



Round 7 Regional Activity Centers & Clusters

DRAFT



Metropolitan Washington Regional Activity Centers and Clusters



The Regional Activity Centers and Clusters maps and data in this publication are derived from the Round 70 Cooperative Forecasts—the official local government projections of employment, population and household growth in metropolitan Washington.

The Regional Activity Centers are based upon current local comprehensive plans and zoning. As shown in the maps and tables, the Centers are classified into one of five typologies according to their concentration of employment and housing. The Regional Activity Clusters depict groupings of Regional Activity Centers as well as the concentrations of housing and jobs immediately surrounding the Centers and along major transportation facilities.

The Regional Activity Centers and Clusters have been developed by COG's Metropolitan Development Policy Committee as a tool to help guide land use and transportation planning decisions. In addition, local and regional planning and policy goals may recommend working to increase either the amount of employment or housing in the Centers and Clusters.

Background

In 1998, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) adopted its transportation "Vision" for the Washington region. As part of its Transportation "Vision," the TPB also adopted a series of goals, objectives and strategies, including the following objective seeking better interjurisdictional coordination of transportation and land use planning:

"...A composite general land use and transportation map of the region that identifies the key elements needed for regional transportation planning—regional activity centers, principal transportation corridors and facilities, and designated green space."

The Planning Directors Technical Advisory Committee completed the initial map of Activity Centers in 1999 and, under the direction of a joint work group composed of COG Board and TPB members, worked to define the "regional" nature of the maps.

In 2002, the COG Board of Directors and the TPB approved the final Regional Activity Centers and Clusters maps based on the Round 63 Cooperative Forecasts. The 58 Regional Activity Centers contained slightly more than half of the region's current and future employment, but only about 10 percent of the region's households. The Regional Activity Clusters were developed to portray a more stylized, conceptual depiction of development in the transportation corridors, much like the maps prepared for the Northern Virginia 2020 Plan. These Regional Activity Centers and Clusters contained nearly 70 percent of the region's current and future jobs and approximately 31 percent of the region's current and projected households.

In approving the maps of Regional Activity Centers and Clusters, the COG Board and the TPB also approved Resolution 913-02 which recommended that COG review and amend the regional activity centers maps following the adoption by the COG Board of each major round of its cooperative forecasts, i.e., Round 70, Round 80, etc. In October 2006, the COG Board of Directors approved the Round 70 Cooperative Forecasts, and in April 2008, the COG Board approved a work plan for preparing updates to the Regional Activity Centers maps based upon the Round 70 Cooperative Forecasts.

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Updating the Regional Activity Centers and Clusters

In working to update the Regional Activity Centers and Clusters, Planning Directors Technical Advisory committee (PDTAC) members unanimously agreed to use the criteria established in 2002 to evaluate the Round 70 Cooperative Forecasts:

- **DC Core**—Primary focal point of Metropolitan Washington. Comprises major centers within the District of Columbia. Contains the major governmental, cultural and tourism activities of the region, as well as significant business and commercial activity. Center of the region's transit system. Pedestrian-oriented sidewalk network with an organized street grid/block configuration.
- **Mixed Use Centers**—Generally urban in character, less up to two square miles (1,280 acres) that contain either a dense mix of retail, employment, and residential activity or significant levels of employment and housing. Accessible by transit or commuter rail and by major highways. Employment Criteria: Greater than 15,000 jobs and greater than 25 jobs/acre in 2030. Residential Criteria: Greater than 10 units per acre.

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**COG Board of Directors Meeting
April 11, 2007**

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board Vision (1998)

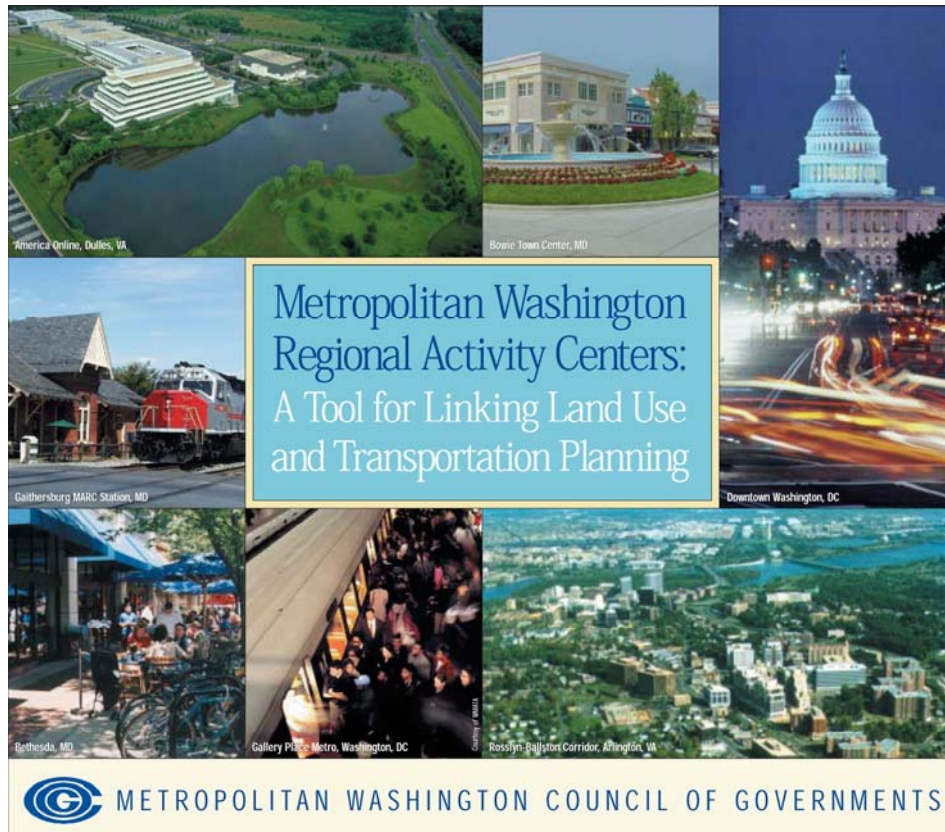
“In the 21st Century, the Washington metropolitan region remains a vibrant world capital, with a transportation system that provides efficient movement of people and goods. This system promotes the region's economy and environmental quality, and operates in an attractive and safe setting--it is a system that serves everyone. The system is fiscally sustainable, promotes areas of concentrated growth, manages both demand and capacity, employs the best technology, and joins rail, roadway, bus, air, water, pedestrian and bicycle facilities into a fully interconnected network.”

...(2) Better coordination of transportation and land use planning, including the creation of a composite regional map that identifies and integrates a system of regional transportation corridors and facilities, the regional core, regional activity centers, and "green space," and which will serve as the basis for future transportation planning and funding priorities



TPB Vision Action Agenda, Goal 2

Regional Activity Centers



- Approved by COG Board of Directors and TPB in 2002
- Included recommendation that the maps and data be updated following each major update or “Round” of Cooperative Forecasts
- October 2005 – COG Board approved the Round 7.0 Cooperative Forecasts
- April 2006 – COG Board approved work program to update the Activity Centers and Clusters
- March 2007 – Metropolitan Development Policy Committee (MDPC) approves Round 7 Activity Centers and Clusters

Regional Activity Center Typologies and Criteria

DC Core – Primary focal point of Metropolitan Washington. Comprises major centers within the District of Columbia. Contains the major governmental, cultural and tourism activities of the region, as well as significant business and commercial activity. Center of the region’s transit system. Pedestrian oriented sidewalk network with an organized street grid/block configuration.

Mixed Use Centers – Generally urban in character, areas **up to two square miles** (1,280 acres) that contain either a dense mix of retail, employment, and residential activity or significant levels of employment and housing. Accessible by transit or commuter rail and by major highways. *Employment Criteria: Greater than 15,000 jobs and greater than 25 jobs per acre in 2025. Residential Criteria: Greater than 10 units per acre.*

Employment Centers – Higher-density areas **up to 3.5 square miles** (2,240 acres) that contain significant concentrations of employment. Generally urban or becoming more urban in character. *Employment Criteria: Greater than 20,000 jobs and greater than 30 jobs per acre in 2025.*

Suburban Employment Centers – More-dispersed, lower-density areas, **less than 6 square miles** (3,840 acres). *Employment Criteria: Greater than 15,000 jobs and greater than 10 jobs per acre in 2025.*

Emerging Employment Centers – Rapidly developing “campus-style” suburban employment areas **less than 6 square miles** (3,840 acres) in total area. *Employment Criteria: Greater than 15,000 jobs in 2025, and greater than 50 percent job growth between 2000 and 2025 OR less than 50 percent commercial buildout in 2025.*

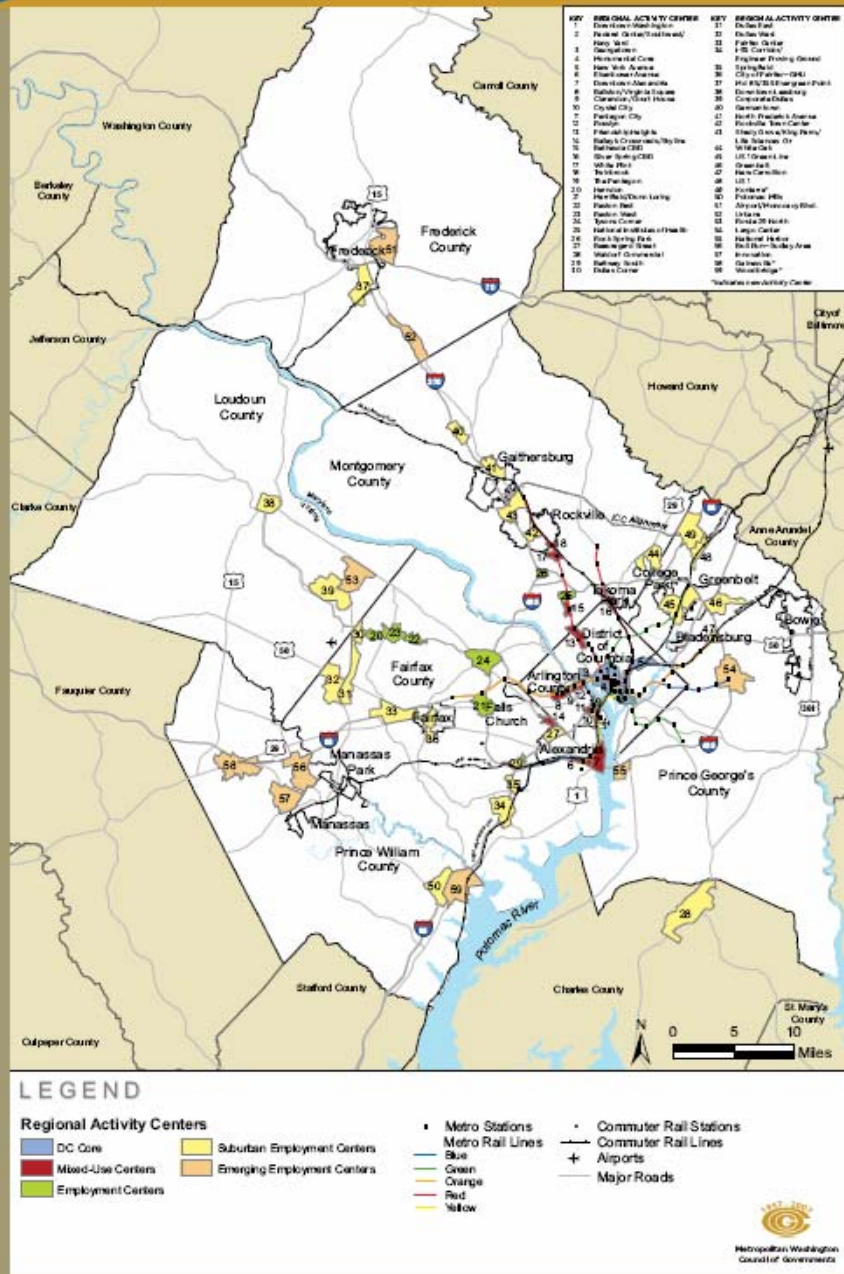


Regional Activity Center Typologies and Criteria

By applying these criteria to the new Round 7.0 Cooperative Forecasts, PDTAC members identified 3 additional new Regional Activity Centers:

- “Konterra” – a “Suburban Employment Center” in Prince George’s County
- “Woodbridge” – an “Emerging Employment Center” in Prince William County
- “Gainesville” – an “Emerging Employment Center” in Prince William County





Round 7 Regional Activity Centers Findings

Contain approximately 54 percent of the region's current and future employment, and slightly more than 13 percent of the region's current households and 16 percent of future households

Employment shares are comparable to those of previous Activity Centers

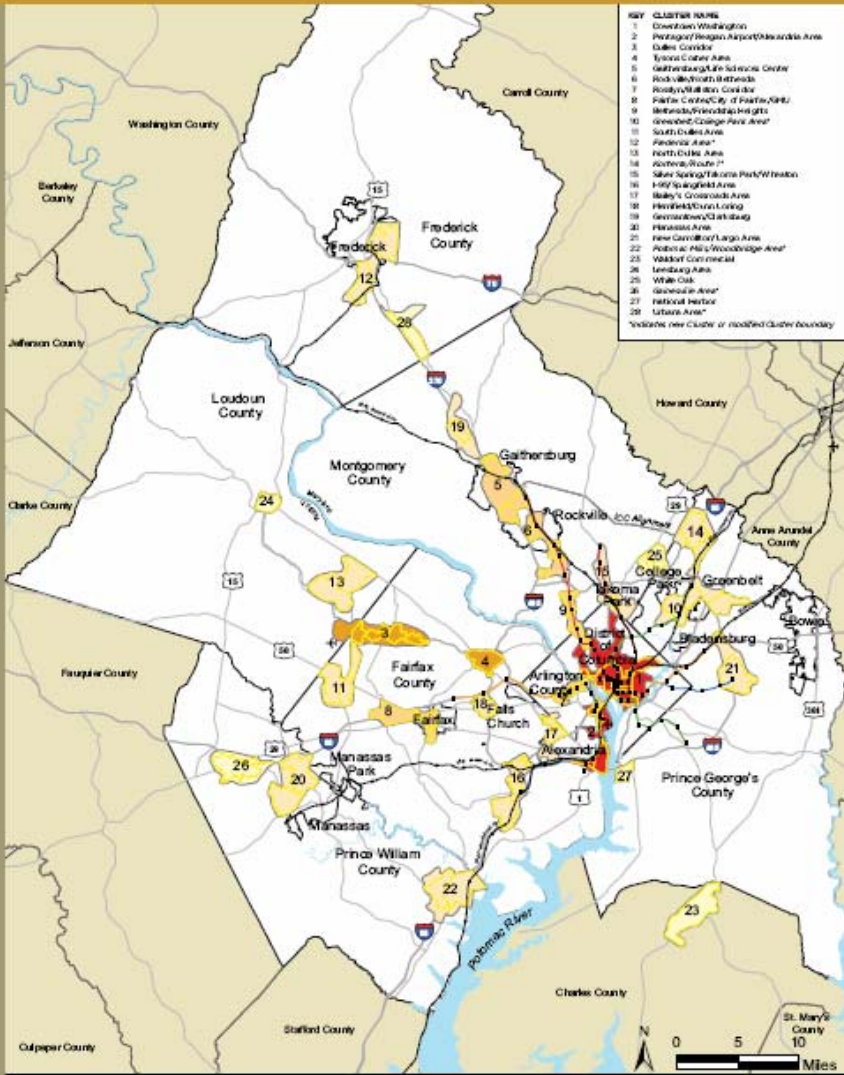
Household shares are significantly higher due to the more than 120,000 households that were added during Round 7 approval process

Regional Activity Clusters

Developed based upon the recognition that:

- Except for the “Mixed-Use Centers”, most of the Regional Activity Centers were primarily commercial employment centers
- The PDTAC believed that the Regional Activity Centers by themselves were too narrowly defined and excluded large concentrations of housing located immediately adjacent to these employment areas
- The PDTAC defined “Clusters” to better represent regional concentrations of housing and employment located in close proximity to one another along major transportation corridors
 - e.g., Rosslyn-Ballston, Bethesda/Friendship Heights, Greenbelt/College Park, I-270, I-95 and the Dulles Corridor





- KEY CLUSTER TOWNS**
- 1 Downtown Washington
 - 2 Pentagon/Regan Airport/Manassas Area
 - 3 Silver Spring
 - 4 National Center Area
 - 5 Gaithersburg/Leesville Center
 - 6 Rockville/Leesville Center
 - 7 Rockville/Leesville Center
 - 8 Potomac/City of Fairfax Area
 - 9 Beltsville/College Park Area
 - 10 Greenbelt/College Park Area
 - 11 South District Area
 - 12 Frederick Area
 - 13 North Falls Area
 - 14 Potomac/Road 7
 - 15 Silver Spring/Leesville Park/Wheaton
 - 16 Ivy Spring Area
 - 17 Bailey's Crossroads Area
 - 18 Herndon/Leesville
 - 19 Germantown/Clarksburg
 - 20 Potomac Area
 - 21 Area Center/Leesville Area
 - 22 Ashburn/Leesville Area
 - 23 Woodbridge/Leesville Area
 - 24 Fairfax/Leesville Area
 - 25 White Oak
 - 26 Greenbelt Area
 - 27 National Harbor
 - 28 Largo Area
 - 29 Lorton Area
- *Indicates new cluster or modified cluster boundary

LEGEND

Activity Clusters - 2030 Employment	Metro Stations	Commuter Rail Stations
15,000 - 49,999	Metro Rail Lines	Commuter Rail Lines
50,000 - 99,999	Blue	Airports
100,000 - 149,999	Orange	Major Roads
150,000 - 199,999	Yellow	
200,000 - 750,000	Activity Center Boundaries	

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

Round 7 Regional Activity Clusters Findings

Contain approximately 72 percent of the region's current and future employment, and slightly more than 40 percent of the region's current households and 42 percent of future households

Employment shares comparable to those of previous Activity Clusters

As with the Activity Centers, the household shares are significantly higher due to the more than 120,000 households that were added during Round 7 approval process

Applications of Regional Activity Centers and Clusters

- **TPB Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study -**
 - Activity Clusters guided the allocation of future household and job growth for the 5 alternative land use scenarios
- **Development of COG's Round 7.0 Cooperative Forecasts**
 - To address the imbalance between forecast jobs and households in the initial Round 7.0 Forecasts, PDTAC and MDPC members added nearly 120,000 additional households in 2030 - 2/3 of the additional households assumed under the "More Households" scenario
- **TPB Activity Cluster Analysis of the Constrained Long-Range Plan**
 - Activity Clusters used to identify how transportation projects / proposals support the regional core and regional activity centers, as stated in Goal 2, Strategy 4 of the TPB Vision:
 - "...Give high priority to regional planning and funding for transportation facilities that serve the regional core and regional activity centers, including expanded rail service and transit centers where passengers can switch easily from one transportation mode to another."*



Applications of Regional Activity Centers and Clusters

- **Reality Check on Growth Event**
 - Participants directed to use COG's Activity Centers and Clusters as priority areas for allocating household and job growth
- **Cooperative Forecast Analysis**
 - Employment, population and household growth tabulated in Activity Clusters for each Cooperative Forecast update
- **COG Annual Commercial Construction Indicators Report**
 - Annual summary of number of projects, square footage, estimated construction cost for Activity Clusters
- **WMATA Regional Activity Centers Demonstration Report**
 - Activity Centers analyzed to demonstrate how low-cost transit improvements and demand management policies could offer alternatives to single-occupant vehicles and increase mobility in Centers



Potential Policy Application of Regional Activity Centers and Clusters

(1) Increasing the Share of Future Employment in the Regional Activity Centers and Clusters.

By 2030, the Regional Activity Centers are forecast to capture approximately 2.34 million jobs, or 55 percent of all jobs in the region, while the Regional Activity Center Clusters are anticipated to contain 71 percent of the region's jobs. An initial regional policy goal would be to increase the number and share of jobs forecast to be located within the boundaries of the Activity Centers and Clusters.

(2) Concentrating Residential Growth in the Regional Activity Centers

Excluding the Mixed-Use Centers, the Regional Activity Centers are defined in terms of concentrations of employment. By 2030, the Regional Activity Centers are forecast to capture approximately 398,000 households or 16 percent of all households, while the Regional Activity Center Clusters are to capture 42 percent of all households. A regional policy goal should be to increase efforts to concentrate more housing in the Regional Activity Centers and Clusters.



Potential Policy Application of Regional Activity Centers and Clusters


(3) Concentrating Growth in Transit Station and Commuter Rail Station Areas

The Regional Activity Centers and Clusters contain 62 Metrorail Stations, 8 Maryland Commuter Rail (MARC) stations, and 7 Virginia Railway Express (VRE) stations. However, within the COG member jurisdictions, there are 24 Metrorail stations, 12 MARC, and 8 VRE stations that are NOT located within Activity Center or Cluster boundaries. A local and regional policy goal could be, wherever possible, to continue to increase development in these “underutilized” station areas.




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