

**Metropolitan Development Policy Committee
Meeting Summary
January 11, 2006**

1. Call to Order, Approval of the November 9, 2005 Meeting Summary, and Announcements

Chair Hewlett called the meeting of the MDPC to order at 10:00 a.m. The November 9, 2005 meeting summary was approved. Paul DesJardin of the COG staff distributed copies of the new Round 7.0 “Growth Trends to 2030” publication. Mr. DesJardin provided an update on the February 17 “Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Roundtable II” to be held in Washington, DC.

2. Update on COG Board 3-Year Policy Focus on Growth

Chair Hewlett introduced Hon. Jay Fisetete of Arlington, the Chair-elect of the COG Board for 2006. Mr. Fisetete explained that the COG Board is in the third year of a three year policy focus on growth and development. He explained that this focus provides an opportunity to make a difference over time with the quality of life and sustainability.

Mr. Fisetete provided an overview of the policy initiatives.

- Smart Growth – the priorities are difficult implement because of limited funding, be the region can build on existing resources. The MWCOG Smart Growth video was an outstanding product, but the plan to disseminate could have been better. We should look not just at the numbers given out, but also the type of uses as a more effective way to measure the success.
- Reality Check on Growth – a very tangible effort through working with the Urban Land Institute (ULI) because of the connections with the business community. The event was not the end, but the beginning of other efforts. The next steps, such as the upcoming Potomac Conference, require community buy-in. COG needs to be part of this effort.
- Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study – COG and TPB need to be coordinated in this effort and begin to figure out how to promote the results.
- Activity Centers Map – the Activity Centers map should be updated, but the process should not be redesigned. COG should not go back to zero in the process, but rather update with the new Round 7.0 forecasts. It is not necessary to revisit assumptions.
- Pedestrian Issues – how can we frame a policy about pedestrian safety? We need something to sink our teeth into.

James Zook, Planning Director for Fairfax County, added that the value of Fairfax’s funding to COG was a good value for their money in the region. MDPC Vice Chair Sharon Bulova suggested that the Smart Growth project has made a difference. Mr. Fisetete concluded with saying that some projects, such as the Smart Growth video, still have a “shelf life” and that there are still opportunities to get more mileage out of several of the projects.

3. Presentation on the Washington Area Housing Partnership’s (WAHP) “Toolkit for Affordable Housing Development” and Local Workshops

Barbara Favola, Member of the Arlington County Board and Chair of the Washington Area Housing Partnership (WAHP), presented the partnership’s recently completed “Toolkit for Affordable Housing Development” and their plans for upcoming local workshops in the region.

Ms. Favola stated that the amount of affordable housing in the region is quickly eroding and explained the need for a toolkit to educate the public and elected officials on best practices of affordable housing in the region and in the country.

Ms. Favola outlined the next phase of project as conducting an aggressive outreach campaign for the toolkit which will include setting up meetings with different localities and engaging local leaders and housing directors in each locality. The toolkit will educate stakeholders and set up appointments for meetings in the region. WAHP is interested in an umbrella approach of integrating housing, and smart growth. There is interest in co-sponsoring a forum on affordable housing with the Urban Land Institute. Ms. Favola concluded that there is a logical connection between the Smart Growth project and the toolkit.

Mr. Zook asked to what extent the Planning Directors could be involved in the project. Councilmember Marilyn Praisner added that the value of land use planning is important when looking at housing issues. She also suggested that explaining the public policy trade-offs of affordable housing is very important for the discussion.

4. Update on Work to Refine COG/TPB Regional Activity Centers and Clusters

Mr. Goodwin and Charles Grier of the COG staff briefed the committee on issues related to updating the Regional Activity Centers and Clusters with the new Round 7 forecast data. Mr. Goodwin explained that because Activity Center and Cluster boundaries and TAZ boundaries do not always match, calculating new totals for most activity centers requires estimating what percentage of the population and employment is contained within the TAZs. For instance, some adjacent activity centers share a common TAZ; therefore, the percentage of population and employment captured by each activity center must be calculated for these TAZs.

COG staff has developed a spreadsheet that allows one to enter the percentage of the Activity Center's population and housing for each TAZ for each of the forecast years. Mr. Goodwin explained the process and demonstrated how the spreadsheet functions.

5. Other Business / Information Items

Chair Hewlett asked whether there were additional information items, and there were none.

6. Adjournment

Chair Hewlett stated that the next meeting of the MDPC was scheduled for Wednesday, March 11, 2006. The meeting was adjourned at 11:50.