



# Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Executive Director's Report • October 2014

COMMITTEE WORK HEART OF COG OUTREACH MEDIA CALENDAR

## Policy Board & Committee Work

### TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD

The TPB focused on the new update of the region's long-range transportation plan, which included two new analyses of the overall plan's funding and its impact on future travel, the environment, and access to jobs. Public comment on the plan is open until October 11.

### CHESAPEAKE BAY AND WATER RESOURCES POLICY COMMITTEE

The Committee met at the Blue Plains Advanced Wastewater Treatment plant to tour the facility and hear a briefing by DC Water GM George Hawkins and Alexandria Renew Enterprises CEO Karen Pallansch on a new study that begins to quantify the tremendous impact the water infrastructure sector (i.e., wastewater, drinking water and stormwater) has on local jobs and the economy.



Leaders tour Blue Plains to see various state-of-the-art technologies for reducing water pollution and saving energy.

### HUMAN SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY POLICY COMMITTEE

The Committee was briefed on regional gang activity, which is relatively stable and accounts for up to half of all violent crimes. They discussed an innovative program by a COG subcommittee where corrections officials are working with local and federal law enforcement to collect intelligence and address gangs and other threats. The Committee was also briefed on the recent Urban Institute-COG study on housing security in the region.

## Heart of COG: Empowering People to Protect their Health & Clean the Air

### JEN DESIMONE, DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS



For a second consecutive summer, area residents could breathe easier thanks to no Code Red unhealthy days — a major milestone for our region! This progress is thanks to a variety of efforts, such as power plant and vehicle emission regulations, energy efficiency programs, renewable energy use, and greener transportation options.

Our progress is also due to the work of Clean Air Partners and its Managing Director Jen Desimone, a 10 year veteran of COG, who leads the program's marketing, education, and outreach. On unhealthy air days, Clean Air Partners encourages people to take everyday actions like driving less, postponing mowing, and reducing their energy use. The program is a public-private partnership created by COG and the Baltimore Metropolitan Council.

Jen has overseen the creation of AirAlerts, mobile apps, and a website that have made it much easier for the public to receive forecasts and health warnings. The AirAlerts system, which was launched in 2007 with 500 subscribers, now has almost 5,000. During this same time span, Clean Air Partners has worked to educate more than 15,000 area schoolchildren on climate and air issues across our two regions. And thanks to this outreach and marketing by Jen and Clean Air Partners, the air quality index color codes are now widely recognized by a more healthy and empowered public.

- Chuck Bean, Executive Director



Sign up for  
AirAlerts

**AIRPORTS FORUM**

As part of the 2014 focus on infrastructure, COG held a Regional Airports Forum to review the status of metropolitan Washington’s three major airports, including each facility’s share of national and international air traffic and the surrounding infrastructure that support them. Loudoun County Supervisor Matt Letourneau chaired the meeting, which will inform the COG Board’s discussion on airport infrastructure in October.

**GREEN BUILDING SYMPOSIUM**

COG’s Leah Boggs and Amanda Campbell participated in the District of Columbia’s Third Annual Green Building Symposium and Expo, which focused on how the District is implementing and enforcing greener construction codes, energy conservation codes, and building energy benchmarking. COG officials were invited to demonstrate how area leaders are working together to make our region the most sustainable in the nation.

**CONFERENCES ON REGIONALISM**

Chuck Bean participated in the National Association of Regional Councils Executive Directors’ Conference in Des Moines. Bean also participated in the Urban Land Institute (ULI) Washington Regionalism Initiative meeting in the District with Transportation Director Kanti Srikanth and Community Planning Director Paul DesJardin. Srikanth briefed the group on the COG/TPB regional transportation planning process.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & ACTIVITY CENTERS**

Paul DesJardin spoke about *Region Forward*, *Place + Opportunity*, and Activity Centers to the National Association for County Community and Economic Development at their annual conference in Arlington. COG’s Sophie Mintier was a panelist on a ULI Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) for Prince George’s Plaza, which focused on land use, economic development, and transportation needs and opportunities. This is one four TAPs focused on development in Activity Centers selected and funded this year by ULI-Washington and COG.

**COG HOUSING MEETING IN PRINCE GEORGE’S COUNTY**

COG’s Housing Directors Advisory Committee meeting was hosted by the Prince George’s County Department of Housing and Community Development in Largo. The meeting highlighted County incentives for transit oriented development at Metro stations and the Transforming Neighborhoods Initiative.



*David Mould, Vice President, Communications, Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority, Jim Walsh, CFO, BWI Marshall Airport, Matt Letourneau, and Chuck Bean at the Regional Airports Forum*



*Greenbelt Mayor Emmett Jordan with COG’s Amanda Campbell and Leah Boggs at the Green Building Symposium*

### EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS BRIEFING

In light of growing tensions around the world, COG, the Board of Trade, and the Red Cross hosted an emergency preparedness briefing for area leaders. The briefing covered a variety of topics, including an assessment of threats to the region, continuity of operations (COOP) planning, and personal preparedness.

### IDEA EXCHANGE WITH CITY, COUNTY MANAGERS

For over a decade, COG's Institute for Regional Excellence (IRE) has served as a think tank for regional issues, and its September Poster Session gave IRE students an opportunity to share their ideas with members of the Chief Administrative Officers Committee. This year's class projects were focused on several key regional issues, including pedestrian safety, child welfare, and affordable housing. IRE is a partnership between COG and The George Washington University offering a graduate-level Certified Public Manager training program for local government staff members.

### ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE & DISASTERS

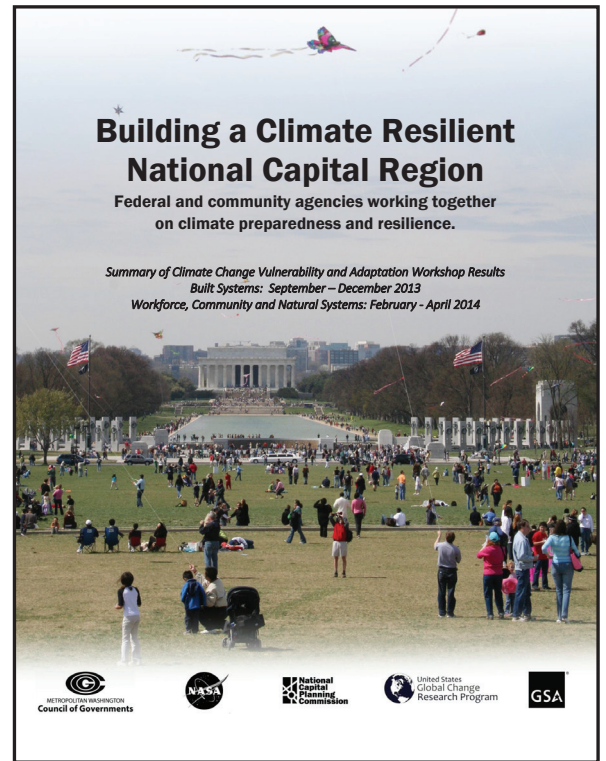
COG hosted an event for the American Water Resources Association National Capital Region Section on adaptation and resilience to natural disasters. COG and its partners NCPC, GSA, NASA, US Global Change Research Program, and the Smithsonian Institution released *Building a Climate Resilient National Capital Region*, a report on a series of webinars and workshops in 2013 and 2014 to assist with climate adaptation planning and improve regional coordination. Amanda Campbell also participated in the first District of Columbia Department of the Environment Climate Adaptation Advisory Group meeting. COG staff will help provide guidance as the District develops its climate adaptation plan.

### SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

The District of Columbia hosted the sixth annual summit of EcoDistricts, a group that serves the growing number of sustainable development practitioners and policymakers. COG served as an EcoDistricts sponsor and hosted a pre-summit meeting. COG also sent a team to the Institute for Sustainable Communities' Leadership Academy in Houston, which included staff from the District and Greenbelt. The team learned about strategies, tools, and techniques for empowering communities to be resilient to climate risks, which they hope to implement in our region.



Arlington County Manager Barbara Donnellan and Fire Chief James Schwartz at the COG-BOT-Red Cross Preparedness Briefing



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## PRESENTATION TO COG BOARD DRAWS ATTENTION TO OLYMPIC BID

DC2024 Olympic Bid Chair Russ Ramsey and Vice Chair Ted Leonsis (pictured right), owner of the Washington ice hockey and basketball teams, gave a presentation at the September COG Board meeting, which drew coverage from *The Washington Post*, *Washington Business Journal*, and several other media outlets.



## LEADERS TALK TRANSPORTATION PLAN, TRENDS

College Park Councilmember Patrick Wojahn, who also serves as Transportation Planning Board Chair, and COG Transportation Planning Director Kanti Srikanth were guests on News Channel 8's NewsTalk with Bruce DePuyt to discuss the new update of the region's long-range plan and transportation trends. The September TPB meeting and plan update were also covered by NBC4, WUSA9, WAMU, WTOP, and DCist.



*Patrick Wojahn (center) and Kanti Srikanth (right) appear on NewsTalk with Bruce DePuyt*

## DR. GRIDLOCK FEATURES COMMUTER CONNECTIONS 40TH ANNIVERSARY

In his Sunday Commuter Page column, *The Washington Post's* Robert Thomson wrote about the history of Commuter Connections and how the COG program has expanded over the decades to provide a wide range of free, cutting-edge services to help area commuters.

**METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON AIR QUALITY COMMITTEE & CLIMATE, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY COMMITTEE JOINT MEETING**  
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 2

**TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD -**  
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15

**COG 2014 ANNUAL MEETING -**  
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10

*For more information about these and other COG meetings and events, visit [www.mwco.org/calendar](http://www.mwco.org/calendar)*