



MEMORANDUM

TO: COG Board of Directors
FROM: Clark Mercer, COG Executive Director
SUBJECT: Executive Director's Report – April 2023
DATE: April 5, 2023

POLICY BOARD & COMMITTEE UPDATES

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) – At its March 15 meeting, the TPB adopted its FY 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) as well as the FY 2024 Commuter Connections Work Program. The board was briefed on the Environmental Justice analysis results of the 2022 update of the *Visualize 2045* long-range transportation plan. The analysis reports that the plan does not have a disproportionately high or significantly adverse impact on low-income and racial and ethnic minority population groups. In addition, TPB members were introduced to new COG Executive Director Clark Mercer.

Climate, Energy & Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) – At its March meeting, CEEPC discussed the global Race to Zero Campaign and how COG and member goals, and high impact action areas compare. ICLEI's Local Government Budgeting for Climate Action Cohort was highlighted, and members expressed interest in a future regional cohort on this topic. Frederick and Loudoun Counties' plans for climate, energy, and electric vehicle planning were also presented.

Chesapeake Bay and Water Resources Policy Committee (CBPC) – CBPC wrapped up its review and advocacy regarding legislation in the state assemblies. In their March meeting, CBPC members were briefed about Charles County's innovative oyster restoration project producing stormwater program credits and were presented with key findings from the Hughes Center Maryland Forest and Tree Canopy Study.



PFAS Summit focuses on 'Forever Chemicals'

At a summit organized by COG and hosted at DC Water Headquarters in honor of World Water Day on March 22, water utility professionals, researchers, environmental advocates and experts, and local government staff gathered to learn more about PFAS, their presence in the environment, and regulatory and policy implications as the region works together to ensure safe and clean water for residents. Fairfax County Vice Chair and COG Board Member Penny Gross provided opening remarks.

[Read the highlight.](#)

OUTREACH & PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Fair Housing – Throughout March, COG Housing Program Manager Hilary Chapman presented the draft *Regional Fair Housing Plan* to: Northern Virginia Association of Realtors, Arlington County Tenant’s Commission, the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors Public Hearing on the draft plan, the Northern Virginia Regional Commission, the Purple Line Corridor Coalition, Fairfax County Public Hearings and Listening Sessions, and ULI Washington as part of a panel presentation. Housing Planner Shirin Wilkerson participated as panelist to brief the Montgomery County Council Housing Task Force on the COG Housing Targets on March 27.

Homeland Security and Public Safety – On March 30, COG and the Baltimore Metropolitan Council convened the first joint meeting of their cybersecurity committees. Participants included the State of Maryland and nearly two dozen local jurisdictions, schools, public utilities, and public transportation agencies across the National Capital Region and Baltimore Metro Region. Topics discussed included cybersecurity insurance, information security and emergency management collaboration, how entities may leverage federal government services to mitigate risk, and opportunities for future regular collaboration.

Regional Transit – Deputy Executive Director Kanti Srikanth briefed the Maryland General Assembly’s Transit Caucus on the state of transit in the region.

Commuting Trends – On March 14, COG Commuter Connections Director Nicholas Ramfos joined the Montgomery County Action Committee for Transit to share the results of the *2022 State of the Commute Survey*.

Water Resources – COG’s Community Engagement Campaign announced the winners of the 2023 One Water Regional Art Contest. The contest was open to high school aged youth and submitted pieces highlighted the ways in which community members can protect and preserve the region’s water sources. [Read the highlight.](#)

Electric Vehicles – The Regional Electric Vehicle Deployment Working Group convened for its first meeting on March 16. Committee members received a briefing on regional deployment of electric vehicles as a COG priority. Representatives from Virginia, Maryland, and D.C. Departments of Transportation presented their plans for NEVI Formula Funding Deployment.



BATTERY MANAGEMENT CAMPAIGN:

On April 3, COG launched a four-week public education campaign sharing information about proper disposal of batteries and fire risks associated with batteries in the solid waste and recycling collection process. The campaign is sponsored by several area waste haulers and local jurisdictions’ public works departments.

[Learn more about the campaign.](#)

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Housing – COG’s Regional Housing Targets and the *Regional Fair Housing Plan* continue to be referenced in conversations on the region’s housing needs.

[Washington Post](#) – Editorial on Arlington’s “Missing Middle”.

[Greater Greater Washington](#) – shares info on “Missing Middle” vote.

Roadway Safety – “How Safe are our Roads?” Report and Regional Roadway Safety Program highlight work to improve the safety of the region’s multi-modal transportation network.

[Greater Greater Washington](#) – coverage of Northern Virginia Families for Safer Streets’ “Near Miss Dashboard” mentions COG roadway safety grants.



PODCAST: PRIORITIZING SAFETY ON OUR REGION'S ROADWAYS

In the latest episode of COG's podcast, Think Regionally, area officials discuss strategies like redesigning streets to be safer for all users, increasing public outreach and education, and using equity tools (like EEAs) to target historically underserved areas.

[Listen to the episode/read the transcript.](#)