



**For Immediate Release**  
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## **Reality Check Summit Discusses Regional Growth Challenges**

### *Local Leaders Attend From 20+ Greater DC Jurisdictions*

**Washington, D.C.** – On Wednesday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, nearly 300 elected officials and community, environmental, housing and business leaders from Washington and more than 20 jurisdictions around the region participated in a unique one-day exercise—known as **Reality Check**—intended to envision how the region will absorb another 2 million people and 1.6 million jobs over the next 25 years. The event, the first of its kind in the Greater Washington region and held at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center, was co-sponsored by a broad coalition of more than a dozen environmental, government, business and educational organizations from across the D.C. area.

Reality Check was intended to provoke a regional discussion about **where** we should grow, while future efforts on the local level will consider **how** we should grow. It was co-sponsored by the Urban Land Institute's Washington District Council and the Washington Smart Growth Alliance.

Through discourse and negotiation, all 300 participants proposed alternative growth scenarios by placing LEGO® blocks representing a certain amount of households and jobs on a grid-covered map of the region. The results of this work will serve as the groundwork for needed regional dialogue and future action to accommodate growth in a way that leverages resources, adds value to our communities, and protects our environment and quality of life.

Prior to the exercise, ULI Washington Chairman Len Forkas of Milestone Communities welcomed the participants and Margery Turner of the Urban Institute gave a brief presentation entitled "Trends as Destiny?".

Later in the day, findings from the morning's Reality Check exercise were presented by Dr. Gerrit J. Knaap, Executive Director of the National Center for Smart Growth Research and Education at the University of Maryland, College Park. For a copy of the presentation, visit the News Release section of the Media Center on the Reality Check website ([www.realitycheckwashington.org](http://www.realitycheckwashington.org)).

Post-exercise speakers during the afternoon of February 2<sup>nd</sup> also included Robert Grow, Founder and Chairman Emeritus of Envision Utah, a public/private partnership that was formed to guide the development of a broadly and publicly supported Quality Growth Strategy in Utah during the late 1990s.

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Supporting Institutions include the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the Coalition for Smarter Growth, Fannie Mae, George Mason University, George Washington University, Greater Washington Board of Trade, Johns Hopkins University, Metropolitan Washington Builders' Council, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, National Capital Planning Commission, the National Center for Smart Growth at the University of Maryland and the Metropolitan Institute at Virginia Tech.

#### **Participating Jurisdictions**

*Includes Municipalities Within  
These Jurisdictions*

- Washington, D.C.
- Maryland
  - Anne Arundel County
  - Calvert County
  - Charles County
  - Howard County
  - Frederick County
  - Montgomery County
  - Prince George's County
  - St. Mary's County
- Virginia
  - Alexandria
  - Arlington County
  - Fairfax City
  - Manassas
  - Falls Church
  - Fairfax County
  - Fauquier County
  - Loudoun County
  - Prince William County
  - Stafford County
  - Spotsylvania County



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### Reality Check

In addition, a panel of local business, community and government leader facilitated by Arlington County Board Chairman Jay Fisette discussed how to best realize the vision established by the Reality Check exercise on the local and regional level. Panelists included George Vradenburg, The Potomac Conference; Will Baker, Chesapeake Bay Foundation; Kate Hanley, Fairfax County; and Gary Garczynski, the National Association of Home Builders.

In spring 2005, Reality Check organizers will compile the outcomes of the exercise in a wrap-up report, which will also include tools, indicators and recommendations for value-added planning on the local and regional levels.

For more information, visit [www.RealityCheckWashington.org](http://www.RealityCheckWashington.org) or contact Beth Offenbacker at 703.683.4815 x202 (office) or 703.623.4811 (cell).

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