

The background of the entire page is a complex network of light gray lines and nodes. The nodes are represented by small circles, some of which are solid and some are hollow. The lines connect these nodes in a web-like pattern, creating a sense of interconnectedness and data flow. The overall aesthetic is clean, modern, and technical.

REGION FORWARD COALITION

**BASELINE PROGRESS REPORT**

# Preface

*Region Forward* is the National Capital Region's vision plan for making the region an attractive place to live, work, and play while addressing four main interconnected regional challenges: **economic growth, equity, aging infrastructure, and a healthy environment.** *Region Forward* includes targets and metrics for the purpose of regularly measuring progress toward shared regional goals designed to address our core challenges and enhance our quality of life. This progress report measures *Region Forward's* targets and establishes a baseline for measuring progress in the future.

The results of this progress report reflect collective local actions supporting the regional vision. This progress report will increase awareness and accountability among local governments, regional agencies and stakeholders. The report is a tool for residents and leaders to understand where we stand, where we are making progress, and where we are struggling to achieve our shared goals. It provides a starting point for assessing existing or new policies and programs in areas such as transportation, land use, the environment, climate and energy, housing, economic development, health, and public safety. The major issues called out in this report are below.

- **Built Environment** – The region's built environment contributes to high energy costs, CO2 emissions, asthma, obesity, diabetes, and poor access to key jobs, goods, and services
- **Equitable Prosperity** – The region's affluence masks entrenched inequities in communities with high concentrations of poverty and unemployment, low-wage jobs,
- **Transportation Funding** – New revenue and dedicated funding is needed to support our existing transportation system and expansion efforts
- **Water Quality** – Developed land uses, including impervious surfaces such as roads are stressors on waterways, such as streams and the Chesapeake Bay

The report's findings demonstrate new and intractable regional challenges that will require forward thinking and innovation. In areas where the region is struggling to achieve our goals, we may need to reexamine our institutions, leadership structures and policies to remain competitive on the global stage. Now is the time to focus on the region's long-term future. The communities we leave to our children and future residents will depend on our ability to seize the moment, make hard decisions and see them through.

**Eric Olson** (Vice Chair of the Prince George's County Council)

**Harriet Tregoning** (Director of DC Office of Planning)

**Mary Hynes** (Chair of Arlington County Board)

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Comprehensive Vision & Achievement Plan

PHASE 2

**Regional Activity Centers**  
Identifies areas of value and opportunity, spatial component of Region Forward

**Baseline Progress Report**  
Measures Progress Toward Achieving the Vision

PHASE 3

**Region Forward Implementation Tool**  
Coordinates Public and Private Sector Decisions to Achieve the Region Forward Vision

# Performance Dashboard

Accessibility targets in *Region Forward* examine the interplay between land use and transportation.

Sustainability targets focus on the built and natural environment, examining issues related to climate, energy, water, and land.

## ACCESSIBILITY

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
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Attainment Challenge =







Prosperity targets focus on economic health and improving the region's human capital through attracting a highly educated population and reducing educational disparities.

Livability targets focus on affordable housing, public safety, and health.

## PROSPERITY

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Extent of Changes to existing policies, programs, or processes to reverse trends and or achieve the target



Major



Moderate



Minor



Insufficient Data

# Overview

When *Region Forward* was adopted in 2010, the region promised to frequently measure progress toward achieving the vision. This report focuses only on outcomes and trends related to *Region Forward's* currently adopted targets.

The report is designed around *Region Forward's* four themes accessibility, sustainability, prosperity, and livability. Each chapter begins with a higher level summary of the theme's focus, performance and challenges and a more detailed examination of regional trends. Chapters are comprised of findings related to each specific *Region Forward* target and a "challenge" rating designed to inform the public as to the extent of change needed to reverse trends and achieve the target. This information will demonstrate where changes to existing policy or programs might be considered. The information will also be helpful when considering future updates to *Region Forward*.

This report analyzes twenty-eight targets to assesses our region's progress toward addressing our challenges. The signatories to *Region Forward* have agreed to measure our progress as a region and then use the results to develop solutions.



## Challenge



Major Challenges are the areas that need the most attention. Currently seven targets are characterized as major challenges. The Region Forward Coalition and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments will work with their policy bodies and partners to help the region meet these targets.

## Challenge



Twelve targets are Moderate Challenges that will require special attention to ensure that progress toward attainment is sufficient. The Coalition and other regional leaders should pay special attention to ensure that progress toward attaining these targets serves all members of the region equally.

## Challenge



There are seven targets that are categorized as Minor Challenges that will not require active engagement from the coalition to ensure their attainment. However, the Coalition should ensure that each of these targets is implemented equitably.

## Challenge



Two targets had insufficient data. The Region Forward Coalition and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments will work to collect and analyze the data required to assess the challenge of attaining these targets.



## ACCESSIBILITY

The Accessibility targets in Region Forward examine the interplay between land use and transportation. The most significant accessibility challenges for the region exist around transportation funding, affordability and land use decisions that bring people closer to everyday needs. Currently considerable uncertainty exists around dedicated resources to maintain and fund new transportation projects. In addition to securing more predictable and greater amounts of transportation funding, part of the solution to our transportation challenges lies in how we coordinate land use decisions to maximize the efficiency of the existing transportation system. By strategically coordinating development with existing transportation infrastructure, the region will be better position to meet its accessibility goals.



## SUSTAINABILITY

The Sustainability targets focus on the built and natural environment, examining issues related to climate, energy, water, and land. The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, local governments, and wastewater utilities have continued to make investments upgrading wastewater treatment plants to accommodate growth and address more stringent water quality requirements for the region's waterways and the Chesapeake Bay. Despite these efforts, the region will still need to address potential water quality challenges from stormwater runoff and the need to find new methods to minimize and manage that runoff. Making progress toward our water and land preservation targets will require better regional assessment of protected and threatened lands and a regional inventory of land providing ecological benefits to wildlife, habitat, local food production, recreational opportunities, and scenic beauty. The inventory and conservation strategy should be coordinated with regional development efforts focusing growth in Regional Activity Centers. Preserving land and concentrating growth and investment in regional centers will use existing infrastructure, energy, and water more efficiently, but these actions must be balanced against the water quality impacts of concentrating growth into areas that are already highly urbanized and that often already have poorer water quality.



## PROSPERITY



The Prosperity targets generally focus on economic health and improving the region's human capital through attracting a highly educated population and reducing educational disparities. The region continues to attract highly educated workers and our gross regional product has continued to increase. However, three challenges threaten the continued success of this region. The first includes the regional disparities which prevent the region from meeting its goals to educate and create opportunities for its low-income residents. There are large areas throughout our region that experience high concentrations of poverty and unemployment, low-wage jobs, low-performing schools and low-educational attainment. The second major concern is the region's dependence on the Federal government and federal spending, which cannot sustain the recent explosive deficit spending or its disproportionate concentration of spending in the region. Addressing these challenges requires understanding and support among the region's business and elected leaders to create an action-oriented regional economic development plan.

## LIVABILITY



The Livability targets focus on affordable housing, public safety, and health. The region is performing well in health and public safety. However, producing and preserving affordable housing is the area of primary concern. *Region Forward's* affordable housing targets focus on creating and preserving mixed-income housing throughout the region while maintaining our existing affordable housing stock. To achieve this, we must focus our efforts on preserving and leveraging new development opportunities in neighborhoods expected to experience significant price increases and development activity due to public investments such as transit.

# Major Building Blocks for Evaluation

## COOPERATIVE FORECAST

The Cooperative Forecasting Program, established in 1975 and administered by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), enables local, regional, and federal agencies to coordinate planning decisions using common assumptions about future growth and development in the region. Each series of forecasts, or a “Round,” provides land use activity forecasts of employment, population, and households by five year increments. Each Round covers a period of 20 to 30 years.

## NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION CLIMATE CHANGE REPORT

On November 12, 2008, the COG Board approved the National Capital Region Climate Report, which includes significant greenhouse gas reduction goals for the region and 78 recommendations to help area leaders and citizens meet the targets.

## CONSTRAINED LONG RANGE PLAN

The Financially Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan, or CLRP, identifies all regionally significant transportation projects and programs that are planned in the Washington metropolitan area between 2011 and 2040. Over 750 projects are included, ranging from simple highway landscaping to billion-dollar highway and transit projects. Some of the projects will be completed in the near future, while others are only in the initial planning stage.

## CENSUS

The U.S. Census Bureau produces several data products which provide the foundation for most demographic analysis. This report uses data from the Decennial census and the American Community Survey.

## REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTERS

Regional Activity Centers were developed as a tool to help guide land use and transportation planning decisions. The centers were derived from the Cooperative Forecasts. Centers were selected using a series of housing and employment thresholds designed to highlight regionally significant concentrations of activity.

## BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics is a primary source for economic data. This report utilizes several of the bureau's data series for the prosperity section.

