



## MEMORANDUM

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

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## 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](#)