

Testimony Before the Senate Subcommittee on Oversight of Government
Management, the Federal Workforce and the District of Columbia;
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Securing the National Capital Region: An Examination of the
NCR's Strategic Plan

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Introduction

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear today to discuss the *National Capital Region (NCR) Homeland Security Strategic Plan* and coordination efforts within the Region. The last time we met, you had a number of questions and concerns regarding regional coordination for preparedness in the NCR, and you made a number of recommendations to improve and expand the regional *NCR Homeland Security Strategic Plan*.

Today, my colleagues and I will provide you with an update on the Region's progress. I am pleased to report that the centerpiece of this effort, the *NCR Homeland Security Strategic Plan*, has been completed. I should also mention that, throughout this effort, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) was kept apprised. Representatives from the NCR Senior Policy Group (SPG), including myself, met with GAO officials on several occasions to welcome GAO's advice and input, and to incorporate key recommendations.

With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I would like to join my NCR colleagues in submitting this *NCR Homeland Security Strategic Plan*, along with my written testimony, for the Record. This *NCR Homeland Security Strategic Plan* includes three documents: Volume I: Core Plan, which contains the overall strategy with Goals, Objectives, and Initiatives for the Region; Volume II: Appendices, which contains details on the Initiatives, as well as other resource materials; and an Overview document that summarizes key elements of the *NCR Homeland Security Strategic Plan*.

Completion of this *NCR Homeland Security Strategic Plan* represents a significant milestone. In reviewing other homeland security strategic plans—many of those supplied to us by the GAO—it became clear that the *Strategic Plan* before you today is unprecedented. For many reasons, the NCR is unique among this nation's metropolitan areas. Within the NCR's approximately 6,000 square miles is situated by far the largest concentration of government entities in the nation. This includes 14 state and local entities, along with all three branches of the Federal Government, and representation by almost all foreign governments. The NCR also has the largest concentration of not-for-profit organizations in the country—now estimated at 2,100. Moreover, like most other metro areas, the NCR has a thriving private sector that ranks 4th in size among metro areas. As you can appreciate, catastrophic events—whether natural or human-caused—respect no boundaries. When you couple this with the geopolitical complexities of the NCR, one begins to appreciate the daunting homeland security challenges this area poses.

Certainly this requires significant investment of resources. But equally important is the need for collaboration on an unprecedented scale. Significant resources, extraordinary collaboration, and a long-term plan to leverage these two assets effectively underpin the strategy for homeland security across the NCR.

The Strategic Plan

The *NCR Homeland Security Strategic Plan* lays out a three-to-five-year, Region-wide strategy for managing risk and strengthening homeland security capabilities within the NCR. It sets forth strategic Goals, Objectives, and implementation Initiatives to make the NCR safe and secure. Equally important in ensuring success is the means to gauge the region's progress and to make informed adjustments in the strategy along the way. The *NCR Homeland Security Strategic Plan* addresses the need for performance measures for use during implementation.

The NCR partners went to great lengths to align the details of the *NCR Homeland Security Strategic Plan* with a variety of important planning, guidance and assessment documents relevant to NCR homeland security, including some from the GAO and this body. While assessing risks, identifying vulnerabilities, and understanding their consequences are critical to determining *what* should be done, collaboration, coordination, and information and resource sharing are the principal means for *how* to build and sustain capabilities across the Region. The *NCR Homeland Security Strategic Plan*—along with other state, local, and national plans—serves as a roadmap for strengthening capabilities and enhancing capacity to realize the NCR partners' vision for a safe and secure NCR.

Engaging partners in this collaborative enterprise remains a strategic imperative. To get to this point, the Region continued the extensive stakeholder-driven process that has guided NCR homeland security preparedness efforts over the past few years. The Region continued to make enhancements and improvements to the 2005 *NCR Homeland Security Strategic Plan* framework about which NCR leaders and I testified last March. Throughout the development process, NCR jurisdictions used the Interim National Preparedness Goal, which emphasizes capabilities-based planning for national preparedness, to help guide the overall Initiatives contained in the *NCR Homeland Security Strategic Plan*. More recently, results from major programs and initiatives such as the Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) and the Nationwide Plan Review were incorporated to finalize the *NCR Homeland Security Strategic Plan*.

Earlier this year all of the jurisdictions in the NCR completed a regional assessment using the nationally-recognized EMAP standard, which is based on the National Fire Protection Association 1600 Standard on Disaster/Emergency Management and Business Continuity Programs. This was the first time the standard was applied in a regional context. In general, the process demonstrates that a jurisdiction, or, in this case, multiple jurisdictions, is aiming to use its resources to provide the capabilities that emergency managers nationwide agree are necessary to be prepared for and to respond to natural and human-caused disasters.

Additionally, in June, the Department of Homeland Security Nationwide Plan Review Phase Two Report was published. This provided a post-Hurricane Katrina assessment of the status of catastrophic planning for states, including the District of Columbia, and 75

of the nation's largest urban areas, including the NCR. The conclusions from this report, in addition to EMAP process mentioned above, were considered in the strategic planning effort and included within the *NCR Homeland Security Strategic Plan*.

Moving Forward

The *NCR Homeland Security Strategic Plan* is a major milestone in the regional approach to preparedness in the NCR, continuing to advance the Region's efforts as a model for intergovernmental, cross-jurisdictional, regional strategic planning. It has promoted and will continue to promote a more collaborative culture to sustain capabilities to respond to and recover from all-hazards events affecting the NCR. Execution of the *NCR Homeland Security Strategic Plan* in the future will enhance the NCR's coordinated approach for communication and interaction among stakeholders, and for more efficient prioritized funding for the Region.

All involved recognize the need to update elements of the *NCR Homeland Security Strategic Plan* on an annual basis to reflect changed. As specific threats and the nature of all-hazards events evolve, and as further risk and capability assessments are conducted, the *NCR Homeland Security Strategic Plan* will be amended and adapted as necessary.

These steps forward reflect a strong collaboration with our state and local partners. The *NCR Homeland Security Strategic Plan* provides the Region with a common framework to coordinate and implement initiatives that meet strategic objectives. The region will continue to strive toward fielding those capabilities necessary for a safe and secure National Capital Region.

Closing

Collaboration among NCR Partners continues to enhance the safety and security of this Region. Many challenges remain, but the *NCR Homeland Security Strategic Plan* provides a focus to guide regional efforts. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member and members of the Subcommittee, I would again like to thank you for the opportunity to appear today to discuss the *NCR Homeland Security Strategic Plan* and coordination efforts within the Region. I look forward to continued communication and cooperation in this important undertaking. This concludes my statement. I am pleased to answer any questions you or members of the Subcommittee may have.