

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

RISING TO THE MOMENT, PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE



Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments

Message from the COG Board Chair and Executive Director

In 2020, our region—not to mention the entire world—faced an unprecedented challenge as we grappled with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), the most serious public health crisis in over a century.

It's hard to believe that COG's wide network has been fully activated in service to the region for over a year. With vaccine distribution underway, there are certainly better days ahead, but it will continue to be critical to work together to respond to the pandemic. We also recognize that many of the issues we had entering 2020 persist and, in some cases, have been magnified by COVID-19—from food insecurity to health inequities, to housing instability.

As we move toward recovery, we must apply what we have learned from the pandemic, the resulting economic recession and quality of life impacts, in addition to the nation's reckoning on racial issues, to shape a better future. This will include more integrated planning across disciplines—transportation, housing, the environment, health and human services, and public safety—with a focus on advancing racial equity and enhancing our resiliency so that our region is better positioned for the ‘certain uncertainties’ of the future.

We also note that, like so many organizations, COG adapted to the times and embraced maximum telework and remote meetings. As the hub for regional partnership, this took some getting used to. The good news is that COG members and staff demonstrated an incredibly high level of dedication during these difficult times. Thank you for your hard work on behalf of our region in 2020 and for your engagement in the years ahead.

Visit mwcog.org/COG2020 to hear local leaders reflect on the region's work in 2020 to respond to COVID-19, advance equity, and plan for the future in COG's annual video.



Robert C. White, Jr.

2021 COG Board Chair



Chuck Bean

COG Executive Director

COVID-19 Coordination

COG supported area officials in their efforts to prepare for and respond to COVID-19—sharing best practices, research, data, and messaging. This network included the region's health officials as well as elected officials, city and county managers, emergency managers, public information officers, and many more.

Visit nwcog.org/covid19 to find more information and resources.



NEW TOOLS

State epidemiologists, in conjunction with COG, developed a way to securely share COVID-19 contact tracing data through an Association of Public Health Laboratories platform. COG also partnered with the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Lab on a dashboard for public health agencies and hospitals showing the medical surge status of the region's hospitals.

COMMON MESSAGING

COG worked with area public information officers to develop and share common messages about stopping the spread of COVID-19 to complement and amplify local and state communications efforts.



REGIONAL RESOURCES

COG regularly convened food policy leaders and providers, compiled and shared emergency food assistance resources, and the COG Board established a new ad hoc food and agriculture committee to focus on food insecurity in 2021. Commuter Connections offered new telework resources and commuting information to support a safe transition back to the workplace.

DATA TRACKING

COG staff tracked and reported the impact of COVID-19 on the region—particularly the effects on the transportation system, economy, environment, and health.



CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Officials and local government experts approved a 2030 Climate and Energy Action Plan, which outlines actions the region should take to meet its shared climate goals. The plan was developed by COG's Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee.

New Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Goal

50%

below 2005 levels by 2030.



TRANSIT ORIENTED COMMUNITIES

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) at COG developed a High-Capacity Transit Station Areas Map, or areas around Metrorail, commuter rail, light rail, streetcar, bus rapid transit, and multimodal stations, to help the region identify opportunities for enhancing housing and transportation connectivity in areas served by transit. It also endorsed a list of 49 Transit Access Focus Areas to prioritize walk and bike improvements near transit.

ROADWAY SAFETY

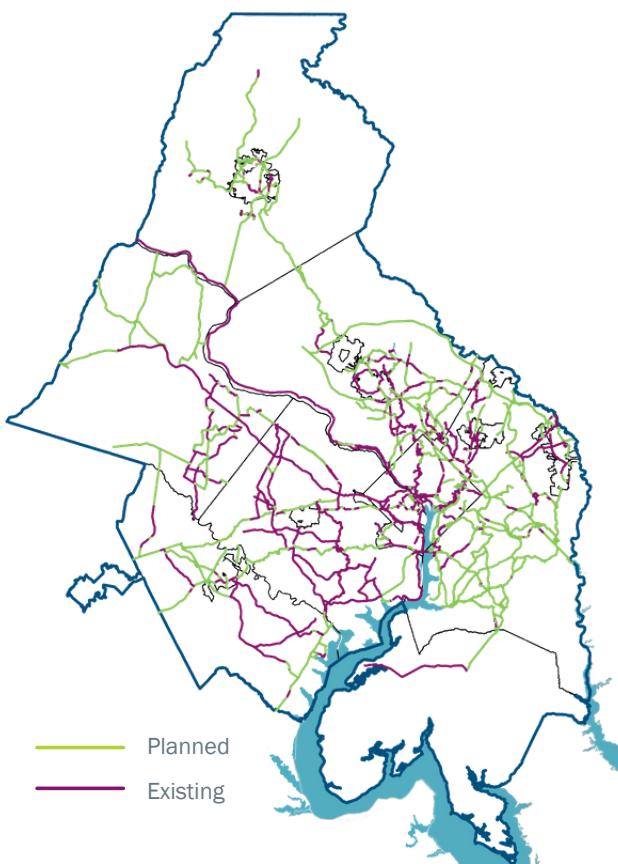
The TPB adopted a regional roadway safety policy—shared actions to reduce injuries and fatalities on area roadways. The board also established a Regional Safety Program to assist area jurisdictions with studying, developing, and implementing projects, programs, or policies that improve roadway safety.

NATIONAL CAPITAL TRAIL NETWORK

The TPB approved the National Capital Trail Network, a 1,400-mile, continuous system of long-distance, off-street trails, serving the entire region. It was also endorsed by the COG Board. The network will help the region prioritize bicycle and pedestrian projects.



National Capital Trail Network



EQUITY

Following the killing of George Floyd and the nation's reckoning on racial issues, the COG Board of Directors and TPB passed resolutions establishing equity as a fundamental value to ensure a more prosperous, accessible, livable, sustainable, and equitable future for all area residents.

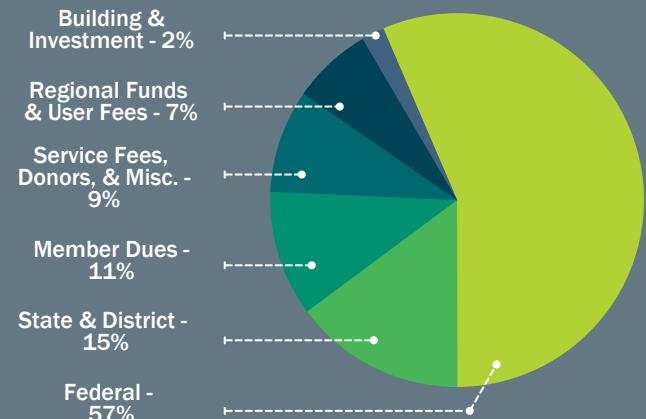
Several of COG's programs advanced initiatives centered on equity, including the creation of a regional fair housing plan and an equity brief focused on how race shapes health outcomes. Over the course of five town hall discussions hosted by COG and TPB, local government leaders discussed managing and responding to current challenges to shape a more equitable, resilient region.

- 100 local government staff graduated from COG's first Advancing Racial Equity Cohort, held with the Government Alliance on Race and Equity.

Visit mwcog.org/equity
for more on these
initiatives.

COG Financial Highlights

FY20 Total Revenue: \$40,544,000



About the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG)

COG is an independent, nonprofit association that brings area leaders together to address major regional issues in the District of Columbia, suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia. COG's membership is comprised of 300 elected officials from 24 local governments, the Maryland and Virginia state legislatures, and U.S. Congress.

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