



NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD

At its March meeting, the TPB approved the FY 2016 Unified Planning Work Program, which is required as a basis and condition for all funding assistance for transportation planning to state, local and regional agencies by the Federal Transit Administration and Federal Highway Administration. The TPB also approved the Commuter Connections FY 2016 Work Program.

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON AIR QUALITY COMMITTEE

MWAQC approved a letter to EPA regarding their proposed revision to the ozone national ambient air quality standard. MWAQC supports the range of the proposed standard, 65-70 parts per billion as being more protective of human health and the environment and is pleased that EPA's recommendation is consistent with the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee. MWAQC believes that the proposal is the next logical step in a long term effort to improve air quality.

CHESAPEAKE BAY AND WATER RESOURCES POLICY COMMITTEE

CBPC agreed upon specific state and national advocacy issues to address this year on behalf of local governments and utilities. Members were also briefed on the Chesapeake Bay Program's (CBP) draft Management Strategies ([which are open for public comment](#)), directed staff to work with the Water Resources Technical Committee to develop formal comments, and agreed to work more closely with the CBP's Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC) over the coming year.

CLIMATE, ENERGY, AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY COMMITTEE

CEEPC received a presentation on efforts by a partnership of COG, local governments, and other regional agencies to develop a collaborative initiative to procure solar energy systems. The Committee was briefed on successful procurements and discussed opportunities for additional jurisdictions to install solar.

Member Feature:

Q&A w/ EMMETT JORDAN

City of Greenbelt Mayor and Chairman of the Region Forward Coalition discusses how he got into public service, how the Coalition helps address the region's challenges as well as COG's value to his city.

[CLICK HERE TO READ THE Q&A.](#)



WMATA-COG COORDINATION

COG Deputy Executive Director Stuart Freudberg, COG Fire Chiefs Chairman Marc Bashoor (Prince George’s County), and COG 9-1-1 Directors Chairman Steve Souder (Fairfax County) spoke at WMATA’s Safety and Security Committee meeting about ongoing coordination between WMATA and COG following the January 12 incident. The officials referenced work responding to requests from Senator Mark Warner (D-VA) regarding radio system communications and Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) regarding emergency evacuation training for first responders to the Metrorail system. LETTERS TO SENATORS ATTACHED IN PACKET.

SUMMIT ON HOMELESSNESS

Montgomery County Executive Ike Leggett, District of Columbia Mayor Muriel Bowser, and Prince George’s County Executive Rushern L. Baker III organized a summit on homelessness in Silver Spring and signed Charters committing to work together to eliminate homelessness. COG Executive Director Chuck Bean, who attended the summit, said COG is prepared to support their new efforts and work with other jurisdictions and partners in the region.

ECODISTRICT PLANNING

COG’s Jeff King, John Swanson, and Lamont Cobb participated in the D.C. Office of Planning’s meeting for the Congress Heights/St. Elizabeth Ecodistrict. COG staff supported discussions in the energy and transportation planning subgroups.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

A COG-led group, including participants from Alexandria, the SW Business Improvement District, Prince George’s County Redevelopment Authority, Bethesda Green, The Livability Project, and NCPC, took part in the Institute of Sustainable Communities Leadership Academy on Climate Resilience and Economic Development in Boston to help local leaders advance sustainability initiatives.

AMERICA RECYCLES DAY WINNER

Teja Dupree, a student at Woodbridge High School in Prince William County, won the America Recycles Day pledge drawing sponsored by COG’s Recycling Committee. Her school will receive a \$500 check for use on a recycling or other environmental program.

NATIONAL DRINKING WATER WEEK

COG’s Community Engagement Campaign is planning a series of public events for National Drinking Water Week, May 4-8, to highlight the region’s water infrastructure and the benefits of tap water. Local water utilities will be serving cold, refreshing tap water and promoting the TapIt campaign at the Smithsonian Garden Fest behind the Smithsonian Castle on May 8.



Outreach Highlight:
**WOJAHN, BEAN TALK
TRANSPORTATION NEEDS AT
NLC CONFERENCE**

At the National League of Cities’ Congressional City Conference, College Park Councilmember and former TPB Chairman Patrick Wojahn and COG Executive Director Chuck Bean discussed the federal transportation bill on a panel arranged in part by Greenbelt Mayor and NLC Community & Economic Development Steering Committee Member Emmett Jordan.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD - APRIL 15

HUMAN SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY POLICY COMMITTEE - APRIL 17

REGION FORWARD COALITION - APRIL 24

2015 ARRIVE ALIVE & SURVIVE SYMPOSIUM - APRIL 24-25

ANNUAL CORRECTIONS WREATH LAYING CEREMONY & HONOR GUARD COMPETITION - MAY 9

CLEAN AIR PARTNERS ANNUAL CELEBRATION AND AWARDS - MAY 13

BIKE TO WORK DAY - MAY 15

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE ABOUT THESE AND OTHER COG MEETINGS & EVENTS](#)

GOVERNING MAGAZINE FEATURES COG INFRASTRUCTURE REPORT

In a column on “Why a Regional View of Infrastructure Is Crucial” written for Governing, Bob Graves featured COG’s State of the Region: Infrastructure Report. He wrote “the COG report serves as a template for other regions.” [STORY ATTACHED IN PACKET.](#)

TIM LOVAIN, CHUCK BEAN DISCUSS REGIONAL GROWTH ON NEWS CHANNEL 8

Alexandria Councilmember Tim Lovain, who serves as TPB Vice Chairman, and COG Executive Director Chuck Bean discussed COG’s recent population and job forecasts and how the region is preparing for this growth as guests on NewsTalk with Bruce DePuyt on News Channel 8. [CLICK HERE FOR THE SHOW.](#)

STUDY ON REGIONAL BUS STAGING, PARKING FEATURED IN WASHINGTON POST

A recent TPB study looked at possible locations throughout the District of Columbia and Arlington County where buses could arrive early and wait for afternoon routes to begin. The study was a step toward providing more staging and parking opportunities for commuter and tour buses, which are an integral part of the region’s transportation system. [CLICK HERE FOR THE STORY.](#)



Media Highlight:

**AREA OFFICIALS PROMOTE
SPRING 2015 STREET SMART
CAMPAIGN ON NBC4**

Walter Tejada, Vice Chairman of the Arlington County Board and COG Board Member, Captain Tom Didone of the Montgomery County Police Department, and George Branyan, Pedestrian Program Coordinator of DDOT talked about pedestrian and bicyclist safety on NBC4’s Viewpoint show. In addition, Street Smart’s launch in College Park was highlighted in several local news stories.

[CLICK HERE FOR THE SHOW.](#)

GOVERNING

THE STATES AND LOCALITIES

Why a Regional View of Infrastructure Is Crucial

A new report covering the national capital area could serve as a template for other regions to engage the public and deal with funding gaps.

BY: [Bob Graves](#) | March 25, 2015

Dramatic images of crumbling roadways, derailed trains and collapsed bridges can be counted on to make the evening news. But the public-sector financial bodies, planning organizations and engineers entrusted with the maintenance and repair of our infrastructure aren't particularly newsworthy -- until something really bad happens. Ensuring that infrastructure gets the attention it needs before those bad things happen is a significant challenge for government.

Given that need to get the public and policy-makers to focus on the state of the crucial systems that underlie our regions, the recently released "[2015 State of the Region: Infrastructure Report](#)" by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) is remarkable for both its purpose and scope.

This column appears in our monthly Infrastructure email newsletter. [Click to subscribe.](#)

"We wanted to get beyond a simple letter grade for the condition of our infrastructure," explained Chuck Bean, executive director of COG, which addresses regional issues in Washington, D.C., and its Maryland and Virginia suburbs. "We created an inventory to understand how the infrastructure got there, who owns it and what we can do about it."

COG's staff recommended that the study focus on five of the region's most critical sectors: transportation, water, energy, local-government buildings and public-safety communications. These were selected because they're lifeline infrastructure systems that are regional in scope and significantly affected by government regulation.

A quick review of the inventory points out the magnitude of the challenges that await policy-makers: 1,500 Metro buses, 91 Metro rail stations, 117 miles of track, 1,363 miles of highway, 18 major wastewater plants, seven electric and three natural gas retailers, 13 drinking-water suppliers and 27 water distributors, and three major airports.

That's a lot to deal with, including both maintenance of existing infrastructure and updates and expansions to deal with future growth, and the report estimates a regional funding gap of \$58 billion over the next 15 years. The report calls attention to the

importance of bringing infrastructure needs to the forefront of discussion among both public and private-sector providers.

With that in mind, the report recommends the creation of a regional "infrastructure exchange" group that would study and prioritize projects and ways of funding them. It also calls for a sustained public-education campaign to raise awareness of the region's infrastructure needs as well as a series of workshops bringing together experts to "brainstorm out-of-the-box funding mechanisms" to pay for them.

Recent Governing Institute research highlights the importance of these recommendations. When members of the Institute's Exchange community were surveyed on "the biggest challenges your region faces in getting from where it is to where you would like it to be," 54 percent responded with "funding" followed by "lack of leadership or vision" (18 percent), "community resistance to change" (12 percent) and "regional governance issues" (11 percent). When asked if they thought citizens "have a good understanding of what it really costs to build and maintain infrastructure," a remarkable 88 percent replied "no."

While COG officials acknowledge that its report is not the first regional infrastructure analysis, they do claim it to be the most in-depth inventory of these critical sectors. As such, the COG report serves as a template for other regions. Leaders of the hundreds of other regional government councils across the country would do well to review and share COG's data, findings and recommendations to generate interest in creating their own "state of the region" infrastructure reports.

But the real work in the metropolitan Washington region is just beginning. "Now, our challenge is to put this valuable information to good use as each of our jurisdictions, authorities and other infrastructure owners and regulators set budgets and consider projects," wrote Phil Mendelson, chairman of the D.C. city council and former chair of COG.

How might we measure their progress? If the region's leaders are successful in using this assessment, prioritizing their projects and finding innovative funding, it's a lot less likely that images of crumbling local infrastructure will be dominating the evening news around the nation's capital.

This article was printed from: <http://www.governing.com/blogs/view/gov-regional-view-infrastructure-metropolitan-washington-dc.html>