



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

September 2016

COMMITTEE WORK   FEATURE   OUTREACH   CALENDAR   MEDIA

Policy Boards & Committees

## COG BOARD OF DIRECTORS

At the 2016 COG Annual Leadership Retreat held in July in Cambridge, Maryland, COG Board members and committee leaders discussed promoting the biotechnology sector, economic competitiveness, and global exports, as well as supporting entrepreneurship and developing a regional brand.

## TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD (TPB)

The TPB's Freight Subcommittee completed work on a major update to the regional *Freight Plan*. Approved by the TPB in July, the plan examines the role of freight in the region. The plan also outlines policies to help guide freight planning activities and identifies a limited list of key projects that would improve the flow of goods. The TPB also approved five bicycle and pedestrian projects in Maryland to receive \$1.1 million in federal funding to advance regional priorities like expanding travel options, connecting and strengthening Activity Centers, and serving disadvantaged groups.

## HUMAN SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY POLICY COMMITTEE (HSPSPC)

The HSPSPC's July meeting focused on workforce development, and included a panel on the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) across the region, as well as a discussion of local, state, and federal initiatives to train the workforce to meet current needs.

## CHESAPEAKE BAY POLICY AND WATER RESOURCES COMMITTEE (CBPC) AND CLIMATE, ENERGY, AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY COMMITTEE (CEEPC)

The CBPC and CEEPC committees held their second joint committee meeting in July, focused on energy reduction measures being implemented by the region's cutting-edge drinking water and wastewater utilities, and an overview of research and innovation to bring the water sector closer to energy neutrality. CEEPC Chairwoman Penny Gross and CPBC Vice Chairman Sze noted that the joint meeting provided an excellent opportunity for exchanging water, energy, and climate information between members.



Heart of COG:  
**JOHN SNARR**

Recycling. Homeland Security. Website Management. As a Principal Planner in the Department of Environmental Planning and a Technical Manager at COG, John Snarr's day-to-day work is wide-ranging. An employee for more than 25 years, he is featured as this month's Heart of COG.

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### REGION'S AIR QUALITY CONTINUES TO IMPROVE

While July and August brought major heat the region experienced no Code Red days and 11 Code Orange days in 2016. Despite stricter 2015 ground-level ozone standards, the region's air quality has continued to improve due to progress in reducing emissions from power plants and passenger vehicles, as well as improving energy efficiency and renewable energy use.

### COLLABORATION WITH AREA UNIVERSITIES

COG Deputy Director Stuart Freudberg and COG Board members John Foust, Penny Gross, and Phil Mendelson met with the President of the Consortium of Universities and two university presidents in August. COG will continue to collaborate with the Consortium on the Global Cities Initiative, economic development initiatives, and shared research.

### ACCESS FOR ALL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Earlier this summer, the TPB finished recruiting new members for its Access for All Advisory Committee, a group first set up in 2001 to give a voice to people traditionally underserved by our region's transportation system. The revamped committee met for the first time in June.

### GO RECYCLE CAMPAIGN

With generous support from Fairfax County, Montgomery County, and Loudoun County, COG ran a Go Recycle paid social media campaign in June on Facebook and Instagram. The campaign directed residents to [www.gorecycle.org](http://www.gorecycle.org) and jurisdiction-specific online resources for recycling information.

### COOPERATIVE PURCHASING

The Cooperative Purchasing Program is currently working on regional bids for EMS medical supplies and subscriber radios. COG is still reaching out to jurisdictions to join these cooperative procurements. By combining buying power, the region has the potential to see significant savings.

### #BREATHEEASY CONCERT TICKET GIVEAWAY

Clean Air Partners and WGL sponsored the second annual #BreatheEasy concert giveaway. In August, residents took to social media to share what they do improve the region's air—from biking to planting a tree—for a chance to win tickets to the sold out Bruce Springsteen concert at Nationals Park.

### METRO DC FOOD POLICY MEETING

On August 19, COG's environment staff hosted a Metro DC Food Policy Update meeting at COG. About 40 attendees from across the region shared food-related programming and policy achievements, and discussed challenges on topics such as food waste and recovery, composting, local food distribution, and community engagement. COG plans to host a fall webinar on its proposed Local Food Distribution Working Group as one of several next steps.



#### Event Highlight: **SEPARATED BIKE LANE WORKSHOP**

The TPB's Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee hosted a workshop in June to highlight best practices in the design of separated bike-lane facilities. Engineers, planners, and consultants from around the region attended to learn about new federal and state design guides and to share their own successes and challenges in designing and building separated bike lanes.

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TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) FORUM - September 15

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD - September 21

CAR FREE DAY - September 22

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON AIR QUALITY COMMITTEE - September 28

COG BOARD OF DIRECTORS - October 26

[MORE COG MEETINGS & EVENTS](#)

### COG REPORTS DECLINE IN COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION

Commercial construction declined by 31 percent between 2014 and 2015, according to a new COG report, *Commercial Construction Indicators*. The only category to see an increase in commercial construction last year was industrial properties, including data centers and warehouses. The decline in commercial construction mirrors a period of declining federal procurement and stagnant job growth in metropolitan Washington. [MORE FROM WTOP](#)

### STAFF ANALYZE IMPACT OF FIRST FOUR SAFETRACK SURGES ON TRAFFIC

Transportation staff analyzed weekday traffic patterns during the first four Metrorail SafeTrack surges and compared results to the same time last year to help the region prepare for the remaining surges, which continue into early 2017. According to the analysis, weekday peak-period traffic congestion increased during the first four surges compared with the same time periods in 2015, and Surge 1 saw the most significant increases in congestion. [MORE FROM THE WASHINGTON POST](#)

### TPB APPROVES FEDERAL FUNDING FOR CITY OF FREDERICK RAILS WITH TRAILS PROJECT

The TPB voted to give funding to the City of Frederick for its Rails with Trails project, which will help pedestrians and bicyclists get around the city. The funding is part of the Federal Highway Administration's Surface Transportation Block Grant program, which also provided funding to five projects in suburban Maryland. [MORE IN THE FREDERICK NEWS-POST](#)

### STAFF OUTLINES STEPS TO TAKE ON UNHEALTHY AIR QUALITY DAYS

As summer heated up in metropolitan Washington, COG staff provided area residents with actions they should take on days when air quality is considered unhealthy for sensitive groups. COG, in partnership with the District Department of Energy & Environment, Maryland Department of the Environment, and Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, provides daily air quality forecasts for the region. [MORE FROM WTOP](#)



### Outreach Highlight: COG LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE

COG recently launched a new website: [www.mwcog.org](http://www.mwcog.org). COG is metropolitan Washington's hub for regional partnership, so it's essential that the website serves as a hub, too, for regional data and expertise. The rollout of the new site was promoted through targeted email and social media pushes, and sharing by COG members.

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