

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
Metropolitan Development Policy Committee (MDPC)
Proposed Policy Focus and Priorities – 2008

METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT POLICY COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP – 2008

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BACKGROUND

COG's Vision: The members of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) envision the National Capital Region as the best place to live, work, play and learn.

COG's Mission: COG fosters regionalism – by promoting regional partnerships, developing best practices, applying cutting-edge technologies, and providing a forum for discussion and decision-making. The COG Board of Directors is responsible for overseeing COG's mission and implementing its work program and activities.

The most challenging issues facing the metropolitan Washington region require a long-term vision and commitment to action. As a voluntary association of local governments, COG educates area policy officials as to the regional challenges and identifies and encourages the implementation of solutions built around consensus. While COG has an impressive record of achievement using this approach, solutions are not often easily reached and rarely can be completed in the one-year term of office for its policy boards and committees.

Beginning in 2004, the COG Board of Directors committed to a **multi-year policy focus on growth and development**. The foundation for this policy focus is COG's adopted Strategic Plan and the goals and strategies centered on growth issues. This focus does not preclude COG's leadership and involvement on a wide-range of policies and programs; rather, it is intended to help provide a framework for potentially disconnected actions and better organize COG's ongoing and new work. This focus also complements and leverages the priorities and activities of COG's two independent policy boards, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) and the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC).

Goal: Promote balanced, sustainable growth and livable communities.

Strategies: Identify and disseminate best management principles, practices, and policies for sustainable growth and livable communities; establish regional consensus on principles, practices and policies for sustainable growth and livable communities; and facilitate dialogue among competing stakeholders.

The Metropolitan Development Policy Committee (MDPC) is the principal advisor to the COG Board on all matters that pertain to land use, growth, and economic development. The COG Board's adopted policy focus embraces partnerships with organizations and stakeholders with varied perspectives on these issues. The policy focus also acknowledges that there is no "one size fits all" approach to balanced, sustainable growth, and that COG's efforts in this area will address the needs of core, inner suburban and outer suburban jurisdictions. However, COG believes that sharing information, challenging past assumptions, and educating public officials on best practices and new growth and development tools holds great promise for the balanced, sustainable growth and livable communities we seek.

PROPOSED MDPC POLICY FOCUS AND PRIORITIES

Greater Washington 2050

At the recommendation of the MDPC, the COG Board of Directors approved the Greater Washington 2050 initiative in December 2007. Greater Washington 2050 builds on extensive discussion over the past two years concerning the scope and impact of COG's regional planning activities and ways to improve outcomes and regional quality of life. Greater Washington 2050 has the potential to expand the time

horizon for regional planning, the scope of area jurisdictions involved, to engage new partners, and strengthen the impact and effectiveness of regional planning tools and products. This effort is an ambitious, 12 to 18 month program.

Regional Housing Continuum

Almost since its inception, affordable housing has been a policy focus for COG. At COG's December 2006 annual membership meeting, former HUD Secretary Cisneros challenged COG members to re-examine their regional and local housing policies to address a seven-point housing continuum, ranging from shelters and transitional housing for the homeless to move-up and long-term homeownership. Affordable housing is closely linked to overall regional growth and development policies and the absence of affordable housing near regional employment centers exacerbates transportation congestion. COG's renewed attention to housing in 2008 comes at a critical time as declining housing value and a sharp increase in mortgage foreclosures presents new challenges.

BRAC

In 2005 COG and TPB staff analyzed the likely impacts of the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission recommendations for the Washington region. In addition to the base-specific BRAC recommendations, DoD also recommended not renewing leases for many buildings in the region that do not meet the Department's anti-terrorism standards for design and security. The findings from the COG / TPB analysis were provided to COG member local governments as well as the BRAC Commission to assist with their deliberations on the BRAC actions. Since that action, COG technical committees and the TPB have been incorporating BRAC land use and transportation actions into ongoing regional land development, transportation and air quality plans.

Census 2010

COG and its member local governments have a great need for accurate and timely data published by the U.S. Bureau of the Census in conjunction with the decennial census and other surveys. COG is a co-state data Center with the District of Columbia.

Waterfront development / redevelopment

Many COG jurisdictions are undertaking major new waterfront development and redevelopment projects. Among the important elements of these designs are considerations of mixed-use development, as well as pedestrian access and transportation linkages. The MDPC will sponsor a discussion of these projects and how several are planned to be linked to other jurisdictions in the region.