

# Livability

Vibrant, safe and healthy neighborhoods

## Goals



Make the production, preservation, and distribution of affordable housing a priority throughout the region



Healthy communities with greater access to quality health care and a focus on wellness and prevention



Provide access and delivery of quality social services to all residents



Safe communities for residents and visitors



Partnerships that manage emergencies, protect the public health, safety, welfare, and preserve the lives, property and economic well-being of the region and its residents



*Twinbrook Station, Rockville, Maryland (JBG)*

## **A More Livable Region**

A renewed focus on affordable housing, healthy environments, and safe neighborhoods will shape a more livable National Capital Region for all area residents by mid century. Residents will have the resources to make responsible choices about where to live, and those choices will not be limited by unreasonable costs. The region's housing stock will offer more options to people looking for single-family residences, row houses, urban style condos, assisted living for those with disabilities, and student housing. Neighborhoods will be designed and revitalized with a new focus on safety and health. Residents will be able to walk, bike or take high-quality transit to access a variety of services such as health care, schools, and shops. The services will offer residents of varying ages programs tailored to their differing needs. A trip to the doctor will be manageable for working parents; whether it involves picking a child up from daycare, taking enough time off of work, accessing health clinics or receiving proper medicine for the child—all in the area in which residents live.

Nature, parks and opportunities for recreation will be accessible to all residents in every neighborhood. The region will be a tolerant place with unprecedented connections to the international community through the world's largest concentration of embassies, educational institutions and cultural events. Architecture and urban design will improve livability and accentuate historical and cultural uniqueness. Activity Centers will be safer for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists through continued public outreach campaigns and law enforcement efforts. A coordinated plan will increase awareness and response to residents' safety concerns. Unexpected emergencies will not turn into life-altering situations, as public services will be efficiently and appropriately delivered. Residents will remain connected to their neighborhoods and the region at large. Local governments will find new approaches to engaging residents in local and regional decisions.

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**Target: Beginning in 2012, the region will dedicate 15% of all new housing units to be affordable—or a comparable amount of existing housing units through rehabilitation or preservation efforts—for households earning less than 80% of the regional median income**



Providing affordable housing choices across the region will improve access to jobs and services while ensuring economic prosperity and competitiveness with other world cities. Achieving this target will contribute to maintaining and economically diverse workforce where all residents can afford to live and work. Jurisdictions achieving this target will need to balance the creation of new affordable units with rehabilitation and preservation efforts while attempting to maintain the unique character of existing neighborhoods.

The region's jurisdictions are committed to look for new approaches to adjust and leverage the private market. Affordable housing provision strategies can include density bonuses, fee waivers, inclusionary zoning, and innovative financing programs for the creation and preservation of for sale and rental housing.

**“Committing to more affordable housing choices region-wide will improve access to jobs and services and strengthen the economy,” said Barbara Favola, Arlington County Board Chair. “It will also ensure the diversity and vitality of our neighborhoods, which helps build stronger communities.”**

## Supply & Demand

**The challenge today will be to reduce the gap between housing supply and housing demand that has limited housing choice and made homeownership out of reach for many households over the past decade. By 2050, the region will need to build between 800,000 and 1,000,000 new units to accommodate expected growth without diminishing our quality of life.**

*COG Department of Community Planning & Services*

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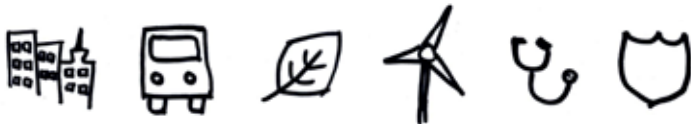
**Target: Beginning in 2012, the region will maintain a minimum of 10% of housing stock affordable to households earning less than 80% of the regional median income**



Creating housing to accommodate over two million additional residents is necessary; but maintaining the affordability of housing will be a priority. The region continues to be among the most expensive areas in the country to live. Committing to a 10% minimum affordability standard for all housing ensures the overall region will be an attractive and sustainable place for residents to live. Limited access to affordable housing for low-and moderate-income families is a prevalent, cross-jurisdictional issue that the region will continue to address in new and creative ways.

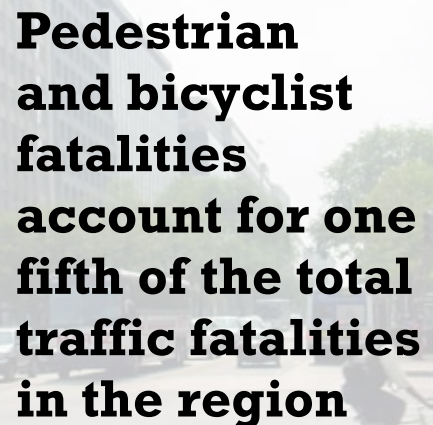
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**Target: Reduce the number of pedestrian and bicycle fatalities across the region**



New investments in sidewalks, bike lanes and other improvements will encourage less reliance on the automobile. Pedestrian and bicycle safety will be improved through narrower local streets, better designed crossings, and lower speeds for vehicles on local streets and arterials. An increase in pedestrians and bicyclists will also require greater attention to traffic safety because they currently account for one fifth of the total traffic fatalities in the National Capital Region.

In recent years, elected officials, transportation planners, law enforcement officers, and community activists have focused on the three E's (education, enforcement, and engineering) to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety. They support continued and aggressive outreach messages, such as the Street Smart campaign. Street Smart uses creative radio advertising in English and Spanish to reach drivers, and targets pedestrians through outdoor and transit advertising. The program is coordinated by the TPB and is supported by federal funds made available through state governments, and funding from some area jurisdictions. Area governments have increased enforcement of pedestrian safety laws, and leaders are also recommending better coordination on bus stop locations, consistent traffic laws across jurisdictional lines, more community policing, and engineering and technological improvements at busy intersections.



**Pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities account for one fifth of the total traffic fatalities in the region**

*Street Smart/TPB*

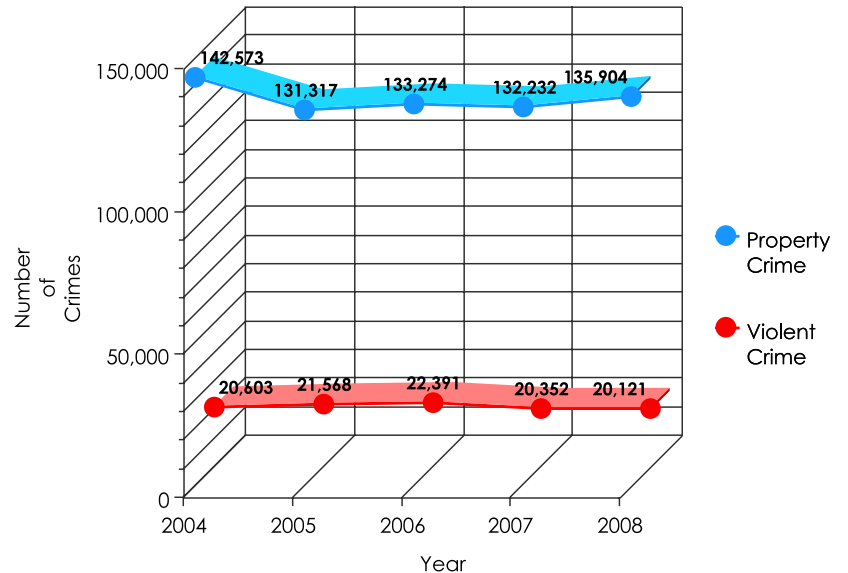
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## Target: Reduce the number of violent and property crimes across the region



From 2004 to 2008, there was an overall decrease in violent crime; however, the number of property crimes has remained relatively flat. Specifically, the region has experienced an overall downward trend in homicides, rapes, aggravated assaults, and motor vehicle thefts. However, the number of reported burglaries and larcenies continue in an upward trend. While the overall decline in the number of serious violent crimes is promising, the lack of progress on fighting property crime remains challenging. In 2008, over 87 percent of all crimes reported in the region involved the loss of property. This has a substantially negative effect on area residents and business owners.

### Crime Trends in Metropolitan Washington



COG Annual Report on Crime & Crime Control (2008)

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## Target: Increase access for area residents to real time crime data and timely emergency alerts through the internet or mobile applications



Crime is not isolated within or limited to specific jurisdictional boundaries and therefore, information-sharing among area law enforcement agencies will continue to serve a crucial role in the development of new strategies and initiatives needed to effectively reduce crimes of opportunity. Making use of real-time data and information-sharing technology, communities and business districts must partner with law enforcement agencies and amongst themselves to take an active role in crime prevention. Mobile resources for emergency information at the regional and local level, such as local government emergency alert services, will help people maintain awareness wherever they are in the region.

“It’s extremely valuable to include health and public safety in this conversation about a regional vision,” said Montgomery County Councilmember George Leventhal. “We have to make progress eliminating regional disparities on these issues to benefit people of different needs and all backgrounds.”

**Target: The majority of the Healthy People Goals are met by greater than half of the region's population**



Health can differ quite dramatically depending upon where one lives in the region. Health is also not simply a matter of genetics, personal behaviors, lifestyle choices, or medical care. It is determined by the conditions and characteristics of peoples' everyday lives: race and ethnicity, education and income, family history and early life experience, neighborhoods, and even the homes in which we live.

The Healthy People Goals 2010, developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, created ten goal categories to measure health and disease prevention. The overarching goal is to increase the quality and years of healthy life and eliminate health disparities. Currently, the region would meet less than half of the Healthy People 2010 goals, four out of the ten goal measures. The region just missed two goal categories, Lung Cancer and Motor Vehicle Deaths by a small margin.

Health data is normally tabulated based upon where the population sleeps and methods of collecting data limit a truly regional perspective. In reality, people "live" in more jurisdictions as they cross state and local borders for jobs and services. As a result no one jurisdiction entirely influences the health of a resident. The travel, health-related services, food and exercise opportunities, or lack of these factors, that residents encounter in their daily activities impact health at a multi-jurisdictional level. In addition, an increasing amount of research shows that a high degree of suburban sprawl is a contributor to chronic diseases such as asthma, diabetes, high blood pressure, arthritis, and obesity. Local governments are increasingly addressing public health through land-use tools and comprehensive plans that employ long-term strategies for healthy communities.

<b>Healthy People 2010 Goal Measures</b>	<b>Regional Goal Achievement as of 2009</b>
Infant mortality	No
Breast cancer	No
Colon cancer	No
Lung cancer	No
Coronary disease	Yes
Stroke	Yes
Injury	Yes
Motor vehicle deaths	No
Homicide	Yes
Suicide	No

*Community Health Status Indicators for Metropolitan Washington: 2009*

# Livability: Indicators

**In addition to targets, COG will be monitoring the following indicators to ensure that the region is moving in the right direction toward achieving its goals:**

Percentage of late/no prenatal care

Obesity Rate

Count of Homeless People

Acres of park land per capita

Number of museums, theaters, and restaurants per capita

Number of national and local historical sites