness, presented at the May COG Board meeting, drew coverage from more than a dozen local news outlets, including an A1 story in The Washington Post.

[DCist – quotes COG Housing Program Manager Hilary Chapman](#)

[WTOP – quotes D.C. Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness Deputy Chief and COG Homeless Services Committee Chair Elisabeth Young.](#)



Housing Affordability Planning Program (HAPP)

The HAPP grant program is now accepting applications for its second funding cycle. HAPP will award small, flexible grants of up to \$75,000 to area governments and non-profit developers (with support from a local jurisdiction) engaged in planning, approving, or developing housing near transit stations.

[Applications are due by July 21.](#)

WUSA9 – quotes Fairfax County Office to Prevent and End Homelessness Deputy Director and COG Homeless Services Committee Member Tom Barnett.

ABC7 – quotes Ilana Branda, the Deputy Chief of the Department of Health and Human Services to End and Prevent homelessness in Montgomery County.

Roadway Safety – Local outlets covered projects selected for assistance through the TPB Regional Roadway Safety Program.

Frederick News-Post – discusses project in City of Frederick

My MC Media – discusses three projects in Montgomery County, City of Gaithersburg, and City of Rockville