



REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTERS UPDATE

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Regional Activity Centers and Transportation Planning

- Good land use planning **IS** an effective regional transportation planning strategy.
- TPB's work program calls for coordinating regional land use and transportation planning to encourage favorable future development patterns that will help optimize transportation investments and promote mobility and accessibility.
- Work program activities include supporting and coordinating with the COG Planning Directors Technical Advisory Committee (PDTAC) in its work activities:
 - Cooperative Forecast updates
 - **Regional Activity Centers**
 - Analyzing development, demographic, and economic trends and their effects on future growth, housing, and transportation.



Regional Activity Centers

- Concept first proposed by the TPB in its 1998 Vision - calling for the use of Regional Activity Centers to help develop an **“interconnected transportation system that enhances quality of life and promotes a strong and growing economy . . . ”**
 - Walkable mix of jobs, housing, services, and recreation
 - Help reduce automobile dependence
 - Optimize existing infrastructure
 - Priority locations for federal employment
 - Prioritize transportation and infrastructure investment



The VISION

10TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board | Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

VISION STATEMENT

In the 21st Century, the Washington metropolitan region remains a vibrant world capital, with a transportation system that provides efficient movement of people and goods. This system promotes the region's economy and environmental quality, and operates in an attractive and safe setting—it is a system that serves everyone. The system is fiscally sustainable, promotes areas of concentrated growth, manages both demand and capacity, employs the best technology, and joins rail, roadway, bus, air, water, pedestrian and bicycle facilities into a fully interconnected network.

Adopted by the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board on October 21, 1998

Policy Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Policy Goal 1

The Washington metropolitan region's transportation system will provide reasonable access at reasonable cost to everyone in the region.

Objectives

- 1 | A comprehensive range of choices for users of the region's transportation system.
- 2 | Accurate, up-to-date and understandable transportation system information which is available to everyone in real time, and is user-friendly for first-time visitors and residents, regardless of mode of travel or language of the traveler.
- 3 | Fair and reasonable opportunities for access and mobility for persons with special accessibility needs.
- 4 | Convenient bicycle and pedestrian access.

Strategies

- 1 | Plan, implement, and maintain a truly integrated, multi-modal regional transportation system.
- 2 | Plan and implement a tourist-friendly system that encourages the use of transit and provides international signage and information.
- 3 | Make the region's transportation facilities safer, more accessible, and less intimidating for pedestrians, bicyclists, and persons with special needs.
- 4 | Plan and implement a uniform fare system for transit and commuter rail.
- 5 | Adopt a regional transit planning process and plan, with priority to uniformity, connectivity, equity, cost effectiveness and reasonable fares.

Policy Goal 2

The Washington metropolitan region will develop, implement, and maintain an interconnected transportation system that enhances quality of life and promotes a strong and growing economy throughout the entire region, including a healthy regional core and dynamic regional activity centers with a mix of jobs, housing and services in a walkable environment.

Objectives

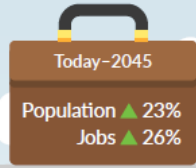
- 1 | Economically strong regional core.
- 2 | Economically strong regional activity centers with a mix of jobs, housing, services, and recreation in a walkable environment.
- 3 | A web of multi-modal transportation connections which provide convenient access (including improved mobility with reduced reliance on the automobile) between the regional core and regional activity centers, reinforcing existing transportation connections and creating new connections where appropriate.
- 4 | Improved internal mobility with reduced reliance on the automobile within the regional core and within regional activity centers.
- 5 | Efficient and safe movement of people, goods, and information, with minimal adverse impacts on residents and the environment.

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board | Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
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THE CHALLENGE

People travel from their homes to find jobs and opportunities. But jobs and housing are often not near each other, leading to longer commutes. A lack of travel options and affordable housing near jobs leads to congestion and delays.

As the region grows, how can we improve travel for all?



Since 2010, the region has focused on building new homes in Activity Centers, where housing, jobs, and transit are all close to each other.

But, Activity Centers are home to just 29% of the population, despite containing 66% of the jobs.

THE SOLUTION

Here's how we can reduce congestion for everyone, while expanding housing options for people who want to live closer to where jobs are.

- Create and support policies that encourage building more housing
 - 320,000 new units needed by 2030
 - 75% to be affordable and near Activity Centers and transit
- Improve travel options in and between Activity Centers

This approach works! More choices mean less congestion.



- How we get around is changing
 - Drive Alone ----- ▼ 13%
 - Take Transit ----- ▲ 7%
 - Use Active Travel ----- ▲ Doubled
 - Telework ----- ▲ Tripled

(Change in each travel type's share of daily commutes, 2001-2019)

THE IMPACT

Source: TPB

- Reduced traffic and emissions from transportation
- Expanded travel options and shorter trips
- Vibrant communities where people can live, work, and play
- A stronger economy and improved quality of life

The National Capital Region Transportation Plan (NCRTP), *Visualize 2045*, contains a set of aspirational initiatives, including “Bring Jobs and Housing Closer Together.”

Encouraging future housing and employment growth in Regional Activity Centers helps the region make progress toward this aspiration.



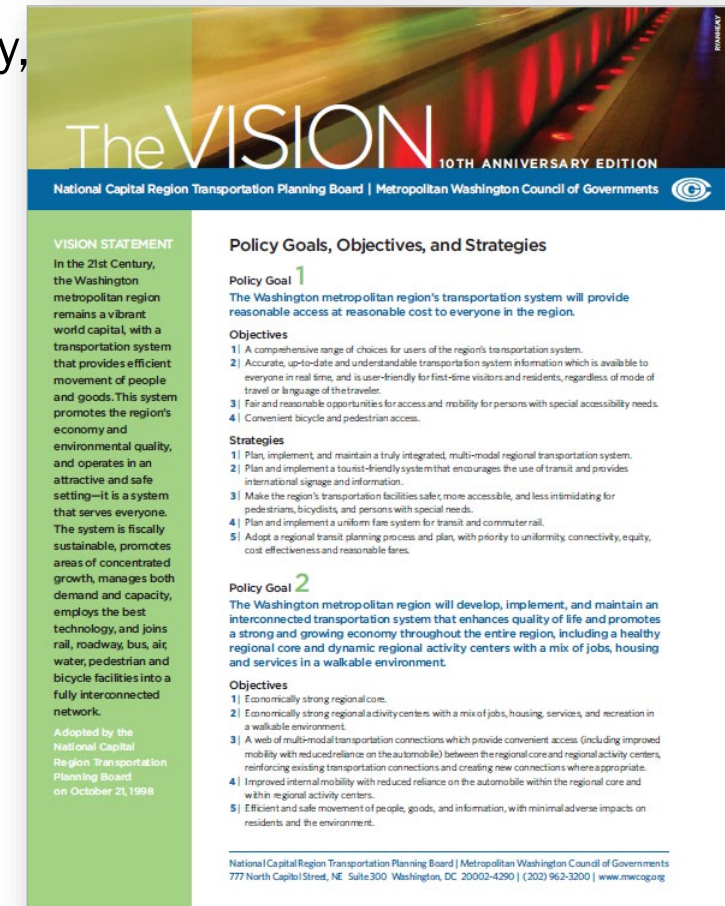
How TPB Uses COG's Regional Activity Centers in Regional Transportation Planning

- Selection criteria for TPB Technical Assistance Grant Programs (TLC, RRSP, TWR)
- Visualize 2050 and TIP Project Submissions...Is the project located in/near a Regional Activity Center?
- Tracking the region's progress against policy goals/initiatives--How much future growth will occur inside/outside Regional Activity Centers?
- Technical analyses of travel and growth trends inside/outside Regional Activity Centers



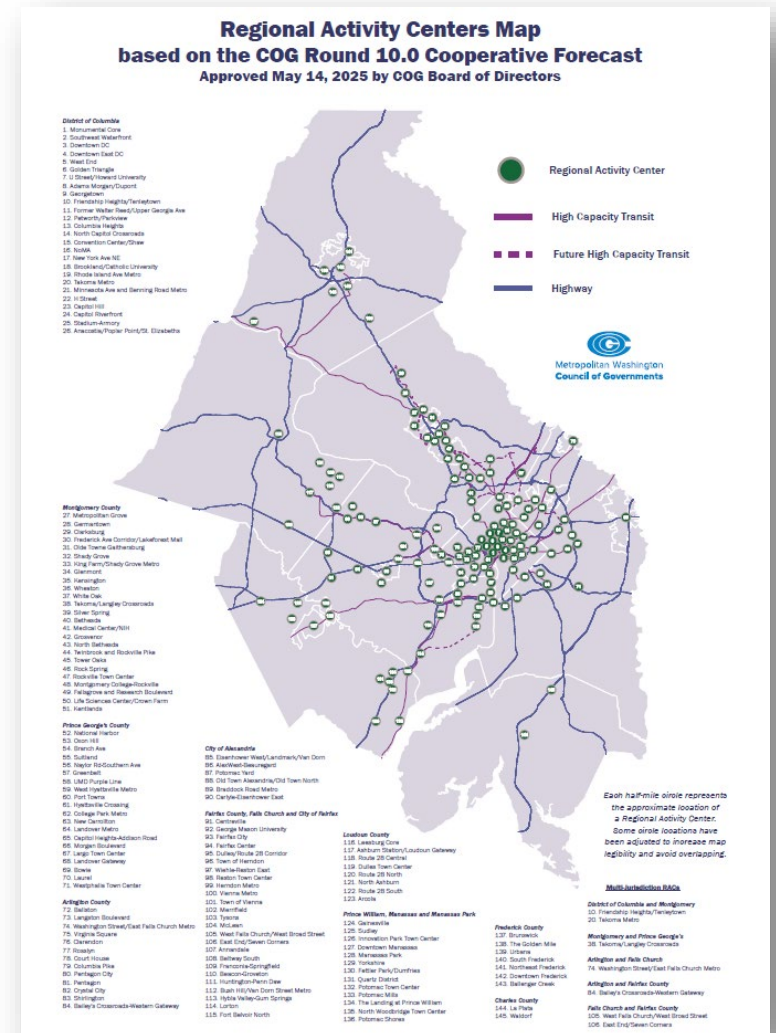
What are Regional Activity Centers?

- Locations that will accommodate future growth and support prosperity, accessibility, livability, and sustainability (Region Forward Goals).
 - urban centers
 - traditional towns
 - priority growth areas
 - transit hubs
- Proposed in the 1998 Transportation Planning Board's Vision
- First Activity Centers adopted by COG in 1999
- Activity Centers are updated following every major round of Cooperative Forecasts
 - updated in 2002, 2007 and 2013



Round 10.0 Regional Activity Centers Map

- No change in the COG adopted technical methodology
- Planning Directors Technical Advisory Committee managed the update process for the Round 10.0 Regional Activity Centers
- COG staff conducted the technical analysis to determine Regional Activity Center eligibility
- The Round 10.0 Regional Activity Centers Map was approved by the Planning Directors Technical Advisory Committee on March 21, 2025
- The Round 10.0 Regional Activity Centers Map was approved by the COG Board of Directors on May 14, 2025



Regional Activity Center: Core Attributes



Policy: In base year (2023) the center or priority growth area should be designated in a jurisdiction's adopted comprehensive/general plan or other locally-adopted land use plan.





AND



Density: In horizon Year (2050), have a person per acre density (employment + population) that falls within the top one-half of densities within the jurisdiction.



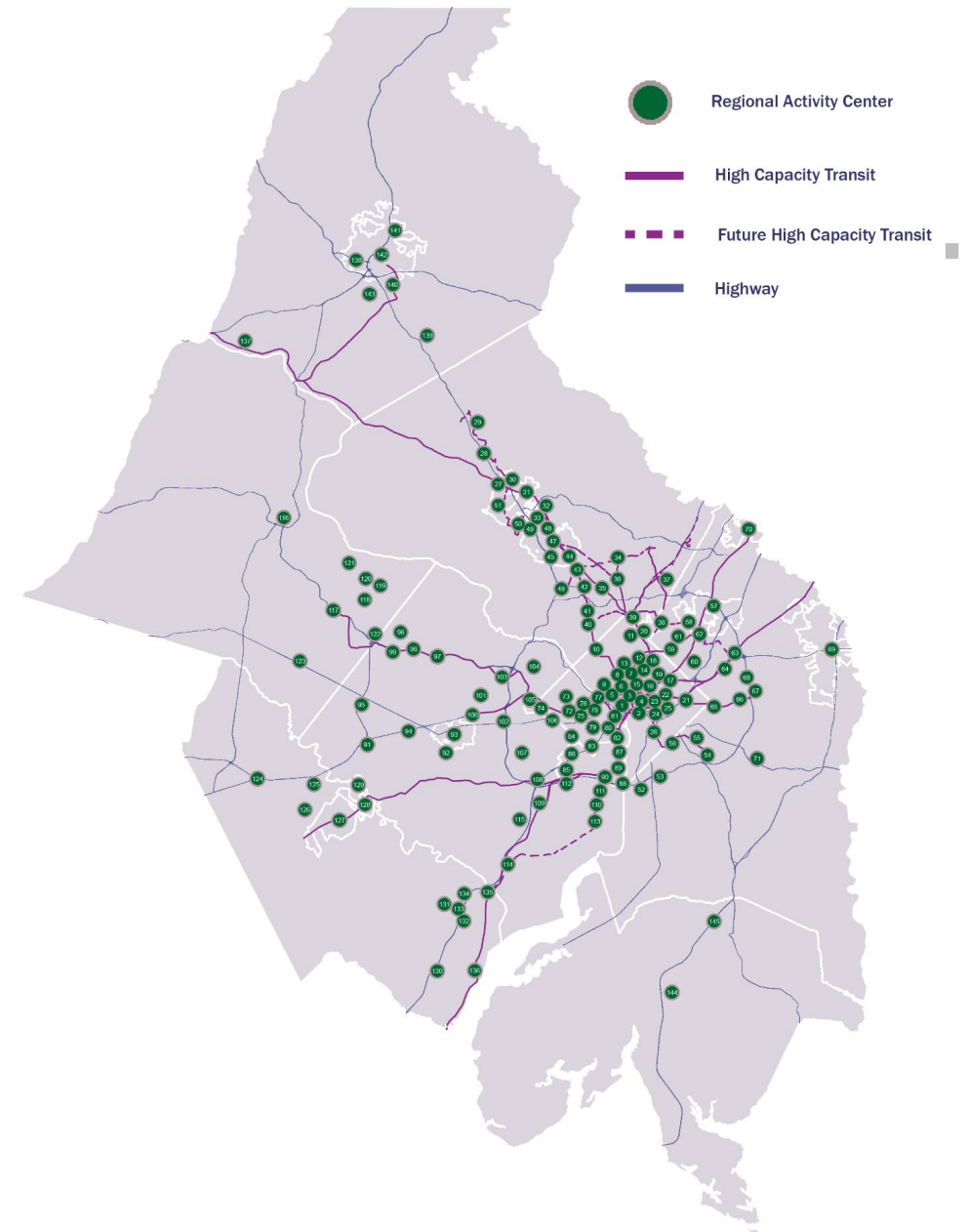
Regional Activity Center: Secondary Attributes (2 out of 4 Required)

-  **Land Use Mix:** locally-adopted land use plan encourages mixed-use development
-  **Transit Capacity:** Metrorail, BRT, streetcar, commuter rail, OR light rail station by 2050
-  **Housing & Transportation Affordability:** Combined housing and transportation costs do not exceed 45% of regional median income
-  **Intersection Density:** > 55 intersections per square mile.



Analysis of Round 10.0 Regional Activity Centers

Number of Approved Regional Activity Centers	145
Total Square Miles of Regional Activity Centers	216
Total Number of High-Capacity Transit Stations in Regional Activity Centers in 2050	238
Population Growth Rate in Regional Activity Centers from 2020 to 2050 in Round 10.0 Forecast	53%
Employment Growth Rate in Regional Activity Centers from 2020 to 2050 in Round 10.0 Forecast	35%



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