



2022 Annual Report

Region United: Accelerating Action



Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments



Messages from the COG Board Chair and Executive Director

There is no place better positioned than COG to assist area leaders as we address our biggest, interrelated issues such as housing, transit, climate change, and equity. I am so pleased to see us accelerating action on these priorities and putting in place lessons learned from addressing COVID to create a more accessible, inclusive, and sustainable region.

Even as we celebrate attaining (and surpassing) our 2020 regional climate goal, we are putting in motion electric vehicle planning to help meet an even more ambitious goal for 2030. I am proud of our new Housing Affordability Planning Program, which joins a portfolio of COG grant programs supporting the creation of transit-oriented communities. And it is great to see our members and partners increasingly turn to COG's Equity Emphasis Areas to inform planning and investment decisions.

I look forward to building on this momentum in my year as chair and working alongside you on these initiatives.

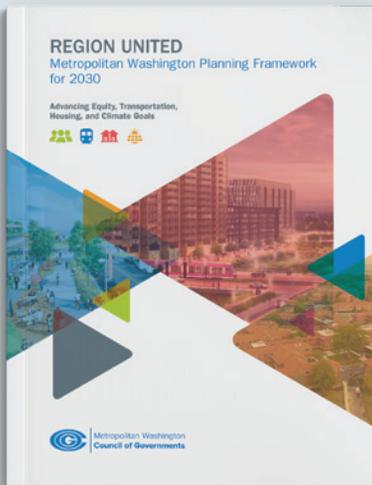
Kate Stewart, 2023 COG Board Chair
Montgomery County Councilmember

As I get to know COG's diverse portfolio of partnerships, programs, and planning initiatives, I've been impressed by the wide network who made the achievements outlined in this report possible. I'm talking about our membership of 300 local, state, and federal elected officials; the public servants from water utilities to police departments and transportation agencies; the partners and stakeholders from the private, nonprofit, and civic sectors; and, of course, COG's expert staff.

Building and enhancing these relationships will be key to delivering the transformative change and results we seek in our *Region Forward Vision* and *Region United Planning Framework*. It's a great honor to take the helm at COG and help seize the many opportunities in front of us to shape strong communities and a better metropolitan Washington for all residents of our region.

Clark Mercer, COG Executive Director





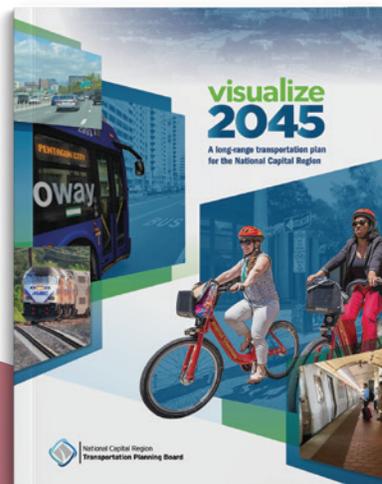
Region United

In 2022, COG pulled together its recent priorities—regional housing targets, a regional greenhouse gas emissions reduction goal, and new transit and equity planning concepts—into an overarching framework for 2030, known as *Region United*. The framework shows how the priorities interrelate and promotes grants, technical assistance, and planning tools available to COG members and partners to advance these shared regional goals.

◀ Learn more: mwkog.org/regionunited

Visualize 2045

The Transportation Planning Board at COG approved a major update to *Visualize 2045*, the region's federally mandated, long-range transportation plan. The multimodal plan consists of highway, transit, and bicycle/pedestrian projects totaling \$233 billion that the region expects to fund through 2045. The 2022 update highlights progress in expanding travel choices, considers how our investments advance equity and opportunity, and takes steps to include climate goals and strategies into the plan.



▲ Learn more: visualize2045.org

Climate Milestone

A COG emissions inventory revealed the region surpassed its goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20 percent below 2005 levels by 2020 due to a cleaner electrical grid, decreased driving, federal fuel efficiency standards, and less intense use of commercial energy. In addition to the regional inventory, COG published summaries for all 24 local jurisdictions.



SOLAR

Grid connected renewables (such as rooftop solar) grew from

500 to 51,000
between 2009 and 2020.



GREEN BUILDINGS

Third-party certified buildings (such as LEED) grew from

90 to 5,300
between 2005 and 2020.



HYBRID AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE (EV)

Ownership grew from

12,000 to 179,000
between 2005 and 2020.



VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED (VMT)

Decreased by 28%

between 2005 and 2020 even as population and jobs grew 20%.

Equity Emphasis Areas (EEAs)

A growing number of organizations, including COG member governments, the Greater Washington Community Foundation, and WMATA, are using EEAs, a planning concept endorsed by the COG Board and incorporated into the *Region United* framework, to inform their decision-making. COG staff updated its mapping tool with the latest data, and now 364 Census tracts with high concentrations of traditionally underserved communities qualify as EEAs.

▲ Learn more: mwcog.org/EEAs

Housing Grants

The new Housing Affordability Planning Program (HAPP), administered by COG and backed by the Amazon Housing Equity Fund, approved its first set of grants for more than \$650,000. The 10 local planning initiatives and development projects awarded funding will support efforts to meet the regional housing targets to produce more units, affordable to those with lower incomes and near transit.

Rendering of HAPP recipient:
Residences at Forest Glen



FARM tour of
Montgomery
Ag Reserve

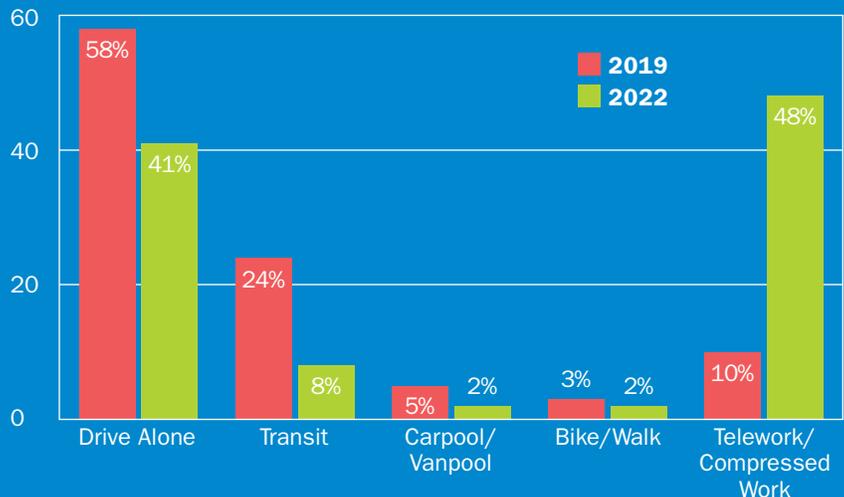
Food Security

Strategies for expanding the use of Medicaid reimbursement for nutritious food, providing flexible forms of cash assistance, and other innovative policies are featured in a comprehensive, new publication, the *Healthy Food Access Policy Compendium for Metropolitan Washington*. The publication, a product of COG's Food and Agriculture Regional Member (FARM) Policy Committee, aims to improve policymaking to strengthen food security.

Commuting Trends

COG has continued to track work and travel trends since the start of COVID, and results from a 2022 survey drew a great deal of attention. Telework has significantly increased from pre-pandemic levels in the region and more commuters shifted away from driving alone and transit, according to the triennial *State of the Commute Survey* by COG's Commuter Connections program.

WEEKLY COMMUTE TRIPS BY MODE TREND



Preparedness

COG continued to help area leaders prepare and train for a wide array of threats and emergencies, including coordinating and communicating during cyber attacks. COG partnered with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) to conduct two major exercises involving city and county managers, emergency management, and information technology officials.

Water Supply

Area leaders have been advancing a long-established priority to improve security and resiliency in the water system, which currently depends on the Potomac River for 78 percent of the region's water supply. COG has been working closely with area water utilities and government leaders to rally support for a federal feasibility study to identify and analyze water supply alternatives, which Congress authorized in December 2022.

Roadway Safety

The Transportation Planning Board and its members have been doubling down on initiatives to improve roadway safety. The TPB coordinated spring and fall Street Smart public awareness campaigns and awarded \$250,000 through its Regional Roadway Safety Program to support local planning or preliminary engineering projects. The TPB also hosted a special roundtable for state departments of transportation to share information about their recent safety efforts.

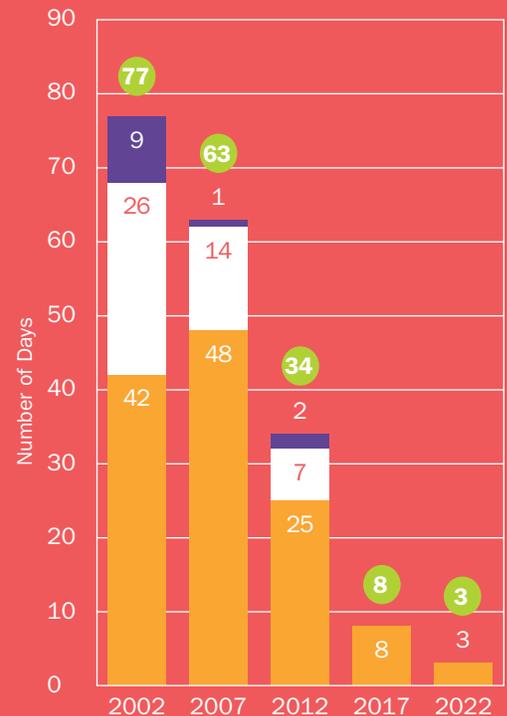


Spring 2022
Street Smart
Campaign Kickoff

Air Quality

Metropolitan Washington experienced just three "Code Orange" unhealthy air days in 2022, a decrease from eight days in 2021, according to data collected as part of COG's Ozone Season Summary for the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee. The region recorded its best three-year period (2020–2022) for air quality since COG began tracking air pollution in the 1970s.

NUMBER OF EXCEEDANCE DAYS UNDER THE 2015 OZONE STANDARD (70PPB)



- Code Purple Days (>105 ppb)
- Code Red Days (>85 ppb)
- Code Orange Days (>70 ppb)
- Total Exceedances

About the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG)

COG is an independent, nonprofit association that brings area leaders from the District of Columbia, suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia together to address regional issues and plan for the future. COG's membership is comprised of 300 elected officials from 24 local governments, the Maryland and Virginia state legislatures, and U.S. Congress.

Alternative formats of this document are available upon request. Visit www.mwcog.org/accommodations or call (202) 962-3300 or (202) 962-3213 (TDD).

Front cover: COG members discuss housing solutions with HUD Secretary Fudge (HUD)

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