



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** COG Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Clark Mercer, COG Executive Director  
**SUBJECT:** Executive Director's Report – March 2024  
**DATE:** March 6, 2024

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### POLICY BOARD & COMMITTEE UPDATES

**National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB)** – At its February meeting, the TPB adopted two resolutions, the first making an adjustment to the TPB membership to remove Fauquier County from the Board and MPO, and the second approved an update to the National Capital Trail Network, which will provide a continuous pedestrian and bicycle network of 1,549 miles of trails and already includes 752 completed miles. The board also received updates on key planning activities for 2024, the FY 2025 Unified Planning Work Program and the FY 2025 Commuter Connections Work Program.

**Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC)** – At its February meeting, members and state air agencies provided updates on activities about their respective jurisdictions. COG Environmental Engineer Sunil Kumar briefed members on EPA's revised fine particles (PM2.5) air quality health standard and provided an overview on MWAQC's role in the region's air quality planning efforts. COG staff also provided an overview of the upcoming DC, MD, and VA legislative sessions, and outlined the development of a new approach to equity and environmental justice in air quality planning. In addition, TPB staff briefed the committee on how air quality planning is an integral part of the transportation planning process.

**Food & Agriculture Regional Member (FARM) Policy Committee** – At its February meeting, members received a briefing on the upcoming 2024 Farm Bill's significance for food security and agriculture and outlined why this bill is important for the region. Members approved the next steps of sending a letter to metropolitan Washington's Congressional delegation to share FARM's priorities for the upcoming Farm Bill and appropriations process negotiations. Lastly, members received updates on



#### Visualize 2050 – Public Comment

From March 1 - 30, 2024, the public is invited to comment on the National Capital Region Transportation Plan—Visualize 2050—before the TPB conducts an Air Quality Conformity Analysis of proposed, regionally significant roadway and transit projects, the next step in the planning process. For projects to receive federal funding and approvals, they must be in the TPB plan.

[Click here to learn more](#)

the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Healthy School Meals for All, Child Tax Credit, and legislation supporting small farmers and the region's food system.

## OUTREACH & PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

**Stakeholder engagement** – On February 5, COG Executive Director Clark Mercer joined Arlington County 2050: Envisioning Tomorrow Together. Mercer also participated in the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) National Conference of Regions, and on February 21, Mercer delivered an in-person testimony at the DC Performance Oversight Hearing.

**Climate Pollution Reduction Grants** – COG has released the final DC-VA-MD-WV Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) [Priority Climate Action Plan \(PCAP\)](#). The PCAP, funded by the Inflation Reduction Act, was prepared for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a deliverable for the Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG) Program. DOEE engaged COG through a subgrant to develop the PCAP. The (PCAP) presents practical and achievable strategies to reduce air pollution and GHG emissions in the MSA.

**Transportation planning** – TPB is accepting applications for the Community Leadership Institute, an educational program where participants learn to be regional transportation leaders by connecting the interests of their local communities, constituencies, and elected officials with the planning issues facing the entire region. [Apply by March 15, 2024.](#)

**Bike to Work Day** – COG's Commuter Connections program and the Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) partnered for Bike to Work Day, which will take place on Friday, May 17 in over 100 pit stops throughout the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia. This event offers a healthy and enjoyable start to the workday. Visit [www.biketoworkmetrodc.org](http://www.biketoworkmetrodc.org) for more information and to register.

**Homeless services** – On February 22, the COG Homeless Services Committee formally kicked off its partnership with Community Solutions to participate in its regional Built for Zero initiative. COG will serve as the regional backbone organization, the designation for organizations supporting and guiding multijurisdictional efforts to prevent and end homelessness. Community Solutions will provide three years of technical assistance, training, and coaching to COG staff and local jurisdictions. The committee will be focusing on ending Veteran homelessness as a region.



### Future of the Federal Workplace Roundtable Discussion

Following the completion of the Workplace Scenario Planning Study, COG and the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) reconvened stakeholders to go over the key findings and prioritize issues the region should address in policy development in NCPC's next Comprehensive Plan that will benefit both federal and local interests moving forward from the pandemic.

[Discover additional insights into the research](#)

**Winter Weather Coordination** – On February 5, COG virtually hosted hundreds of regional stakeholders involved in severe winter weather operations for a briefing from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management on the federal workforce status decision-making process.

## MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

**Metro FY 2025 Budget** – The COG Board of Directors discussion of budget issues for WMATA was covered in news stories by WTOP and NBC 4. COG Executive Director Clark Mercer also discussed the status of funding for Metro in the Virginia legislative session.

[WTOP – quotes COG Board Chair Charles Allen at COG Board meeting](#)

[WTOP – quotes COG Executive Director Clark Mercer on funding discussions in Virginia](#)

**Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA)** – The COG Board of Directors unanimously approved Resolution R11-2024, urging Congress to not add slots or change the perimeter rules at DCA. It drew coverage from the Washington Business Journal and WTOP.

[Washington Business Journal](#)

[WTOP – quotes COG Board Chair Charles Allen](#)



### WBJ Executive Profile

The Washington Business Journal profiled Executive Director Clark Mercer in its March 1, 2024 edition covering regional initiatives underway at COG as well as details from his past experience.

[Profile on COG Executive Director Clark Mercer](#)