

An Eye on the

FUTURE



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Regional Structure

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments – also known as COG – is a regional organization comprised of representatives of 20 local governments surrounding the nation’s capital, plus area members of the Maryland and Virginia legislatures, the U.S. Senate, and the U.S. House of Representatives.

Policies are set by the full membership acting through the Board of Directors, the National Capital Area Transportation Planning Board, and the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee. These three independent policy boards are responsible for a broad range of issues under the COG umbrella, and are supported by an energetic group of stakeholders from diverse disciplines. Supporting groups help shape programs and technical procedures through the dedicated work of public servants whose occupations span a wide range, from police chiefs to social workers.

Framework for the Future

In a little more than two decades, the metropolitan Washington region is expected to be 1.6 million people and 1.2 million jobs bigger than it is today. For those who live and work in the region, the increases will mean more congestion on roadways, more crowding on buses and trains, and more threats to the natural environment.

With this in mind, the Board of Directors at COG adopted a multi-year policy focus on growth and development. Now two years into that plan, COG is well on its way to pinpointing solutions for some of the region’s toughest challenges. In bringing together the many separate entities that make up the metropolitan area, COG serves as the place where regional solutions are born and built—in the face of growth and development and changing needs.

VISION & MISSION

The elected officials of COG envision the National Capital Region as the best place to live, work, play and learn.

COG fosters regionalism by promoting regional partnerships, developing best practices, applying cutting-edge technologies, and providing a forum for decision-making.

COG is the premier forum to resolve regional issues by convening local governments and other stakeholders. It is the place where intergovernmental plans are developed to enhance the quality of life in the National Capital Region.



Message from THE BOARD CHAIR



As a long-time member of the Board of Directors, I have watched the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' role in the National Capital Region evolve. Following 9/11, issues of safety and security quickly came to the forefront. When the Metro system faced a funding crisis in 2004, we mobilized to respond to this regional need.

Our overarching long-term challenge, however, is how our region will grow. How will we manage the projected 1.6 million new residents and 1.2 million new jobs that WILL arrive by 2030? Where will we put these people and these jobs? How do we sustain our prosperity while not being strangled by it? How do we ensure a quality of life that will continue to attract highly skilled workers? How do we reduce time spent in congestion, protect the Chesapeake Bay, and offset the effects of skyrocketing housing costs? And how do we find new ways of working together – across jurisdictional and other boundaries – to meet these challenges?

Since 2004, consecutive COG Boards have made issues related to growth and development our top priority. Many of the programs and policies described in this annual report were influenced by this multi-year policy focus on growth and development.

The Reality Check on Growth exercise – held in 2005 and spearheaded by the Urban Land Institute and co-sponsored by COG – successfully raised the awareness of these growth-related challenges.

In 2005, COG also helped coordinate a citizen education campaign on personal emergency preparedness, began a reassessment of the region's emergency plans, sponsored a summit regarding day laborer issues, implemented a recruitment campaign for foster parents, and recorded our first summer with no Code Red air quality days. We have selected some of COG's most significant accomplishments to highlight in this 2005 Annual Report.

Each year, we look back to take stock of past achievements and milestones. And more importantly, we look forward to refine our vision of the future and to do the hard work necessary to take tangible steps in moving our wonderful metropolitan Washington region yet closer to that common vision. I look forward to continuing our work together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jay Fisette". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jay Fisette
2006 Chair, Board of Directors

Message from THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



I like to think of COG as a place of action. Year after year, this organization works to improve the region's quality of life through its many programs and initiatives.

But in addition to clean air initiatives and transportation studies, one of COG's biggest responsibilities is to call attention to challenges the region is likely to face in coming years. As we look ahead, I am confident that the metropolitan region will continue to reap the benefits of this organization's pool of highly skilled, enthusiastic contributors.

COG provides a valuable setting for discussion and debate in front of a region-wide audience, but it is more than just a gathering place for big discussions about large-scale growth and development in the region. It is also the focal point where health directors cooperate on emergency preparedness, housing directors create methods for more affordable housing, police chiefs collaborate on crime-solving techniques, and environmental managers develop proactive policies to clean the Chesapeake Bay and Potomac and Anacostia Rivers. In 2005, COG facilitated dialogue on many issues that are likely to intensify in the future, such as day laborer centers and homelessness.

Through working with the Board of Directors and various committees, COG's member jurisdictions took great strides in meeting our vision and mission for the metropolitan region. I look forward to more discussion, debate, and new ideas on how to plan and build an even stronger region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David J. Robertson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David J. Robertson
Executive Director



PLANNING

The region must create 92,000 homes in addition to the ones already planned in current blueprints.

PLANNING

At the Center of Change

Area residents are becoming increasingly concerned with issues such as rapid growth and development, traffic congestion, and air and water quality. For these complicated, often-interrelated issues, local governments turn to COG and its record of sound planning and regional collaboration.

The Big Picture

Planning for rapid growth was a key theme throughout 2005 at the Council of Governments. According to COG's most recent Round 7.0 Forecasts, by 2030 metropolitan Washington will have 1.6 million more residents and 1.2 million new jobs than it did in 2005. These new numbers led COG's committee of local planning officials to conclude that the region must create 92,000 homes in addition to the ones already planned in their current blueprints.

Earlier in the year, local leaders gathered together for a hands-on exercise to decide the best places to put these new people, jobs and homes by using toy building blocks on maps of the region. At the Reality Check on Growth Summit, hundreds of participants including developers, environmentalists, business people and elected officials were

encouraged to work together and apply new tools and strategies to help guide the planning processes.

Base Closings

In addition to regularly-scheduled forecasts, COG responded quickly to a Board request to analyze the regional impact of the U.S. Department of Defense base closure and realignment recommendations. The study predicted an initial drop in jobs in 2010 due to the proposed changes, followed by a strong rebound in 2020 thanks to the region's healthy economic outlook. COG also forecast slight increases in vehicle trips and emissions as well as a decrease in transit trips. The Board expressed concern that the base closings and separate DoD anti-terrorism, building setback standards were not consistent with local land-use policies such as transit-oriented development.



COG reminded elected officials in preserving the area's Bay restoration efforts in Frederick County.

New Strategies=New Lanes

Forecasts of new people and jobs will likely mean more cars on the region's already crowded road system, yet adequate funding for highway and transit improvements is increasingly difficult to obtain. With this in mind, elected officials and transportation planners are examining new strategies, such as High Occupancy/Toll (HOT) lanes.

The region's Transportation Planning Board approved a set of goals for a system of these variably-priced lanes, including an agreement that when there are revenue surpluses from tolls, consideration should be given to enhancing transit services. Later in the fall, the TPB approved the first HOT lanes proposal to the region's long-range transportation plans, which will add four new lanes to the Capital Beltway on the Northern Virginia side.

First-time Conversations

One new product of the region's strong economy is a growing number of day laborers, who gather in parking lots, at street corners, and a variety of official and unofficial sites throughout the region. Because many area citizens have expressed concern about the workers' safety, public safety in general, and the impact on local businesses, COG's Human Services Policy Committee organized the region's first summit on day labor issues. The summit served as an introduction for some area officials, while others shared their experiences in dealing with the issues. Representatives from day labor centers, nonprofit groups, local businesses, and labor unions joined the discussion.

Officials that farmers play an important role in preserving natural resources and advancing Chesapeake Bay restoration efforts during a one-day Agricultural Tour and Forum in



Advanced Farms, Fuels

COG reminded elected officials that farmers play an important role in preserving the area's natural resources and advancing Chesapeake Bay restoration efforts during a one-day Agricultural Tour and Forum in Frederick County. Farm representatives explained the methods used to prevent excess nutrients from draining away from local fields, and the forum provided them an opportunity to discuss policies and regulations with regional leaders on the Chesapeake Bay Policy Committee. The future of agriculture was also the focus of a day-long

'Working Lands Forum' hosted by COG and the National Park Service to support contributions to the region's green infrastructure.

Dedication to improved air quality and reduced energy costs led COG to plan a seminar for local government officials and industry experts to discuss new markets for cleaner fuels and environmentally-friendly power sources. More than a half dozen local jurisdictions and agencies have begun purchasing wind power, and other jurisdictions are considering a variety of energy sources that are non-depleting and naturally replenishing.



PREPAREDNESS

Hurricane Katrina

When Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast Region in late August, its impact was felt throughout the nation, including the National Capital Region. Hundreds of evacuees relocated to this area. Through COG, local emergency managers held a series of conference calls to discuss the status of evacuees in their localities and the protocols for offering social services to them. Local governments and citizens of metropolitan Washington donated money, supplies and manpower to rescue and relief efforts in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.

Improving Emergency Response and Readiness

Katrina also prompted area officials to ask COG to help them review and improve upon local and regional emergency plans since the 9/11 attacks. The COG Board of Directors asked for examples of where local efforts

would rely on state and federal assistance and a review of how emergency plans serve disabled, elderly and low-income citizens. The Board also approved new mutual aid legislation to improve coordination among first responders from different area jurisdictions.

PREPAREDNESS

To strengthen regional communication, the committee of local Chief Administrative Officers—which helps lead COG's homeland security efforts—engaged in special briefings with the region's military leadership at Fort McNair and the Congressional Delegation on Capitol Hill in October.

Katrina also struck just as the region launched a citizen preparedness campaign reminding local residents to make an emergency plan for themselves and their families as well as to stock up on essential supplies like water, food, medicine, and batteries for their radios.

Spotlight on Energy Issues

After the hurricane, the National Capital Region posted the highest gasoline prices in the nation, which sparked renewed interest in energy issues. Responding to concerns about the effect of the high prices on the region's economy, COG organized a forum

in September. Business and public policy experts advised local governments to scrap inefficient vehicles in their fleets, expand the mass transit system and concentrate on high-density development that would lessen the length and frequency of car trips. COG was also asked by state officials to review regional energy emergency plans.

Better Commuting Options

The high gasoline prices, which spiked in early September, increased interest in ridesharing and telework. COG's Commuter Connections, a network of regional transportation organizations promoting alternative commuting options, witnessed a dramatic increase in visits to its website and phone inquiries about programs. Earlier in the year, Commuter Connections welcomed hundreds of new people to participate in their ridesharing database thanks to a successful promotional campaign with Gevalia Kaffe headquarters in Clifton, New Jersey.

A photograph of a wooden pillar in a room with a window and a door. The pillar is the central focus, with a window to its left and a door to its right. The text 'REJUVENATION' is overlaid on the image in a large, white, sans-serif font.

REJUVENATION

In 2005, several new initiatives brought to life solutions for some of the region's biggest challenges and provided hope for some of its greatest resources.

REJUVENATION

At the Center of Revival

Each year, the Council of Governments' various committees look for new and inventive ways to better the quality of life for residents and the communities they inhabit. In 2005, several new initiatives brought to life solutions for some of the region's biggest challenges and provided hope for some of its greatest resources.

Fresh starts

The region's great economic growth comes at a price: Many of the most-needed workers, such as police officers and teachers, can no longer afford to live here. Many who earn low wages move in and out of homelessness; others make do in an increasingly expensive rental market. As housing becomes increasingly out of reach for many residents, officials are searching for effective ways to help people achieve the dream of homeownership. In 2005, the Washington Area Housing Partnership – a public-private coalition staffed by COG – created a "Toolkit for Affordable Housing Development." The toolkit provides

local governments with new ideas and successful strategies for preserving housing units for the scores of hard-working citizens who can't afford to live in the region.

As the housing partnership was formulating the toolkit, it also sponsored a special conference at COG that brought together elected officials and nonprofits to discuss joint solutions for ending chronic homelessness. Member governments discussed ways to get more homeless people into programs that address the problems that lead to homelessness.

Reaching out

Among COG's many projects was a renewed effort to reach a segment of the population most in need of help: foster children. The new Work of Heart Foster Parent Recruitment campaign, supported in part by a federal grant and funding from the Freddie Mac Foundation, launched the nation's first regional program to train foster and adoptive parents as recruiters. A separate volunteer

respite program began certifying adults to care for foster children one weekend per month, offering foster parents much-needed breaks for rest and rejuvenation. Both initiatives greatly increased the pool of foster parents and volunteers available to care for children who otherwise would have no place to call home. In its first year, the respite program certified 40 families who cared for foster children in 300 placements.





Renewing the environment

While the region's rapid population and job growth have benefited the region in many ways, it has also intensified the need for forward-looking practices that lessen the impact of development. With even greater expansion looming, the Council of Governments is working harder than ever to protect natural resources and maintain a clean, healthy environment.

For the first time, metropolitan Washington experienced no "code red" health alerts in 2005, proof that efforts to clean the region's air are working. Despite a hot summer, ozone pollution levels did not reach the unhealthy levels that are typical during the air quality season from spring through late fall. The accomplishment is attributed largely to a long list of programs spearheaded by local government agencies, including controls on power plants, cleaner motor vehicle standards, and programs such as vehicle inspection and multi-jurisdictional wind power purchases.

But even as pollution levels were lowered in 2005, the region remained focused on future

challenges to keeping the air clean. The Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee is actively preparing plans to meet the new and more stringent federal health standards for ozone and particulate pollution by 2010.

Member governments also remain committed to improving the quality of the region's waterways. COG's Board of Directors pledged support for public education on the Trash-Free Potomac Initiative, with the goal of cleaning the Potomac River by 2013. Support was also given to cleaning the Chesapeake Bay. Once a prominent source of oysters and blue crabs, the bay now is among the region's most endangered – and most valuable – resources, and needs to be protected. As local governments continued to participate in ongoing efforts to clean it, COG took part in the 2005 National Geographic Summit on Chesapeake Bay Education, where measures were adopted to accelerate protection and restoration of the bay and its tidal tributaries. COG also continued to assist its partners with the restoration of the Anacostia River, which included planting over 1,200 trees and restoring forests along streams in the watershed.



PROGRESS

The Council of Governments has kept pace with the area's changing needs by tapping into new technologies and innovative thinking, in turn positioning itself to be competitive in the global economy.

PROGRESS

At the Center of Progress

As the National Capital Region grows and changes, the needs of its various communities are growing and becoming more sophisticated. The Council of Governments has kept pace with the area's changing needs by tapping into new technologies and innovative thinking, in turn positioning itself to be competitive in the global economy.

Enhanced Coordination

With each year that passes after the events of 9/11, local governments find newer and better methods for securing the metropolitan region surrounding the nation's capital. In 2005, the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia agreed to support a coordination program to handle transportation emergencies. The new system will improve coordination among state transportation departments and Metro by allowing them to share information during all types of emergencies, from major traffic accidents to a potential terrorist attack.

Through the Transportation Planning Board housed at COG, the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia agreed to supply the project with a combined total of \$400,000 over a five-year period, beginning in 2005. The project also received a congressional earmark of \$1.6 million.

Local police departments also found an inventive way to communicate on issues related to public safety. In 2005, COG assisted law enforcement officials as they implemented a new regional pawnshop database to share information on stolen goods and solve crimes. By giving police departments direct access to lists in neighboring jurisdictions, the database has greatly increased chances of recovering items that are stolen in one jurisdiction and then pawned in another. Since its introduction, the system has solved more than 450 cases and assisted in the recovery of \$450,000 worth of stolen property in COG member jurisdictions. Its widespread success caught the attention of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, which selected the database for its annual Excellence in Technology Award.



Improved resources

Some of the region's most progressive steps forward occurred in the area of homeland security, as local governments worked together to set priorities for federal Urban Area Security Initiative funding. Since 2003, the National Capital Region has used a total of \$188 million in grant money for more than 100 projects initiated to improve emergency preparedness.

As a result, the region has made significant strides in preparing for all kinds of emergencies, from weather-related disasters to potential terrorist attacks.

A regional cache of 1,250 portable megahertz radios now enables firefighters and

police to communicate with each other quickly and directly at any time of the day or night. Firefighters, meanwhile, are being equipped with a second set of fire gear in case their first set becomes contaminated during a response to an incident involving chemicals.

Progress was also made in connecting local jurisdictions digitally, a process that will greatly enhance communication during emergencies. A new web-based system will connect individual Emergency Operations Centers through government-owned fiber networks, greatly increasing the speed at which counties and cities can communicate while responding to crisis situations that cross jurisdictional lines.

Since 2003, the National Capital Region has used a total of \$188 million in grant money for more than 100 projects initiated to improve emergency preparedness.

As work on integrating Emergency Operation Centers began in 2005, local governments also made progress in several other areas that together will greatly impact the region's ability to handle security threats in coming years. Grant money was provided for a new automated fingerprint identification system that will allow police to screen suspects against data bases around the country. The region began putting in place mass casualty support units and ambulance buses. At the same time, funding was approved to establish a patient tracking system that will analyze disease symptoms, enabling emergency rooms to quickly react with appropriate care when mass illness becomes a threat.

And, in partnership with COG's members and area water utilities, COG provided assistance with the installation of an early warning monitoring system to enhance water security and protect public health for the citizens of region.

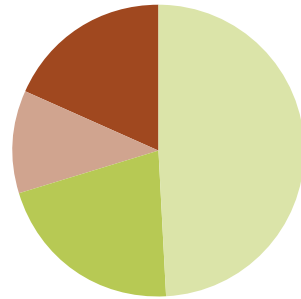
The successes are due largely to government collaboration through the National Capital Region Emergency Preparedness Council, whose member representatives continue meeting quarterly to determine the best, and most efficient, methods for keeping residents and visitors safe.



BUDGET: FY 2005 HIGHLIGHTS

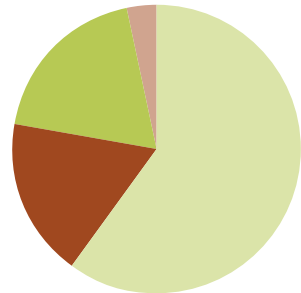
Revenue Sources

Federal Grants and Contracts	\$11,668,303
State Grants and Contracts	\$ 5,053,591
Special Contributions	\$4,319,578
Local Government Contributions	\$2,686,859
Total Revenues	\$23,728,331



Expenditures by Program

Transportation Planning	\$14,297,000
Human Services, Planning & Public Safety	\$4,509,880
Environmental Programs	\$4,180,101
Direct Services to Governments	\$741,350
Total Expenditures	\$23,728,331



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Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

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