



*Local governments working together for a better metropolitan region*

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Bladensburg\*  
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College Park  
Frederick  
Frederick County  
Gaithersburg  
Greenbelt  
Montgomery County  
Prince George's County  
Rockville  
Takoma Park  
Alexandria  
Arlington County  
Fairfax  
Fairfax County  
Falls Church  
Loudoun County  
Manassas  
Manassas Park  
Prince William County*

November 4, 2010

Robert Buchanan  
Co-Chair, 2030 Group  
Buchanan Partners, LLC  
9841 Washingtonian Boulevard  
Suite 300  
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

Dear Mr. Buchanan:

On behalf of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) Board of Directors, I am writing to thank the 2030 Group for the time, energy and financial resources it has invested in what I understand is a multi-year commitment by 2030 Group members on a wide-range of matters important to the National Capital Region.

The 2030 Group has commissioned research and other information to strengthen governance and leadership in the National Capital Region. COG has been a significant force for regional governance and leadership since its establishment in 1957. COG looks forward to working with the 2030 Group and other stakeholders to identify opportunities to improve collaboration, strengthen decision-making, and foster greater action and implementation on critical matters facing the National Capital Region.

At its October 13 meeting, the COG Board of Directors agreed to share its initial perspectives on 2030 Group work to date and suggest a process for moving forward. The COG Board also wished to provide some comments concerning a recent 2030 Group-sponsored survey of elected officials in the National Capital Region.

Comment 1: The 2030 Group's research and analysis of other regional models of governance, as well as its study of the evolution of regional thinking and action in the National Capital Region provides a much needed body of information on which to base future thinking and action. COG is willing to work with the 2030 Group and others to ensure that this body of knowledge is shared with a much broader range of stakeholders. As an initial step, COG would like to include the 2030 Group as a resource on COG's soon to be launched Region Forward website, [www.regionforward.org](http://www.regionforward.org).

Comment 2: The chief conclusion of the 2030 Group, "there is no effective regional governance structure, or dedicated region-wide revenue, for comprehensive governance in the National Capital Region" perhaps implies that dedicated region-wide revenue is necessary for effective regional governance.

*\*Adjunct member*

COG believes that although imperfect, there are many examples of effective regional governance in the National Capital Region and significant areas of regional achievement led by COG in such areas as transportation, homeland security, and air quality. A more successful strategy may be to marshal support for local and state funding strategies to address widely-recognized regional priorities. The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board, which is part of COG, has identified for some time the consequences of deferred investment in transportation infrastructure, including funding for roads, bridges and transit, as well as pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

Comment 3: COG officials remain concerned that the 2030 Group needs to reach out more aggressively to seek broad stakeholder and diverse community engagement on its work to date and the work that likely is ahead. COG appreciates that 2030 Group members responded affirmatively to pledge a significant amount of funding over several years to underwrite commissioned studies and other sponsored work. COG also appreciates that David Robertson, its executive director, and several others area leaders served on the 2030 Group's advisory committee leading up to the release of its findings at the September 20 forum. Although no civic engagement model is perfect, including those employed by COG, the strength of the 2030 Group's work will rise from the support it receives from a broad mix of diverse stakeholders in the National Capital Region.

Comment 4: The 2030 Group advanced four principal goals at its September 20 forum. The 2030 Group goal to build on the work of the Greater Washington 2050 Compact and the Region Forward report is most welcome. Representing primarily local development firms, the 2030 Group is well-positioned to help support Region Forward by pledging that new development and redevelopment projects advanced by its members and others in the development community embrace and reflect the Region Forward principles of accessibility, sustainability, prosperity and livability. COG's member local governments will be seeking partnerships with the private sector on new development and community revitalization actions to embrace these principles, as well.

The 2030 Group goal to make the National Capital Region a national model for federal/state/local cooperation is worthy of support and fully consistent with COG's strategic plan. The private sector can be especially effective in supporting public officials and governing boards that embrace meaningful regional collaboration to ensure that local action supports broadly agreed upon principles, such as those outlined in Region Forward. While COG has long recognized the unique, tri-state nature of the National Capital Region and the very unique role of the federal government, our differences from other regions in the country should not be an impediment to innovation.

The 2030 Group's proposed goal to build a regional charter for governing the National Capital Region will benefit from additional thought, in COG's view. A regional "charter" is an unclear concept to many and can be easily confused with the charters that are more often associated with local governments in the context of their enabling legislation or authority granted by states. COG believes a more useful initial step may be 2030 Group support for aggressively promoting and seeking support for the Greater Washington 2050 Compact and Region Forward, which has attracted broad support from local governments and several philanthropic or civic groups.

The 2030 Group's proposal to create an abundance of practicing regional citizens is perhaps the most significant goal that has been suggested. COG's survey commissioned for its Region Forward report echoed the 2030 Group survey that found strong support for regional collaboration and leadership. However, there are few sustained efforts underway to engage and educate businesses, residents and civic institutions concerning the urgency and benefits of regional approaches to governance and problem-solving. At a time when it is difficult to engage the public on matters of local interest, extending that demand on time and attention to regional matters that may be perceived as having little impact on day-to-day concerns raises an even higher bar for COG, the 2030 Group and other regionally-serving organizations and institutions. COG looks forward to working with the 2030 Group to explore how its support could help launch a multi-jurisdictional, multi-sector campaign to create or deepen regional civic engagement.

Comment 5: Several local public officials contacted COG staff in response to an email survey they received in early October. While well-intended, the COG Board concluded that the survey process and structure may not yield the quality response that is being sought by the 2030 Group. The survey was described as an opportunity for public officials to provide information on positions related to regional governance prior to the November election. The survey may have assumed a broader level of knowledge about the 2030 Group and its findings than is the case at present, or required that respondents go to the 2030 Group's website to access reports and other information. Also, the survey was sent to some public officials who are not standing for election in November and the communication was unclear as to how the information would be used and published. Both points may have contributed to some delay or reluctance to respond to the survey.

COG has helped lead the charge for regionalism for more than 50 years and welcomes new allies, partners and supporters. The 2030 Group is comprised of respected development leaders that have spurred the transformation of many communities in the National Capital Region. As your organization's studies have stated, more work is needed to ensure that the quality of life enjoyed today is not just maintained, but improved for the next generation of residents and businesses that call the National Capital Region home.

The COG Board has directed David Robertson, COG's executive director to contact you and your colleagues to begin to align our respective work programs and explore opportunities for further collaboration and 2030 Group support for Region Forward implementation, which the COG Board believes is the most promising tool to advance our shared goals. Mr. Robertson will contact you soon to begin this dialogue.

Again, thank you for your regional leadership and willingness to partner with COG.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'KRB' with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kwame R. Brown  
Chairman, COG Board of Directors