



# Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments 2013 Board of Directors Work Plan

22 JURISDICTIONS 5+ MILLION PEOPLE 300 ELECTED OFFICIALS

## Key Elements of the 2013 Work Plan

### REGION FORWARD 2.0

In 2010, the Council of Governments approved *Region Forward*, our vision for a more prosperous, accessible, livable, and sustainable metropolitan Washington. In 2013, Board and staff will focus on propelling Region Forward to its next phase by aligning everything we do – our communications, programs, and governance – through the *Region Forward* framework.

### ECONOMY FORWARD IMPLEMENTATION

*Economy Forward* is a five point plan to strengthen the region's economy amid major changes in federal spending. It brings together a range of interrelated areas including transportation, activity centers, and workforce development.

### MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

Membership is the lifeblood of any association, particularly for the Council of Governments. Building a strong sense of community and harnessing the collective intelligence of our members is critical to our future success.

### STRONGER STATE & FEDERAL ALLIANCE

Strengthening COG's relationship with state and federal legislators continues to be a priority for the COG Board. We cannot achieve our Region Forward vision without an equal commitment from, and strong alliance with, state and federal governments.

ADOPTED FEBRUARY 13, 2013

ONE REGION **MOVING FORWARD**

[www.mwcog.org](http://www.mwcog.org)



[www.regionforward.org](http://www.regionforward.org)

## > REGION FORWARD 2.0

In 2010, the Council of Governments approved *Region Forward*, our vision for a more prosperous, accessible, livable, and sustainable metropolitan Washington. All COG member local governments, along with several civic and nonprofit partners endorsed this vision. In 2013, Board and staff will focus on propelling *Region Forward* to its next phase by aligning everything we do – our communications, programs, and governance – through the *Region Forward* framework.

- **Positioning Region Forward:** *Region Forward* aligns COG's many programs, including transportation, the environment, planning, public safety and health, but there are opportunities to better promote our vision. WMATA recently embedded *Region Forward* into its own strategic plans. Board and staff will build on this example to better engage business, nonprofit, thought leaders, and the media about our vision, goals, and objectives and seek additional key regional partners' strong support of *Region Forward*. In January 2013, an updated *Region Forward* website and blog was launched to improve and expand online and social media outreach. (The site averages 1,000 views a month.) In addition, publications and presentations will focus on explaining *Region Forward's* central role in our work.
- **Strategic re-alignment:** Taking *Region Forward* to the next level will require greater collaboration amongst COG's departments, policy boards and committees. To foster this collaboration the Board will receive regular committee briefings that highlight and promote synergies and integration.
- **Governance:** An ad-hoc Board committee will conduct a deeper examination of COG's committee structure and potential changes to align COG's structure to more comprehensively advance *Region Forward*.

## > ECONOMY FORWARD IMPLEMENTATION

*Economy Forward* identified 5 key actions to strengthen the region's economy amid major changes in federal spending. It refocuses some of COG's existing regional projects and provides new activities to enhance the regional economy. Three of these projects, a new Federal-Regional Liaison, an Activity Center Strategic Investment Plan, and a Regional Transportation Priorities Plan, are currently underway. Two other projects, Industry and Labor Market Analysis and a Regional Brand, will be launched in late 2013 and early 2014, respectively.

- **Federal-Regional Partnership:** Staff will continue to engage David Agnew, Senior Advisor to the President and Director of Intergovernmental Relations, who has expressed an interest and willingness in strengthening the Administration's partnership with COG. COG will convene senior Administration and regional officials to discuss current and future needs, including the impact of sequestration on the region's economy.
- **Transportation Investment Plan:** This summer, the TPB will release a Regional Transportation Priorities Plan identifying top priority transportation projects and critically, the specific funding sources to make the projects a reality. The COG Board will be briefed on the report's findings, identify opportunities for joint TPB-COG Board promotion, and will use it to inform 2014 Legislative Priorities.
- **Activity Centers:** The recently approved Activity Centers Map will form the basis of the Activity Center Strategic Investment Plan, which aims to position these places for more strategic use of public and private sector investment, while helping to advance the goals in *Region Forward*. The Board will be briefed on the Plan this Spring and take an active role in its promotion, specifically showcasing how each of the region's 22 member jurisdictions can use the Plan as a tool to improve their individual economic competitiveness.
- **Workforce Development:** The *Region Forward* Coalition will conduct an industry and labor market analysis to identify current and projected workforce demands by sector, including the skill sets needed to fill these positions, and assess whether training and workforce development programs are adequately preparing workers for these jobs.

## > MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

Membership is the lifeblood of any association or alliance, particularly for the Council of Governments. Building a strong sense of community and harnessing the collective intelligence of our members is critical to COG's future success.

- **Board Members:** Meetings of the Board will be more interactive and engaging in 2013, providing members with greater opportunities for peer learning and exchange. Staff presentations will scaled back and active participation by members will be sought. For example, members engaged in the state and national associations, not staff, will be asked to brief the Board on legislative activities.
- **Member Governments:** Staff visits to each of COG's 22 member counties and cities will enable us to better understand the challenges and opportunities facing our member communities, their philosophies and how COG can better support and advance local priorities. COG will also identify opportunities to expand the regional cooperative purchasing program and provide additional cost savings to our jurisdictions.
- **Other Member Officials and Staff:** COG will continue to streamline and align the work of our many peer groups. From the Chief Purchasing Officers to the Health Officers to the Emergency Managers, peer groups will be realigned to help advance the policy goals of COG. Additionally, COG will launch a new website and association management tools by the middle of 2013 that will dramatically improve accessibility to committee pages, publications and will facilitate opportunities for electronic peer exchange.

## > STRONGER STATE AND FEDERAL ALLIANCE

Strengthening COG's relationship with state and federal legislators continues to be a priority for the COG Board. We cannot achieve our *Region Forward* vision without an equal commitment from, and strong alliance with, state and federal governments. COG will continue to advocate the priorities of our region through outreach to state and federal leaders. We will aggressively implement a multi-pronged communication strategy that includes the use of email, newsletters, website and social media to communicate our positions. Issue-focused one-on-one meetings, as well as small group meetings with legislators are critical for establishing COG as a legitimate player.

- **Congressional Delegation:** We will renew efforts to work more closely with the region's Congressional delegation and hold regular meetings with their staff as federal activity on sequestration, transportation funding, and environmental protection continue to pose significant implications for the region. Additionally, COG will, over the course of the year, invite members of Congress to make presentations to the Board either on proposed legislation of regional significance or opportunities for collaboration with COG.
- **Executive Branch:** Modeled after our enhanced cooperation with OPM, COG will strategically and assertively engage federal agencies, like the GSA, EPA, DOT, and OMB to advance the region's legislative priorities. We will also identify opportunities for COG Board engagement and collaboration. The White House Office of Intergovernmental Relations will continue to be central to our federal outreach strategy.
- **State Legislators:** Many of our Board members hold significant leadership positions with key state and national associations (e.g., MML, NARC, VACO). We will better leverage the knowledge of our Board members and their connections with state and national associations. The composition and mission of the Legislative Committee will be revisited to ensure we are maximizing its potential.