

***Greater Washington 2050 Discussion Report***

**A Proposal Prepared by:  
Metropolitan Development Policy Committee  
*Greater Washington 2050* Work Group**

**For:  
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments**

**September 12, 2007  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Metropolitan Development Policy Committee Meeting**

**DRAFT  
August 22, 2007**



# **Proposed Work Plan For *Greater Washington 2050***

## **Background**

In 2006, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), the Greater Washington Board of Trade and the Community Foundation for the National Capital Region co-convened work groups to review and make recommendations on a proposal to launch a regional visioning campaign, known as Envision Greater Washington. This effort arose following the Reality Check on Growth event in February 2005 and the Potomac Conference in February 2006. COG's Metropolitan Development Policy Committee (MDPC), as the COG Board's principal policy advisor on growth and development, also monitored and reviewed the Envision Greater Washington proposal. A recent staff business plan expanded on the Envision Greater Washington proposal completed by the organizing committee in July 2006.

During their April 11, 2007 meeting, the COG Board of Directors was briefed on the outcomes and recommended next steps on Envision Greater Washington, specifically:

- *What are the specific elements/activities that would be carried out through a visioning effort, how will it be funded, and how will progress be measured?*
- *How can the region avoid reinventing the wheel and how can we be sure there is added value from this effort?*
- *Does the region need more planning or should we focus our resources on advancing the vision and plans we already have?*
- *What will be different, better and/or measurable as a result of this effort?*

The COG Board also adopted Resolution R34-07 which charged the MDPC with advancing action on this effort, specifically directing the Committee to review the July 2006 Envision Greater Washington report and other supporting information, and to identify specific actions that can be quickly implemented by COG or proposed for the work program and budget to advance the principles of:

1. *Stronger multi-sector, multi-jurisdictional and citizen engagement.*
2. *Leveraging existing plans and visions.*
3. *Public choice through deeper understanding of the impact and consequences of alternative growth and investment scenarios.*
4. *A commitment to action and outcomes*

## **Metropolitan Development Policy Committee Recommendations**

The Metropolitan Development Policy Committee (MDPC) established a work group to respond to the COG Board request. The work group convened 4 times, and its members felt strongly that any effort must build upon recent and long-term achievements of COG and its member local governments to address growth.

This region has a storied history of vision, regional collaboration and collective action, most notably in the two decades from 1955 to 1976 when the region planned and built the 100+ mile Metro system. As the largest and most ambitious post-war transit system, the Metro investment was a far-sighted challenge to the conventional wisdom – providing a widely used alternative to the automobile in an era where virtually every other government incentive encouraged driving and car ownership. It was visionary leadership that resulted in Metro, that shaped development patterns around transit in communities around the region, and that provided visitors, residents and employees with inexpensive, convenient, clean, safe and efficient mobility and access throughout the region.

As the region prepares to meet the challenges of a new century, we face the prospect of rising energy costs and possible energy shortages, the imperative to be responsive and resilient in answer to natural or man-made disasters, the necessity to address greenhouse gas emissions and the issue of climate change, a housing affordability crisis, and the sprawling growth of our region way beyond the current reach of Metro. The issues of our time call upon the leaders of our region to once again demonstrate the visionary, far-sighted, collaborative and effective collective action that has created such a strong economy, distinctive quality of place, and vibrant quality of life in the greater Washington region.

The MDPC proposal has two components. The first proposal involves working across jurisdictions to identify common planning goals from *already identified* comprehensive plans, as a way to support a shared regional vision and take advantage of the many already developed visions and goals. The second proposal focuses this first, high-level review through a focused regional planning exercise along the Baltimore-Washington-Richmond corridor intended to provide “on-the-ground” inter-jurisdiction discussions, results focused on implementation, and the opportunity to position the region to effectively compete for federal resources across a range of issues: transportation, climate change, security, and economic development.

The MDPC hereby submits its recommended actions to the COG Board.

**Action 1:**

The MDPC recommends that the effort be re-named *Greater Washington 2050*.

**Action 2:**

To fulfill it’s obligations in overseeing the *Greater Washington 2050* initiative and as well as it’s standing responsibility as policy advisor to the COG Board on matters pertaining to land use, growth, and economic development, the MDPC recommends that COG commit to strengthening the membership of the Metropolitan Development Policy Committee through a re-affirmation of the *Bylaws of the Metropolitan Development Policy Committee*.

For example, in addition to COG local government representation, the *Bylaws* currently recommend active participation by the federal government, and representatives from other COG standing and short term policy committees, including the Transportation Planning Board (TPB); Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC). Representation should also be sought from COG’s Chesapeake Bay Policy Committee (CBPC) and Human Services Policy Committee (HSPC) and the Climate Change Steering Committee (CCSC).

**Action 3:**

Consistent with the *Bylaws*, the MDPC recommends that a *Greater Washington 2050 Committee* composed of MDPC and other COG Policy Committee representatives be established and charged with oversight of the *Greater Washington 2050* initiative for a period of 2 years, with a goal of developing a regional *Greater Washington 2050 Compact* to address growth-related issues. The *Greater Washington 2050 Committee* will prepare a draft work program for review by the COG Board during their annual retreat on July 27 to 29, 2007, with final action by the Board during Fall 2007. Consistent with the recommendations of Action 2, the MDPC recommends that the *Greater Washington 2050 Committee* include representatives from existing COG and TPB policy committees. It is anticipated that the Committee would invite participation as well from business, civic and environmental stakeholders.

**Action 4:**

To develop the *Compact*, the MDPC recommends a literature review and comprehensive assessment of the common goals articulated in existing member jurisdiction comprehensive and functional plans; previous and current regional “visioning” efforts; and applicable federal and state regulations.

This research would define specific elements of the *Compact* to address:

- land use
- economic growth
- environmental quality
- transportation
- affordable housing
- population and demographics
- health
- climate and energy

The *Compact* will include appendices containing a detailed listing of the goals as specifically articulated in the member jurisdiction plans and other documents.

The MDPC also requests that other COG Policy Committees (MWAQC, TPB, HSPC, CBPC, and CCSC) provide more detailed goals based on their existing body of work. The MDPC further recommends that the appendices include a summary of the external

influences for each level of government: county on local, state on county, federal on all entities.

**Action 5:**

To assist with Action 4 and with the development of the *Compact*, the MDPC recommends that COG undertake a scientific survey to determine citizens' attitudes concerning growth and quality of life issues in the Washington region

**Action 6:**

The MDPC recommends that COG and TPB staff greatly expand upon the work of the *Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study (RMAS)* by developing additional measures of effectiveness for the existing alternative land use and transportation scenarios. Potential indicators include:

- air quality
- water quality
- open space loss / preservation
- affordable housing

In addition, the MDPC recommends that COG and TPB staff work to develop additional technical “tools” for communicating the results of this work to the public.

**Action 7:**

Upon completion of Actions 1 through 6, the MDPC recommends that COG commit to the *Greater Washington 2050 Compact* which will articulate the need for coordinated long-range planning to ensure a high quality of life for current and future residents while benefiting from the region's anticipated growth. Among the basic tenants of the *Compact* would be the willingness of the signatory member jurisdictions to subscribe to:

- long-range planning of at least 40 years
- timely implementation of the stated goals of the *Compact*
- creative financing of public infrastructure and enhanced governmental services to achieve the goals
- development of inter-jurisdictional projects and agreements where necessary to achieve the goals

**Action 8:**

To assess progress in achieving the specific goals of the *Compact*, the MDPC recommends the development of a series of metrics for each element. The MDPC further recommends the preparation of a tri-annual report detailing an analysis by jurisdiction of the region's progress towards achievement of the goals, consistent with the major update cycles of the TPB's financially Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP) and the Cooperative Forecasts.

### **Action 9:**

The MDPC recommends that COG staff and the *Greater Washington 2050 Committee* develop a Communications Plan to disseminate the purpose and understanding of the *Compact* with the primary focus being the support of local elected officials in their roles of balancing the need to support local projects and authority with regional planning goals. Included in the Communications plan will be specific recommendations on ways to enhance the Transportation Planning Board's public outreach on the alternative growth scenarios developed through the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study (RMAS).

- COG will provide the appropriate training and “talking points”
- COG will develop a “communications package” for local jurisdictions to brief their constituents
- COG will leverage new and existing technologies to broadly disseminate this information

COG will work with local jurisdictions to develop a planning and public outreach process to develop Action Item 3. (One idea may be to provide staff “on-loan” from other jurisdictions for a short time period to produce this plan and process. )

### **Action 10:**

The MDPC recommends that the *Greater Washington 2050 Committee* reach out to MPOs in the Baltimore and Richmond regions to collaborate on a bold 21<sup>st</sup> century investment plan to address the issues of environmental quality, energy efficiency, climate change, sprawling development and the transportation challenges that face our collective mega-region. One near-term opportunity is the transportation reauthorization bill expected in 2009 and the potential to address the climate, national security, energy, freight, high-speed passenger and commuter rail, and transit issues of our rapidly growing region.

### **Timing**

The July COG Board retreat was an opportunity for broad but focused discussion to determine support for the MDPC outcomes and recommendations. Committee members and COG staff will develop a project schedule and budget for further discussion by the MDPC in September and subsequent Board action by the end of this calendar year. It is anticipated that COG will launch this initiative in January 2008.

### **Budget**

COG staff anticipates that several of the recommended actions may be implemented by leveraging existing work activities, budget resources and staff. However, several proposed activities may require additional financial resources to expand or accelerate current work program activities, as well as actions not anticipated or funded in adopted work programs and budgets. COG staff anticipates that supplemental funds may be

available from invited stakeholders, government grants, or foundations. The MDPC recommendations are unlikely to be achievable without some additional resources; however, the scale and direction of this initiative is anticipated to be significantly less than what was proposed for the Envision Greater Washington project. COG would likely organize this effort to leverage existing staff activities with contractor or consultant support to provide day-to-day project management under COG supervision.

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