

Metropolitan Development Policy Committee
Meeting Summary
July 12, 2006

1. Call to Order, Approval of May 10, 2006 Meeting Summary and Announcements

Chair Sharon Bulova called the meeting of the MDPC to order at 10:00am. The May 10, 2006 meeting summary was approved.

Paul DesJardin of the COG staff briefed the committee on the latest *In Focus* Reports. The reports feature demographic characteristics for each jurisdiction in the region and will continue to be released on a monthly basis this year. Mr. DesJardin also mentioned the ongoing workshops connected to the *Affordable Housing Toolkit*.

Mr. DesJardin gave a brief overview of the Institute for Region Excellence students' project on Mansionization. The students' final report examines the issues and challenges that communities are facing with 'Mansionization', which is the replacement of existing housing stock with houses that are much larger than other houses in the neighborhood. The students will present a poster session later in the summer.

Mr. DesJardin then briefed the committee on the upcoming Metropolitan Development Citizens Advisory Committee (MDCAC) appointment and reappointment process. The MDCAC was established in the mid-1990s to advise the MDPC and its technical committees on policy and work program activities; to share information on MDPC policy and work program activities with community/stakeholder organizations; and to solicit stakeholder/community input on MDPC policy and work program activities and providing input back to the MDPC. The MDCAC has been inactive for the past year and has lost five members. The committee, which is self-directing and whose membership consists of citizens from each state group (MD, DC, VA) in the region, needs appointees to fill the committee roster. COG staff will be soliciting appointments from the MDPC at the September meeting.

Lee Quill, MDCAC's Co-Chair, mentioned that there are several growth and housing issues, such as affordable housing, that the MDCAC could examine. The committee would need to move from talking about issues to implementation of ideas. Mr. Quill stated that the CAC needed help from the committee on bringing new members on board.

Mr. DesJardin then provided an update on the upcoming COG Board Retreat to be held July 28 – 30.

2. Transferable Development Rights – Local Government Experience in the Washington Region

Members of the Planning Directors Technical Advisory Committee presented an overview of how local governments in the region have used transferable development rights (TDR). The Commonwealth of Virginia recently authorized local governments to use TDR as a tool to guide and manage growth. Charles Graves of the District of Columbia, Faroll Hamer of Montgomery County, Dr. Fern Piret, of Prince George's County, and Robert Brosnan of Arlington County shared their experiences with local programs and discussed the challenges of implementing TDR as a growth management tool.

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3. Briefing on “Envision Greater Washington” (EGW) Working Group Meetings and Proposed Next Steps

As a follow up to his March 8 presentation, COG Board Chair Fisette updated the Committee on the results of the Envision Greater Washington working group meetings. Mr. Fisette explained that the working groups had met several times over the past three months to develop a workplan as part of the group’s 90-day exploratory period. The working group participants discussed 1) whether the Envision Greater Washington should actually go forward; 2) what type of body/organization this committee should consist of; and 3) what existing organizations could assist the process. Mr. Fisette reported that the participants and the organizing committee have formed a draft addressing what EGW should encompass, but this report has not been finalized.

Mr. Fisette stated that EGW cannot just be an exercise on paper, so the organizing committee has looked at similar efforts at other regions in the country. Mr. Fisette added that EGW should not be a planning exercise, but rather a ‘campaign’ to create a broadly-based vision and consensus for the future development of the region.

Prince George’s County Council Chairman Dernoga expressed concerns about the cost of this type of effort. EGW staff has indicated that cost estimates could be as high as \$3 to \$5 million split between the three state groups of the region. Mr. Dernoga also stated that EGW does not have the support of Prince George’s County at this time and that many hurdles may need to be overcome.

Dr. Fern Piret of Prince George’s County asked if there will be any coordination with Reality Check. The EGW effort arose as a next step of Reality Check, according to Mr. Fisette. Mr. Fisette stated that the COG Board was to discuss EGW in detail during their retreat in late July. Chair Bulova, Ms. Praisner and other Committee members requested that COG Board action on the EGW proposal be presented and discussed during the September MDPC meeting.

4. Proposed Transportation Planning Board (TPB) Land Use and Transportation Initiative

Ronald Kirby, Director of COG’s Department of Transportation Planning, briefed the committee on an initiative proposed by the TPB to examine how the Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP) can support land use initiatives and can be integrated with plans for concentrated, mixed-use development. Mr. Kirby provided an overview of transportation and land use incentive programs sponsored by Metropolitan Planning Organizations in San Francisco, Atlanta, and Burlington, VT. The TPB plans to develop a similar transportation and land use incentive program in the Washington region. Mr. Kirby stated that there are several options and funding elements to the program that are still being studied and discussed.

5. Presentation on Regional Economic Trends and Commercial Construction Indicators Report

Greg Goodwin, COG Planning Staff, reported on the key findings of the *Economic Trends in Metropolitan Washington, 2001 – 2005* and *Commercial Construction Indicators – 2005 Summary Report*. COG publishes the five-year analysis of the region’s economy each year to

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provide information on the region's population, employment, construction, retail sales, inflation, mortgage rates, and number of passengers served by the area's major airports. Commercial construction is analyzed annually by COG to provide information on the number, location, structure type, size, and estimated costs of new commercial development projects. Mr. Goodwin stated that the report shows that population and job growth are continuing, albeit at a somewhat slower pace than in previous years. The metropolitan region grew by more than 312,600 people and added more than 119,000 jobs between 2001 and 2005. Those increases were slightly lower than the previous five-year period studied, when the region saw 351,800 new residents and 124,738 new jobs. In the regional housing and development landscape, the report show that home sales jumped dramatically, from 86,966 units in 2001 to 106,920 units in 2005, while the number of new housing units approved for development decreased from 4,646 in 2004 to 32,849 in 2005. Charles Grier of the COG staff stated that the *Commercial Construction Indicators* report shows the region added 24.4 million square feet of space in 430 new projects in 2005, the metropolitan area's eleventh largest rate of commercial growth in 25 years.

6. Other Business / Information Items

There were no other items of business. Committee members requested that further discussions of the TPB Land Use and Transportation Incentives Program and the Economic Trends and Commercial Construction Indicators reports be scheduled for the September meeting.

7. Adjournment

Chair Bulova announced that the next meeting was scheduled for September 13 and adjourned the meeting at 11:55 a.m.