

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON  COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

One Region Moving Forward

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August 1, 2012

Terri Lee Freeman
Chair, Board of Directors
Washington Regional Association of Grantmakers
1400 16th Street NW, Suite 740
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Ms. Freeman:

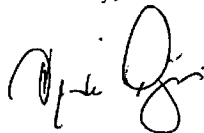
Thank you for your recent letter concerning the very important selection of the next Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) Executive Director.

As I have stated publicly since his departure was announced to the COG Board in February, Dave Robertson leaves "big shoes to fill". Yet, it also creates an opportunity to reaffirm and refocus COG and National Capital Region priorities. WRAG's insight on the factors necessary for success in this position is most welcome and timely. COG's many partnerships with diverse stakeholders underscores, I believe, its commitment to building and sustaining relationships that will foster regional success and strengthen the quality of life for all area residents.

I have shared your letter with my colleagues on the Executive Director Search Committee and with representatives of The Mercer Group, Inc., which is assisting COG with the search process. I will also share your letter with the COG Board, which is expected to make its decision in October. I can assure you that your thoughtful observations on the values and attributes necessary in the next Executive Director will truly shape our decision.

I am eager to announce the appointment of a new Executive Director this fall who will swiftly build on our already strong relationships with WRAG and COG's other partners and help move our region forward.

Sincerely,



Frank J. Principi
Chairman, COG Board of Directors

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www.mwcog.org

WASHINGTON
Regional Association of
GRANTMAKERS

July 26, 2012

The Honorable Frank Principi
Chair
Board of Directors
Council of Governments
Via email – fprincipi@gpwhealthcenter.org

Dear Supervisor Principi:

For several years, the Washington Regional Association of Grantmakers (WRAG) has been a partner with the Council of Governments in two important areas of work, 8 Neighbors and Region Forward. We understand the import of government, business, the nonprofit sector and philanthropy speaking with one voice relative to the issues facing the region. We have applauded COG's leadership around the Region Forward plan, formally endorsed it and were very pleased to see "Region Forward is Our Vision" on the cover of your position announcement. It is our belief in the powerful role that COG plays in shaping, supporting and implementing a vision for our region that leads us to write to you now regarding the COG Executive Director position.

As Chairman of the Board, we know that you face a significant challenge in choosing the right candidate for this critically important position. As you weigh the many factors that go into you making a decision on the candidate who can truly move the region forward, we ask that you consider the following:

- A candidate who seeks opportunities to address regional challenges by bringing together the government, business, philanthropic and civic communities -- The development of the Region Forward plan and the work of 8 Neighbors have been important cross-sector partnerships that have demonstrated the need to work collaboratively to maximize impact. We hope that the value of this approach will be recognized by the new leader and that s/he will work to continue to create opportunities for dialogue and action across sectors.
- A candidate who is action-oriented – the Washington metropolitan area is blessed with numerous think tanks committed to researching and developing comprehensive reports on the state of the region. Few organizations have the inherent membership power, as does COG, to tackle problems in the region. Your recent call for a regional response to

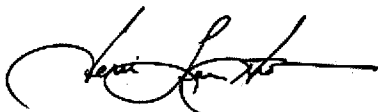
the power failures that have threatened our region is not just a call for a study, but a call for action. That is the type of leadership which we hope to see in the new Executive Director.

- A candidate who understands politics and policy – Having the involvement of the chief elected officials from across the region affords COG the *gravitas* that ensures that others pay attention when COG “speaks.” That factor combined with a heightened focus on the Chief Administrative Officers as the implementers of the politicians’ vision makes the CAOs the strong backbone to affect needed policy change. The region needs a leader who understands the strengths and limitations of the various components of his/her membership and knows how and when to effectively utilize them all.
- A candidate who is focused on the region – We believe that Region Forward is the right plan for the region and we are pleased that COG has taken the important step of releasing baseline information relative to the plan’s goals. We urge you to seek a candidate who recognizes the importance of publicizing COG’s work around Region Forward broadly. While a number of organizations, such as WRAG, want to play a supporting role, COG must be the drum major for this effort. Like you, we want every sector benchmarking efforts against the goals set in Region Forward. The Region Forward plan must constantly be lifted up as *the* plan for the region, not just COG’s plan for the region. This is a nuanced marketing effort that the new leader must understand.
- A candidate who is able to balance the needs of job creators with the needs of those without jobs – It is a unique individual who can discuss the needs of the poor and the ramifications of poverty while also describing tax advantages for new businesses and market analyses, but that is what is needed in the COG Executive Director. As this region is increasingly viewed as one dependent upon intellectual capital, COG must be able to ensure that all boats rise as interventions to benefit the region and *all* who live here are discussed.
- A candidate who is willing to explore change in the organization – We all know that a few eggs must be cracked to make the perfect omelet. Accepting the cracking of those perfectly formed eggs is sometimes hard to do. COG has an established way of undertaking its work that has worked successfully in some areas and less so in others. COG has the potential for proactive leadership along with a responsiveness that positions it to play a great role in improving the region. Some of the structures that are currently in place in COG, like those in other longstanding organizations, may not be the structures that lend themselves to the vibrancy and flexibility that are necessary for a 21st century leadership organization.
- A candidate whose knowledge may be outside of the historical land use and transportation domains of traditional leaders of COG-like organizations – We recognize the import of quality planning in our region, but COG’s role is so much bigger than that. Just as Region Forward addresses multiple issue domains, the leader of COG must be

more of a generalist leader with deep issue and functional expertise resting across the breadth of his/her staff. We urge you to shape an organization that mirrors the comprehensiveness of the Region Forward plan.

The philanthropic community has long recognized the value of collaboration as we tackle the entrenched problems in our community. Our collaboration with COG was powerful as this region struggled through the economic downturn of a few years ago. While we are recovering, the region faces so many other challenges as we look at our public school systems, affordable housing, transit oriented development, a green economy and jobs. We at the Washington Regional Association of Grantmakers applaud the strong leadership of Dave Robertson and look forward to working with his successor in the years to come. Thank you for considering the characteristics that we raise in this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Terri Lee Freeman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Terri Lee Freeman, Chair, Board of Directors, the Washington Regional Association of Grantmakers and President, Community Foundation for the National Capital Region

Cc: James L. Mercer, CEO, The Mercer Group
Patricia Mathews, CEO, Northern Virginia Health Foundation and Vice Chair,
Board of Directors, Washington Regional Association of Grantmakers