

## ***Strengthening National Capital Region Governance and Leadership Workshop Background***

The Center for Public Policy and Private Enterprise, at the University of Maryland, School of Public Policy, has been involved in a year-long research effort to examine the regional governance and leadership in the National Capital Region (NCR). This workshop culminates this first year's efforts. **The purpose of this workshop is engage senior representatives from the region's public, private, academic and civic sectors, to begin the process of developing and evaluating options available to improve the region's governance structure.**

During the first phase of our research, we wrote a series of three papers; these are summarized below:

- Paper I, "Assessment of Regional Governance in the National Capital Region," summarizes the history of regional governance in the National Capital Region (NCR) from its roots in 17<sup>th</sup> century English colonies and an 18<sup>th</sup> century federal district under the U.S. Constitution, to a globally-recognized multi-state region in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Based principally on the interviews conducted for this project, Paper I also presents the challenges facing the NCR and its public, private, nonprofit, academic and civic assets and liabilities for addressing them. Overall, Paper I concludes that the NCR lacks the governance and leadership capacities it needs to be able to effectively think and act as a region, especially a world-class one.
- Paper II, "Governance Models and Case Studies," provides background information on regional governance. It shares information on the models of regional governance that have been proffered and, to some degree, practiced, nationally and globally. It offers thoughts on the key components that need to be found in the practice of regional cooperation in the NCR. It reports on the thoughts of individuals interviewed for Paper I on actions that might be taken to build the capacity of the NCR to address cross-cutting challenges, effectively and confidently. Finally, it suggests case studies for further exploration from regions that have pursued these actions.
- Paper III, "Case Studies," presents the ten case studies that were selected; these also illustrate the range of interviewee suggestions for strengthening regional governance, as they have been applied in other regions. The ten case studies are:
  1. Citizens League of Minneapolis/St. Paul (Regional Citizens League) ([www.citizensleague.org](http://www.citizensleague.org))
  2. METRO (Portland) (Regional Planning and Service District) ([www.oregonmetro.org](http://www.oregonmetro.org))
  3. Envision Utah (Salt Lake City) (Regional Growth Compact) ([www.envisionutah.org](http://www.envisionutah.org))
  4. Southern California Association of Governments State of the Region Report (Los Angeles) (State of the Region Report) ([www.scag.ca.gov](http://www.scag.ca.gov))
  5. Chicago Metropolis 2020 (Regional Leadership Partnership) ([www.chicagometropolis2020.org](http://www.chicagometropolis2020.org))
  6. St. Louis Cross-sector Collaboration (Regional Leadership Partnership) ([www.gotostlouis.org](http://www.gotostlouis.org))
  7. Negotiated Investment Strategy (Federal/State/Local Regional Initiative, e.g. Dayton, Ohio, and Gary, Indiana)
  8. Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (Regional Public Authority) ([www.panynj.gov](http://www.panynj.gov))
  9. San Diego Association of Governments (Empowered Regional Council) ([www.sandag.org](http://www.sandag.org))

10. Institute for Portland Metropolitan Studies (Regional Studies Institute)  
([www.pdx.edu/ims](http://www.pdx.edu/ims))

Based on our research to date, we have concluded that the absence of a world-class, regional governance structure and leadership capacity is a matter that must be taken seriously and addressed. Within that broad and complex regional context, while there are many fine regional institutions and leaders, the National Capital Region, as-a-whole, currently lacks the governance and leadership capacities it needs to be able to effectively think and act as a region; and to gain the synergistic benefits there from. As a result, the region is less able to address long-standing chronic problems, such as: traffic congestion and long commute times; deficiencies in mass transit; lack of affordable housing; unsettling divergences in regional wealth and incomes; education; and air quality that hovers and dips below the standard for healthy living. However, whatever the record of the past, there is simply no alternative, but for the Washington region (as its population continues to expand significantly) to continue striving to meet these regional challenges, since all indications are that they will continue to grow beyond the capacity of local organizations to adequately address in isolation. NCR residents have also indicated their support for greater regional cooperation and more effective regional governance building on existing organizations; the poll results have also been included for background reading.

We have no prejudged conclusion as to the specific details, other than the belief that some form of regional governance structure is required to address future challenges. Our intent for this workshop is to listen to the participants' ideas, as we collectively validate our proposed goals, and begin to develop a plan forward.

To begin the process of developing and adopting an effective regional governance structure [note: governance is a process (different from government)] for the National Capital Region, we have proposed four goals, along with some optional actions for achieving those goals. These are covered in our fourth paper, *Background Materials on Goal and Options*. This draft paper highlights background information in an introduction to each goal. Then, the paper identifies optional actions that could be taken to achieve each goal. For each action, the paper shares information relevant NCR activities along with case studies from other regions, and, when appropriate, websites for these examples. The goal and optional actions are summarized below:

**Goal 1: Empower the Greater Washington 2050 Compact to Shape Cooperative Regional Growth**

- Option 1-A: Request Individuals and Organizations to Adopt the Greater Washington 2050 Compact and Participate in Its Implementation
- Option 1-B: Empower the Region, Through the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, to Implement *Region Forward* Actions
- Option 1-C: Prepare Regular Reports on Progress in Achieving *Region Forward* Goals and Share in Annual Meetings of Regional and Other Organizations.
- Other NCR Governance Options

## **Goal 2: Make the National Capital Region a National Model for Federal/State/Local Cooperation**

- Option 2-A: Create a Committee of the National Capital Region to Coordinate the Efforts of Regional Leaders and Organizations and Advise Federal, District, Maryland, Virginia And Local Governments
- Option 2-B: Strengthen the National Capital Planning Commission to Provide a More Unified, Regular, and Strategic Federal Government Engagement in the NCR
- Option 2-C: Create a Federal Office for the National Capital Region and Empower the Committee of the NCR to Advise on NCR Issues
- Option 2-D: Create Maryland and Virginia Offices for the National Capital Region and Empower the Committee of the NCR to Advise on NCR Issues
- Option 2-E: Establish Formulas for Distributing Funding by the Federal, Maryland, and Virginia Governments on a Regional Basis in the National Capital Region
- Option 2-F: Request the District Mayor and Maryland and Virginia Governors to Sponsor Annual Conferences on Their Actions to Strengthen Regional Governance
- Option 2-G: Develop a Negotiated Investment Strategy for the National Capital Region
- NCR Governance Option 3-H: Organize National/Global Councils of Regions
- Other NCR Governance Options

## **Goal 3: Adopt a Charter for Guiding National Capital Region Governance Improvements**

- Option 3-A: Engage Regional Leaders and Citizens in Preparing a NCR Charter for Achieving Effective Regional Governance
- Option 3-B: Designate an Organization(s) To Be the Keeper(s) of the NCR Charter
- Option 3-C: Launch a NCR Governance Fund to Finance NCR Charter Actions
- Option 3-D: Create an Institute for NCR Studies to Explore Opportunities for Strengthening Regional Governance and Monitor Implementation of the NCR Charter
- Other NCR Governance Options

## **Goal 4: Create an Abundance of Practicing Regional Citizens**

- Option 4-A: Launch A Regional Citizens League--A Better Capital Region--to Engage Individuals in Analyzing Tough Regional Challenges.
- Option 4-B: Make Becoming a Regional Citizen a Key Component of All NCR Leadership Programs
- Option 4-C: Launch Regional Citizenship Programs to Help Prepare Practicing Regional Citizens
- Option 4-D: Connect Trained Regional Leaders and Citizens with Opportunities to Practice Their Skills
- Option 4-E: Organize Annual Visitations of Regional Leaders and Citizens to Other Regions, Domestically And Globally, Including Other Capital Regions Option 4-F-- Celebrate an Annual OneNCR Day
- Other NCR Governance Options

The overarching product of these goals and actions is to improve the ability of individuals and organizations to collaborate with each other across all sectors--government, business, nonprofit, academic, and civic--and address the toughest regional challenges effectively, as well as building on current organizations (not replacing them).

As part of the workshop we will ask for your active participation. We break up into four groups and ask that you address the following questions:

- What should be the vision for the National Capital Region?
- Is regional governance action desired and needed?
- What should be the Mission for the evolving governance structure?
  - Our first cut--Strengthening regional governance and leadership, building on current organizations, to address the National Capital Region's future challenges
- How can the effective regional processes be institutionalized to transcend political changes?
- What should be the initial actions and next steps?

At the conclusion of the workshop we will reconvene, and the groups will report back with their results.

Finally, strengthening NCR governance will not happen overnight; it is truly the pursuit of the marathoner, not the sprinter. However, as the case studies confirm, even though the most critical actions are the most controversial, once they are implemented, they not only strengthen the capacity of regional leaders and citizens to address tough regional challenges, they enjoy the overwhelming support of the public, and all elements will synergistically benefit.

All of the referenced reports have been provided as separate documents. Thank you for joining us for this important workshop.