

# MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Boards of Directors  
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments  
Greater Washington Board of Trade  
Community Foundation for the National Capital Region

FROM: The Envision Greater Washington Organizing Committee

DATE: July 31, 2006

RE: Recommendations to our Convenors

Our region will grow dramatically in the next twenty-five years. Experts tell us that by 2030 the region will add 1.6 million new jobs and 2 million new residents. We will also look different as a result of significant shifts in our demographics and consumer preferences. The negative by-products of this growth – increased congestion, rapid consumption of our natural resources, relentless pressure for new taxes, increasing inequalities, and escalating housing costs – threaten our regional competitiveness and quality of life and are well known to you. The question is: what should we do about it?

Following the recommendations of the February 2006 Potomac Conference, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, the Greater Washington Board of Trade, and the Community Foundation for the National Capital Region, in March/April 2006 endorsed a 90-day exploratory effort (Phase 1) and commissioned us, a 50-person organizing committee of public, civic and private sector leaders, to consider whether a multi-sector regional visioning process might help improve regional economic and social outcomes, and if so, to examine how such a visioning process might work.

Many of us came into this 90-day process with questions, concerns and open skepticism. We shared an understanding of the challenges our region faces, but few of us were knowledgeable about regional visioning processes. Through conversation, we built our understanding, deepened our analysis, and built a shared belief that it is possible to construct a well-designed, broadly supported and action-oriented regional visioning process that enhances our likelihood of improving future regional outcomes.

We learned, for example, that regional visioning efforts have become more sophisticated and increasingly action oriented in recent years, and it is this type of highly developed, community-wide process that has the potential to produce action in our complex region. We also came to believe the time to act is now, during our time of prosperity. Finally, we concluded that the investment needed to finance the effort is small compared to the potential economic and social returns of even modest success. We also concluded that not to try new approaches would result in a continuation of the current troublesome trends causing the long-term degradation of our region's economic, social and environmental health.

With these observations in mind, therefore, our principal recommendation is:

*That a collaborative, diverse, multi-sector partnership of regional leaders and leading organizations pursue a sustained state-of-the-art, community-wide regional visioning initiative that focuses on establishing goals to guide where and how our region will grow in the coming decades and that the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, the Greater Washington Board of Trade and The Community Foundation for the National Capital Region take a leading role in its successful launch and implementation.*

We recommend that this effort focus on how and where we grow, with a clear eye toward ensuring that we grow in a way that improves the long-term economic and social competitiveness of our region and creates opportunities for all residents to enjoy a strong quality of life. To be clear, when we speak of creating opportunities for all residents, we expect this process to address social challenges confronting our region within the framework of future development, not just traditional land use and transportation issues.

In order for Envision Greater Washington (the placeholder name for this initiative) to be effective, it should have the following characteristics:

- Maintain a laser-like focus on implementation and action; otherwise, why do it?
- Engage and respect local, state and federal government stakeholders and decision makers; our jurisdictional landscape needs to be our strength, not our weakness.
- Place a premium on transparency, accountability and inclusiveness; it is these process elements that will lead to widely supported outcomes.
- Work from community values; they are what is shared.
- Use realistic alternative growth scenarios (including what happens if we continue current trends); they support hard thinking about the future and set the stage for real choices.
- Recognize the interconnectedness of issues, including the roles of race and class; it is the honest big-picture analysis that makes the conversation real and leads to action.
- Reach beyond the usual participants and ensure honest and constructive dialogue.
- Embrace all sectors as partners; it is how we will move to significant actions that draw upon all our resources.

We also recommend the following next steps:

- We, the Organizing Committee, be recognized as the interim group to move this effort forward with the three convening organizations. It is premature to make major decisions on the full composition of this effort's leadership and in what existing organization(s) it should be hosted. We seek your feedback on the governance and hosting options presented in the case statement. We propose to report back to you on our governance and accountability recommendations in January 2007.
- Assuming your agreement that we move forward with this initiative, we propose to work with you and others in the public, business and civic sectors to share the financing of its costs, including the immediate funds needed to meet the costs of its next phase (Phase 2). Once funds are raised for Phase 2, we would move forward on tasks that include values research, scenario development and additional outreach to more public, private, and nonprofit organizations from around the region. These tasks and others are detailed in the attached report.

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As a signal of our support for moving forward together and as a reflection of the diversity of perspectives we bring to the urgent need to address our regional challenges, all of us have attached our names to this document.

We look forward to continuing our work together.



|         |                 |   |   |
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| Chuck   | Bean            | Executive Director  | The Nonprofit Roundtable of Greater Washington                                  |
| Frankie | Blackburn       | Executive Director  | Impact Silver Spring  |
| David   | Bowers          | Director  | Enterprise Community Partners, Washington D.C.                                  |
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| Steve   | Chaudet         | Vice President  | Lockheed Martin Corporation   |
| Foster  | Chris           | Deputy Director   | Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development                        |
| Laura   | Cole            | Executive Director  | ULI Washington  |
| Sean    | Connaughton     | Chairman  | Prince William Board of County Supervisors                                      |
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| Stacey  | Davis Stewart   | President & CEO   | Fannie Mae Foundation   |
| James   | Duffey          | VP of Global Sales & Client Solution US Gov.                                | Electronic Data Systems (EDS)   |
| Lee     | Epstein         | Director, Lands Program   | Chesapeake Bay Foundation   |
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| Charlie | Givans          | Director of Operations  | Booz Allen Hamilton   |
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| Robert  | Harris          | Partner   | Holland & Knight LLP  |
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| Kwasi   | Holman          | President & CEO   | Prince George's Economic Development Corporation                                |
| John    | Kane            | President & CEO   | The Kane Company  |
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| Gerrit  | Knaap           | Executive Director  | University of Maryland, National Center for Smart Growth Research and Education |
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