Government Relations Director Report – June 2026

Cecil County Board of REALTORS® | Summary of Key Points

The following highlights the most relevant information from the June 2026 Government Relations Director (GAD) Report, with an emphasis on **issues affecting REALTORS®, property owners, housing affordability, development, and potential Board action.**

1. Cecil County Budget and Property Taxes

- Cecil County approved its FY2027 budget and Capital Improvement Program.
- **County property tax rates were reduced.**
- **Senior Citizens and Veterans Property Tax Credit Program was expanded:**
  - Residency requirement reduced from 10 years to 7 years.
  - Maximum assessed property value increased from $500,000 to $800,000.
- Additional funding approved for schools, public safety, emergency services, and recreational facilities.
- A draft marketing piece was developed for REALTORS® to educate clients about homeowner tax incentives.

Why it matters: These changes could improve housing affordability and help seniors and veterans remain in their homes.

2. North East – Zoning, Development and Water Capacity

- Proposed zoning changes affecting commercial districts, parking requirements, assisted-living facilities, and group homes.
- Development activity includes retail sites at North East Retail Shopping Center and a proposed Texas Roadhouse.
- Planning and zoning fee changes were considered.
- Water allocation requests were reviewed for Chesapeake Club, North East Harbors, and Commerce Center.

Why it matters: Zoning regulations, development fees, and water availability directly affect development costs, property use, and future growth.

3. Chesapeake City – Major Zoning Ordinance Changes

- Chesapeake City is considering replacing its existing Comprehensive Development Ordinance with a new zoning ordinance.
- Potential changes include:
  - Permitted property uses and development standards.
  - Parking and signage regulations.
  - Nonconforming properties.
  - Redevelopment opportunities and approval procedures.
- **Identified as one of the most significant land-use issues requiring continued monitoring.**

Why it matters: Changes could affect property values, marketability, and future development opportunities.

4. Port Deposit – Bainbridge Redevelopment

- Continued progress on the Bainbridge redevelopment project.
- Proposed annexation of approximately 34 acres.
- Environmental remediation, subdivision plans, and a proposed solar field are under consideration.
- Infrastructure improvements, stormwater management, and utility extensions remain important.
- An annexation public hearing was expected on August 4, 2026.

Why it matters: The project could influence economic development, future housing opportunities, and infrastructure needs.

5. Elkton – Planning Fees and Municipal Property

- Proposed updates to planning and development review fees.
- Consideration of disposing of surplus municipal property.
- Updates regarding Southfields Sportsplex.

Why it matters: Planning fees affect development costs, while surplus property could present future real estate opportunities.

6. Union Hospital Family Birth Center

- Continued monitoring of the announced closure of the Family Birth Center at Union Hospital.
- No additional developments were reported in June.

Why it matters: Availability of healthcare services can influence quality of life and community attractiveness.

7. National Association of REALTORS® – Advocacy Resources

The GAD attended NAR government affairs training in Washington, D.C., June 14–16.

Key resources identified:

- **Calls for Action:** Encourage members to contact elected officials about important issues.
- **Petitions:** Demonstrate public and member support.
- **Calls for Information:** Gather member experiences and feedback.
- **Mobile Alerts:** Quickly communicate legislative issues to REALTORS®.
- **Broker Involvement Program:** Increase broker and agent participation in advocacy.

These tools could strengthen CCBOR's ability to respond to local legislative and regulatory matters.

8. Grant Opportunities for CCBOR

- NAR's Consumer Advocacy Outreach Grant may provide **up to $25,000**, subject to local contribution and program requirements.
- Potential uses include campaigns focused on:
  - Homeownership and housing affordability.
  - Property rights.
  - Housing supply and land-use policies.
  - Community development.
- Applications should support a specific local policy goal and be coordinated with Board leadership and Maryland REALTORS®.

Opportunity: Explore grants to support local advocacy initiatives and increase CCBOR's community visibility.

9. Member Technology Opportunity – Pivo Real Estate

- The GAD evaluated a smartphone-based video and virtual tour platform.
- Features include automatic camera tracking, virtual property tours, teleprompter support, captions, and branding tools.
- Equipment was purchased personally for evaluation.
- A demonstration for interested CCBOR members was proposed.

Potential member benefit: Affordable technology to improve listing presentations, marketing videos, and social media content.

10. Government Affairs Relationships and Professional Development

- Established connections with Maryland REALTORS® leadership and government affairs professionals.
- Networked with Government Affairs Directors from other associations to exchange advocacy and monitoring strategies.
- Reviewed attendance options for the July 21–23 Government Affairs Directors' Institute in Columbus, Ohio.
- NAR's territorial-jurisdiction policy emphasizes coordination with other associations when advocacy extends beyond Cecil County.

Most Important Follow-Up Items for CCBOR

These are the priorities I would pull from the report for a Board of Directors or Legislative Committee discussion.

Priority	Recommended Follow-Up
High	Monitor Chesapeake City's proposed zoning ordinance and potential effects on property owners.
High	Follow North East zoning changes, development fees, and water capacity issues.
High	Share information about expanded senior and veteran property tax credits with members.
Medium	Monitor Bainbridge redevelopment and annexation activity.
Medium	Review Elkton planning fee changes and potential effects on development.
Medium	Explore NAR grant opportunities for local advocacy initiatives.
Low	Consider a Pivo technology demonstration as a member benefit.

Overall Takeaway

- The GAD transitioned from orientation into active monitoring of local government activities.
- The most important issues identified involve **property taxes, housing affordability, zoning, development fees, infrastructure, and property rights.**
- NAR training provided resources and professional relationships that could support CCBOR's future advocacy efforts.

- **No formal Board position was recommended in the June report.** Continued monitoring was recommended as more information becomes available.

My recommendation: For a Board of Directors meeting, concentrate on the first five sections, the advocacy grant opportunity, and the follow-up priorities. These have the clearest connection to CCBOR's responsibility to represent its members and protect local real estate interests.