

Regional Transportation Leadership Opportunity

There are many great regional councils and metropolitan planning organizations. What makes this the perfect fit for an exceptional transportation planning leader?

The National Capital Region is a tri-state metropolitan area home to more than 5 million people. It has a strong economy, diverse population, and well-educated workforce. There is a recognized culture of political support and respect for COG and the Transportation Planning Board among members and stakeholders as well as the general public. Region Forward, the TPB Vision, the new Regional Transportation Priorities Plan, and other COG and TPB initiatives are helping to strengthen awareness of the importance of sound, forward-thinking land use, transportation, and environmental planning and how they can improve the quality of life and economic competitiveness of the National Capital Region.

Like many metropolitan areas, the National Capital Region has more to do to improve accessibility, mobility, and livability. However, the region boasts extensive and growing transit capacity, a vibrant, revitalized downtown and expanding network of suburban growth and activity centers, and three major commercial airports.

COG has stable membership and funding support, an exceptionally skilled and well-respected staff that regularly seeks new opportunities to provide value-added services to the region and its members, and competitive salaries and benefits.

In short, the National Capital Region and COG present a rich and challenging opportunity for an outstanding transportation leader to build on past successes and help take transportation planning to new levels of achievement in coming years.

Position Overview

The Director of the Department of Transportation Planning provides strategic, programmatic, technical, and administrative leadership and manages a staff of 60 employees.

The Director also serves as the staff director to the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), helping elected and appointed officials fulfill their metropolitan planning organization (MPO) responsibilities for the National Capital Region. The TPB is supported by its Steering Committee, Technical Committee, Citizens Advisory Committee, and Access for All Advisory Committee, as well as several other standing committees and task forces.

Successfully performing the diverse roles and responsibilities of this position requires a strong leader and excellent communicator who can effectively coordinate planning activities among numerous local and state governments, federal agency representatives, regional authorities and stakeholders, and representatives of civic and community organizations.

The Director will be a highly experienced senior manager who leads, directs, and delivers clear guidance to staff and provides broad oversight for programs and activities of the Department. As a COG senior manager, the Director will work with the Executive Director, other COG senior managers, and COG and TPB members and stakeholders to accomplish key organizational objectives consistent with COG's Region Forward vision, the TPB Vision, and the new Regional Transportation Priorities Plan, adopted by the TPB in early 2014. The Director will be expected to refine and expand on these and other policies and plans to help shape the long-term strategic vision for the region's transportation system, as well as the Department.

Examples of Work

Lead the annual development and adoption of the federally required Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the National Capital Region, and oversee work to demonstrate that both the CLRP and TIP conform with federal air quality requirements.

Serve as lead staff director for the TPB and its chief committees and leadership, and develop and execute its agenda and work program.

Engage in regular interaction with and outreach to member governments and non-government partners and stakeholders on regional transportation policies, plans, and programs.

Plan and manage the day-to-day operations, budgets, grants, and programs of the Department and the TPB. Supervise the administration of various grants and programs, including federal TIGER and FTA Enhanced Mobility Program grants and the regional Commuter Connections and Transportation/Land-Use Connections (TLC) programs. Provide professional guidance and standards for all technical work within the Department, including final technical review.

Develop and oversee new federal and other grants and transportation project proposals to generate new funding and assist participating agencies with implementation of transportation programs.

Oversee a staff of 60 transportation and administrative professionals from diverse backgrounds through a team of program supervisors. The position reports to the COG Executive Director.

Advise the COG Executive Director and COG members on matters of transportation policies, plans, and programs as part of the senior staff leadership team.



Characteristics of the Ideal Candidate

Ability to Achieve Results in a Complex Region

- Highly competent manager with political savvy who understands and can develop consensus among a wide range of perspectives, including those of urban, suburban, and rural communities, advocates for different transportation modes, and advocates for traditionally underrepresented populations
- Ability to use sound technical data in a clear, easily understood manner to build consensus on regional policies, plans, and programs
- Capable of learning quickly and developing relationships with elected and appointed officials, stakeholders, and staff

Strong Grounding in Transportation Policy and MPO Administration

- Committed to multi-modal transportation solutions that recognize different state and local governance, authority, and approaches
- Experience in leveraging MPO roles and resources to support regional, state, and local planning objectives
- Technical and administrative competency on federal and state regulations affecting MPOs

Forward-Thinking Approach to Planning

- Systems approach to transportation planning that seeks to improve coordination with land use and environmental planning and economic development
- Seeks opportunities to integrate planning across disciplines; consistently sees “the big picture” and knows how to stay focused on long-term outcomes
- Aptitude to be a leader in national and regional thinking on the evolving roles of regional councils and MPOs

Effective Leader, Manager, and Communicator

- Promotes a strong organization through inclusiveness, fairness, and open communication with members, stakeholders, colleagues, and staff, as well as by setting long-term strategic vision for the Department
- Empowers and mentors staff to achieve their full potential and is a good listener and can help staff adapt to new direction or requirements
- Exceptional communicator who is accurate, impartial, and can clearly explain complex transportation policies and plans to diverse audiences



Qualifications

- At least 15 years of broad, progressively responsible experience in the field of transportation planning, ideally experience with regional transportation planning programs and processes.
- At least 10 years of senior management and supervisory experience.
- Master's degree from accredited university in Planning, Engineering, Public Administration, or related field. Transportation planning expertise with preference for experience in local or state government, MPO, or related nonprofit organization.

Preferred Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

- Comprehensive knowledge of public administration, regional transportation planning practices and policies, and federal MPO planning regulations.
- Highly experienced senior manager with ability to lead and facilitate strategic planning to achieve policy and other outcomes.
- Thorough technical understanding of major transportation issues, challenges, and opportunities in the Washington region and nationally.
- Ability to establish and maintain effective relationships with elected and appointed officials at all levels of government, representatives of business, civic and community stakeholders, and media organizations.
- Relevant technical skills and/or knowledge of travel demand, simulation, and forecasting models, and use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS).
- Ability to supervise and manage employees, consultants, and department work program activities, prepare and administer budgets, make presentations to diverse groups, and prepare strategic plans and programs.



About COG

For more than 50 years, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, known as COG, has helped develop regional solutions to such issues as the environment, affordable housing, growth and development, public health, child welfare, public safety, homeland security, and transportation.

Founded in 1957, COG is an independent, 501(c)(3) nonprofit association comprising elected officials from 22 local governments, members of the Maryland and Virginia state legislatures, and members of the U.S. Congress.

COG's Region Forward vision is a commitment by COG and its member governments, who together seek to create a more accessible, sustainable, prosperous, and livable National Capital Region. COG's mission is to make Region Forward a reality by being a discussion forum, expert technical and policy resource, issue advocate, and catalyst for action.

COG is supported by financial contributions from its participating local governments, federal and state grants and contracts, fee-for-service contributions, and donations from foundations and the private sector. COG's annual budget is approximately \$27 million.

About the Transportation Planning Board

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Washington region and plays an important role as the regional forum and organization responsible for comprehensive and coordinated regional transportation planning. The TPB is housed within and supported by COG; however, the TPB is an independent policy board responsible for preparing plans and programs that the U.S. Department of Transportation must approve in order for federal-aid transportation funds to flow to the Washington region. The TPB also serves as the transportation policy advisory committee for the COG Board of Directors and its involvement helps to ensure that land use, transportation, and environmental planning are well-coordinated in the National Capital Region.

The TPB became associated with COG in 1966. Members of the TPB include representatives of local governments, state transportation agencies, the Maryland and Virginia General Assemblies, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), and non-voting members from the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority and other federal agencies.

Although the TPB is an independent decision-making body, its staff is provided by COG's Department of Transportation Planning. The Director of the Department of Transportation Planning is an important part of COG's leadership team and will play a vital role in transportation policy, planning, and programs in the National Capital Region, including overseeing the TPB's \$18 million annual budget.



