

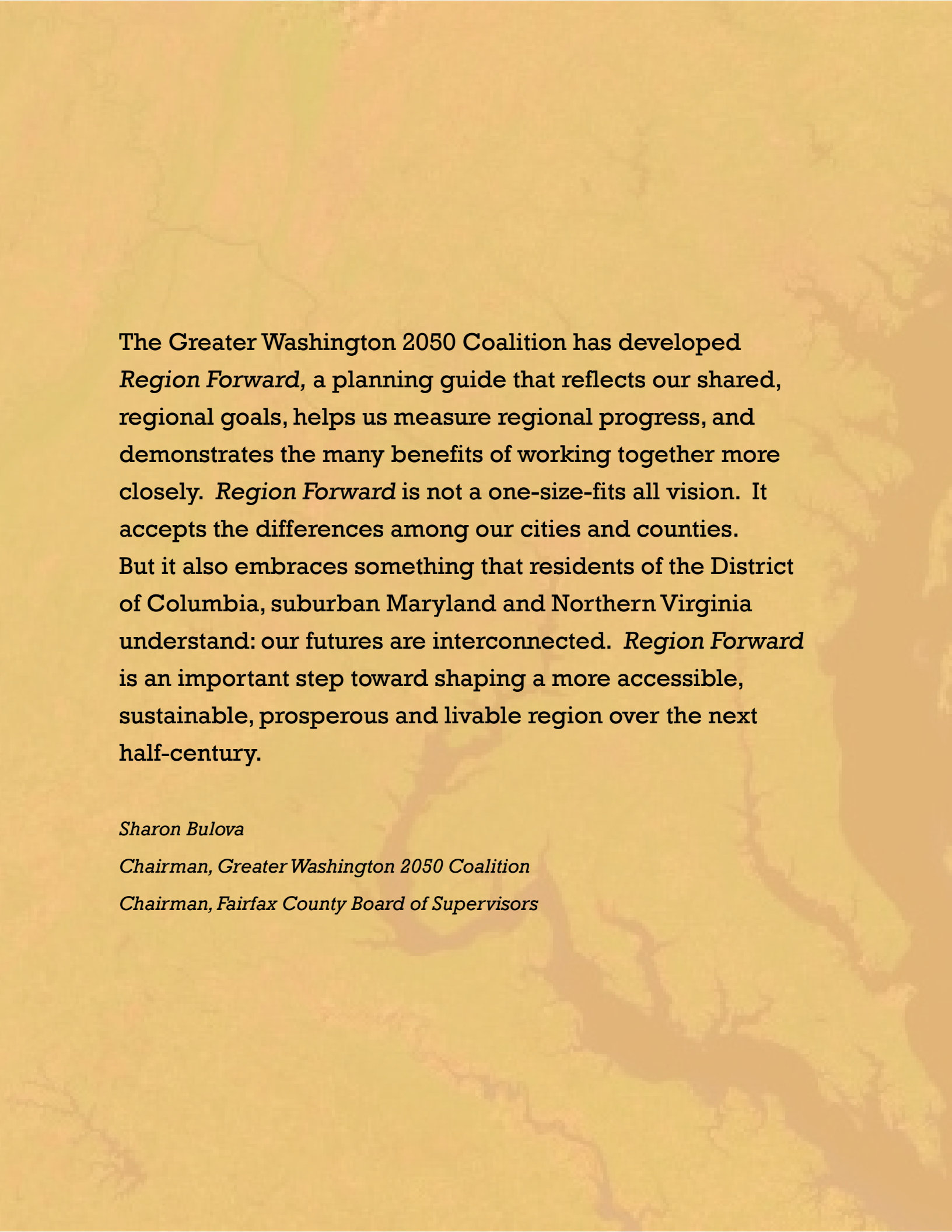
Region



Forward

A Comprehensive Guide for Regional Planning
and Measuring Progress in the 21st Century

Prepared by the Greater Washington 2050 Coalition
Approved by the COG Board of Directors on January 13, 2010



The Greater Washington 2050 Coalition has developed *Region Forward*, a planning guide that reflects our shared, regional goals, helps us measure regional progress, and demonstrates the many benefits of working together more closely. *Region Forward* is not a one-size-fits all vision. It accepts the differences among our cities and counties. But it also embraces something that residents of the District of Columbia, suburban Maryland and Northern Virginia understand: our futures are interconnected. *Region Forward* is an important step toward shaping a more accessible, sustainable, prosperous and livable region over the next half-century.

Sharon Bulova

Chairman, Greater Washington 2050 Coalition

Chairman, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

Overview

From the L'Enfant Plan to the National Mall, from Metrorail to Dulles Airport, bold vision and action by area leaders have shaped the National Capital Region we live in today. In that spirit, the Greater Washington 2050 Coalition has been thinking about the future and setting the stage for action and long-term success. In *Region Forward*, the Coalition proposes goals, targets, and a compact agreement to guide future planning and help measure progress.

Challenges (pg. 3)

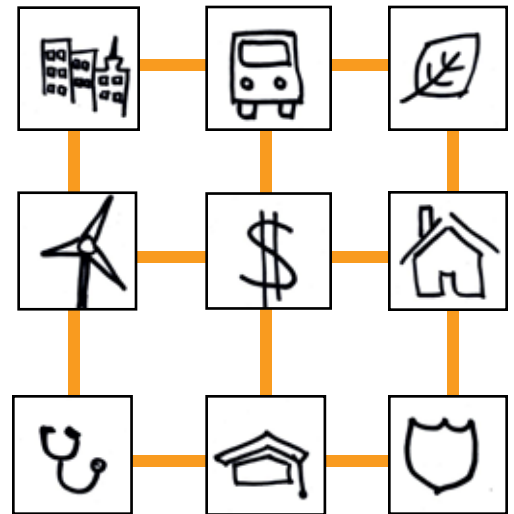
The success of this region over the next half century will depend on how we tackle interrelated challenges like population growth, aging infrastructure, traffic congestion, energy costs, environmental restoration and protection, the need for more affordable housing and sustainable development, and education, economic and health disparities. Other regions—our competitors in the United States and globally—are in the same race to maintain and grow communities that have clean air and water, safe and healthy neighborhoods, resilient economies, and access to housing and transportation choices.

Coalition (pg. 4)

The Greater Washington 2050 Coalition was established by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) to create a new, comprehensive, regional approach to solving these challenges—not business as usual. The Coalition was comprised of a diverse group of public officials and business and civic leaders. They built on recent regional plans, studied efforts in other parts of the country, and asked for input from experts and area residents.

Goals (pg. 9)

Coalition members found broad agreement on common goals that create a comprehensive vision for the region. The goal categories include land use, transportation, environmental, climate and energy, economic, housing, education, health, and public safety.



REGION FORWARD:

In this report, the Greater Washington 2050 Coalition proposes goals (pictured above), targets, and a compact agreement to guide future planning and help measure progress.

Compact (pg. 10)

Coalition members created a Compact Agreement because they knew that strong regional support would be critical to inspire action. While the Compact is voluntary, it represents a new approach to regional challenges, lays out the goals, and calls for more engagement of state and federal partners to improve regional cooperation. It asks area jurisdictions to pledge to use their best efforts to advance the regional goals.

Targets and Indicators (pg. 11)

Coalition members developed a set of targets and indicators to help regularly measure progress toward the goals. These targets and indicators judge the region as a whole, rather than measuring individual jurisdictions. By measuring things like regional green space, affordable housing units, and graduation rates, the targets and indicators will help show if the region is heading in the right direction.

Next Steps (pg. 13)

Once COG and its participating governments endorse *Region Forward*, the Coalition recommends that COG conduct regular progress reports to see if the region is moving closer to achieving its shared goals. It also recommends that COG commission future surveys to gauge public opinion on the region's progress, collect strategies and best practices to help governments achieve the goals, and create an interactive web site to communicate and build support for the effort.

Special Note on the Report

To show how the goals and targets are connected, they are presented in overarching categories—Accessibility, Sustainability, Prosperity, and Livability—that explain how they will help shape the region. Every target is tied to a primary goal, but some actions will help meet other goals. Look for the goal icons throughout the report. They show the co-benefits produced by achieving these goals.



Accessibility
(pg. 15)



Sustainability
(pg. 27)



Prosperity
(pg. 39)



Livability
(pg. 47)

INTERCONNECTION:

The goals and targets are presented in categories—Accessibility, Sustainability, Prosperity, and Livability—that explain how they will help shape the region.



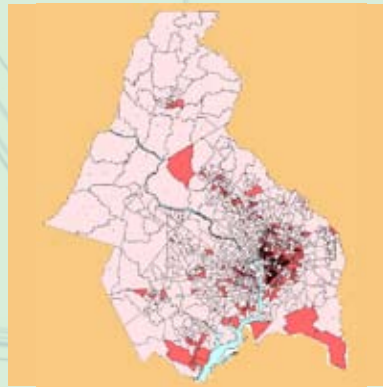
Population Growth



Infrastructure



Sustainable Growth



Inclusive Prosperity

CHALLENGES:

By 2050, the region will add at least another 2 million residents. Imagine incorporating the population of Houston, Texas into the present-day region.

Maintaining the region's infrastructure is critical as water lines, roadways, and the Metrorail system are showing their age.

Climate change, unpredictable energy costs, loss of green space, and pollution of the Chesapeake Bay, the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers demand new, more sustainable growth patterns.

In spite of being one of the most affluent metropolitan areas in the nation, major economic and social disparities are found throughout the region, sometimes in communities located just a few miles from each other. Making sure all residents are included in future prosperity will help build a stronger region.

Greater Washington 2050 Coalition

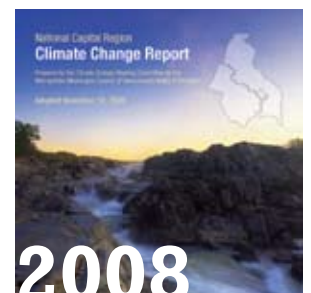
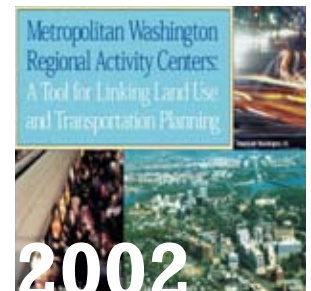
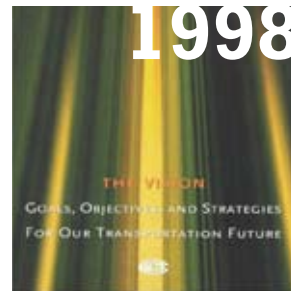
Fresh Approach to Regional Challenges

In the years before the creation of the Greater Washington 2050 Coalition, momentum had been building to create a comprehensive regional vision. It was a unique time for the region. Workshops and conferences encouraged people to think about long-range planning for additional residents and jobs. New issues like climate change demanded a different, more integrated way forward. Area leaders recognized the increasing level of agreement on the big issues of growth, transportation, and the environment. They also sensed growing frustration that the “business as usual” approach to these challenges would limit future success.

As the association of elected officials from the District of Columbia, suburban Maryland and Northern Virginia, COG was involved in the visioning process every step of the way. In 2007, as part of its 50th anniversary, COG held a special *Futures Forum* to build on the earlier workshops and conferences. It helped strengthen area leaders’ resolve to try a new, more comprehensive approach to regional planning.

In 2008, the COG Board of Directors formed the Greater Washington 2050 Coalition. They invited elected officials and business and civic leaders to guide the initiative to make sure the effort would be inclusive. Rather than launch a new visioning process that could take several years, the Coalition’s challenge was to tie together earlier work in a comprehensive way. Setting the stage for swift action, the COG Board gave the Coalition 18 months to complete its task.

The Coalition began its work by studying visioning efforts in other regions such as Denver, San Diego, and Chicago. It also focused on identifying shared, regional goals. Coalition members combed through local government vision plans and thought about ways to integrate COG’s most influential recent plans like the 1998 *Transportation Planning Board (TPB) Vision*, the 2002 *Regional Activity Centers*, and the 2008 *National Capital Region Climate Change Report*.



BUILDING BLOCKS:

The *TPB Vision* created a framework to guide regional transportation investments in the 21st Century.

Regional Activity Centers maps transformed how leaders thought about regional planning and concentrating development around jobs.

The *Reality Check on Growth* event challenged area leaders to find a place in the region for millions of new regional jobs and residents.

The *Climate Change Report* created recommendations for sustainable growth and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Regional Activity Centers 2007 Map Update

EVOLVING CENTERS:

Regional Activity Centers are determined by current local comprehensive plans and zoning approved to accommodate existing and future employment and housing growth. They are largely based on employment concentrations and to a lesser extent on residential, transit, and cultural activities. They will continue to evolve and be regularly updated to reflect regional priorities and policies for addressing growth, transportation or environmental issues.

In approving the 2007 Regional Activity Centers update, the COG Board and the TPB recommended that COG review and amend the centers following each major round of cooperative forecasts by COG, or about every three years. In the 2007 update, Konterra in Prince George's County, Gainesville in Prince William County, and Woodbridge in Prince William County were identified as Regional Activity Centers newly formed since 2002.



** COG jurisdictions labeled on map.
Activity Centers in green.*

Informing The Coalition's Work Through Public Outreach

The Coalition spearheaded two focused, public outreach initiatives to inform their work. The *Greater Washington 2050 Scenario Thinking Workshop* brought together a diverse group of over 100 leaders to learn the latest economic, environmental, and technological trends from a panel of experts and to examine bold scenarios that strayed from conservative projections. Four starkly different scenarios were offered, including an extended economic recession and massive government debt; low oil prices that derail strong climate change policies; a federal government dispersal from the region; and a Green Industrial Revolution. Participants were urged to create strategies that would produce desired results in any future. They created a variety of “big moves” or priorities for the region including development near transit, the green economy, affordable housing, public education and health.

The Coalition also commissioned a survey, *Priorities for a Growing Region*, to ask thousands of area residents about present-day issues and future concerns. It revealed that people identify closely with the region and expect leaders to address more problems at the regional level. Area residents identified transportation as the top long-term issue facing the region. They were also asked to rate the region on a number of issues and rank them by their willingness to pay more taxes for each priority. On these questions, participants ranked social issues like education, the economy, and housing as top priorities. While some answers to the survey varied by jurisdiction due to the region's geographic diversity, both the workshop and survey revealed an appetite for a mix of goals focusing on the area's physical and social development.



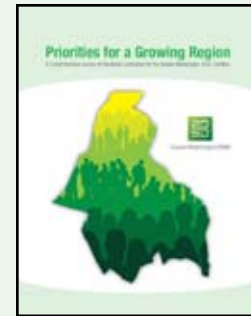
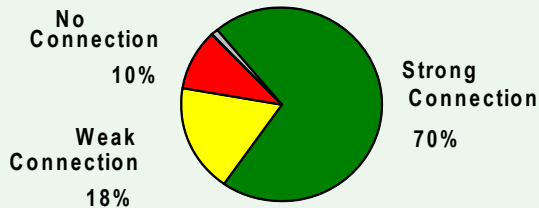
BIG MOVES:

Participants of Greater Washington 2050's *Scenario Thinking Workshop* created ten strategies or “big moves” that would produce desired results in any future.

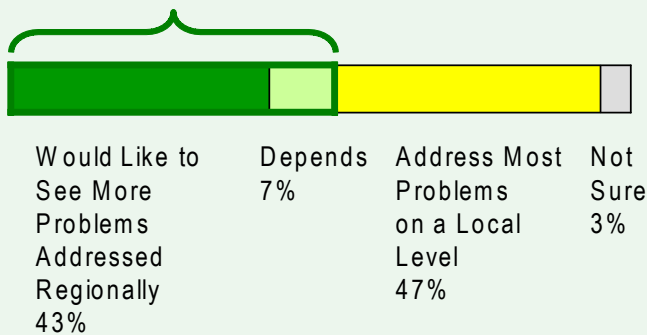
TEN **BIG** MOVES

pursue transit-oriented development
leverage emerging sustainable
technologies **emphasize green**
economic development develop
greater washington as a knowledge hub
strengthen regionalism use financial
innovations **ensure availability of**
moderate and low-cost housing
focus on quality of life **improve**
public education promote health

Feelings of Connection to Region



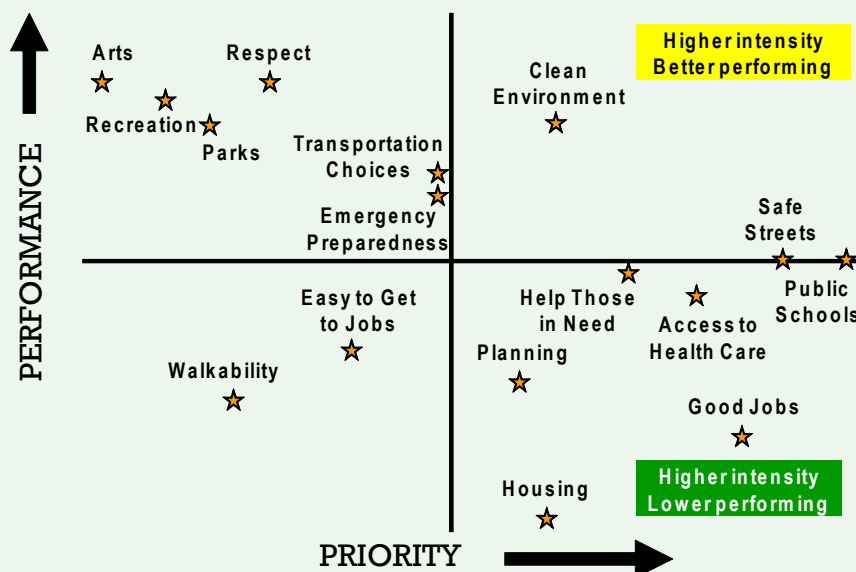
Desire for Regional Action



SURVEY FEEDBACK:

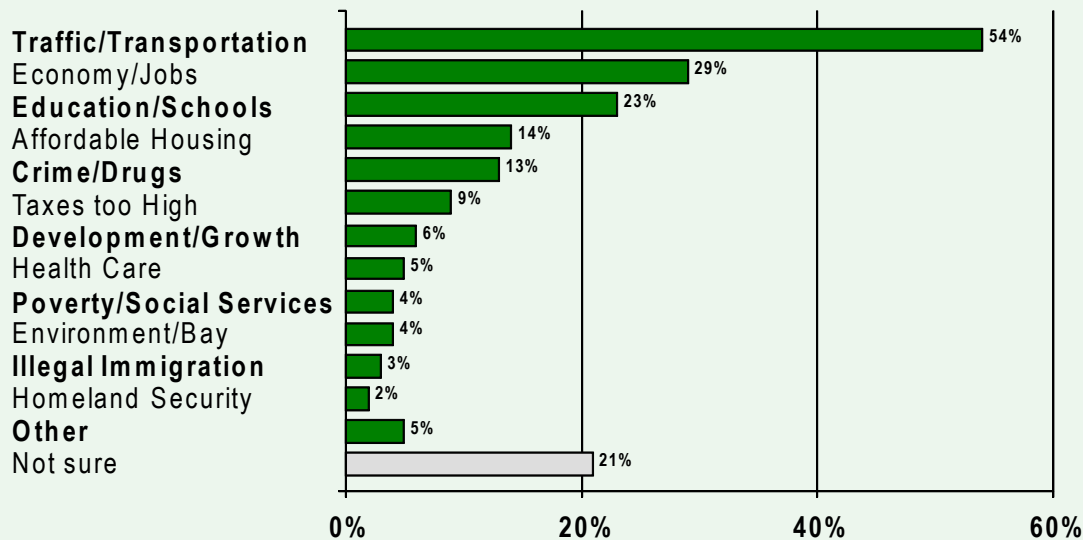
(Left) Survey participants were asked about their connection to the region and desire for regional action. Participants were also asked to rate regional performance on a number of issues and rank them by their willingness to pay more taxes for each priority. The bottom right corner of the graph shows the issues identified as both presently in need of improvement and the highest priority for the future.

Regional Priorities/Performance Chart

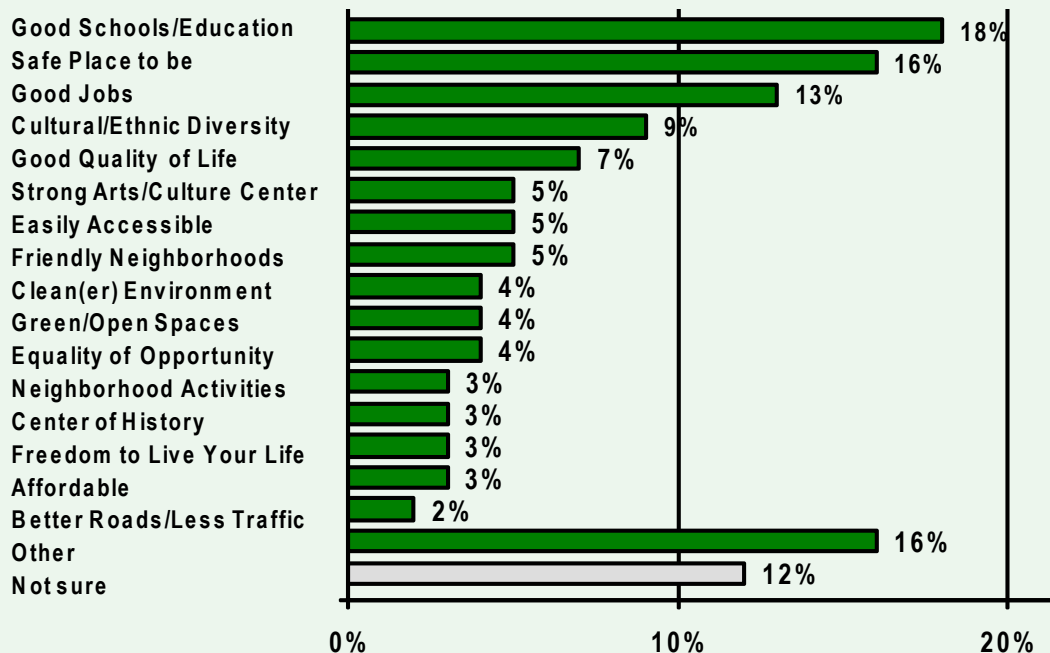


(Opposite page) Participants were asked to name the region's most important long-term issue or challenge and their long-term hopes for the region.

Most Important Long-Term Issues



Long-Term Hopes for the Region



Goals



Land Use

We seek the enhancement of established neighborhoods of differing densities with compact, walkable infill development, rehabilitation and retention of historic sites and districts, and preservation of open space, farmland and environmental resource land in rural areas.

(Sustainability)

We seek transit-oriented and mixed-use communities emerging in Regional Activity Centers that will capture new employment and household growth.

(Accessibility)



Transportation

We seek a broad range of public and private transportation choices for our Region which maximizes accessibility and affordability to everyone and minimizes reliance upon single occupancy use of the automobile.

(Accessibility)

We seek a transportation system that maximizes community connectivity and walkability, and minimizes ecological harm to the Region and world beyond.

(Accessibility)



Environmental

We seek to maximize protection and enhancement of the Region's environmental resources by meeting and exceeding standards for our air, water, and land.

(Sustainability)

We seek preservation and enhancement of our Region's open space, green space, and wildlife preserves.

(Sustainability)



Climate & Energy

We seek a significant decrease in greenhouse gas emissions, with substantial reductions from the built environment and transportation sector.

(Sustainability)

We seek efficient public and private use of energy Region-wide, with reliance upon renewable energy and alternative fuels for buildings, vehicles, and public transportation.

(Sustainability)



Economic

We seek a diversified, stable, and competitive economy, with a wide range of employment opportunities and a focus on sustainable economic development.

(Prosperity)

We seek to minimize economic disparities and enhance the prosperity of each jurisdiction and the Region as a whole through balanced growth and access to high-quality jobs for everyone.

(Prosperity)

We seek to fully recognize and enhance the benefits that accrue to the region as the seat of the National government and as a world capital.

(Prosperity)



Housing

We seek a variety of housing types and choices in diverse, vibrant, safe, healthy, and sustainable neighborhoods, affordable to persons at all income levels.

(Accessibility)

We seek to make the production, preservation, and distribution of affordable housing a priority throughout the Region.

(Livability)



Health & Human Services

We seek healthy communities with greater access to quality health care and a focus on wellness and prevention.

(Livability)

We seek to provide access and delivery of quality social services to all residents.

(Livability)



Education

We seek to provide greater access to the best education at all levels, from pre-kindergarten to graduate school.

(Prosperity)

We seek to make our Region a pre-eminent knowledge hub, through educational venues, workforce development, and institutional collaboration.

(Prosperity)



Public Safety

We seek safe communities for residents and visitors.

(Livability)

We seek partnerships that manage emergencies, protect the public health, safety, welfare, and preserve the lives, property and economic well-being of the region and its residents.

(Livability)

Compact

Advancing Regional Collaboration

Region Forward is a planning guide for our time. It reflects the new reality for the National Capital Region in the 21st Century, an interconnected region facing interrelated issues. While it has been designed for a new moment in history, it carries the spirit of past visionary plans that shaped the region like the L'Enfant Plan, McMillan Plan, Policy Plan for the Year 2000 (also known as Wedges and Corridors), and Metrorail.

After selecting the best elements of the local visions, COG plans, and public input, the Coalition developed a regional vision that combines physical development goals with social and economic ones. Its goals create a framework rather than a detailed plan. They map out where we want to go as a region and encourage leaders to think regionally when acting locally.

Throughout the process, the Coalition members knew that strong regional support would be critical to inspire action. Once it established the goals, the Coalition moved on to drafting an agreement for area governments to support. While this agreement, the *Greater Washington 2050 Compact*, is voluntary, it represents a new approach to advance regional collaboration and address unforeseen challenges.

The Coalition designed the Compact to be an agreement that area leaders and residents can rally around—something that elected officials, business executives, and civic leaders will point to when advocating positions and making decisions. The Compact recognizes the region's strengths and challenges, lays out its shared goals, and calls for more engagement of state and federal partners to improve regional cooperation. It asks area jurisdictions to pledge to use their best efforts to advance these regional goals.

District of Columbia *Lakewood Park*
Bladensburg *Alexandria*
Bowie *Arlington County*
College Park *Fairfax*
Frederick *Fairfax County*
Frederick County *Falls Church*
Gaithersburg *Loudoun County*
Greenbelt *Manassas*
Montgomery County *Manassas Park*
Prince George's County *Prince William County*
Rockville

21st CENTURY VISION:

The *Greater Washington 2050 Compact* represents a new approach to advance regional collaboration and address unforeseen challenges. COG's participating jurisdictions (above) will be asked to endorse the Compact. The goals are listed on the preceding page; the full Compact is included in Appendix A. (pg. 55)

Targets and Indicators

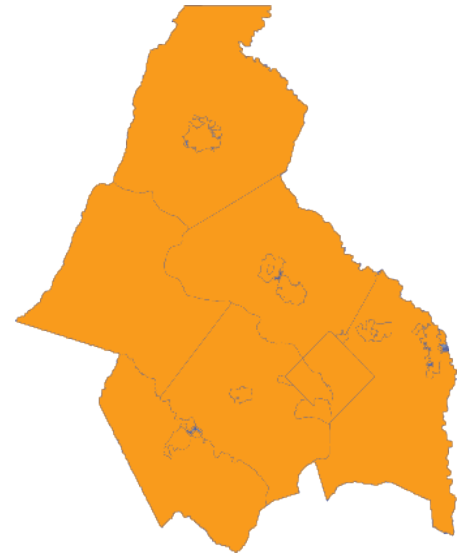
Gauging Regional Progress Toward Goals

Region Forward was always meant to be more than a vision plan. Because of its focus on action and results, the Coalition developed a set of targets and indicators to help regularly measure regional progress toward the goals in the Compact.

In most cases the targets are specific, measureable milestones based on available data that can be used to determine whether a goal has been achieved. The targets focus on various time periods. Several are annual targets, while others are set for a longer horizon, such as 2025 or 2050. The indicators are secondary measures to track progress towards achieving the goals. Some of the targets and indicators are based on data that COG already collects, such as commercial construction, air quality, and crime figures. COG will integrate this existing data and seek out more relevant sources to track these targets.

By measuring things like regional green space, affordable housing units, and graduation rates, the targets and indicators will show if the region is heading in the right direction. They give more weight and context to the goals and reflect the region's commitment to success.

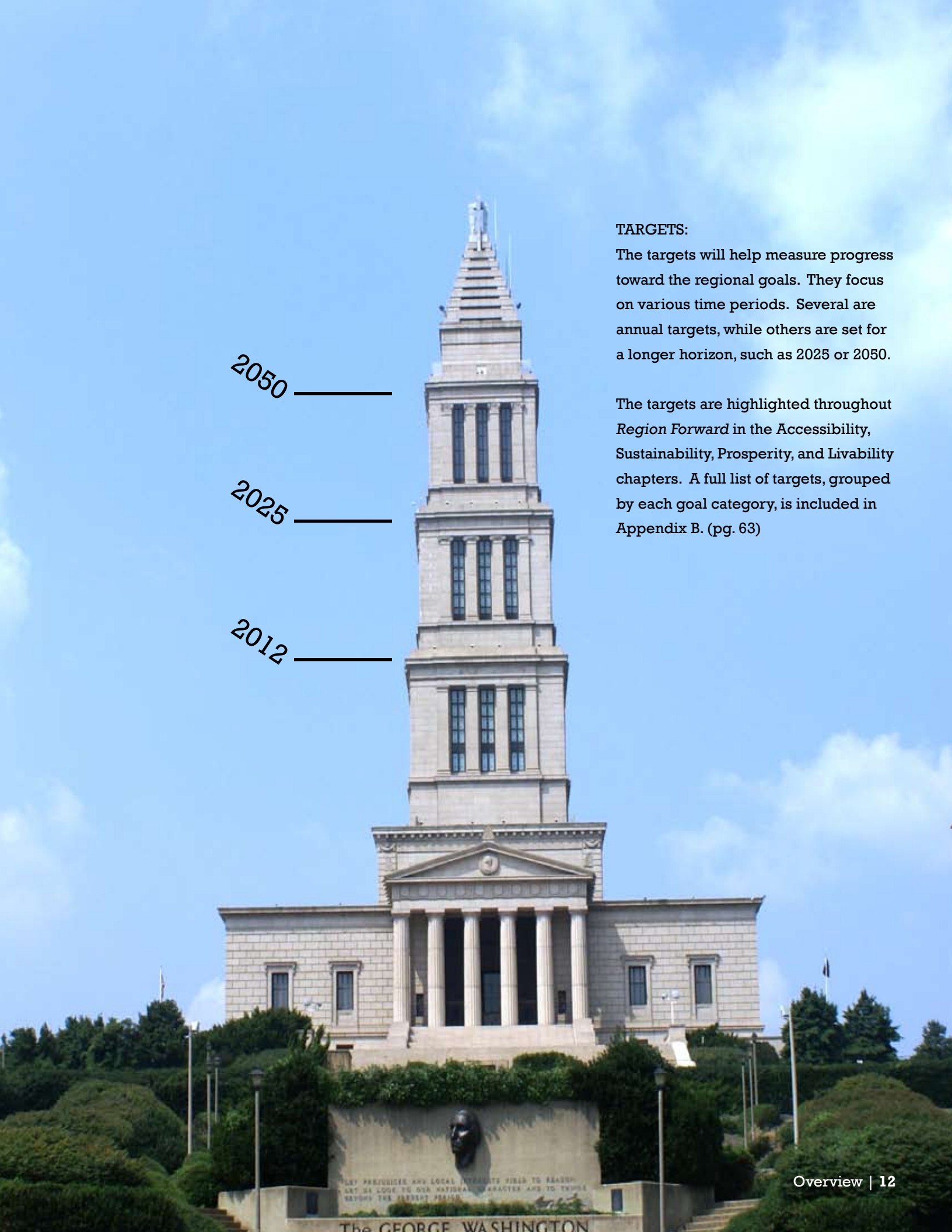
Due to the region's geographic diversity, the Coalition realized that some cities and counties will have an easier time meeting environmental targets, while others may be better poised to meet housing targets. The targets were designed to judge the region as a whole and assess progress toward the goals, rather than measure individual jurisdictions.



**Regional
Targets & Indicators**



**Not Local
Targets & Indicators**



2050

2025

2012

TARGETS:

The targets will help measure progress toward the regional goals. They focus on various time periods. Several are annual targets, while others are set for a longer horizon, such as 2025 or 2050.

The targets are highlighted throughout *Region Forward* in the Accessibility, Sustainability, Prosperity, and Livability chapters. A full list of targets, grouped by each goal category, is included in Appendix B. (pg. 63)

THEY PREJUDICE AND LOCAL INTERESTS VIBED TO REASON
ART BE LOGE TO OUR NATIONAL CHARACTER AND TO THRIVE
BEYOND THE PRESENT PERIOD

The GEORGE WASHINGTON

Next Steps

Integrating Region Forward into COG's Work

The work does not end with this report—it is just the beginning. From COG to local governments to stakeholder groups to individual citizens, everyone has a role to play in helping us meet our shared, regional goals. On January 13, 2010, the COG Board of Directors approved *Region Forward*. Following this action, COG will integrate *Region Forward* into its work, effectively changing the way it does business with a new, more comprehensive approach to regional planning. First, COG will communicate *Region Forward* and build support by reaching out to every corner of the region. Through this support, COG will seek approval of the Compact by all of its member counties and cities. And the outreach can't stop there. Because area stakeholders made such valuable contributions to shape *Region Forward*, COG will also seek endorsement of this effort by businesses, civic groups, individuals as well as neighboring regions through their regional councils and metropolitan planning organizations.

In addition to increasing public support for *Region Forward*, COG will update the Regional Activity Centers maps in 2010 during the next round of cooperative forecasts. It will also begin implementing the Compact by regularly monitoring progress towards the goals through regional progress reports. COG will start with an initial baseline analysis of the targets and indicators in this report. The analysis will be used to create comprehensive progress reports every 3-4 years to inform regional leadership and influence policy stances and decisions. In concert with the progress reports, COG will commission surveys of area residents similar to the one conducted by the Coalition to get feedback from the public and track their opinions on regional issues and future priorities. This will ensure COG's regional priorities and action reflects the long-term aspirations of area residents. COG will also prepare a strategy toolbox to help foster local and regional success. The toolbox will outline a comprehensive approach to implementing the vision. The strategies will include best practices and recommendations for both local and regional action.

The Coalition has set the stage for action. Now it is up to us to follow through with these goals to shape a more accessible, sustainable, prosperous, and livable National Capital Region.



From COG to local governments to stakeholder groups to individual citizens, everyone has a role to play in helping the region meet its goals.



ACTIVITY CENTERS UPDATE

COG will update the maps during the next round of cooperative forecasts in 2010.



STRATEGY TOOLBOX

COG will prepare a toolbox of strategies and best practices to help area governments, businesses, nonprofits, and residents achieve the goals.



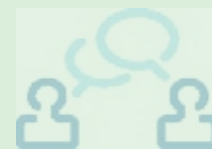
VIRTUAL REGION FORWARD

COG will build support for *Region Forward* through old-fashioned outreach and new technology like www.regionforward.org



PROGRESS REPORTS

COG will create a baseline analysis of the targets and indicators in 2010. Then, it will measure if the region is heading in the right direction every 3-4 years in a comprehensive report.



SURVEYS

COG will commission a survey every 3-4 years similar to the one conducted by the Coalition to gauge residents' attitudes and priorities and give a clearer report on regional progress.