

Metropolitan Development Policy Committee
Meeting Summary
March 8, 2006

1. Call to Order, Approval of January 11, 2006 Meeting Summary and Announcements

Chair Sharon Bulova called the meeting of the MDPC to order at 10:00am. The January 11, 2006 meeting summary was approved. Chair Bulova announced the meeting would be former Chair Elizabeth Hewlett's last meeting and presented a plaque from the group showing their appreciation

Paul DesJardin and Calvin Smith of the COG staff provided information on the second Day Laborer Summit scheduled for March 30. This conference will build upon the first Day Laborer Summit held on November 15, 2005 and will address what are the best practices in other parts of the country and what impact the proposed federal immigration legislation will have on the region. The meeting will be open to elected and appointed officials only.

Dara Dann, COG Housing Manager announced the upcoming Predatory Lending Conference on April 27, 2006. Chair Bulova asked whether the conference will integrate the affordable housing component. Mr. DesJardin responded that this issue would be addressed by the panelists in at least one of the sessions and all the conference information would be posted on the COG website.

Mr. DesJardin briefed the committee on the In Focus Reports. The reports feature demographic characteristics for each jurisdiction in the region and will be released this year. Mr. DesJardin gave an overview of the ongoing workshops connected to the Affordable Housing Toolkit.

Mr. Smith introduced Chinyere Uzoukwu, a new Policy Analyst for the Department of Human Services, Planning and Public Safety.

2. Discussion of Greater Washington Board of Trade Potomac Conference Event and Next Steps

Chair Bulova began the discussion by reviewing highlights from the Potomac Conference, especially the video presented. The video is available on the Board of Trade website at: <http://www.potomacconference.org/>. The conference provided a chance to discuss future development and planning with a focus on regional values. The breakout sessions provided an opportunity to brainstorm about what we value most about region and what are the challenges and then a session about what we do next, which Organization to adopt some regional planning process to steer. Ms. Bulova then read the proclamation developed at the session.

Mr. DesJardin commented that the COG Board of Directors will discuss COG's involvement in future Potomac Conference endeavors and provided background on the possible next steps.

COG Board Chair Jay Fisette added his perspective on what came out of conference. The conference is seen as an outgrowth of the ULI Reality Check process. The conference laid out several models of how regions work together to ensure their future. He noted that there were also discussions of how regional consensus building scenarios would be helpful and what form they would take. The conference ended with discussions of whether the issues were substantial enough to take a visioning exercise to the next step. The proposal that has been shaped is to create a next phase to agree to a 90 day phase that explores what options are out there and what are the desired outcomes of this type of planning process.

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Mr. Fisette stated that a working group would then develop a workplan in the next 90 days. During this phase, participants would decide 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.

Chair Bulova commented that other jurisdictions, especially in Maryland, have very different government structures. Envision Utah did not face this problem because it was dealing with just one type of government structure.

Ms. Hewlett said that many people do not know breadth of what COG does. She believes COG does a very good job of addressing growth issues in the region. The major issues, according to Ms. Hewlett, are who is going to take the lead or do you form a new organization. Ms. Hewlett stated that COG needs to ask whether we have the money and wherewithal to be the leader. If we are not, we should play a key role in the process.

Councilmember Woodson questioned whether or not the efforts of existing organizations such as COG or the Board of Trade are not be given sufficient credit of what is already being done or attempted, and asked what would be the over-arching organization that could lead and make the necessary policy changes on behalf of all of the region's jurisdictions.

Mr. Fisette echoed the comments from the conference regarding the complexity of other regions including the Washington region (DC, Maryland, and Virginia) and agreed that every region is different and unique. In order to make the visioning process work in this region you will have to bring in the "three states" into the process. Mr. Fisette said that the potential difference with other regions is that COG has attempted to raise the visibility of the issues with such projects as the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study, though this was primarily related to transportation. Mr. Fisette also said he believed that the region has never dealt with the land use issue and only transportation. Mr. Fisette also asked what COG and MDPC are going to do with the scenarios that came out of the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study? Mr. Fisette noted that Realty Check on Growth event helped to raise this issue of the additional growth of two million people coming into our region and how that will this effect are quality of life. Mr. Fisette said that successful visioning efforts in other regions have shown that COG can not do this alone.

Chair Bulova stated that she would like to know what the difference is from what has been done already and what the Potomac Conference participants want to do with Envision Washington.

Mr. Fisette agreed that every jurisdiction is different, but stated that if we continue to grow, we will continue to strangle ourselves with traffic. Mr. Fisette stated that the visioning process must include the civic and business sectors in order to move toward a consensus on alternative development scenarios.

Ms. Woodson noted that any new group or coalition would have very little authority to regulate regional or local land use.

Council Chairman Dernoga asked what is going to be the conclusion of the exercise - to move more people and jobs to Prince George's County? Mr. Dernoga also asked how the region would get cooperative funding to implement what we need, and stated that he is not opposed to such an exercise, but that it would need to have follow up, to have a goal with lots of buy-in. The region is not capable of winning against competition without this.

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Mr. Fiset mentioned that Reality Check was an effort of Urban Land Institute (ULI) and the breadth of the participation was not a problem.

Lee Quill of the Metropolitan Development Citizens Advisory Committee commented that many mechanisms exist but no way to implement, and that the region needs to focus on how to make things happen.

Dr. Piret stated that the effort needs to be led by citizens and groups that are accountable in the region.

3. Briefing on Preliminary Results from the TPB Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study

Bob Griffiths of the COG/TPB staff presented a briefing on the preliminary findings of the TPB Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study. Mr. Griffiths described how the scenarios were used to help and guide the Round 7.0 Cooperative Forecast. Mr. Kirby discussed the next steps, including presentations and public outreach program planned for this project. Mr. Kirby indicated that public outreach will be an ongoing component of this project with three public meetings planned for the region so far.

4. Presentation on the COG Board of Directors Arts and Culture Planning Group

George Rice, COG Assistant Executive Director, began by describing the new Arts and Culture Planning Group as a “planning group” and not a policy committee. He also spoke about the mission statement to include “stimulate a creative economy and facilitate the integration of cultural institutions and change agents into civic dialogue throughout the region” Mr. Rice stated that the group would work through MDPC and the Human Services Policy Committee under the direction of the COG Board. Some of the deliverables of the group include: 1. A one-day, regional forum, 2. A series of Ethnic Communities Fact sheets, 3. Report on regional economic impact of the arts, and 4. Provide ongoing analysis to support arts and cultural activities. Ms. Coyne-Payne went into further detail about the report involving regional economic impact of the arts and cultural community in the region. Mr. Rice requested representation from the MDPC to join and serve on this new group. The group would be meeting every other month. Chair Bulova requested representation from MDPC to this new Arts and Culture Planning Group and indicated that MDPC would like future briefings on the group’s work.

5. Other Business / Information Items

Mr. DesJardin commented to the committee on the chronology of visioning activities and forecasting milestones that have occurred in the Washington region. One example being the “Wedges and Corridors” exercise of the 1960s. Mr. DesJardin also spoke about COG’s list of accomplishments relating to growth issues during the past year. He also remarked on how such activities such as the Planning Dialogue Series led to the smart growth video.

Ms. Woodson indicated that this would be her last meeting since she will not be seeking re-election and will be traveling during the month of May.

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Ms. Hewlett also indicated that this would be her last meeting as well.

6. Adjournment

Chair Bulova adjourned the meeting at 11:55 a.m..