



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Wednesday, September 8, 2021

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

WebEx Virtual Meeting (provided to members only by email)

Video livestream available to public on COG website

AGENDA

- 12:00 P.M.**
- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
Robert C. White, Jr., COG Board Chair
 - 2. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**
Robert C. White, Jr., COG Board Chair
- 12:05 P.M.**
- 3. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**
Chuck Bean, COG Executive Director
 - 4. AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA**
Robert C. White, Jr., COG Board Chair
- 12:15 P.M.**
- 5. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM JUNE 9, 2021**
Robert C. White, Jr., COG Board Chair
Recommended Action: Approve minutes.
 - 6. ADOPTION OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS**
Robert C. White, Jr., COG Board Chair
 - A. Resolution R31-2021 – Resolution authorizing COG to procure and enter into a contract to provide the Maryland Emergency Management Agency with support to enhance the state's cybersecurity and cyber preparedness programs.
 - B. Resolution R32-2021 – Resolution authorizing COG to procure and enter into a contract to provide the District of Columbia Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency with performance data collection and analysis for the district's emergency management strategy.
 - C. Resolution R33-2021 – Resolution authorizing COG to procure and enter into a contract for strategic alignment and consulting support for the District of Columbia's gun violence prevention office – Building Blocks DC.
 - D. Resolution R34-2021 – Resolution authorizing the amendment of Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Pension Plan.**Recommended Action: Adopt Resolutions R31-2021 – R34-2021.**

- 12:20 P.M.** **7. BRIEFING FROM FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA) ADMINISTRATOR FERNANDEZ**
Nuria Fernandez, Federal Transit Administration Administrator
- Administrator Fernandez will brief the board on the FTA's priorities, including equity considerations and optimizing land-use around transit stations to maximize the reach of transit.
- Recommended Action: Receive briefing.**
- 12:45 P.M.** **8. COG LEADERSHIP RETREAT OUTCOMES AND NEXT STEPS: PRIOTIZING HIGH-CAPACITY TRANSIT STATIONS (HCTS) AND EQUITY EMPHASIS AREAS (EEAS)**
Phyllis Randall, HCTs/EEAs Task Force Chair
Chuck Bean, COG Executive Director
Kanti Srikanth, COG Deputy Executive Director of Metropolitan Planning
- The board will be briefed on outcomes of the July Leadership Retreat and the work of the HCTs/EEAs Task Force to reach consensus on optimizing land use around High-Capacity Transit Station Areas and elevating Equity Emphasis Areas throughout all of COG's planning.
- Recommended Action: Receive briefing.**
- 1:15 P.M.** **9. COVID 19: SITUATIONAL UPDATE**
Dr. Patrick Eteme, D.C. Health Infectious Diseases Epidemiologist
- The board will be briefed on the status of COVID-19 cases in the region, return to office plans, and regional collaboration.
- Recommended Action: Receive briefing.**
- 1:35 P.M.** **10. ESTABLISHING A REGIONAL FOOD SECURITY WORK PROGRAM AND COMMITTEE**
Jon Stehle, COG FARM Committee Vice Chair
- Following consensus at the COG Leadership Retreat, the board will consider making the Food and Agriculture Regional Member (FARM) Ad-Hoc Committee a standing policy committee and establishing a regional food security work program and regional fund.
- Recommended Action: Receive briefing and adopt Resolution R35-2021.**
- 1:55 P.M.** **11. OTHER BUSINESS**
- 2:00 P.M.** **12. ADJOURN**
The next COG Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for October 13, 2021.

AGENDA ITEM #2

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

AGENDA ITEM #3

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT



MEMORANDUM

TO: COG Board of Directors
FROM: Chuck Bean, COG Executive Director
SUBJECT: Executive Director's Report – September 2021
DATE: September 1, 2021

POLICY BOARD & COMMITTEE UPDATES

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) – At its June and July meetings, the TPB approved projects for funding through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 for Enhanced Mobility. The TPB also approved five local projects that have the potential to improve safety on the region's roadways, especially for its underserved communities, for technical assistance through the new Regional Roadway Safety Program. Following several months of intense debate, the TPB approved project inputs and the air quality conformity scope of work for the *Visualize 2045* air quality conformity analysis, which includes the Maryland I-270/I-495 widening project. *Visualize 2045*, the region's long-range transportation plan, is scheduled for final approval next summer.

Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) and Chesapeake Bay and Water Resources Policy Committee (CBPC)

CEEPC and CBPC met jointly in July to discuss local activities and funding opportunities for building climate resiliency. Members were briefed by Charles County about its nonprofit resilience authority and by a panel of FEMA representatives that summarized the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant funding opportunity and provided guidance for applying.

Region Forward Coalition (RFC) – In July, the RFC received a briefing on COG's regional fair housing work. The committee also heard from a panel on livability and equitable COVID-19 recovery led by health, food, and economic experts in the region.



(Juli Briskman/Twitter)

COG ANNUAL LEADERSHIP RETREAT
Board members gathered at the 2021 COG Leadership Retreat to brainstorm and discuss a plan for optimizing transit-oriented communities in our region through an equity lens. Equity Emphasis Areas and High Capacity Transit Station Areas were identified as tools to assist in planning for the next decade.

Human Services Policy Committee (HSPC) – In June, HSPC focused on efforts to address housing and homelessness in the region. The committee also discussed technical assistance opportunities, the HAND Housing Indicator Tool (HIT), and received an update on the HSPC 2020 Homelessness Compact.

OUTREACH & PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Fair Housing – In July, COG hosted a series of regional dialogues on the intersection of housing, transportation, environment, and race. The dialogues helped inform the Regional Housing Equity Plan currently under development, a collaboration between COG and local governments.

Equity in Homelessness – COG is leading a Regional Homeless Services Racial Equity and Systems Analysis to review COG jurisdictions' Continuums of Care (CoC) operations and then provide guidance on how to center racial equity in these efforts.

Visualize 2045 Aspiration to Implementation Outreach – In June, staff hosted an event to highlight projects and places in the region that align with a specific TPB Aspirational Initiative in *Visualize 2045*. Staff also physically placed posters with QR codes in locations around the region that could be scanned to access an online survey. This project sought to raise awareness about TPB Aspirational Initiatives and show how these concepts can be implemented around the region.

Air Quality – COG developed a bilingual informational video on why air quality is important and how residents can help reduce pollution in the region. The videos were shared by COG and members during the recent Code Orange air alert days.

Employer Recognition Awards – On June 29, Commuter Connections recognized the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), GEICO, and the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), with awards for their incentives, marketing, and telework programs, respectively.

Commuter Transportation Recovery – Commuter Connections rolled out its Commuter Transportation Recovery marketing campaign to encourage those heading back to the office to use alternative forms of transportation other than driving alone. The campaign began in June and will run through early September.



STAFF SPOTLIGHT: JENNIFER SCHITTER, COVID-19 PROJECTS

COG Principal Health Planner Jennifer Schitter's work led to COG receiving two awards from the Public Technology Institute (PTI). Schitter led both the National Capital Region Dagger System and the Contact Tracing Interstate Exchange programs to completion and oversaw their implementation throughout the pandemic.

[Learn more about the projects](#)

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

More workers are returning to the office. The pandemic-era commute might be changed forever – COG Planning Data and Research Program Director Tim Canan discusses the pandemic's effects on commuting habits, mass transit changes, and how traffic pattern will continue to progress.

[The Washington Post](#)

Hogan's plan for toll lanes is back on – Several TPB members quoted after the board voted in July to include Maryland's I-270/I-495 widening project in its air-quality conformity analysis.

[The Washington Post](#)

Local Leaders Aim to Cut Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Half by 2030 – COG Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee Chair (CEEPC) and Prince George's County Council Member Deni Taveras and COG Executive Director Chuck Bean discusses local climate initiatives.

[NBC 4](#)

Opinion: Hey, DMV: It's time to get back on the bus – COG Commuter Connections Director Nicholas Ramfos shared his experience returning to his pre-pandemic commute and urged residents to make a plan to return to shared forms of transportation as they consider coming back to the office.

[The Washington Post](#)



TPB AWARDS FUNDING FOR LOCAL ROADWAY SAFETY PROJECTS

TPB approved five projects to receive expert consultant services to help with planning and design through the TPB's new Regional Roadway Safety Program. The projects include a focus on serving Equity Emphasis Areas (EEAs), or areas with larger concentrations of minority and low-income populations. TPB Planner Jon Schermann talked with WJLA about an Arlington County project approved for funding.

[Learn more and watch the WJLA story](#)



MEMORANDUM

TO: COG Board of Directors
FROM: Chuck Bean, COG Executive Director
SUBJECT: COG Pension Fund Rebalancing of Assets
DATE: September 1, 2021

SUMMARY

This memorandum provides information on a recent “rebalancing” of pension fund assets authorized by the Pension Plan Advisory Committee (PPAC).

On August 20, 2021, the PPAC met to discuss several items related to the administration of pension funds including consideration of a “rebalancing of assets” to address an imbalance in the equity to fixed asset ratio as defined by policy requirements. During the meeting, Bolton Partners, PPAC’s investment advisor, recommended the rebalancing to reduce an “overweighting” of funds retained in equity assets and a corresponding increase in funds retained in fixed income assets. The rebalancing of assets is routinely required and typically results from earnings realized in equity investments outpacing earnings of fixed income assets.

At the June 9, 2021 meeting of the COG Board of Directors, Resolution R28-2021 was adopted clarifying that administrative activities, including the rebalancing of assets to reflect policy requirements, is the purview of the PPAC. However, in a continual effort to keep the Board of Directors apprised of issues relevant to the proper administration of our organization, I am providing this memorandum for your information.

A summary of the rebalancing which took place on August 27, 2021 is as follows:

August 27, 2021 Execution, Settlement August 30, 2021					
Fund	6/30/2021		Transfer	New Allocation	
Vanguard	50,803,998	66%	(12,121,891)	38,682,107	50%
Dodge & Cox-DODIX	2,483,775	3%	2,192,735	4,676,510	6%
Western-WACPX	2,503,447	3%	2,192,735	4,696,182	6%
NYL	21,533,784	28%		21,533,784	28%
Cash	39,210	0%		39,210	0%
American Funds EuroPacific Growth Fund -R6 -RERGX			7,736,421	7,736,421	10%
	77,364,214	100%	0	77,364,214	100%

As always, I am pleased to answer any questions you may have on this matter.

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 9, 2021**

BOARD MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES: See attached chart for attendance.

SPEAKERS:

Kate Stewart, Racial Equity Training Task Force Chair
Dr. Travis Gayles, COG Health Officials Committee Co-Chair & Montgomery County Health Officer
Kanti Srikanth, COG Deputy Executive Director of Metropolitan Planning
Jeffrey King, COG Director of Climate, Energy and Air Program

1. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

COG Board Chair Robert C. White, Jr. called the meeting to order at 12:02 P.M. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- A. COG's 2021 Annual Leadership Retreat

3. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

COG Executive Director Chuck Bean briefed the board on local governments' racial equity efforts including several new chief equity officer positions and the City of Gaithersburg's new equity plan. Bean also updated the board on three new initiatives launched by COG programs: Visualize 2045 website, DMV Climate Partners website, and the Regional Housing Equity Plan. Lastly, Bean provided a brief overview of the topics to be covered at COG's 2021 Leadership Retreat.

4. AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA

- A. Add Consent Agenda Resolution R30-2021.

ACTION: Approved Amendment to add R30-2021 to Consent Agenda.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from the May 12, 2021 board meeting were approved.

6. ADOPTION OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

- A. Resolution R28-2021 – Resolution approving COG's Pension Plan Investment Policy Statement
- B. Resolution R29-2021 – Resolution commending City Manager Suzanne Ludlow's 27 years of public service at the City of Takoma Park
- C. Resolution R30-2021 – Resolution authorizing COG to enter in a contract(s) and expend funds for an after-action report/improvement plan for events that occurred at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021

ACTION: Approved Resolutions R28-2021 – R30-2021.

7. COG BOARD RACIAL EQUITY TRAINING (ELECTED OFFICIALS) TASK FORCE UPDATE

COG Board Vice Chair and Chair of the Racial Equity Training Task Force Kate Stewart briefed the board on the goals of the task force and the development of a regional training for elected officials.

ACTION: Received briefing.

8. COG HEALTH OFFICIALS COMMITTEE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

COG Health Officials Committee Co-Chair and Montgomery County Health Officer Dr. Travis Gayles briefed the board on recommendations from the Health Officials Committee to support the health and well-being of our communities that have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 virus.

ACTION: Received briefing.

9. THE REGION'S EQUITY EMPHASIS AREAS

COG Deputy Executive Director of Metropolitan Planning Kanti Srikanth briefed the board on COG's Equity Emphasis Areas, a resource that uses U.S. Census tract-level data to identify communities that have significant concentrations of low-income and/or minority populations. Srikanth reviewed the application of EEA's as a tool for improving transportation in the region and its potential use in other industries.

ACTION: Received briefing.

10. MULTI-SECTORAL GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION STRATEGIES

COG Director of Climate, Energy and Air Program Jeffrey King and COG Deputy Executive Director of Metropolitan Planning Kanti Srikanth presented a follow-up briefing to the board on the 2030 greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals and current strategies in different sectors that have the potential to help the region achieve these goals.

ACTION: Received briefing.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

12. ADJOURN

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 1:56 P.M.

June 9, 2021 Attendance

<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>Y/N</u>	<u>Alternate</u>	<u>Y/N</u>
<i>District of Columbia</i>				
Executive	Hon. Muriel Bowser		Ms. Beverly Perry Mr. Wayne Turnage Ms. Lucinda Babers	Y
	Mr. Kevin Donahue		Eugene Kinlow	
Council	Hon. Phil Mendelson	Y		
	<i>Hon. Robert White</i>	Y		
<i>Maryland</i>				
Bowie	Hon. Tim Adams	Y		
Charles County	Hon. Reuben Collins	Y	Thomasina Coates Gilbert Bowling	Y
City of Frederick	Hon. Michael O'Connor	Y		
Frederick County	Hon. Jan Gardner		Ms. Joy Schaefer	Y
College Park	Hon. Denise Mitchell	Y	Hon. Patrick Wojahn	
Gaithersburg	Hon. Robert Wu	Y	Hon. Neil Harris	
Greenbelt	Hon. Colin Byrd	Y	Hon. Emmett Jordan	Y
Laurel	Hon. Craig Moe	Y	Hon. Michael Leszcz Mr. Bill Goddard	
Montgomery County				
Executive	Hon. Marc Elrich		Mr. Richard Madaleno	
Council	Hon. Tom Hucker	Y		
	Hon. Nancy Navarro			
Prince George's County				
Executive	Hon. Angela Alsobrooks		Ms. Tara Jackson	Y
Council	Hon. Derrick Leon Davis			
	Hon. Sydney Harrison			
Rockville	Hon. Bridget Donnell Newton	Y		
Takoma Park	<i>Hon. Kate Stewart</i>	Y	Hon. Cindy Dyballa Hon. Peter Kovar	
Maryland General Assembly	Hon. Brian Feldman			
<i>Virginia</i>				
Alexandria	Hon. Justin Wilson		Hon. Redella Pepper	
Arlington County	<i>Hon. Christian Dorsey</i>	Y		
City of Fairfax	Hon. David Meyer	Y	Hon. Jon Stehle	
Fairfax County	Hon. Jeff McKay		Hon. James Walkinshaw	
	Hon. Penelope Gross	Y	Hon. Daniel Storck	
	Hon. Rodney Lusk	Y	Hon. Walter Alcorn	
Falls Church	Hon. David Snyder	Y	Hon. David Tarter	
Loudoun County	Hon. Juli Briskman	Y		
Loudoun County	Hon. Phyllis Randall	Y		
Manassas	Hon. Mark Wolfe	Y		
Manassas Park	Hon. Darryl Moore	Y		
Prince William County	Hon. Ann Wheeler	Y		
	Hon. Andrea Bailey	Y		
Virginia General Assembly	Hon. George Barker	Y		

Y = Present, voting

(P) = Present as Alternate in addition to Primary

AGENDA ITEM #6

ADOPTION OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

ADOPTION OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS
September 2021

A. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING COG TO PROCURE AND ENTER INTO A CONTRACT TO PROVIDE THE MARYLAND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY WITH SUPPORT TO ENHANCE THE STATE'S CYBERSECURITY AND CYBER PREPAREDNESS PROGRAMS

The board will be asked to adopt Resolution R31-2021 authorizing the Executive Director, or his designee, to receive and expend \$154,392 to provide the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) with cybersecurity assessment and planning activities. COG has been requested by MEMA to procure a contractor(s) to conduct a cybersecurity assessment, develop a cybersecurity and preparedness strategic plan and create a cyber disruption contingency plan template for local jurisdictions. 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 R31-2021.

B. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING COG TO PROCURE AND ENTER INTO A CONTRACT TO PROVIDE THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA HOMELAND SECURITY AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY WITH PERFORMANCE DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS FOR THE DISTRICT'S EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The board will be asked to adopt Resolution R32-2021 authorizing the Executive Director, or his designee, to receive and expend \$1,260,000 for the purpose to provide the District of Columbia Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency (HSEMA) with support for their Performance and Data Analysis (PANDA) program. As the Secretariat for the Urban Area Security Initiative for the National Capital Region, COG has been requested by HSEMA to procure a contractor(s) to support the PANDA team in establishing the processes to collect and analyze data and performance metrics on the implementation of the District's emergency management strategy. Funding for this effort will be provided through two subgrants from the State Administrative Agent (SAA) for the National Capital Region. No COG matching funds are required.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Adopt Resolution R32-2021.

C. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING COG TO PROCURE AND ENTER INTO A CONTRACT FOR STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT AND CONSULTING SUPPORT FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA'S GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION OFFICE – BUILDING BLOCKS DC

The board will be asked to adopt Resolution R33-2021 authorizing the Executive Director, or his designee, to receive and expend \$787,500 for strategic alignment and consulting support for the District of Columbia's Gun Violence Prevention Office (GVPO) – Building Blocks DC. 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 (HSEMA) to procure a contractor(s) and enter into a contract to provide consulting, design, strategic communications, and facilitation services to align and support leadership to the newly formed comprehensive gun violence prevention program, Building Blocks DC. The Firm Fixed Price contract, \$749,772, for a 15-month period of performance (July 2021 – September 2022) will allow The Clearing to support the District's GVPO within the Office of the City Administrator to align its leaders on their vision, priorities, and desired impacts, and commit to action plans to

achieve these outcomes. 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 R33-2021.

D. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE AMENDMENT OF METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS PENSION PLAN

The board will be asked to adopt Resolution R34-2021 authorizing the amendment of Section 2.02 and 2.04 of COG's Pension Plan. Section 2.02 is amended to read as follows:

2.02 Accrued Benefit Derived from Employee Contributions as of any date shall mean the deferred, single life annuity (without ancillary benefits), commencing at a Participant's Normal Retirement Date that is equivalent, as determined in accordance with Treasury Regulation section 1.411(c)-1(c)(1) and (2), to the Employee Contributions made by such Participant plus interest on such Contributions at the annual rate of (a) in the case of a Participant who is Temporary Employee, the Applicable Federal Rate for long-term debt instruments, as in effect for the first month of a Plan Year, or (b) in the case of any other Participant, for each Contribution made prior to October 1, 2021, five percent, compounded quarterly, from the date of each such Contribution to September 30, 2021, and after such date, at two and one-half percent, through the Participant's Retirement Date, and for Contributions after October 1, 2021, two and one-half percent, compounded quarterly, to the Participant's Retirement Date. Notwithstanding the preceding sentence, the Accrued Benefit Derived from Employee Contributions of a Participant who has received a distribution under section 9.05, which he or she has not repaid, shall be computed without regard to Employee Contributions made before such distribution.

Section 2.04 is amended to read as follows:

Section 2.04 Actuarial Equivalent means having an equal present value when computed, except as otherwise provided in the Plan, on the basis of the following actuarial assumptions:

Interest rate –six percent per annum.

Mortality – 2010 Public Plan General Employees headcount-weighted mortality tables, projected to 2030 using the MP-2020 Mortality Improvement Scale with the mortality rate being sixty percent of the male mortality rate plus forty percent of the female mortality rate.

Rate of increase in the consumer price index – two and one-half percent per annum.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Adopt Resolution R34-2021.

AGENDA ITEM #7

**BRIEFING FROM FEDERAL
TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION
(FTA) ADMINISTRATOR
FERNANDEZ**

 An official website of the United States government [Here's how you know](#) 

Find the Latest Information on the Coronavirus/COVID-19 at FTA's Coronavirus landing page.

United States Department of Transportation

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Business Hours:

8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. ET, M-F

Nuria Fernandez

Administrator

Nuria Fernandez was confirmed by the U.S. Senate as the 15th Administrator of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) on June 10, 2021. She was previously appointed as Deputy Administrator and senior FTA official on January 20, 2021. With more than 35 years of experience, Fernandez made a name for herself as an inspiring leader in the transportation industry. She came to FTA after serving as General Manager and CEO of the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), where she was responsible for 2,100 employees and oversaw projects, programs, and transit services that provide mobility solutions for more than two million people who live and work in the Silicon Valley.

Among the highlights of her tenure at VTA was the completion of the first Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) heavy rail service into Silicon Valley, a 10-mile, \$3 billion line that opened to passenger service in June 2020. She also received federal approval in 2018 to extend the heavy rail service for another six miles. When completed in 2026, the heavy rail service will total 16 miles of rail and six stations that will provide transit alternatives for tens of thousands of commuters in and around the Silicon Valley.

Fernandez is also responsible for the creation of VTA's Innovation Center, an incubator to encourage collaboration, test the latest technology, and imagine new ways to keep the valley moving forward by leveraging the expertise of Silicon Valley's high-tech corporations and universities.

Prior to leading VTA, Fernandez served in leadership positions at some of the busiest transit agencies in America, including Chief Operating Officer of the New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority, and Senior Vice President of Design and Construction for the Chicago Transit Authority and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, consecutively. She also served as Commissioner for the Chicago Department of Aviation, overseeing O'Hare and Midway Airports.

In 1997, Fernandez was appointed by President Bill Clinton as Acting Administrator of FTA, where she led the agency's programs, including \$1 billion in annual grant funding to local communities for planning, design, and construction of new and expanding rail and bus systems.

She served as Chair of the American Public Transportation Association from 2019-2020 and on the boards of the Mineta Transportation Institute, The Transportation Learning Center and on the Executive Committee of the Transportation Research Board.

Fernandez was born and raised in Panama City, Panama. She holds a B.S. in Civil Engineering from Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois, and an M.B.A. from Roosevelt University in Chicago.

[A high resolution photo is available for download here.](#) Please contact FTA's Office of Communications & Congressional Affairs by emailing FTAPressOffice@dot.gov regarding any requests to reproduce or publish this photo.



AGENDA ITEM #8

**COG LEADERSHIP RETREAT
OUTCOMES AND NEXT STEPS:
PRIOTIZING HIGH-CAPACITY
TRANSIT STATIONS (HCTS)
AND EQUITY EMPHASIS
AREAS (EEAS)**



MEMORANDUM

TO: COG Board of Directors

FROM: Kanti Srikanth, COG Deputy Executive Director for Metropolitan Planning
Paul Desjardin, COG Community Planning and Services Director
Timothy Canan, COG Planning Data and Research Program Director

SUBJECT: High-Capacity Transit Station Areas

DATE: July 19, 2021

SUMMARY

As metropolitan Washington emerges from COVID-19, it will be key for the region to focus on connectivity and creating transit-oriented communities to sustain and enhance our current and future residents' quality of life and remain economically competitive.

At the 2021 Leadership Retreat, the COG Board of Directors will consider the potential for optimizing 225 High-Capacity Transit Station Areas (HCTs) in our region. These are areas around Metrorail, commuter rail, light rail (Purple Line), bus rapid transit/Streetcar stations that are currently in place or will be by 2030.

According to COG's latest draft Round 9.2 Cooperative Forecasts, there were 3.4 jobs million and 5.7 million residents in the region in 2020. Between 2020 and 2030, the region is forecast to add 406,000 more jobs, an increase of 12 percent, and 592,000 more residents, an increase of 10 percent. Although HCTs make up just 10 percent of the region's land mass—or 350 square miles—42 percent of the region's new household growth and 55 percent of new job growth will occur in HCTs.

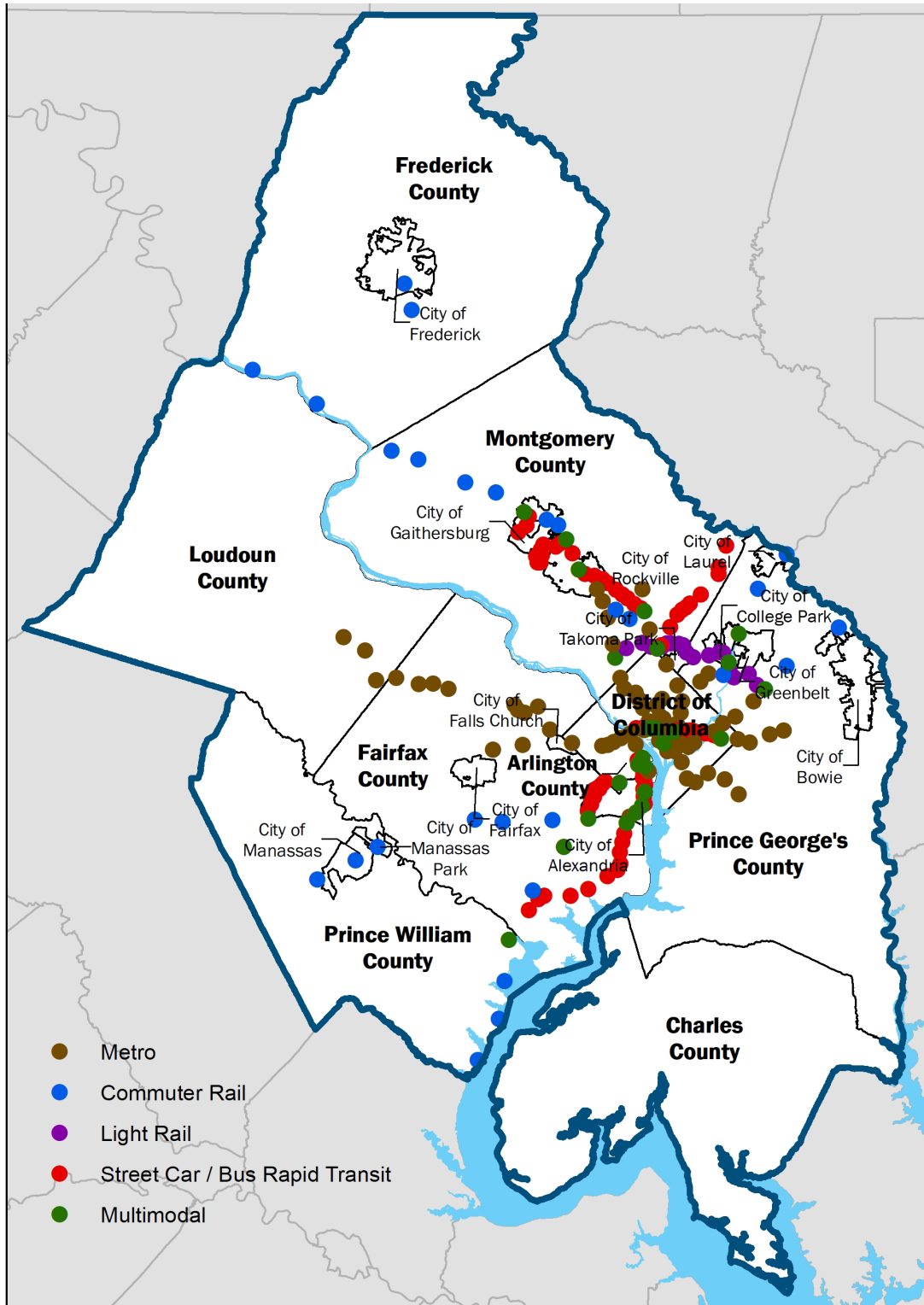
To plan for this growth, it will be important that the region take actions that optimize its land use and transportation systems to develop communities that leverage current and planned assets.

As outlined in this memo and in this packet, optimizing HCTs could mean endorsing the 225 HCTs for special consideration in local decision making. For example, implementing local projects that prioritize bike and walk access to transit. This could include completing the National Capital Trail Network (NCTN) of off-street trails and ensuring new development offers a wide range of uses, including housing choices for residents of mixed-incomes. Members will have the opportunity to consider this at the retreat.

This memo describes staff's collaborative work with member jurisdictions to help realize the region's goal of building transit-oriented communities that advance the region's shared vision of being a more prosperous, accessible, livable, and sustainable metropolitan Washington for all.

Having access to transit is critical not just to get the most out of the infrastructure investments already made, but also to build successful transit-oriented communities. Investing efforts to build successful transit-oriented communities will advance multiple regional goals from transportation and land use, to housing, and climate.

Figure 1: High-Capacity Transit Station Areas – Existing and Planned for 2030



BACKGROUND

The TPB approved the region's long-range transportation plan, *Visualize 2045*, in October 2018. For the first time, the plan included a set of aspirational initiatives that, with additional resources, could substantially address mobility and accessibility issues in the region. One of these aspirational initiatives, *Bring Jobs and Housing Closer Together*, calls for locating future jobs and housing in Regional Activity Centers (RAC) and in areas served by HCTs. This assessment was done in response to concern over increased traffic congestion, inefficient land-use patterns, and inadequate housing options and affordability—all of which can undermine the region's ability to support vibrant and equitable communities and a competitive regional economy.

The COG Board of Directors, recognizing this linkage of livability and accessibility, has made transit-oriented communities one of its focus areas. The COG Board adopted regional housing targets in September 2019, the culmination of its year-long work with its Housing Strategy Group, the Planning Directors Technical Advisory Committee, and the Housing Directors Advisory Committee assessing the adequacy and location of housing in the region. This assessment of the region's housing needs, along with adopting regional housing targets, aligns with and advances *the Bring Jobs and Housing Closer Together* initiative contained in *Visualize 2045*.

One of the three elements of the regional housing targets is that at least 75 percent of all new housing (between 2020 and 2030) should be in RAC or near HCTs. While RACs provide the opportunity to concentrate growth in housing and jobs in specific locations, HCTs greatly enhance this wise land use planning by offering sustainable, affordable transportation options.

HIGH-CAPACITY TRANSIT STATION AREAS

The region has set important goals for the short term through 2030, including on housing, emissions, and air quality (federal air quality standard must be attained in the next four years). The TPB's goals for mobility and accessibility, while not time specific, are no less urgent. To attain these goals regionwide, it would be helpful to identify geographic areas where efforts can be focused to build and cultivate transit-oriented communities.

The region has a well-established HCT system that includes heavy urban and commuter rails, light rails, Streetcars, and BRT services, and these services are expanding. Local land use planners over the past decades have considered these HCTs in their land use planning decisions as good locations to concentrate future growth to promote desirable development patterns. Some of the stations are served by multiple transit systems. For example, Union Station, Crystal City, and Greenbelt each are served by both Metrorail and commuter rail, two types of HCT service.

Visualize 2045 indicates that the region will have 225 HCTs by 2030. Figure 1 on the previous page identifies the locations of these 225 HCTs. Table 1 lists the 2030 HCTs by jurisdiction and the type of transit service available.

Table 1: High-Capacity Transit Station Areas, 2030

JURISDICTION	TOTAL	Commuter Rail	Light Rail	Metro Rail	Multi System	Streetcar / B R T
City of Alexandria	21	0	0	1	4	16
Arlington County	19	0	0	8	4	7
City of College Park	5	0	3	0	2	0
District of Columbia	55	0	0	34	6	15
Fairfax County	28	4	0	11	2	11
Frederick County	3	3	0	0	0	0
City of Frederick	1	1	0	0	0	0
City of Gaithersburg	6	1	0	0	1	4
City of Laurel	1	1	0	0	0	0
Loudoun County	3	0	0	3	0	0
City of Manassas	1	1	0	0	0	0
City of Manassas Park	1	1	0	0	0	0
Montgomery County	47	7	8	5	4	23
Prince George's County	23	4	6	12	1	0
Prince William County	5	4	0	0	1	0
City of Rockville	6	0	0	1	1	4
Regional Total	225	27	17	75	26	80

Of these, 203 will be within RAC and 22 outside of these centers. For nearly two decades, RAC have been the adopted, preferred option to advance our shared vision for the region and manage its growth. Optimizing HCTs are an important strategy in this effort and the presence of a HCT station in an RAC offers added opportunity.

WHY OPTIMIZE HCTS

Investing in transit access in HCTs, particularly those within a RAC, supports convenient and safe accessibility to transit, can increase transit usage, reduce household transportation costs, provide a wider range of travel options for residents and workers, and maximizes the return on the region's investment in transit.

Even where transit exists, or is planned to be within reach, accessing the stations can be difficult and/or dangerous without proper infrastructure surrounding it. Barriers to walking and biking cause many people to drive their cars even if they live or work close to a station. Having to own a car for basic mobility adds to the financial stress on households, and for many it is not a choice. Thus, transit-dependent populations are often forced to use circuitous routes or navigate unsafe conditions when they walk or bike to transit. Such inequities to transportation access and options affect people's quality of life and renders transit as an unviable and unaffordable option.

Non-motorized access to HCTs can be viewed from the perspective of walking (typically 10 minutes or one-half mile around the destination, referred to as the “walkshed”) and bicycling/other micro-mobility (about one mile around the destination). The population and employment within these walk or micro-mobility access areas, both current and projected for 2030, provides a measure of the potential beneficiaries of any action that optimizes these areas. Table 2 lists the profiles of all station areas in a jurisdiction within half-mile walksheds and Table 3 for areas within one-mile bikesheds. A list of these station areas and the RAC associated with them is provided at the end of the memo.

Table 2: 2030 High-Capacity Transit Station Areas - Half Mile Walkshed Area Profiles

	Station Areas	Total Population		Total Employment	
		2020	2030	2020	2030
REGION	208	2,127,517	2,435,006	2,014,335	2,285,815
<i>Jurisdiction</i>					
City of Alexandria	19	144,910	158,759	103,835	120,538
Arlington County	19	168,807	188,316	185,003	205,567
District of Columbia	53	610,857	713,840	810,584	899,729
Fairfax County	27	332,250	418,263	318,741	378,137
Frederick County	3	20,464	26,334	30,581	33,009
Loudoun County	2	14,525	24,971	25,388	40,834
Montgomery County	53	502,374	555,855	379,921	426,616
Prince George’s County	27	283,583	292,842	136,488	152,269
Prince William County	5	49,747	55,826	24,494	29,116

Table 3: 2030 High-Capacity Transit Station Areas - One Mile Bikeshed Area Profiles

	Station Areas	Total Population		Total Employment	
		2020	2030	2020	2030
REGION	225	1,728,851	2,462,990	1,786,492	2,366,883
<i>Jurisdiction</i>					
City of Alexandria	21	96,526	180,128	79,366	113,000
Arlington County	19	128,555	184,528	194,380	230,329
District of Columbia	55	570,875	671,778	810,959	900,104

Improving accessibility to transit in the immediate vicinity of transit stations can attract housing, which improves connections among housing, employment locations, and commercial and entertainment centers.

FOCUSING TOGETHER ON HCTS

Building successful transit-oriented communities is an integral part of the efforts to realize many of the region's goals, as shown in Figure 2 below. Even before HCTs were identified as a focus of the region's adopted housing targets, COG's *Region Forward Vision* called for integrating land use and transportation to advance Prosperity, Accessibility, Livability, and Sustainability for all metropolitan Washington residents.

Figure 2: Summary of Impact Areas of HCT Station Area Access Improvements



Moving forward, optimizing HCTs could entail:

- Maximizing land area and using it to provide for a variety of activities (jobs, housing, shopping, entertainment, health care, education, etc.).
- Providing safe and convenient non-motorized modes access to the transit station and the activities in the immediate vicinity.
- Ensuring that area remains affordable to all sectors of the population group.

For example, all consideration that jurisdictions and agencies can give to prioritizing projects, programs, and policies to provide walk and bike access to HCTs by 2030 will contribute to bolstering the region's shared goals.

The TPB has identified and adopted, as a priority, the strategy of providing safe, affordable, sustainable, and healthy modes of non-motorized access to HCT station areas. The initiative, called Transit Access Focus Areas (TAFAs), seeks to optimize the region's complex land use and transportation system in a manner that will favorably address traffic congestion and support increased accessibility throughout the region. Although all HCTs deserve our focus, TAFAs are a subset of HCTs (49 of 225 HCTs) identified as being optimal for non-motorized enhancements.

Table 4 illustrates the many ways that improving walk and bike access to HCTs can contribute to the region's goals and targets, especially beyond transportation.

Transit-oriented communities have the potential to help the region achieve its housing, accessibility, and climate goals in an equitable manner and provide for a sustainable prosperity for all. To achieve these goals, the region should work with strategic partners—major employers, developers, and philanthropy—to re-affirm local and regional commitments and resources for focusing growth in these priority places.

WEAVING IN EQUITY

As part of the retreat briefings, staff will also highlight opportunities to address equity disparities in the region using the Equity Emphasis Area (EEA) framework. These areas have higher concentrations of low-income and/or minority populations compared with the regional average. The proximity of HCTs to EEAs is an important measure of opportunities for affordable and effective means of mobility to all people. Building on the idea that HCTs represent good locations to further optimize land use and transportation, investments in HCTs that are in or in close proximity to EEAs help ensure equitable investments are being made for all residents in the region.

Staff will also discuss how completing the National Capital Trail Network (NCTN), a network of regionwide off street trails suitable for non-motorized use, may support both the goal to optimize land use and transportation within HCTs as well as improving access to jobs for persons living in areas where equity is a concern.

More information on EEAs and the NCTN have been provided to board members for the retreat. When considered together, taking actions to optimize HCTs, further examining and addressing equity using the EEA framework, and investing in infrastructure like the completion of the NCTN can result in meaningful progress for the region in achieving its priorities and goals.

Table 4: High-Capacity Transit Station Areas – 2030 Station Profiles

No.	Region Forward Target	Transit Station Access Improvement Initiative
Prosperity		
1	Sustain an annual 2 to 4 percent growth rate in Gross Regional Product for the National Capital Region.	Improving access to transit stations can provide more balanced jobs and housing growth, which can support talent attraction and retention and improve regional economic competitiveness.
2	Improve access to vocational training and educational opportunities throughout the region.	With improved access to transit education, institutions throughout the region become more accessible.
Accessibility		
1	Beginning in 2012, capture 75 percent of the square footage of new commercial construction and 50 percent of new households in Activity Centers.	Providing safe and convenient non-motorized access to high-capacity transit stations in Activity Centers will make residential and commercial development in Activity Centers more attractive and viable.
2	Reduce daily vehicle miles (VMT) per capita.	Addressing the barriers to non-motorized access to transit will reduce auto travel and auto access to transit, thus reducing VMT per capita.
3	The region's transportation system will give priority to management, performance, maintenance, and safety of all transportation modes and facilities.	With convenient walk and bike access to transit reducing auto travel and auto access of transit the performance of the roadway system will improve via reduced congestion.
4	Transportation investments will link Regional Activity Centers.	Improving access within ½ mile of the 208 high-capacity transit station areas will increase accessibility to 99 Activity Centers by 2030 – 70 percent of all Activity Centers or 98 percent of Activity Centers with high-capacity transit.
5	Increase the rate of construction of bike and pedestrian facilities from the Transportation Planning Board's Plan.	TPB approval of the transit station area access improvements will contribute to this regional goal.
6	By 2020, the housing and transportation costs in Regional Activity Centers will not exceed 45 percent of area median income.	With increased walk and bicycle access to transit stations, need for auto travel/auto ownership can be reduced and reduce overall transportation costs.
7	Increase the share of walk, bike, and transit trips.	Improving walk and bike access to transit stations will contribute to all three elements of this goal.
Livability		
1	The majority of the Healthy People Goals are met by greater than half of the region's population.	The investment to connect transit stations to the communities for active modes of travel, walking and biking, will contribute to improved health. Reduced automobile travel will help decrease emissions of pollutants and improve air quality.
Sustainability		
1	By 2020, reduce regional greenhouse gas emissions by 20 percent below 2005 levels.	Increased transit usage and accessing transit stations by walking and bicycling, will help reduce fossil fuel combustion and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
2	Beginning in 2014, the region's air quality will be improving, and ambient concentrations will be reduced below federal standards.	Increased transit usage will help reduce fossil fuel combustion and improve ambient air quality with reduced emissions of ozone forming nitrous oxides and volatile organic compounds, which lead to ozone formation.

Table 5: High-Capacity Transit Station Areas – Existing and Planned by 2030

No.	HCT Station Area	HCT System	Regional Activity Center
Arlington County			
1	23rd and Clark	Streetcar / B R T	Crystal City
2	23rd and Crystal	Streetcar / B R T	Crystal City
3	26th and Clark	Streetcar / B R T	Crystal City
4	27th and Crystal	Streetcar / B R T	Crystal City
5	33rd and Crystal	Streetcar / B R T	Crystal City
6	Arlington Cemetery	Metro	Pentagon
7	Army Navy Dr. station	Streetcar / B R T	Pentagon City
8	Ballston-MU	Metro	Ballston
9	Clarendon	Metro	Clarendon
10	Court House	Metro	Courthouse
11	Crystal City	Metro / Commuter Rail / Streetcar / B R T	Crystal City
12	East Falls Church	Metro	Falls Church
13	Pentagon	Metro / Streetcar / B R T	Pentagon
14	Pentagon City	Metro / Streetcar / B R T	Pentagon City
15	Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport	Metro	Crystal City
16	Rosslyn	Metro	Rosslyn
17	Shirlington Transit Center	Multimodal	Shirlington
18	South Glebe Rd	Streetcar / B R T	Crystal City
19	Virginia Square-GMU	Metro	Ballston
City of Alexandria			
1	Braddock Road	Metro / Streetcar / B R T	Braddock Road Metro Area
2	Custis Ave	Streetcar / B R T	Potomac Yard
3	East Glebe Rd	Streetcar / B R T	Potomac Yard
4	Eisenhower Avenue	Metro	Carlyle-Eisenhower East
5	Fayette St	Streetcar / B R T	Braddock Road Metro Area
6	King Street-Old Town	Metro / Commuter Rail	Carlyle-Eisenhower East
7	Landmark Mall	Streetcar / B R T	Landmark-Van Dorn
8	Mark Center	Streetcar / B R T	Beauregard
9	N. Beauregard St at Fillmore Ave	Streetcar / B R T	Beauregard
10	N. Beauregard St at King St	Streetcar / B R T	Beauregard
11	N. Beauregard St at Rayburn Ave	Streetcar / B R T	Beauregard
12	N. Beauregard St at Sanger Ave	Streetcar / B R T	Beauregard
13	N. Beauregard Street at W. Braddock Rd	Streetcar / B R T	Beauregard
14	N. Van Dorn St at Homes Run Parkway	Streetcar / B R T	Landmark-Van Dorn
15	N. Van Dorn St at Sanger Ave	Streetcar / B R T	Not in Regional Activity Center

No.	HCT Station Area	HCT System	Regional Activity Center
16	Potomac Ave	Streetcar / B R T	Potomac Yard
17	Potomac Yards	Metro / Streetcar / B R T	Potomac Yard
18	Reed Ave	Streetcar / B R T	Potomac Yard
19	S. Van Dorn St & Edsall Rd	Streetcar / B R T	Landmark-Van Dorn
20	Southern Towers	Streetcar / B R T	Beauregard
21	Van Dorn Street	Metro / Streetcar / B R T	Landmark-Van Dorn
City of Manassas			
1	Manassas City	Commuter Rail	Manassas
City of Manassas Park			
1	Manassas Park	Commuter Rail	Manassas Park
District of Columbia			
1	Anacostia	Metro	Poplar Point
2	Archives-Navy Memorial-Penn Quarter	Metro	Downtown DC
3	Benning & 42nd NE	Streetcar / B R T	Minnesota Ave
4	Benning & Oklahoma Ave	Streetcar / B R T	H Street
5	Benning and 19th NE	Streetcar / B R T	H Street
6	Benning and 34th NE	Streetcar / B R T	Minnesota Ave
7	Benning and Minnesota Ave	Streetcar / B R T	Minnesota Ave
8	Benning Road	Metro / Streetcar / B R T	Minnesota Ave
9	Brookland-CUA	Metro	Brookland
10	Capitol South	Metro	Capitol Hill
11	Cleveland Park	Metro	Columbia Heights
12	Columbia Heights	Metro	Columbia Heights
13	Congress Heights	Metro	St. Elizabeths
14	Deanwood	Metro	Minnesota Ave
15	Dupont Circle	Metro	Dupont
16	Eastern Market	Metro	Capitol Riverfront
17	Farragut North	Metro / Streetcar / B R T	Farragut Square
18	Farragut West	Metro / Streetcar / B R T	Farragut Square
19	Federal Center SW	Metro	Monumental Core
20	Federal Triangle	Metro	Farragut Square
21	Foggy Bottom-GWU	Metro	West End
22	Fort Totten	Metro	Fort Totten
23	Friendship Heights	Metro	Friendship Heights
24	Gallery Pl-Chinatown	Metro	Downtown DC
25	Georgia Ave-Petworth	Metro	Columbia Heights
26	H & 13 th NE	Streetcar / B R T	H Street
27	H & 3rd NE	Streetcar / B R T	NoMa
28	H & 5th NE	Streetcar / B R T	NoMa
29	H & 8th NE	Streetcar / B R T	NoMa
30	H & MD Ave	Streetcar / B R T	H Street

No.	HCT Station Area	HCT System	Regional Activity Center
31	Judiciary Square	Metro	Downtown DC
32	K & 25th NW Streetcar	Streetcar / B R T	West End
33	K & 3rd NW Streetcar	Streetcar / B R T	Downtown DC
34	K & Wisconsin Streetcar	Streetcar / B R T	Georgetown
35	Kingman Island	Streetcar / B R T	H Street
36	L'Enfant Plaza	Metro / Commuter Rail	Monumental Core
37	McPherson Square	Metro/Streetcar / B R T	Farragut Square
38	Metro Center	Metro	Farragut Square
39	Minnesota Ave	Metro	Minnesota Ave
40	Mt Vernon Square-7th St-Convention Center	Metro	Downtown DC
41	Mt. Vernon Sq. Streetcar	Streetcar / B R T	Downtown DC
42	Navy Yard-Ballpark	Metro	Southwest Waterfront
43	NOMA-Gallaudet	Metro	NoMa
44	Potomac Avenue	Metro	Stadium Armory
45	Rhode Island Ave-Brentwood	Metro	Rhode Island Ave Metro
46	Shaw-Howard U	Metro	U-14th Street Corridor
47	Smithsonian	Metro	Monumental Core
48	Stadium-Armory	Metro	Stadium Armory
49	Takoma	Metro	Takoma Park
50	Tenleytown-AU	Metro	Friendship Heights
51	U Street/African-Amer Civil War Memorial/Cardozo	Metro	U-14th Street Corridor
52	Union Station	Metro / Commuter Rail	NoMa
53	Van Ness-UDC	Metro	Not in Regional Activity Center
54	Waterfront	Metro	Monumental Core
55	Woodley Park-Zoo/Adams Morgan	Metro	Dupont
Fairfax County			
1	Backlick Road	Commuter Rail	Beltway South
2	Beacon Hill	Streetcar / B R T	Beacon-Groveton
3	Burke Center	Commuter Rail	Not in Regional Activity Center
4	Dunn Loring-Merrifield	Metro	Not in Regional Activity Center
5	Fort Belvoir	Streetcar / B R T	Fort Belvoir
6	Franconia-Springfield	Metro / Commuter Rail	Springfield
7	Greensboro	Metro	Tysons West
8	Gum Springs	Streetcar / B R T	Hybla Valley-Gum Springs
9	Gunston Rd	Streetcar / B R T	Not in Regional Activity Center
10	Herndon	Metro	Herndon
11	Huntington	Metro / Streetcar / B R T	Huntington-Penn Daw

No.	HCT Station Area	HCT System	Regional Activity Center
12	Hybla Valley	Streetcar / B R T	Hybla Valley-Gum Springs
13	Innovation Center Route 28	Metro	Fairfax Innovation Center
14	Lockheed Blvd	Streetcar / B R T	Hybla Valley-Gum Springs
15	Lorton	Commuter Rail	Fort Belvoir North Area
16	Lorton Station Blvd	Streetcar / B R T	Not in Regional Activity Center
17	McLean	Metro	Tysons East
18	Penn Daw	Streetcar / B R T	Huntington-Penn Daw
19	Pohick Rd	Streetcar / B R T	Fort Belvoir
20	Reston Town Center	Metro	Reston Town Center
21	Rolling Road	Commuter Rail	Not in Regional Activity Center
22	South County	Streetcar / B R T	Not in Regional Activity Center
23	Spring Hill	Metro	Tysons West
24	Tysons Corner	Metro	Tysons Central 123
25	Vienna-Fairfax-GMU	Metro	Vienna
26	West Falls Church-VT-UVA	Metro	Not in Regional Activity Center
27	Wiehle-Reston East	Metro	Wiehle-Reston East
28	Woodlawn	Streetcar / B R T	Fort Belvoir
Frederick County			
1	Brunswick	Commuter Rail	Brunswick
2	Frederick	Commuter Rail	East Frederick Rising
3	Monocacy/I-270	Commuter Rail	Francis Scott Key Mall
4	Point of Rocks	Commuter Rail	Not in Regional Activity Center
5	Ashburn	Metro	Ashburn Station
6	Dulles Airport	Metro	Not in Regional Activity Center
7	Loudoun Gateway	Metro	Loudoun Gateway Station
Montgomery County			
1	Aspen Hill Rd BRT	Streetcar / B R T	Rockville Twinbrook
2	Barnesville	Commuter Rail	Not in Regional Activity Center
3	Bethesda	Metro / Light Rail / B R T	Bethesda
4	Boyd	Commuter Rail	Not in Regional Activity Center
5	Briggs Chaney PNR BRT	Streetcar / B R T	Not in Regional Activity Center
6	Broadwood Dr BRT	Streetcar / B R T	Rockville Twinbrook
7	Burnt Mills BRT	Streetcar / B R T	Not in Regional Activity Center

No.	HCT Station Area	HCT System	Regional Activity Center
8	Burtonsville PNR BRT	Streetcar / B R T	Not in Regional Activity Center
9	Castle Ridge BRT	Streetcar / B R T	Not in Regional Activity Center
10	Connecticut Avenue	Light Rail	NIH-Walter Reed
11	Crown Farm	Streetcar / B R T	Life Sciences Center-Gaithersburg
12	Dale Drive	Light Rail	Silver Spring
13	DANAC	Streetcar / B R T	Life Sciences Center-Gaithersburg
14	Dickerson	Commuter Rail	Not in Regional Activity Center
15	East Gaither	Streetcar / B R T	Rockville King Farm Research Center
16	Fenton Street BRT	Streetcar / B R T	Silver Spring
17	Firstfield	Streetcar / B R T	Gaithersburg Metropolitan Grove
18	Forest Glen	Metro	Silver Spring
19	Gaithersburg	Commuter Rail	Gaithersburg Central
20	Garrett Park	Commuter Rail	White Flint
21	Germantown	Commuter Rail	Germantown
22	Glenmont	Metro	Glenmont
23	Grosvenor-Strathmore	Metro	Grosvenor
24	Kensington	Commuter Rail	Kensington
25	Kentlands	Streetcar / B R T	Gaithersburg Kentlands
26	Long Branch	Light Rail	Takoma Park
27	LSC Central	Streetcar / B R T	Life Sciences Center-Gaithersburg
28	LSC West	Streetcar / B R T	Life Sciences Center-Gaithersburg
29	Lyttonsville	Light Rail	Silver Spring
30	Manchester Place	Light Rail	Silver Spring
31	MD 185 Connecticut Ave BRT	Streetcar / B R T	Not in Regional Activity Center
32	MD 193 University Blvd BRT	Streetcar / B R T	Wheaton
33	MD 28 First St BRT	Streetcar / B R T	Rockville Twinbrook
34	Medical Center	Metro	NIH-Walter Reed
35	Metropolitan Grove	Commuter Rail / Streetcar / B R T	Gaithersburg Metropolitan Grove
36	Montgomery College BRT	Streetcar / B R T	Rockville Montgomery College
37	Newport Mill Rd BRT	Streetcar / B R T	Kensington

No.	HCT Station Area	HCT System	Regional Activity Center
38	NIST	Streetcar / B R T	Gaithersburg Kentlands
39	Oak Leaf Drive BRT	Streetcar / B R T	White Oak-FDA
40	Parkland Dr BRT	Streetcar / B R T	Rockville Twinbrook
41	Piney Branch Road	Light Rail	Langley Park
42	Randolph Rd BRT	Streetcar / B R T	White Flint
43	Rockville	Metro / Commuter Rail / B R T	Rockville Town Center
44	Shady Grove	Metro / Streetcar / B R T	Rockville King Farm-Research Center
45	Silver Spring	Metro / Commuter Rail / Light Rail / B R T	Silver Spring
46	Silver Spring Library	Light Rail	Silver Spring
47	Stewart Lane BRT	Streetcar / B R T	White Oak-FDA
48	Tech Road BRT	Streetcar / B R T	White Oak-FDA
49	Traville Gateway Dr.	Streetcar / B R T	Life Sciences Center-Gaithersburg
50	Twinbrook	Metro	Rockville Twinbrook
51	Twinbrook Pkwy BRT	Streetcar / B R T	Rockville Twinbrook
52	Universities at Shady Grove	Streetcar / B R T	Life Sciences Center-Gaithersburg
53	University Blvd BRT	Streetcar / B R T	Not in Regional Activity Center
54	Washington Grove	Commuter Rail	Rockville King Farm-Research Center
55	West Gaither	Streetcar / B R T	Rockville King Farm-Research Center
56	Wheaton	Metro / Streetcar / B R T	Wheaton
57	White Flint	Metro	White Flint
58	White Oak Transit Center BRT	Streetcar / B R T	Not in Regional Activity Center
59	Woodside	Light Rail	Silver Spring
Prince George's County			
1	Addison Road-Seat Pleasant	Metro	Not in Regional Activity Center
2	Annapolis Road	Light Rail	New Carrollton
3	Bowie State	Commuter Rail	Bowie MARC
4	Branch Ave	Metro	Branch Ave
5	Capitol Heights	Metro	Capitol Heights-Addison Road
6	Cheverly	Metro	Landover Metro
7	College Park - U of MD	Metro/Commuter Rail /Light Rail	College Park
8	East Campus	Light Rail	Not in Regional Activity Center
9	Greenbelt	Metro / Commuter Rail	Greenbelt
10	Landover	Metro	Landover Metro

No.	HCT Station Area	HCT System	Regional Activity Center
11	Largo Town Center	Metro	Largo Town Center-Morgan Blvd
12	Laurel	Commuter Rail	Not in Regional Activity Center
13	Morgan Boulevard	Metro	Not in Regional Activity Center
14	M-Square	Light Rail	College Park
15	Muirkirk	Commuter Rail	Konterra
16	Naylor Road	Metro	Naylor-Southern Ave
17	New Carrollton	Metro / Commuter Rail	New Carrollton
18	Prince George's Plaza	Metro	Prince George's Plaza
19	Riggs Road	Light Rail	Langley Park
20	Riverdale	Commuter Rail	College Park
21	Riverdale Park	Light Rail	College Park
22	Riverdale Road	Light Rail	New Carrollton
23	Seabrook	Commuter Rail	Not in Regional Activity Center
24	Southern Avenue	Metro	Naylor-Southern Ave
25	Suitland	Metro	Suitland
26	Takoma/Langley Transit Center	Light Rail	Langley Park
27	UM Campus Center	Light Rail	Not in Regional Activity Center
28	West Campus	Light Rail	College Park
29	West Hyattsville	Metro	West Hyattsville Metro
Prince William County			
1	Potomac Shores	Commuter Rail	Potomac Shores
2	Quantico	Commuter Rail	Not in Regional Activity Center
3	Rippon	Commuter Rail	Not in Regional Activity Center
4	Woodbridge	Commuter Rail / Streetcar / B R T	North Woodbridge
5	Broad Run/Airport	Commuter Rail	Manassas Regional Airport

Notes: Stations areas identified by the TPB as focus areas for implanting access improvements projects are in bold font.
 * "Multi system" indicates that more than one type of transit service is available at the station.

MORE: mwcog.org/highcapacitytransit

**METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
777 NORTH CAPITOL STREET, NE
WASHINGTON, DC 20002**

**RESOLUTION ENDORSING HIGH-CAPACITY TRANSIT STATION AREAS AS A KEY PLANNING CONCEPT
AND TOOL TO INFORM DECISION MAKING AND ACTION**

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) comprises the region's 24 local governments and their governing officials, plus area members of the Maryland and Virginia legislatures and the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, and COG provides a focus for action on issues of regional concern; and

WHEREAS, area jurisdictions have a shared vision, *Region Forward*, for a more prosperous, accessible, livable, and sustainable future which has guided the region's evolution over the past two decades into a national leader in transit-oriented development; and

WHEREAS, the region has adopted a set of goals and targets to realize its aspiration for an equitable, prosperous, and sustainable region including in the areas of housing, climate change, and accessibility; and

WHEREAS, the COG Board has articulated building transit-oriented communities as a multi-sectoral planning priority to achieve multiple regional goals including those in housing, climate change, and accessibility; and

WHEREAS, the region's Transportation Planning Board (TPB) in 2018 identified the need for additional housing units and bringing housing closer to jobs as land use and transportation strategies to advance the region's accessibility and climate change goals while also optimizing transportation system performance, and recommended that COG advance land use solutions to address this need; and

WHEREAS, in 2019 the COG Board adopted regional housing amount, accessibility, and affordability targets, stating that at least 320,000 housing units should be added in the region by 2030, with at least 75 percent built in Regional Activity Centers (RACs) or near High-Capacity Transit Station Areas (HCTs), and 75 percent accessible to low- to middle-income households; and

WHEREAS, the region has a well-established system of HCTs that includes heavy urban and commuter rail, light rail, streetcar, and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) services; and

WHEREAS, local governments have supported these HCTs through their zoning and land use planning decisions, identifying them as good locations to concentrate future growth to promote desirable development patterns; and

WHEREAS, the TPB has identified 225 areas (occupying just 10 percent of the region's land area), which currently serve as or are planned to serve as HCTs by 2030 (to be updated periodically), as opportune locations to optimize land use and transportation system connectivity; and

WHEREAS, the COG draft Round 9.2 Cooperative Forecasts project that between 2020 and 2030 the region will add 406,000 jobs to the existing 3.4 million, 592,000 more residents to the existing 5.7 million, and 250,000 more households to the existing 2.1 million, and further that 55 percent of new job growth, 39 percent of new population growth, and 42 percent of new household growth will occur within one-half mile of the 225 HCT stations; and

WHEREAS, at the COG Leadership Retreat in July 2021, the board engaged in discussions on optimizing land use around the 225 HCTs, and connecting them to their surrounding communities, both to get the most out of the infrastructure investments already made and to build successful mixed-use, mixed-income transit-oriented communities as a means to achieve the region's housing, climate change, and accessibility goals in an equitable manner; and

WHEREAS, optimizing the land use in HCTs means building equitable and successful communities that have a variety of services and amenities, within walk, bike, or micro-transit distances, such as housing that is affordable at all income levels, jobs, access to fresh food, health services, education, and other needs through mixed-land use; and

WHEREAS, optimizing the land use in HCTs also means providing the community with safe and convenient access to HCTs, particularly those within an RAC, which can increase transit usage, reduce household transportation costs, particularly to the transit-dependent population groups, and provide a wider range of travel options for residents and workers (particularly essential workers); and

WHEREAS, the TPB has further identified two specific initiatives that support both the goal to provide better connectivity within and between transit-oriented communities and access to HCTs, one which includes removing barriers to walking to the HCT stations and the second to complete the National Capital Trail Network (NCTN), a 1,400 mile network of region-wide trails suitable for non-motorized use, of which about 50 percent exists today; and

WHEREAS, to plan for the expected growth in the region in a way that advances multiple regional goals and prioritizes opportunities for affordable and effective means of mobility for all people, the region must optimize its land use and transportation systems to develop communities that leverage current and planned assets.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS THAT:

1. HCTs should be prioritized for special consideration in land use and transportation planning and programming decision making at local and regional levels to achieve our housing, accessibility, transportation, and climate change goals in an equitable manner.
2. COG committees and staff should discuss and consider strategies, as appropriate, to optimize land use and transportation systems in and around HCTs anticipated by 2030, in regional planning and programming activities.
3. Local governments should commit to provide safe and convenient walk, bike, and micro-transit access to HCTs as a means to make transit a viable mode of travel for all trip purposes and reduce automobile travel and related greenhouse gas emissions.

4. Local governments should commit to complete the NCTN as a means to connect communities in and around HCTs and provide active modes of transportation to access a variety of economic opportunities and help reduce automobile travel and related greenhouse gas emissions.
5. Local governments should strongly consider adopting local resolutions committing to optimizing access improvements to HCTs, including completing the NCTN, in all local planning efforts.

DRAFT



MEMORANDUM

TO: COG Board of Directors
FROM: Kanti Srikanth, COG Deputy Executive Director for Metropolitan Planning
Paul DesJardin, COG Community Planning and Services Director
Timothy Canan, COG Planning Data and Research Program Director
SUBJECT: Equity Emphasis Areas
DATE: July 19, 2021

SUMMARY

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) approved the region's long-range transportation plan, *Visualize 2045*, in October 2018. As part of that update, the TPB considered the effects of the plan's proposed projects, programs, and policies on low-income and minority residents in accordance with new federal regulations.

To perform this assessment, the TPB developed a methodology to identify census tracts in the region that contain higher concentrations of low-income or minority residents compared to the rest of the region. The methodology revealed that approximately 350 of the 1,222 census tracts across the region met these criteria and were identified as **Equity Emphasis Areas (EEAs)**. Figure 1 identifies the location of the EEAs throughout the region.

Beyond the long-range transportation plan, EEAs can be applied in various additional ways to consider equity and inform regional decisions and actions. For example, the TPB also uses EEAs as selection criteria in all its grant programs that fund planning for access to transit stations, improving roadway safety, alternative modes of travel, and connecting land use and the transportation system.

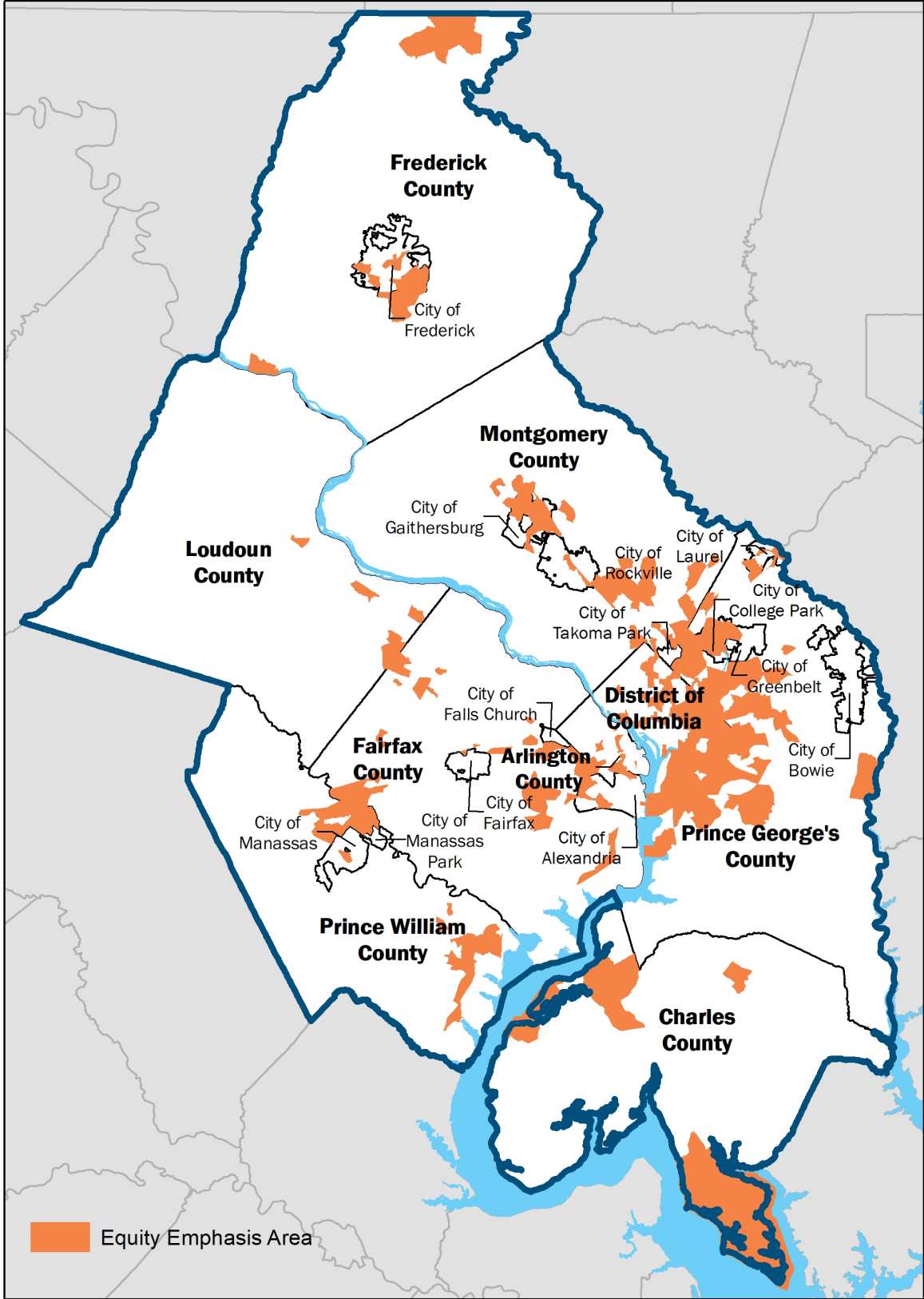
During the 2021 Leadership Retreat, members will consider how EEAs can be used to advance racial equity in additional planning and program areas. Staff will demonstrate how EEAs can be used to examine other equity factors, including educational attainment, economic independence, housing, language proficiency, transportation accessibility and safety, among others.

The memo provides a more in-depth look at the methodology used to develop EEAs and highlights opportunities for using the EEAs in other local and regional planning, project implementation, and decision making.

At the retreat, members will consider EEAs as an analytical framework for local and regional decision making in the areas of land use, transportation, and much more.

EEAs can potentially assist member governments with weaving equity into all that they do and help realize our shared vision for a more prosperous, accessible, livable, and sustainable region for all area residents.

Figure 1: Equity Emphasis Areas



BACKGROUND

Methodology

The methodology developed by TPB to identify EEAs is an enhanced approach to what is required for the Title VI/Environmental Justice Analysis, and relies on the most recently available five-year data from the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) on income, race, and ethnicity to determine which census tracts have concentrations of low-income populations, minority populations, or both, higher than the average concentration in the TPB planning area. Data from the ACS for each of the following four population groups is used:

- Low Income¹
- Black or African American²
- Asian³, and
- Hispanic or Latino⁴

Federal guidance defines the following three fundamental Environmental Justice (EJ) principles that serve as the guiding principles for EJ analysis:

- To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations.
- To ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision making process.
- To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

Executive Order 12898 on US DOT's EJ analysis further defines a "disproportionately high and adverse effect on minority and low-income populations" as an effect that:

1. is predominately borne by a minority population and/or a low-income population, or
2. will be suffered by the minority population and/or low-income population and is appreciably more severe or greater in magnitude than the adverse effect that will be suffered by the non-minority population and/or non-low-income population.

The above could serve as the minimum framework for outcomes of an equity analysis within any area of local or regional decision making.

¹ Individuals with household income less than one-and-a-half times the federal government's official poverty threshold, depending on household size.

² A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.

³ A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent.

⁴ A person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race

The metropolitan Washington regional planning area covers slightly more than 3,500 square miles and includes 24 jurisdictions. This planning area includes dense urban areas, such as the District of Columbia, and relatively rural outer suburban locations, such as Frederick County. In addition, the demographics and built environment vary widely throughout the region.

Given the variation in land area, its use, and population among the various census tracts within the planning area, Index Scores were developed and assigned to each tract to help provide a standard basis to determine areas with high concentration of the four population groups previously identified. Index scores are assigned to each population group by first calculating the proportion of these four groups within each census tract and then determining the ratio of the tract's concentration to that of the region's ⁵ concentration for the group. Tracts are identified as EEAs if one of three criteria are met:

1. Tract has a concentration of individuals identified as low-income more than one-and-a-half times the regional average.
2. Tract has high concentration for two or more minority population groups.
3. Tract has high concentration of at least one minority population group and the concentration of individuals identified as low income that is at or above the region's average.

The Region's EEAs

Figure 1 displays the EEA map developed by the TPB as part of its 2018 long-range transportation plan using ACS 5-year estimates from 2012-2016. Of the 1,231 census tracts in the TPB planning area, 1,222 were analyzed (nine were not as they did not have people residing in them or had no reliable population estimates, ex., Dulles Airport, National Mall, etc.) and 351 met the criteria and were designated as EEAs. The 351 EEAs occupy 341 square miles of the total 3,558 square miles covering the TPB planning area.

Per the ACS data, the total population in the TPB planning area was 5.6 million persons, of which 1.6 million persons resided in EEAs. The analysis will be updated, and the EEA maps revised in conjunction with each major long-range transportation plan update using the latest ACS data.

Table 1 provides the total population of TPB member jurisdictions and the population of those jurisdictions residing in EEAs using more recent ACS 5-year estimates. Additional information on EEAs and the methodology and analysis can be found here: mwcog.org/equityemphasisareas.

⁵ Region is defined as the TPB Planning Area: mwcog.org/TPB

Table 1: Breakdown of Jurisdiction and EEA population

Equity Emphasis Areas per Jurisdiction			
TPB Planning Area Jurisdiction	Number of EEAs	Total	Population within EEAs
District of Columbia	97	692,625	373,236
Charles County	5	159,428	17,979
Frederick County	9	251,422	40,271
Montgomery County	49	1,043,530	259,093
Prince George's County	103	908,670	413,340
Maryland Subtotal	166	2,363,050	730,683
City of Alexandria	9	157,613	45,274
Arlington County	12	233,460	47,013
Fairfax County	43	1,145,857	215,246
City of Fairfax	0	23,531	0
City of Falls Church	0	14,128	0
Loudoun County	5	395,134	27,437
City of Manassas	1	41,174	7,609
City of Manassas Park	1	16,986	7,291
Prince William County	17	467,886	103,940
Fauquier Co. UZA portion	0	35,928	0
Virginia Subtotal	88	2,531,697	453,810
Total	351	5,587,372	1,557,729

Source: ACS 2015-2019 Data

BROADER APPLICATIONS OF EEAS

Advancing equity among traditionally underserved communities is a key principle for many working in local and regional planning and decision making in the region. Racial equity is a fundamental value for COG, affirmed by the Board of Directors in a resolution in July 2020:

“The Board affirms that our work together as the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments will be anti-racist and will advance equity; and The Board affirms that Equity will be woven into COG’s Region Forward Vision to ensure a more prosperous, accessible, livable, sustainable, and equitable future for all area residents and throughout COG’s analyses, operations, procurement, programs, and priorities.”

The 351 EEAs can be useful in informing discussions on equity in other social and community planning activities in housing, health, public safety, education, economic opportunities, and more.

For example, the impact on EEAs could be used for determining the best location of additional housing, climate planning initiatives, tree canopy planning, and food security programming. Moreover, additional data can be examined inside EEAs and in areas outside of EEAs to cultivate a deeper understanding on the nature and magnitude of equity disparities throughout the region and help inform important policy discussions that seek to address them.

While the TPB is required to examine disproportional impacts of long-range transportation plans on low-income and minority residents, there are numerous other equity considerations that can be taken into account. Other data sources are available at the census tract level. These include information on factors such as households on food stamp assistance programs, persons with limited proficiency in English, single-parent households, levels of education achieved, and the cost of rent as a percentage of annual income. In addition, the TPB recently conducted a study on traffic safety in the region. As part of the study, data on fatal crashes were compiled and analyzed at the census tract level, providing information on traffic safety inside and outside of EEAs.

These additional factors can provide much broader understanding of the disparities present in the region’s communities and signal a need to take actions that address them.

WORKING TOGETHER TO ENHANCE EEAS

At the retreat, members will consider whether EEAs should be used in local and regional decision making as means to achieve their shared vision for a more prosperous, accessible, livable, and sustainable region for all, including addressing inequities in the areas of accessibility, quality of life, safety, and more.

As part of the retreat briefings, staff will highlight opportunities for optimizing land use and transportation in High-Capacity Transit Station Areas (HCTs), including by completing the National Capital Trail Network (NCTN), which can help improve accessibility of residents to jobs. When considering these opportunities, better understanding the relationship between EEAs and HCTs can further assist and inform decisions that will cultivate improved access of residents in EEAs to these jobs through investments in infrastructure like the NCTN.

More information on HCTs and the NCTN have also been provided to board members for the retreat. When considered together, taking actions to optimize HCTs, further examining and addressing equity using the EEA framework, and investing in the completion of the NCTN can result in meaningful progress for the region in achieving its priorities and goals.

MORE: mwcog.org/equityemphasisareas

**METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
777 NORTH CAPITOL STREET, NE
WASHINGTON, DC 20002**

**RESOLUTION ENDORSING EQUITY EMPHASIS AREAS AS A KEY PLANNING CONCEPT AND TOOL TO
INFORM DECISION MAKING AND ACTION**

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) comprises the region's 24 local governments and their governing officials, plus area members of the Maryland and Virginia legislatures and the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, and COG provides a focus for action on issues of regional concern; and

WHEREAS, in July 2020 the COG Board passed Resolution R26-2020, affirming that its work together will be anti-racist and will advance equity, and that equity will be woven into COG's *Region Forward Vision* to ensure a more prosperous, accessible, livable, sustainable, and equitable future for all area residents and throughout COG's analyses, operations, procurement, programs, and priorities; and

WHEREAS, in 2018 the Transportation Planning Board (TPB) adopted a methodology to identify census tracts in the region that contain higher concentrations of low-income or racial or ethnic minorities compared to the rest of the region, to ensure its long-range plan does not have disproportionate adverse impacts on these communities; and

WHEREAS, the most recent analysis revealed that 351 of the 1,222 census tracts across the region (a number that will be updated periodically) meet the adopted low-income and racial or ethnic minority concentration thresholds and have been identified as Equity Emphasis Areas (EEAs); and

WHEREAS, these 351 EEAs constitute about 10 percent of the region's land area and house about 30 percent of the region's population, with 214 EEAs located within one-half mile of High-Capacity Transit Station Areas (HCTs) and 340 located within one mile of a Regional Activity Center (RAC); and

WHEREAS, COG's multi-faceted regional planning efforts extend beyond transportation and include housing, health, and environment; and

WHEREAS, at the COG Leadership Retreat in July 2021 the board took an in-depth look at the TPB's EEA designations and engaged in discussions on how EEAs can be used to advance racial equity in local and regional planning, project implementation, and decision making across all sectors of COG work; and

WHEREAS, given COG's commitment to integrate equity considerations in all of its work activities, using the EEA planning construct along with the RACs and HCTs is a way to enable equity considerations in land use and environment and transportation planning to advance the region's housing, transportation, and climate change goals; and

WHEREAS, COG member jurisdictions could also use EEAs in a wide range of their jurisdictional activities and services such as housing, education/employment opportunities, environment, and livability, to cultivate a deeper understanding of the nature and magnitude of equity disparities across their jurisdiction and help inform important policy discussions that seek to address disparities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS THAT:

1. EEAs should be prioritized for special consideration in regional and local planning and decision making as a means to further the *Region Forward Vision* for an accessible, livable, sustainable, and prosperous region.
2. COG committees and staff should explore and implement strategies, as appropriate, to further incorporate the consideration of EEAs in planning areas including but not limited to transportation, land-use, housing, climate, and water resources and COG should serve as a forum to elevate the conversation around these topics to provide regional thought leadership and demonstrate the connection between equity and greater prosperity for all.
3. Local governments should prioritize efforts that provide safe and convenient walk, bicycle, and micro-transit access to all of the HCTs and to complete the National Capital Trail Network as a means to provide enhanced mobility and accessibility options to the traditionally underserved population groups in the EEAs.
4. Local governments should consider adopting local resolutions committing to prioritizing EEAs identified within their jurisdiction.

AGENDA ITEM #9

COVID 19: SITUATIONAL UPDATE

AGENDA ITEM #10

**ESTABLISHING A REGIONAL
FOOD SECURITY WORK
PROGRAM AND COMMITTEE**

NEWS HIGHLIGHT

New food and agriculture committee begins work, identifies regional priorities

Feb 2, 2021



(DC Central Kitchen/[Flickr](#))

A new food and agriculture committee launched by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) Board of Directors last fall has identified its priorities, which include addressing food insecurity, supporting small farmers, and building on previous work to strengthen the region's food system.

The Food and Agricultural Regional Member Ad Hoc (FARM) Committee outlined these priorities and provided feedback on federal nutrition programs in a letter to the USDA transition team, one of its first official actions.

COG's new #food and #agriculture committee, led by DC Councilmember Mary Cheh, Montgomery County Councilmember Craig Rice, and City of Fairfax Councilmember Jon Stehle ask new administration to prioritize food security, support for small farmers, & more: <https://t.co/DiSIuuThr> [pic.twitter.com/JutlVtAPSz](https://t.co/DiSIuuThr)

— COG (@MWCOG) [January 15, 2021](#)

Many area residents are struggling with food insecurity and food access exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The committee is focused on urgently addressing hunger and building a more resilient, connected food and farm economy, among other solutions.

For example, in its letter to the USDA, FARM Committee leadership expressed support for federal, state, and local initiatives to increase food and cash assistance programs for residents in need, increase participation in programs among eligible residents, and streamline program

administration. This includes the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), school meals, and other federal nutrition programs.

“Programs like SNAP are one of the nation’s—and our region’s—most important defenses against hunger,” said the letter, which urged the USDA to consider how flexibilities in federal nutrition benefit program administration, made in response to COVID-19, could become more permanent.

The letter also requested that the USDA provide guidance to states on Pandemic Electronic Benefit (P-EBT) plans, a critical program for food insecure children. The administration has since provided guidance and extended and expanded the program, among other important federal actions to address food insecurity.

The region’s food system will also be strengthened by supporting small farmers, specifically those identifying as Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC).

According to COG’s *What Our Region Grows* report, BIPOC make up a minority of our region’s farmers, despite the area’s diverse population. The committee has identified land access and ownership as key challenges for BIPOC and new farmers. In addition to exploring these challenges more closely, the committee called on the USDA to also consider how it can deploy financial assistance for these farmers, restore lost land, and prevent future loss.

The letter also cited the partnership with USDA that launched COG’s Regional Food Systems Program in 2016, noting the importance of continuing to expand efforts to sustain regional food and farm economies.

The FARM Committee is made up of 22 local elected officials and subject matter experts, and several alternates, and is chaired by District of Columbia Councilmember Mary Cheh; Montgomery County Councilmember Craig Rice and City of Fairfax Councilmember Jon Stehle are Vice Chairs.

MORE:

[Food and Agricultural Regional Member Ad Hoc \(FARM\) Committee Letter to the USDA Transition Team Regarding Food and Agriculture Regional Member Ad Hoc Committee Priorities](#)

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE REGIONAL MEMBER (FARM) AD HOC COMMITTEE

The COG Food and Agriculture Regional Member (FARM) Ad-Hoc Committee was established by the COG Board of Directors in September 2020. The committee is focused on addressing food insecurity and building a more resilient, connected food and farm economy.

Committee priorities include:

- Improving food security in the region
- Supporting Black, Indigenous, and people of color and small farmers
- Focusing FARM's work on farmland preservation, land use regulations, environmental sustainability, and resilience
- Improving and communicating regional food system data
- Leveraging procurement to support equity and the region's food and farm economy

FARM is currently comprised of 22 members including elected officials and subject matter experts from across the region. FARM's 2021 member [roster can be found at this link](#). FARM's current leadership is Chair Mary Cheh (District of Columbia), and Vice Chairs Craig Rice (Montgomery County) and Jon Stehle (City of Fairfax).

Fiscal Year 2021 Accomplishments

FARM's progress and accomplishments span four key areas covering organizational development, priority identification and related actions, regional coordination, and committee deliverables. For a detailed description of accomplishments, the FY22 draft work program, and other work of the committee, please see [this webpage](#).

Fiscal Year 2022 Priorities and Deliverables

In fiscal year 2022, the FARM Committee will continue making progress on its identified priorities and leverage COG's core competencies to further its impact. In addition to bimonthly FARM meetings, COG will also continue to convene regional meetings of a range of stakeholders on issues such as healthy food access and emergency food assistance, leveraging American Rescue Plan Act funds to support food security, state policy needs, and opportunities to improve Zoning and other regulations to promote land preservation, urban agriculture, food recovery and composting. At a staff-level, synergies with COG's Equity Emphasis Areas, affordable housing priorities, and 2030 Climate Action Plan will also be pursued to elevate new programming opportunities. At the October 2021 meeting, FARM will present a compendium of state and local policies supportive of food security, food access, nutrition, and regional food system development with a focus on the metropolitan Washington region.

FARM is also compiling a regional farmers market list which includes information about programs available to support food access for low-income residents. This will most immediately result in a new data set in the National Capital Region Geodata Spatial Exchange (NCR GDX) which member governments can access for decision-making. It will provide the basis for future regional listings and greater promotion of the connections between regional agriculture and healthy food access.

Fiscal Year 2022 FARM Budget and Proposed Revenue Strategy

Among other objectives, Resolution R37-2020 charged FARM with recommending how to provide long-term direction and collaboration through a regional food and agriculture committee representing diverse entities across the metropolitan Washington region. FARM recommends establishing a permanent committee. At its June meeting, FARM approved the level of effort in the following budget.

Baseline Budget by Cost Category		
Expense	FY22 (July 1 to June 30)	FY22 Prorated (October 1 to June 30)
One, Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) FARM Coordinator and COG Staff Program Support	\$225,000	\$225,000
Meeting expenses/speaker fees/travel	\$10,000	\$7,500
Interns	\$60,000	\$45,000
Total	\$295,000	\$277,500

The FARM budget for FY 2022 includes funding for one FTE and other COG staff to support the committee’s work. COG also plans to leverage baseline funding to obtain grants to pay for programmatic initiatives that will benefit member jurisdictions. One example is the redesign and relaunch of the NationalCapitalFarms.org website to raise the profile of the region’s food and farm economy. Note that these grant-funded initiatives are not included in this budget.

Working with COG staff, FARM’s Executive Committee has endorsed establishing a new regional fund to support the committee’s work in FY 2022 and beyond. Annual contributions from participating jurisdictions will be invoiced to member jurisdictions simultaneous with COG dues.

Proposed Regional Fund Revenue Strategy*		
Potential Contributions	FY22 (July 1 to June 30)	FY22 Prorated (October 1 to June 30)
Level A: Population of less than 75,000	\$10,000	\$7,500
Level B: Population of 75,000-250,000	\$20,000	\$15,000
Level C: Population greater than 250,000	\$35,000	\$26,250

Proposed Next Steps

Following discussion at the COG Leadership Retreat, the COG Board will be asked to consider making the FARM Committee a permanent standing committee, and establishing a regional fund to support its work to improve food security in the near and long term in metropolitan Washington.

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
777 NORTH CAPITOL STREET, NE
WASHINGTON, DC 20002

**RESOLUTION ENDORSING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE REGIONAL MEMBER (FARM) POLICY COMMITTEE AND REGIONAL FUND**

WHEREAS, state and local governments, businesses and other organizations have recognized the importance of food security and having locally and regionally produced food and agriculture products for a host of benefits including, healthy food access, diverse sources of supply and distribution, food system resilience, protection of our agricultural lands, and employment opportunities; and

WHEREAS, in September 2020 the COG Board established a Food and Agriculture Regional Member (FARM) Ad-hoc Committee for the duration of one year; and

WHEREAS, the FARM Ad-hoc Committee was tasked with making policy recommendations for member jurisdictions to support a more resilient, connected food and farm economy in metropolitan Washington; recommending how to provide long-term direction and collaboration through a regional food and agriculture committee representing diverse entities across metropolitan Washington; furthering the goals identified in the *What Our Region Grows* report to the benefit of member jurisdictions; and assisting COG in continuing its COVID-19 food security collaboration; and

WHEREAS, a key recommendation of the *What Our Region Grows* report and the Agricultural Task Force is to establish a committee to advise COG on food and farming related issues to facilitate the development of a more connected, resilient food system; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has affirmed the importance of collaborating across jurisdictions to support enhanced food security, supply chain resiliency, and solutions centering racial equity as key criteria in making policy and investment decisions across systems; and

WHEREAS, the committee would be comprised of members representing COG member jurisdictions and subject matter experts representing local and state food and agriculture interests as is provided in the Committee bylaws; and

WHEREAS, the mission of the Committee and work program will be to address food insecurity and build a more resilient, connected food and farm economy in the metropolitan Washington region; and

WHEREAS, the creation of a regional fund is necessary to support the work of the committee and improve food security in the near and long term throughout the region.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS THAT:

The Board endorses the establishment of a Food and Agriculture Regional Member (FARM) Policy Committee and regional fund to support the work. The FARM Committee and work program will be charged with:

1. Improving food security in the region
2. Supporting Black, Indigenous, and people of color and small farmers
3. Focusing FARM's work on farmland preservation, land use regulations, environmental sustainability, and resilience
4. Improving and communicating regional food system data
5. Leveraging procurement to support equity and the region's food and farm economy

For fiscal year 2022, the participating members will contribute a pro-rated annual contribution to establish the regional fund which will support FARM. Subsequent annual contribution levels will be set as part of the Board's consideration of COG member dues and regional fees.

AGENDA ITEM #11

OTHER BUSINESS

AGENDA ITEM #12

ADJOURN