BUILDING THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION COMMUNITY

GOVERNANCE FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION: AN ASSESSMENT
Paper 1

by

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The Center for Public Policy and Private Enterprise provides the strategic linkage between the public and private sector to develop and improve solutions to increasingly complex problems associated with the delivery of public services—a responsibility increasingly shared by both sectors. Operating at the nexus of public and private interests, the Center researches, develops, and promotes best practices; develops policy recommendations; and strives to influence senior decision-makers toward improved government and industry results.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In 2009 the 2030 Group enlisted the Center for Public Policy and Private Enterprise (CPPPE) at the University of Maryland School of Public Policy to undertake a Regional Leadership Project. The purpose of the Regional Leadership Project is to identify regional governance and leadership models suited to the needs of the Greater Washington Region, and to the challenges the region confronts now and is likely to confront over the next two decades and beyond. The guiding question for the project is this: *How can the residents of the Greater Washington Region best think and act as a region, for the mutual benefit of all who live in the region?*

CPPPE's task in the Regional Leadership Project was to address three principal issues: 1) to better understand the governance structures and leadership capacities of the National Capital Region in light of both past experience and current and future challenges; 2) to identify useful models of regional governance and leadership and case examples from other regions; with the objective of strengthening the governance and leadership of the National Capital Region; and 3) to probe further into a selected set of the case examples for practical experiences that could help improve regional governance and leadership in the National Capital Region.

This paper, an "Assessment of Regional Governance in Greater Washington," addresses the first of those three issues. A companion paper, "Models and Cases for Regional Governance in Greater Washington," addresses the second. And a subsequent paper will address the third.

A possible future effort will work (with other outside participants) at evolving a specific set of regional Governance Recommendations for the National Capital region.

The CPPPE research team made use of a wide range of resources in preparing these papers. The principal resource was a set of first-hand accounts based on conversations with a selected sample of about three dozen leaders in the National Capital Region from government, business, nonprofit organizations, philanthropy, academia, the media, and civic organizations more broadly. The sample of those consulted attempted to be as broadly representative as possible for a small sample of the region's overall leadership. However, it was not intended to be a scientific sample of the leadership in any one sector or jurisdiction or of the region's leadership more generally, let alone of the overall population of the Washington region. The research base here was narrowly focused on a selected group of regional leaders believed to be sufficiently representative and experienced to provide useful first-hand knowledge, observations, and insights regarding the nature and challenges of leadership and governance in the Greater Washington Region.

The two papers (as will the third) summarize the wide range of views and perspectives we encountered, without imposing our own judgment, other than to attempt to put these views in a useful analytical context; to highlight similarities, differences, and salient issues among the responses; and to offer some conclusions based on what we found. The reader should keep in mind that the intent of these papers is to present a wide variety of views, diverse and sometimes conflicting as they may be, without attempting to resolve every contradiction or render judgment as to who may be "right" or "wrong." The purpose is to provide the reader with a range of views that illuminate the state of the National Capital Region and its governance and leadership capacities, and that offer a range of possible models, experiences, and suggestions as to how they might be strengthened.

2. DEFINING REGIONAL GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

Regional governance is the process by which people in a region determine and pursue their collective ends, means, and values. ***Governance*** is a broader concept than ***government,*** including the *processes* by which people govern themselves as well as the official public organizational *structures* they might use to do so. Governance also involves engaging non-governmental actors – business, nonprofit, philanthropic, academic, media, civic – in defining and pursuing public purposes. Regional governance includes several important elements, including the *region* itself, *institutional structures* existing within the region, the *processes* through which those institutional structures interact, as well as other elements of *regional capacity*

In human geography, a ***region*** is an area of land encompassing human settlements with particular physical, social, cultural, economic, political, and functional characteristics. The U.S. federal government defines a metropolitan area (MA) conceptually as a region that has "a large population nucleus, together with adjacent communities that have a high degree of economic and social integration with that nucleus**."** Generically, a region is a coherent part of a larger whole, and is itself likely to be comprised of parts (i.e. *sub-regions*) which themselves constitute coherent – albeit interdependent -- wholes in their own right. Thus, the people and organizations in different parts of a region exhibit elements of both independence and interdependence among themselves.

The ***Washington region*** is known by many names, most commonly the *National Capital Region*, the *Washington Metropolitan Area,* and the *Greater Washington Region*.[1] The *Washington region* is also defined in different ways. By one reckoning, the Greater Washington Region encompasses those jurisdictions that comprise the membership of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG).[2] The

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[1] Other names include *Greater Washington, Greater Capital Region, Metropolitan Washington,* and the *Washington area,* among others.
[2] Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) member jurisdictions include: the District of Columbia; the Maryland counties of Prince George's, Montgomery, and Frederick; the Virginia counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William; the Maryland municipalities of Bladensburg, Bowie,

federal government defines the Greater Washington Region as a "Metropolitan Area" covering a territory broader than that of the MWCOG jurisdictions, including an additional tier of counties in Maryland and Virginia, and reaching into West Virginia, with a total population of about 5.4 million people in 2008.[3] Some speculate that the Greater Washington Region may one day stretch into Pennsylvania (if it does not already do so).

The Greater Washington Region itself also forms a part (a sub-region) of still larger regions. For example, it is also part of the ***Baltimore-Washington Metropolitan Region,*** which has a combined population exceeding eight million residents, making it the fourth-largest in the country. The Greater Washington Region is also part of a broader ***Chesapeake Region***, which can be viewed in several dimensions. From a human geography perspective, it comprises the principal population and economic concentrations in the tidewater areas of the Chesapeake Bay in Maryland and Virginia, reaching from the Norfolk area (and including Richmond) to north of Baltimore, and including parts of Delaware. From a natural geography perspective, it encompasses the Chesapeake Bay proper, the tide-water tributaries, and substantial portions, if not the entirety, of the vast Chesapeake watershed, which includes parts of Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New York.

The Greater Washington Region is also considered to be part of variously defined "mega-regions," such as the ***Middle Atlantic Region,*** stretching from Richmond to New York City, and as far west as the Allegheny Mountains; the ***Boston-Washington Corridor,*** identified by Jean Gottman in the 1950s as a pioneering modern *megalopoli*s; and the ***Northeast Mega-region,*** stretching all the way from Portland, Maine, to Richmond.

Regional Governance Structures

While *regional governance* is essentially a *process***,** it nonetheless works through various kinds of institutional *structures*. ***Government*** is the institutional structure most often chosen for public governance, but it is not the only option. Most large metropolitan areas have long since expanded far beyond the boundaries of the government serving their central cities. Some expanding urban regions have tried to maintain the conventional structure of a single coterminous government through various devices, such as annexing the expanding regional periphery to the central city government, or consolidating local governments within the metropolitan area. But few have been

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Gaithersburg, College Park, Greenbelt, Rockville, Takoma Park, and Frederick; and the Virginia municipalities of Alexandria, Falls Church, Fairfax City, Manassas, and Manassas Park.

[3] In addition to the MWCOG jurisdictions, the Federally designated metropolitan area (MA) of Washington includes the Maryland counties of Calvert and Charles, the Virginia counties of Clarke, Fauquier, Spotsylvania, Stafford, and Warren, and, in West Virginia, Jefferson County,. The Census Bureau estimated the 2008 population of that broader region (the Washington MSA) to be 5,358,130 people.

completely successful in maintaining a single government encompassing the entire urban region, that is, using a single *government* as their principal instrument of regional *governance*. Regions have also experimented with more formal agreements that bind area governments together in more permanent and legally binding ways, such as through regional charters and compacts, in order to pursue common purposes that require a more certain and enduring organizational structure.

Regional Governance Processes

In the absence of a single contiguous regional government, the residents of urban regions have relied on other instruments of regional governance, such as formal and informal ways of working together across the boundaries that divide the legally defined political jurisdictions and the government, business, nonprofit, and civic sectors. In doing so, they choose a more conscious and deliberate form of regional governance that depends heavily on various processes of ***regional cooperation,*** which simply means people and organizations in a region working together to solve common problems and pursue common ends.

As in most human endeavors, *cooperation* usually requires *collaboration*. ***Regional collaboration*** refers to a set of processes by which regional governance, and particularly regional cooperation, can be pursued. Such collaborative processes involve bringing people together and enabling them to address common challenges, such as delivering common services. It includes developing an understanding of cross-cutting challenges, strengthening the citizenship (decision-making) skills of participants, designing strategies for addressing the challenges through dialogue, negotiations, and consensus, harnessing the resources to implement priority initiatives, sharing risks, responsibilities and rewards, and reporting to fellow regional citizens on successes and setbacks. It is primarily a bottom-up process, involving regional citizens and their organizations, but might also involve some top down financial and political blessing.

Regional Governance Capacities

Regional capacity broadly refers to the wherewithal of a region to be able to think and act as a region. This includes ***the stocks of public authority and revenues on which it might draw*** from existing governments associated with the region; governance structures and processes it might choose to employ; specific tools of regional governance which might be used, drawing on its own experience or borrowed from other regions; and especially the region's own stocks of human talent, natural endowments, technology, institutional and physical infrastructure, economic and financial resources, culture, and social capital, all of which together constitute the region's primary resource base. Most importantly, regional capacity is shaped by the skill, support and initiative the region's residents are willing to put forth to play the critical roles of *regional citizenship, stewardship, leadership.*

Regional Citizenship, Stewardship, and Leadership

Regional citizenship means residents of a region thinking and behaving regionally. Regional citizens may or may not have consciously or publicly declared their regional citizenship. But in their actual thinking and actions they advance regional initiatives, they "regionalize" their organizations, and they work with others to design and implement strategies for achieving regional excellence. Regional citizens do not give up their national, local, or even neighborhood citizenship, but add a new regional citizenship.

Regional stewardship is a special kind of regional citizenship that protects, nurtures, and thoughtfully develops the region's resources.

And ***regional leadership*** is a special kind of regional citizenship that entails getting people and organizations to do things on behalf of the region that they would not be likely to do on their own. That might mean undertaking a specific project that is important to the region, such as the design, construction, and operation of the Metro subway system, or it might mean fashioning a regional institution needed to undertake such an important regional project, such as the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

In sum, ***regional governance*** is a neutral term, neither good nor bad in and of itself. Every region has some form of regional governance, but it might not be well-designed or well-executed, it might be done quite poorly, or it might hardly be done at all. The residents of a region might simply choose as their *de facto* form of regional governance to let the various governments in their region get along as best they can (or can't) in their efforts to address common problems independently of one another, and simply let general social and economic forces take their course with little effort on the part of citizens to think and act as a region. Or, as citizens of the region, they might decide that they deserve first-rate governance at the regional level as much as they do at any other level, and act accordingly to achieve it.

3. FOUNDATIONS OF REGIONAL GOVERNANCE IN THE WASHINGTON AREA

Two key foundations of 21st century regional governance in the territory we call the Greater Washington Region were established several hundred years ago by settlers from the British Isles. The first was the foundation for state and local government, established in the 17th century. And the second, superimposed on that original foundation, was the new structure of the U.S. Constitution and the federal district it created as the national capital in the 18th century.

Origins of State and Local Government

The structure of state and local governance that prevails in the Washington region today began to take form in the early 17^{th} century with the establishment of the English colonies of Virginia and Maryland, which operated loosely under the English Crown and Parliament. Those colonial governments generally had wide latitude in governing the territory under their jurisdiction, including authority to establish the structures of local government, involving various forms of courts, counties, municipalities, and special districts.

Following independence from Great Britain, the fledgling United States under the Articles of Confederation found that its 13 new state governments were too powerful and independent of one another to be able to settle differences among themselves in a harmonious and expeditious manner. For example, Virginia and Maryland were unable to resolve a long-standing series of quarrels over navigation on the Potomac River, which also formed their common border. James Madison, representing Virginia, met with representatives from Maryland at Mount Vernon in 1785 to try to resolve their differences. Unable to do so, the representatives from the two states concluded that the Articles of Confederation was an unsatisfactory governance mechanism to deal with matters of "commerce," and agreed to call a conference of all the states at Annapolis the following year to recommend needed amendments to the Articles **[of Confederation].**

The subsequent Annapolis Conference of 1786 did not go well, largely because only five states sent delegates (with Maryland failing to send delegates to attend the conference it had called in its own capital). The delegates who did attend became even more convinced that the broader governance issues confronting the new country needed to be addressed in a more systematic way, and convinced the Congress to issue a more urgent call to the states to meet the following year in Philadelphia. So a direct line can be drawn from the dispute between Maryland and Virginia over "regional" issues regarding commerce on the Potomac River to the birth of the U. S. Constitution, which, in turn, fundamentally altered the territory on the Potomac that came to be known as the National Capital Region.

U. S. Constitution and the Federal District

The new U. S. Constitution fundamentally shaped the future of the Washington region in two principal ways. First, and most obviously, the Constitution provided for the establishment of a new federal capital under the exclusive authority of the federal government, and expressly under the purview of the U.S. Congress, in a ten-mile-square "District," which was eventually located at its present site on the Potomac River.[4]

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[4] Article I, Section 8 of the U. S. Constitution explicitly grants Congress the power to create a "District (not exceeding ten miles square)" to "become the seat of the government of the United States," as well as the power "[t]o exercise exclusive legislation in all cases whatsoever, over such District…"

Maryland and Virginia ceded land on the banks of the Potomac for the new capital. And in 1791 President Washington appointed Pierre Charles L'Enfant to devise a plan for the new city, which set the pattern of development within the federal District over the next two centuries**.**

By the time the United States had decided to establish a permanent capital on the banks of the Potomac, it had become clear that the two small port towns then in that region -- Georgetown, Maryland and Alexandria, Virginia -- would never approach the level of development that had already been reached by the dominant Atlantic coast ports, including the thriving nearby Chesapeake city of Baltimore, Maryland (and, later, Norfolk, Virginia). Had the national capital of the United States not ended up in this location, it is likely the territory we know today as the Greater Washington Region would have continued as a predominantly rural area until the 21st century.

Second, the Constitution altered the political and legal (i.e. constitutional) relationships between the states and the federal government, shifting the net balance of power substantially to the advantage of the federal government for important functions of government. However, that net power shift masked the reality that the states retained almost exclusive constitutional control in three key areas of critical importance to local and regional governance:

- the structure and authority of their own state governments, including the interplay of powers among their executive, legislative, and judicial branches;

- the structure and authority of local government within each state; and

- the rules governing the conduct of state and local politics.

These alterations in the federal-state relationship had little relevance for the national capital during its first century or so, since the urban extent of the capital remained fully within the ten-mile-square federal district, and therefore under the exclusive control of the federal government, until the end of the 19th century. But once the *de facto* urban area of the capital city began to expand decisively beyond the District of Columbia in the 20th century, those outlying portions of the National Capital Region would come under the purview of the states of Virginia and Maryland. And at that point, what the Constitution said about the rights of states to govern themselves and their local jurisdictions would matter greatly to the future of the region.

In the 19th century, a legal doctrine known as Dillon's Rule (named after the 19th century Iowa Supreme Court justice who articulated it) came to define the nearly exclusive right of states to determine the structure and authority of local governments within their territory. The constitutional logic of state preeminence is strongly buttressed by the fact that the U.S. Constitution does not even mention local government. The U. S. Supreme Court endorsed Dillon's Rule in a series of cases beginning in the 1890s, and has rarely deviated from that position since then.

The fact that states hold all the constitutional authority to structure their local governments as they see fit, does not, however, mean that local governments will therefore inevitably lack either a broad legal authority or political clout in their own right. Under Dillon's Rule, local governments possess such authority as their states choose to delegate to them, and "home rule" states, such as Maryland (also a "Dillon's Rule state"), has chosen to delegate a substantial proportion of their exclusive constitutional authority to their local governments. And one of the principal reasons the state of Maryland decided to award such a delegation is because local jurisdictions in Maryland that desired such "home rule" status had the political power to persuade the state to give it to them. In Virginia, by contrast, the state, including especially the legislative and judicial branches, has retained a far greater share of power *vis a vis* its local governments, principally because that has been the preference of influential state political forces.

4. FEDERAL RULE IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

From its beginnings as the capital of the United States in 1800, the new city of Washington in the federal district (later officially named the District of Columbia and informally dubbed "Washington, D.C.") was governed exclusively under the purview of the federal government, as prescribed by the Constitution. The capital city relied almost entirely on Congress to finance capital improvements, and to initiate any special projects aimed to spur the city's economy**.** And city residents quickly learned that Congress had little sense of obligation to the city other than to take actions that directly affected the operation of the federal government. In 1847 the federal government agreed to retrocede back to Virginia the 31 square miles of land on the south shore of the Potomac River which that state had originally ceded to form a part of the federal district, largely because it seemed clear to Congress that the capital city of Washington D.C., then wholly lying on the north bank of the Potomac, would never expand south across the river.[5]

Shortly thereafter, during the Civil War, the *de facto* urban area of the national capital expanded south across the Potomac River as the federal government presided over the first of what would turn out to be a series of expansions of the capital city beyond the boundaries of the "federal District."

The District of Columbia's population nearly tripled during the 1860s (from 53,000 in 1860 to nearly 132,000 by 1870) seriously overburdening the city's primitive

[5] That newly restored Virginia territory today includes a portion of the independent city of Alexandria, all of Arlington County (the successor to Alexandria County), and Arlington National Cemetery (once the estate of George Washington Parke Custis which was passed on to his daughter, the wife of Robert E. Lee). The District of Columbia was thereby reduced in size from its original 100 square miles to its current area, the remaining 69 square miles on the north bank of the Potomac that had originally been ceded by Maryland.

infrastructure. Congress flirted with the possibility of moving the entire capital west to keep abreast of the country's shifting population center of gravity, but in the end decided to stay put and make the necessary investment to modernize the capital. In the 1870s Congress authorized the District of Columbia Board of Public Works, under the chairmanship of Alexander Robey Shepherd (the legendary "Boss Shepherd"), to undertake a major urban modernization initiative to upgrade the capital city's physical infrastructure. The Board largely carried out the modernization, but with a financial recklessness that caused Congress to resume its direct governance of the District, which it maintained for nearly a century.

Another major makeover of the national capital occurred beginning in 1900 under the Congressional McMillan Plan, which gave Washington, D.C. its current monumental flavor, largely abiding by L'Enfant's original design. The result was a re-landscaping of the Capitol grounds and the Mall, construction of new federal buildings and monuments, the clearance of slums around the Capitol, and the establishment of a new citywide park system. The McMillan Plan was implemented over the subsequent two decades, ending with construction of the Lincoln Memorial in 1922.

By the end of the 19th century, some modest residential suburbanization had begun in Maryland and Virginia, as federal government employees sought out residences further from the urban core of the capital. Most of the early suburban commuter enclaves were built in small towns along existing railroad tracks. A few entrepreneurs began to develop new residential communities along with the transportation infrastructure to connect them with downtown Washington. Here again, a form of federal leadership was in evidence. For example, in the 1890s U. S. Senator Francis G. Newlands of Nevada founded The Chevy Chase Land Company of Montgomery County, Maryland, purchased more than 1,700 acres of land between DuPont Circle and Jones Bridge Road, began constructing the residential development of Chevy Chase Village, established the Rock Creek Railway and graded Connecticut Avenue to serve the new development, and built its first local schoolhouse**.** But for the most part, the urban area of the national capital remained within the boundaries of the District of Columbia and firmly under the exclusive control of the federal government.

All that changed in the first half of the 20th century, when three major factors fundamentally reshaped the Greater Washington Region, and the challenge to governing it. The first was the explosive growth of the federal government beginning in World War I, and the second was the consequent expansion of the capital city's urban area beyond the borders of the District of Columbia into neighboring Maryland and Virginia. Both of these factors were abetted and further accelerated by the third major factor, the automobile, which would transform urban (and non-urban) configurations everywhere, including the National Capital Region.

The automobile first made its mark on those cities where the private market was driving technological, industrial, and cultural innovation. For example, in the 1920s, Detroit New Center pioneered the concept of the office business district removed from the city's downtown (arguably the first "edge city"). At about the same time in Los Angeles, where by the 1920s every other household had a car, the "Miracle Mile" along Wilshire Boulevard led the way in fashioning a retail business district that catered to automobile traffic, the world's first "linear downtown." These innovations would not reach Washington for another two or three decades.

On the other hand, while other major urban centers would go through a roller coaster of economic peaks and valleys during the first half of the 20^{th} century, the Washington region, driven by a continually growing federal government, would steadily expand (with occasional pauses), even during the years of the Great Depression. For example, during the decade of the 1930s the population of Fairfax County increased by 65 percent, from 25,000 in 1930 to 41,000 in 1940, driven almost exclusively by federal employees from the District seeking suburban homes.

5. GOVERNING THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

After World War II, the District of Columbia continued to grow, reaching a population of 802,178 residents in 1950. (In the same year, the District still had 1,000 acres of farmland.) But from that point on, the population of the District would decline for the remainder of the century in absolute terms, and in comparative terms would shrink to 10 percent of the region's overall population. At the same time, the demographic profile of the District was changing; by 1957 the nation's capital would be the first major city in the United States to have a majority African-American**.**

Meanwhile, in the post-World War II years, the expansion of the Washington suburbs accelerated, and would soon transform the Washington region. Housing development led the expansion as federal employees continued to flock to the suburbs. But even at this early stage, there were clear signs of the potential shift in business activity that would eventually reshape the region. In 1946 Melpar, an electronics contactor to the military, moved from Alexandria to Bailey's Crossroads and became the first non-agricultural company to build its headquarters in Fairfax, County. In 1952, the company built a campus-like office facility off Route 50 and Arlington Boulevard, foretelling an architectural form and land use that would become common throughout Washington's suburban jurisdictions in the decades ahead. And by 1954 the National Capital Region's first major semi-enclosed shopping mall, Seven Corners, had located in Falls Church.

In recognition of these transforming forces, regional leaders in the 1950s began a series of efforts to fashion new infrastructure and the regional institutions required to address the new regional challenges. The federal government led the way by initiating key elements of the Interstate Highway System, including the Capital Beltway, and constructing Dulles International Airport and the Dulles access road. And it later facilitated the creation of the Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority, through an interstate compact of Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia, to build the Metrorail subway system. Congress also established the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) as the central planning agency for the federal government in the National Capital Region. The NCPC's mission was to assure "comprehensive, systematic, and continuous development of the park, parkway, and playground systems of the National Capital and its environs," including preservation of the National Capital Region's important natural and historic features.

In 1957 the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) was founded as a regional organization of Washington area local governments (and state and federal affiliates) to provide a forum for discussion and the development of regional responses to region-wide issues "regarding the environment, transportation, public safety and homeland security, affordable housing, community planning, and economic development." Building on MWCOG reports, planners from governments in the Washington region in the early 1960s worked together, and with federal planners, to develop a general plan for the National Capital Region (called the "Policy Plan for the Year 2000, " and also known as "Wedges and Corridors"). The regional plan broadly called for:

- *high density "corridors"* radiating from Washington, D.C. into the Maryland and Virginia suburbs like spokes on a wheel, concentrating population and business enclaves that would be served by fast and high volume highway and/or transit, including the major legs of the Interstate Highway System and Washington Metro subway system, already under construction;

- *low density green "wedges,"* between the high density corridors, comprised of a combination of agriculture, parks, and low density residential development; and

- *lateral transportation connections* between the high density corridors, including not only the Capital Beltway, but also a second circumferential – i.e. an "outer beltway" – and potentially even a third "outer beltway" beyond that. The circumferentials and other lateral highways were originally intended principally to route traffic around the central business district in the District of Columbia, but they increasingly came to be viewed as important links connecting the business, commercial and retail activity in the suburban high density corridors.

In the absence of any authoritative regional planning body or enforcement mechanism, local jurisdictions were left to decide for themselves whether and how to implement the regional concept. Local governments in Virginia[6] and Maryland issued their own versions of the general regional plan in an effort to interpret it as applied to their own sub-regions. Some elements of the regional plan were implemented in some jurisdictions. For instance, "satellite cities" such as Reston emerged in Fairfax County

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[6] Fairfax County Planning Department. 1963. *Western County Development Policy.* Fairfax County, VA: Fairfax County, Va. County Government Planning Department

and Germantown in Montgomery County, and low density "wedges" were carved out in Montgomery County and reinforced in 1981 through the creation of the county's Agricultural Reserve.

But by the mid 1980s, it was clear that the general regional plan would not be implemented in any comprehensive fashion, probably for three principal reasons. First, it did not necessarily represent a deep consensus, or enjoy a clearly established political base of support, among the region's citizens, if for no other reason than that there were few if any region-wide civic and political institutions by which to forge such a deep consensus and base of political support. There were many skeptics who questioned critical parts of the plan, who felt that their concerns had not been satisfactorily addressed during the planning process, or who had second thoughts when the realities of implementation had to be confronted.

Second, there was no region-wide mechanism for binding the region's jurisdictions to the plan.

And third, there was no region-wide mechanism or funding for implementing the plan, or for assuring that each jurisdiction took the actions required to implement their respective parts of the plan. From that point on, each local jurisdiction pursued its own path, and regional cooperation, such as it was, settled into a pragmatic, *ad hoc* series of efforts to make the region work as best it could.

Meanwhile, even as the region's local governments had begun their first serious region-wide planning initiatives, the region's economy was undergoing the early stages of what would become a major transformation.

In 1962 a new business venture called West*Gate Corporation was formed to develop West*Gate Research Park in Tyson's Corner, in Fairfax, county. By 1970, twenty research-oriented businesses were operating in the industrial park, which by 1972 had grown to cover six hundred of the total 1,700 acres in Tyson's Corner. One of the first new "edge cities" was taking form in the Washington suburbs, a harbinger of a wholly new urban form that would transform the Washington region, as well as much of the urban world throughout the globe. The rapidly growing bedroom communities in the Washington suburbs were already well on their way to becoming vital business centers in their own right.

During the course of the 1980s and 1990s, the Washington region was transformed yet again by the federal government. Beginning in the 1980s under the Reagan Administration, the federal government both substantially increased its discretionary spending, especially for defense, and also dramatically shifted to contracting an ever rising proportion of the goods and services it purchased. The combination of these forces caused federal procurement spending to soar, and the Washington area was the nation's prime beneficiary. According to Stephen Fuller, George Mason Center for Regional Analysis, between 1983 and 2001, while the value of federal procurement increased a robust 55 percent nation-wide, in the National Capital Region it exploded by 359 per cent. The entire region benefitted, especially Fairfax and Montgomery Counties which were increasingly attracting a growing variety of firms in technology, management services and telecommunications. In 2001 Fairfax won some $9.3 billion in government contracts compared with $3.9 billion for Montgomery County. The growth in federal procurement, in turn, drove the real estate industry, especially in Fairfax County. For instance, in early 1987, half of the new commercial construction in the Greater Washington Region occurred in Fairfax, establishing the county as the economic engine of Northern Virginia.

6. 21ST CENTURY REGIONAL CATCH-UP

By the end of the 20th century, the Washington region had been transformed into a major national and international center of business, most of which was now located outside of the District of Columbia along with 90 percent of the region's population. It was also clear by this time that the Washington region-as-a-whole had proved unable, or unwilling, to conceive and execute a set of comprehensive, coherent and integrated plans for its future. The region had experienced a century of unsurpassed regional growth that left many heads spinning.

The National Capital Region's sustained, and accelerating, economic expansion, was now into its third century. But there were some ominous signs of potential troubles that might lie ahead. In the final decades of the 20th century, even the strong Washington area economy had been hard hit, first by the national savings and loan crisis, and then, as the 21st century began, the high-tech dot.com bust of Internet companies, including a substantial number in the Washington region. And then the terrorist attacks of 9/11 dealt yet another blow to the region. These disruptions alerted citizens and leaders to the very real threats they confronted collectively, underscoring the need to think and act as a region.

The principal tasks of regional leadership at this point were to determine how to catch up with the new realities that had already overtaken the region, and how to better anticipate and prepare for those yet to come. To address these tasks, regional leaders stepped up the pace of innovative and useful visioning exercises. At the same time, a corresponding task of regional leadership was to implement the priorities identified through the visioning processes. Addressing this task, that of implementation, proved to be as *ad hoc* and elusive as it had been in the recent past.

MWCOG's 2002 plan for "regional activity centers" was an effort to bring together the existing land use plans of member jurisdictions into a single regional document. It was more an acknowledgement of the "reality on the ground" and efforts to deal with it, than it was a visionary plan for how the National Capital Region ought to look in the future. In 2005, the *Reality Check on Growth* exercise challenged area leaders to determine where to locate the millions of new jobs and residents projected to come to the region in the coming decades. In 2007, MWCOG sponsored a *Futures Forum* that underscored the need for a new, more comprehensive and integrated regional approach to address interconnected issues. And in 2008 the MWCOG Board of Directors formed the Greater Washington 2050 Coalition, an effort to integrate into a comprehensive vision a number of MWCOG reports.

7. REGIONAL RESOURCES AND CHALLENGES

As the first decade of the 21st century comes to a close, the National Capital Region is blessed with an abundance of ***resources and advantages,*** including the following.

Regional Resources and Advantages

The Washington region has a ***strong economic base and high general level of economic prosperit***y. The Washington region is the 6th largest regional economy in the United States, and the 11th largest in the world. This economic strength is based on a formidable array of assets, including:

- a competitive business and job base,
- a vibrant, growing entrepreneurial community,
- a vast and rich pool of human talent, including a highly educated workforce and an enormous multicultural population (with one in five residents foreign born),
- a high ranking in many critical industries, including growth in finance, defense, InfoComm and bioscience sectors,
- three world-class airports,
- the Internet exchanges through which over 50 percent of all Internet traffic flow,
- highly rated office space.

Closely associated with these economic advantages, but also standing on their own, are several other regional assets, including:

- a large number of high quality ***public and private institutions of higher learning,***
- one of the world's largest and richest repositories of ***information and cultural, objects,*** as well as a rich array of theaters and talent in the performing arts,

- a high ***quality of life***, supported by a vibrant economic job base and abundant housing options, as well as a cornucopia of cultural, historic and natural resources such as parks, rivers, the Chesapeake Bay, mountains, forest, and agriculture.

Undergirding all of these benefits, of course, is the force that literally created the National Capital Region, the ***federal government,*** which generates an abundance of benefits to the Washington region, including:

- an economic engine, manifested in good jobs, a large payroll, contract dollars, and high and reliable overall levels of spending,

- federal agencies, labs, and research institutions,

- national political power,

- influential policy- and budget- making institutions,

- national and international visibility and prestige,

- an international community of global institutions, foreign missions and embassies,

- an abundance of federally-sponsored cultural resources**.**

Regional Challenges

At the same time, the Washington region also faces ***significant challenges.***

While the Washington region has enjoyed a high level of ***economic development and prosperity*** for most of its history, there are concerns that it may be slipping from its position of leadership among the nation's regions more generally (and perhaps among the regions of the world even more broadly). Meanwhile, despite the Washington region's generally high level of prosperity, substantial numbers of sub-regions, some neighborhoods and residents remain substantially below average regional indicators of income and wealth.

The many substantial improvements to the region's ***transportation*** system over the years have still not been adequate to accommodate the region's growth. As a consequence, transportation problems have mounted:

- Traffic congestion is almost universally ranked as a major regional problem,

- Cross-county and inter-jurisdictional traffic log-jams are an increasing irritation to commuters, a rising cost of doing business in the region, and a potential threat to the continued growth of regional high tech industries and overall regional prosperity,

- Major highways anticipated in earlier growth projections, including circumferentials, Potomac River crossings, and other lateral routes connecting the regions jurisdictions, have not been built, have been delayed or inadequately funded, or have been deleted altogether from planning,

- Mass transit is inadequate in scope and funding,

- The Metrorail system is characterized by increasing costs, operational deficiencies, and public dissatisfaction,

- While the Washington Airports Authority has made notable improvements in the region's air transportation facilities, its authority is limited**,** and inadequate to take a region-wide approach to air transportation integrated with land transportation,

- Existing institutional structures are inadequate to plan, finance, build, and maintain the transportation infrastructure anticipated to meet transportation demand. State and local revenue sources, in particular, are inadequate to finance such transportation infrastructure.

There is an uneasy sense that the region's ***public schools***, once viewed as among the best in the nation, have been losing ground in their ability to prepare students for the workforce of the future (and even the workforce of the present).

Virtually everyone applauds the region's excellent ***institutions of higher education***, and the enormous strides they have made in recent years. Many observers, however, believe that these universities have made an inadequate effort to work with one another and with other research institutions and enterprises in the region in order to more fully develop their potential as regional networks of learning and economic development**.**

The Washington region, along with every other region in the United States (and many around the world) was seriously hit by the housing bust that began in 2008 and had not yet fully recovered by 2010. Despite the slump in housing prices, lack of ***affordable housing*** continues to be a major problem in the region – and threatens to increase in severity when the economy and housing market recover -- creating financial stress for low and middle income residents as they seek to meet monthly payments and/or commuting stress by seeking homes further from the employment centers of the region (including those employees who live completely outside the Greater Washington Region). No part of the region appears to be moving toward a better balance of jobs and housing. Unaffordable housing and long commutes also constrain the ability of business to recruit and retain workers.

The region has progressed in recognizing and addressing homelessness as a regional issue, especially in contrast to the early 1980s when each jurisdiction addressed the issue as an isolated phenomenon, if they addressed it at all. Still, homelessness remains a serious region-wide problem, exacerbated by the economic slump and stubbornly high unemployment, even by the historically high standards of the Washington region.

Key ***natural resources and systems*** in the region are under stress, raising issues regarding the following:

- Much of the land available for development in the core regional jurisdictions has already been developed, so that future development in those jurisdictions is severely limited to those few available parcels, or redevelopment of existing parcels.

- While the region's air quality has improved in important respects, it continues to experience "Code Purple" days a higher state of air pollution alert than "Code Red, and it remains vulnerable to the increasing consequences of population and traffic growth.

- Climate change caused by carbon emission challenges the Washington region as it does the rest of the world.

- While the region has made enormous strides in assuring water quality and sewage disposal capacity, aging and failing infrastructure is in need of repair, and future growth will require still further attention to the development and more effective management of new water resources facilities.

- Water quality of the Chesapeake Bay remains far behind projected targets for cleanup and challenges every Bay tributary and population, including Washington area residents who constitute one-third of the population of the Bay watershed.

The Washington region has made great strides in better coordinating regional approaches to ***public safety and emergency management***, relying heavily on intergovernmental protocols based on the incident command system; however, questions persist regarding the capacity of the region to deal with major region-wide catastrophes or emergencies.

Virtually everyone agrees on the regional priority of a high ***quality of life,*** but there is wide-spread disagreement about what that term means, and the tradeoffs it entails. There appears to be general agreement that it includes some combination of economic prosperity, good homes and neighborhoods, easy and safe mobility, accessible shopping, cultural and recreational amenities, supportive social services, and a clean and attractive environment. But in what combination, over what period of time and according to whose standards, as determined, for example, by personal taste, by demographic cohort, or by geographical sub-region or neighborhood?

Some Washington area residents believe the region offers an unparalleled quality of life in virtually every respect. Others see the region's obvious benefits as closely balanced against such negatives as crime, poor air quality, substandard schools, long commutes, traffic congestion, inconvenient and unreliable (and unsafe) mass transit, expensive housing, limited entertainment options, shortages of parks and open space, and a general absence of congeniality and a sense of community. For still others, the negatives outweigh the positives.

Not only are such aspects of "quality of life" subjective, varying according to whose standards are being applied, but they can also change over time. For example, there is a dynamic between economic prosperity and quality of life in which the more successful people and communities (as well as the region more generally) become economically, the greater the demand for aspects of quality of life that can inhibit certain traditional elements of economic growth. For example, people become relatively less motivated to buy a larger house and relatively more motivated to preserve and enhance the quality of their neighborhood.

There seems to be far less agreement on these questions than is generally acknowledged. As a consequence, quality of life issues are high on the agenda of some, but not of others, depending in large measure on how they define "quality of life." Nor do regional leaders necessarily agree on the relative importance of quality of life as an inherent goal in and of itself, and as an important factor in attracting and retaining business, jobs, and a talented workforce.

Some people view the challenges facing the Washington region not so much in traditional categories of growth, transportation, public services, quality of life, and so on, as in fundamental structural changes in the nature of the region itself. As discussed earlier, the Washington region has undergone several such structural changes over the course of its history, including its geographical expansion far beyond the District of Columbia, its conversion to accommodate the automobile, and its transformation to a "New Economy" over the past three decades. However, even beyond all of these major structural changes, some believe that the Washington region has reached a size and degree of complexity that constitutes a fundamentally new challenge in its own right, one that overwhelms the overlay of the 17th, 18th, 19th, and 20th century governance structures by which the region attempts to govern itself in the 21st century.

Nearly all of the challenges listed above can be boiled down to one overriding fact and challenge: ***the Washington region lacks the governance and leadership structures and capacities it needs to address the many challenges it confronts today and in the future.*** And underlying this reality is the question of whether the public has lost confidence in the region's ability to tackle tough challenges.

8. THE REGIONAL GOVERNANCE BALANCE SHEET

Regional governance in the National Capital Region has both significant assets and troubling liabilities**.**

Regional Governance Assets

The historical record demonstrates the Washington region's capacity for generating effective leadership capable of successfully taking on major regional challenges. Over the past half century these have included most prominently the construction of Washington area components of the Interstate Highway System, including the Capital Beltway; the Metrorail subway system; a regional approach to managing the area's airports; and collective efforts to monitor and improve air quality. Other significant regional successes have received less public attention, but nonetheless reflect an underlying regional leadership capacity. These include regional initiatives to integrate, improve, and better manage the region's water supply, sewage disposal, police operations, fire services, and emergency management. And in recent years, regional organizations have undertaken any number of well-designed, thoughtful, and productive visioning exercises to scope out the region's future.

There also have been numerous successes that might be characterized as "sub-regional" (or "quasi-regional") initiatives. These include a number of pioneering planned communities, such as Greenbelt in Prince George's County, Reston in Fairfax County, and Germantown in Montgomery County; mixed-use developments, such as Balston in Arlington County, that balance high-density business/residential clusters oriented to mass transit with adjacent low-density neighborhoods; the use of an historic preservation district to anchor economic growth in Alexandria; the emergence of vital high technology employment bases in Virginia and Maryland; the development of one of the world's proto-type "edge cities" in Fairfax's Tyson's Corners; the establishment of "corridor cities" and an agricultural reserve in Montgomery County; and the revitalization of the District's downtown.

There is a core of leaders and citizens regularly and steadily engaged in the affairs of the Washington region. The region's immense pool of human talent is by itself a rich potential source of regional leadership. For instance, the international presence already infuses new leadership into area organizations, and could also play an increasingly prominent role in regional issues in the years ahead.

The region is also blessed with a wide array of organizations, some of which operate quite consciously on a regional scale, and others of which contribute to addressing regional issues even if that is not their core mission. And the many individuals and organizations that have been so effective at the "sub-regional" level in various local jurisdictions also constitute a potential pool of region-wide leadership.

Leaders in the Washington region have also shown themselves ready to step up to the plate "when the chips are down," or when crises or emergencies threaten the region. We saw this demonstrated after the 9/11 attack on the Pentagon with the exemplary response of the region's emergency service agencies and personnel. And there are indications that the recent economic downturn has worked to foster a heightened sense of interdependence among the region's jurisdictions and organizations.

Regional Governance Liabilities

Alongside these formidable assets, Washington regional governance also has its liabilities.

Significant as many regional accomplishments have been, they still leave a large regional agenda of unfinished projects, as well as new threats and opportunities, which have yet to be effectively addressed. The principal reason for this "agenda gap" is that ***the region's leaders to date have not been able, or willing, to fashion a regional governance and leadership capacity adequate to the challenge posed by the de facto reality of the evolving National Capital Region.*** Many regional initiatives have fallen short of expectations. In fact, many of the acknowledged regional successes reflect something less than a full measure of what had been originally expected of them. For example, the Interstate Highway System and related plans for major lateral and circumferential highways in the National Capital Region, including two outer beltways and associated Potomac River crossings, have never been completed. The regional "wedges and corridors" concept from the 1960s was essentially abandoned everywhere but in Montgomery County. Various regional visioning initiatives which initially showed great promise faded for want of effective implementation mechanisms, including both organizational capacity and adequate funding. There are, to be sure, new and recent regional initiatives which are still just getting under way, or have not been long in progress, and so it is too early to tell how they might fare.

The underlying reason that so many regional efforts have not lived up to their full hopes and expectations is that the governance structure of the Washington region rests on 17^{th} and $18^{th.}$ foundations – that were significantly modified but not fundamentally altered in 19^{th} and 20^{th} centuries -- that in some ways are basically at odds with the reality of the National Capital Region in the 21^{st} century, or in any event are not adequate to effectively address them. Those early foundations envisioned a national capital strictly confined to a ten-mile-square territory governed exclusively by the federal government (which has delegated various degrees of authority to local citizens over time to run some aspects of municipal government). So long as this original conception of the federal capital pertained, as it did for the first century or so of its existence, the federal government did a creditable (if intermittent and occasionally shaky) job over the long run of developing Washington, D.C. into a world-class capital city.

But once the *de facto* National Capital Region had expanded substantially beyond the District of Columbia by the mid-20^{th} century, the 18^{th} century Enlightenment vision of a brand new federal capital governed exclusively by a newly designed federal government clashed with the pre-existing reality of state and local government institutions grounded in the history and traditions of 17^{th} century medieval England. To be sure, the states of Maryland and Virginia, and most of the local governments in the Washington region, have long since developed modern and sophisticated governments which in many respects are among the most advanced in the world. Still, the geographical reality is that the Greater Washington Region today spreads across a vast area far beyond the original ten-mile-square federal district, which today is home to only about ten percent of National Capital Region's population of over 5 million people.

Moreover, the nature of life in the 21st century *de facto* national capital region is dramatically different from anything that could have been imagined at the beginning of the 20th century, let alone at the end of the 18th century. It is a marvel of complex public and private systems that afford an unsurpassed capacity to generate economic prosperity for its residents as they engage in the governance of the most powerful, economically advanced and technologically sophisticated nation in the history of the world.

Many leaders in the federal government, in the District of Columbia, in Maryland, and in Virginia have worked hard over the years to grapple with these monumental challenges in order to develop a formula for first-class regional governance. And in some ways they have been quite successful, as testified by their many notable regional successes. The National Capital Region, after all, is a world-class capital region, and one of the most prosperous regions in the world. Still, ***the effort to fashion world-class regional governance has, to date, proved inadequate to the new geographical, demographic, economic, social, cultural, and environmental realities the Washington region confronts.*** Regional leadership in recent years has been unable to overcome the many institutional interests and conflicts inherent in the region's origins, and which in numerous ways have been exacerbated by the changing nature of the Washington region over time.

Beyond the basic structural impediments to effective regional governance and leadership, regional leaders have also encountered other challenges. The pool of active regional leaders, while comprised of a group of outstanding individuals and organizations, is nonetheless small in comparison with the magnitude of challenges the region confronts. Effective leadership more often than not has come from individuals, or small groups of individuals – from all sectors and from all levels from the federal to the local -- who have shown initiative, perseverance, and enduring civic spirit in sticking with a project until it was complete, or in stepping in to break up political log-jams or otherwise execute plans that had been delayed or derailed. And for all the examples, large and small, of how civic leaders at the state and local levels have been effective in raising their sights to address region-wide concerns, successful regional leadership initiatives still appear to many people in the region to depend heavily, if not decisively, on the federal involvement.

One of the overriding regional challenges is that the very definition of "regional success" can be elusive for all but the most obvious and noncontroversial issues. Different definitions of success invariably reflect differences in perspective, information, goals and interests. The problem is that the Washington region lacks the full complement of region-wide political and civic institutions, and associated communications channels, required to reconcile such differences and build the political and civic support needed for effective regional action. To date, there has been little effort to engender participation of the public, the budding regional citizens critical to supporting regional initiatives over the long run.

In short, the dramatically altered nature and scope of the National Capital Region over the course of the 20st century simply outpaced the efforts of regional leaders to update the region's original governance structures and fashion them into something more suitable to the new regional reality. The overriding problem is that there is no effective regional governance structure, or dedicated region-wide revenue, for general, comprehensive governance in the Washington region. There is an absence of regional institutions with strong political and legal authority**.** And there is no sustained source of revenue for regional projects. With a couple of notable exceptions, such as Metro, there are few regional structures and dedicated resources for specialized functions.

The Washington region is hardly unique in this regard. Virtually all major metropolitan areas have long-since expanded beyond their original municipal boundaries and have had to adjust their governance processes to that changing geographical reality. The circumstances of each metropolitan area vary widely, some being more blessed with resources, or more challenged by historical circumstance, than others. And the record is also highly variable regarding the success individual regions have had in dealing with the 20th century regional reality in the absence of an effective corresponding governance structure.

While the Washington region has the capacity to pull together and address major regional issues, and has demonstrated that capacity in the face of regional emergencies, a few major issues, or "border issues" that impinge directly on a jurisdiction's citizens, it has had less success in addressing issues that are less salient or more amorphous, or in anticipating emerging issues and addressing them in a timely fashion**.**

The Washington region has a history of intermittent leadership. Some observers believe that the last time government, business, and civic leaders seriously got together to take effective action was after the 1960s riots in the District of Columbia**.** Regional leaders have periodically been successful in enabling the region to define a common vision, but less successful in execution and follow-through, that is, in taking the decisive, timely, and effective actions required to achieve that vision. In other words, the regional leadership capacity, and the great potential for leadership, exist, but are insufficiently mobilized, sustained and motivated to match the challenges the region confronts. Here again, the Washington region is not unlike many other regions in this regard, and for some of the same underlying reasons. On the other hand, there are regions that have been far more successful in mobilizing, sustaining and motivating a leadership cadre to address the challenges the region confronted (examples are discussed in the companion paper).

The intermittent and tentative nature of regional leadership in the Washington region might be explained in part by the similarly tepid base of regional citizenship on which it rests. As is true of the region's leadership, a strong and active core of committed regional citizens regularly demonstrates its willingness to support regional initiatives, and the residents of the Washington region more generally express their feelings of identity with the region, and well as their desire for a stronger sense of connection to it. The size and intensity of this regional citizenship, however, is relatively limited, especially in comparison with the far stronger sense of connection residents have with their local jurisdictions and neighborhoods, and in contrast with the scope of regional challenges confronting the Washington region.

People in the Washington region often seem to have widely divergent views of the region's history disjoined "collective memory" of the past, as it were**.** And differences in understanding about the past can shape quite different views of the present and future. To be sure, there is an abundance of data and information about trends in the various sectors of the region. But many groups don't know how to readily access that information. And to the extent different groups and jurisdictions have the same data, they are likely to interpret them in quite different ways, and at times cannot seem to agree on a common set of historical facts. Some believe the migratory nature of a substantial part of the region's population (for instance in the military, political, corporate, and international spheres) contribute to this disjointed sense of regional history. Similarly, differences arise in the identification and interpretation of trends and the way they are projected into the future. Whatever the causes, the consequence is the absence of a common set of data and a collective memory upon which to deliberate, negotiate, and resolve different individual interests as they relate to the interest of the region-as-a-whole.

These differences in outlook are exemplified by the current issue of growth, which has been stalled in the region, in large part because of the recession. The national and regional economies remain sluggish. The lack of developable parcels tends to limit what investment is active. There seems to be little agreement on what steps the region could or should take to get growth started again, or on what course or pace it should take. Some leaders worry that the region is not adequately responding to the changing tastes and demands of a younger generation that wants to live near where they work, and that requires high density urban development (at least until they have children, when they are then likely to seek out single-family residences, as in the past)**.** Virtually everyone agrees that the region lacks adequate infrastructure to accommodate future growth, especially for transportation and in the provision of affordable housing. But there is little agreement on what specific types and levels of infrastructure will be required to support the growth that is expected in the coming decades.

It is no surprise that different groups and individuals have different interests and goals. The question is whether the region's institutions and culture are up to the task of reconciling those different interests in a manner that benefits the region as a whole. For instance, there is little opportunity for citizens to regularly express their views on shared regional concerns, such as they are able to do in elections held in their respective state and local jurisdictions. But even in the absence of such basic political institutions, the Washington region lacks some of the rudimentary institutions and resources that would allow for a more regular expression and exploration of a wide variety of concerns about the region.

For example, there is no common place, institution, or forum in the region in which different groups and individuals from all jurisdictions and sectors can regularly meet, deliberate and resolve their respective interests on an ongoing basis. Some regional organizations have attempted to meet that need. COG, for instance, provides a forum for the region's government officials from various state and local jurisdictions. But it does not offer a single point of entry for the other sectors, including business, nonprofit, and civic organizations. The Board of Trade has played a similar role in the business sector, also inviting a wider range of leaders from the various sectors to participate in its Potomac Conference. At present, there is no such form in the nonprofit or civic sectors.

Nor is there a place or tradition in the Washington region for senior leaders ("elder statesmen," both men and women) to remain engaged in regional activities (as there are in some other regions**).**

It is also the case that some factors, otherwise seen as a plus for regional leadership, can also turn out to have their downsides. For example, the strong international presence in Washington has certainly helped to generate leadership talent, ideas, and resources. At the same time, the international presence, like the federal government and national politics, can be a distraction from local and regional affairs. And the international community, despite its weight and permanence, by and large seems to be little interested in regional issues. And while immigration brings the benefits of talent and diversity, it can also bring clashing cultural values that can generate bad habits and lead to such problems as youth gangs.

Ironically, the region's overall high prosperity, in part a consequence of effective regional leadership in the past, can actually work to discourage regional cooperation, by lulling people into a false sense of security in which they take future prosperity for granted.

There are, to be sure, small clusters of people who view themselves as "regional citizens," and a core of those who have provided regional leadership. But the reality is that both the regional citizenship and leadership core are small, and that the vast majority of citizens in the Washington region are not actively engaged in regional affairs. This is not to say that citizens are necessarily unaware or uninterested in regional issues. In fact, a COG survey of residents in the National Capital Region showed that fully 70 percent said they felt a "connection" to the region. But by and large, the Washington region seems to have a comparative lack of "regional civic entrepreneurs," or social innovators, who are willing to assume the leadership in addressing tough regional challenges.

Some observers argue that the problem is not the absence of a substantial pool of citizens who would like to be more engaged in regional affairs, or who might even take active leadership roles. Rather, the problem may be the sheer magnitude of the challenge. One hears the Washington region characterized as an "animal," or "beast," or simply as "a mess." This may in part be because the region is large, amorphous, and not well-defined. But it also appears to result from a sense of frustration that so many seemingly obvious problems remain unaddressed by a seemingly incoherent array of regional institutions**.**

The comparatively small clusters of regional leadership, moreover, tend to be fragmented, and are often more inclined to compete than cooperate with one another. Part of the fragmentation can be attributed to the simple geographical reality that the region is divided into multiple political subdivisions. And some degree of competition is both inevitable and healthy. However, regional leaders also see an excess of inter-jurisdictional rivalry which is counterproductive to the interests of all local jurisdictions, or simply indifference to the interest and concerns of their neighbors.

The few genuinely regional organizations are confronted by three principal factors. First, the number and complexity of regional challenges they confront, as enumerated above, has been growing.

Second, the resources they have to address those challenges are meager by comparison. The resources available for visioning efforts have generally been adequate (and in some instances generous), however, the resources available for planning (except for transportation), implementation, and monitoring of regional activities is woefully inadequate.

And third, some of the organizations are viewed as exhibiting structural or cultural characteristics that prevent them from using the comparatively limited resources for regional issues to best effect, including to overcome the fragmentation that characterizes regional leadership.

In short, while there are many good and committed regional leaders and organizations, there seems to be a mismatch between their comparatively small numbers and capacities on the one hand, and the magnitude and complexity of regional challenges on the other.

Each of the principal sectors of the Washington region brings a combination of strengths and shortcomings to the task of regional governance and leadership.

9. GOVERNMENT SECTOR

The Washington region has an array of generally high quality, professional governments ranging from the federal, to the state, regional, county, municipal, and community and neighborhood levels. Each has a regional role to play.

Federal Government

Few major regional initiatives in the Washington region have been undertaken or successfully completed without the strong involvement of the federal government. And the federal presence, as described earlier, is generally viewed as the basic underlying economic strength of the Washington region.

But the strong federal presence is also seen as a double-edge sword for regional leadership. The dominating influence of the federal government is viewed by some as a major impediment in the development and exercise of a broader range of leadership talent in the Washington region. In the absence of federal support or leadership, it can be difficult to effectively mount and execute any significant regional initiative. This may be due in part to the fact that no other level of government can compete with the federal government in their scope and scale of power or resources. And given the disproportionate magnitude of its authority and resources, the federal government can, if it so chooses, impede or quash any regional initiative which it opposes, in which it does not share a tangible interest, or even to which it is indifferent.

Beyond its actual power and willingness to use it, the mere expectation that "nothing happens at the regional level without federal involvement" can become a self-fulfilling prophecy which can inhibit or discourage regional leaders from taking action on their own, or otherwise provide an excuse for not doing so. Local representatives can seem to be reduced to the role of pleaders and sycophants willing to do virtually anything to secure federal funds to pursue regional projects.

State Government

The Washington region is politically divided into at least three *de facto* "states:" Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia (by some interpretations four, when West Virginia is included, and by some regional definitions, five or six, if Pennsylvania and Delaware are included). Historically there has been only sporadic and limited joint leadership from the "three governors" in the region (i.e. the governors of Maryland and Virginia and the mayor of the District of Columbia). On the rare and irregular occasions when those three leaders do get together, it is often under duress from local leaders, or in response to some pressing issue. On such occasions they typically agree to take some kind of joint, or mutually supportive, action. But regional leaders generally have learned not to expect much genuine, sustained regional leadership from the state level. The governors and legislators are all pulled in different directions, and have quite different priorities and different political constituencies. And whatever regional action they promise, and even genuinely support, they simply can't be counted on to produce the money required for serious regional efforts. Meanwhile, it is rare **[if ever**] that the governors of Maryland and Virginia meet with local government leaders to seriously discuss regional issues.

Local Government

Within the states of Virginia and Maryland, the Washington region is divided into a number of local governments, including counties, municipalities, and special taxing districts, and the District of Columbia recognizes neighborhoods as formal units with their own advisory councils. The Washington region has relatively few local governments (compared with other similarly sized metropolitan regions), and in that sense is generally less fragmented at the local level than is the case in many metropolitan areas. A core of elected officials remains committed and practicing regional citizens and leaders. Local jurisdictions in the region, however, are principally concerned with their own internal issues, and generally rank regional issues as far lower priorities.

On the other hand, regional engagement and cooperation among local governments is more pervasive than is generally recognized. Local jurisdictions participate in prominent regional membership organizations, such as the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), the Washington Airports Authority, and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG). And below the radar screen, there is a long history of agreements, protocols, and habits of cooperative practice among the region's local government covering virtually every aspect of local public, such a transportation, police, fire, emergency services, water and sewer, and so on. Many of these interactions focus on concrete "border issues" that adjacent jurisdictions have in common with one another, as opposed to more broadly region-wide concerns. But others, such as forging of water and sewerage connections among local systems, the establishment of emergency management protocols, and the coordination of local police investigative data, have been genuinely region-wide. The recent 2050 Compact initiative, launched under the auspices of MWCOG, is also an example of how the region's local governments can come together to address common problems.

Regional Government

In general, there seems to be insufficient incentive for local governments to work together in a sustained and effective manner on major regional issues, other than to regularly meet, plan, and address the "least common denominator" issues of low political friction. For example, the Council of Governments (MWCOG) is given generally high marks for the handful of issues it has some authority to address, such as regional visioning, planning and monitoring air pollution, and transportation planning through its affiliate, the Transportation Planning Board (TPB). But when it comes to addressing the tough and controversial regional issues, such as affordable housing, for instance, the tendency of the local elected officials that comprise MWCOG's board is to not force any issue that is likely to be controversial, and consequently not likely to be resolved without an overwhelming regional consensus.

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), which has the principal responsibility for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the Washington region's Metro subway system and major bus routes, is the prime example of a regional government agency designed to serve the interests of the entire region in the provision of a critical public service. As such, it embodies, and reflects, many of the key elements, including both strengths and the weaknesses, that characterize regional efforts more generally in the Washington area.

In one sense, WMATA, and the Metro system, is one of the Washington region's major successes. It has been conceived, negotiated, designed, constructed, financed and operated over some eight decades through the combined efforts of leaders and supporters in every jurisdiction, every sector, and every level of government in the Greater Washington region. It has become the nation's second largest subway system, and has played a major role in transforming life in the National Capital Region.

At the same time, deficiencies in the operation of the Metro system – including most recently a series of lethal safety malfunctions -- have mounted over time. These, in turn are traced to deficiencies in WMATA's overall institutional performance, which are also seen by some as a reflection of deeper systemic deficiencies in the region's governance structure and leadership capacity. Part of the problem no doubt results from the inevitable disagreements over how to share the costs of Metro among riders, taxpayers, and the participating governments. But some see deeper systemic problems in a dysfunctional design of the WMATA Board of Directors mandated in the interstate compact that created the agency. For instance, each of the signatory jurisdictions – the District of Columbia, Commonwealth of Virginia, and State of Maryland – was given its own method and criteria for appointing its representatives to the WMATA Board. Some critics charge that the elected officials serving on the WMATA board tend to use the position more to "show boat" than to seriously address the performance of the Metro system. Others point to an even deeper problem in the nature of the interstate compact mechanism itself, which tends to establish complex institutional structures, and in the nature of single-function regional authorities, which tend to be even more narrowly focused and unaccountable than other forms of government agencies functioning under a directly elected board or general purpose government.

The experience of WMATA also reflects the unique role played by the federal government in the Greater Washington Region. For instance, in response to growing concern about the governance of WMATA, Congress coupled a recent grant of additional funds with a change in the structure of WMATA's Board of Directors, adding four federal appointees designated by the administrator of the General Services Administration (GSA), two voting and two nonvoting. And some members of Congress have threatened to initiate a wholesale takeover of the Metro system by the federal government if WMATA fails to respond adequately to safety problems.

The Washington Metropolitan Airports Authority is another important regional government agency, with responsibility not only for the operation, maintenance and capital improvements for Washington Dulles International Airport and Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, but also for the operation and maintenance of the Dulles Toll Road, and the construction and funding of the Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project.

The Airports Authority, which was a federal initiative, is "quasi-regional" scope, since the Washington region's third major airport, Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport is operated by the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT).

Sub-regional Government

There are also several sub-regional government agencies in the National Capital Region, such as the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC) and Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, both of which serve the Maryland Prince George's and Montgomery counties, and the Washington Aqueduct, operated by the U.S. Corps of Army Engineers, which furnishes water supply to the District of Columbia and other jurisdictions.

10. BUSINESS SECTOR

Business leadership has made substantial contributions to the region, especially in such areas as economic development, communications, sports and entertainment, charity and the arts. Even though Washington has been defined and shaped by government from its birth, business has played a vital role throughout that history. And since World War II, the role of business has become increasingly important as the region has grown into a major world business center.

Region-wide Business Presence

There is no single "business community" in the Washington region, but rather many different business communities defined by industry, by local jurisdiction, by sub-regions, and by other such criteria**.** Each industry tends to have its own organization and representation (for instance, for homebuilders or lawyers.)

The numerous business groups both collaborate and compete among themselves in defining and pursuing their public agendas. They function within a broader context of umbrella business groups, no one of which dominates or provides a unifying context for regional business concerns. The Greater Washington Board of Trade is viewed as the principal regional business organization, encompassing all industries and all local jurisdictions. Since its founding in 1889, the Board of Trade has promoted the business climate of the national capital region as it expanded beyond the core business district in the District of Columbia, promoting such regional projects as the construction of Union Station in 1902 and development of the Metrorail and Metrobus systems in 1966. It is generally seen as focusing principally on member services and networking aimed at helping members expanding their businesses, on promoting selected issues important to the region's economic health, and on marketing the region through its affiliate, the Greater Washington Initiative. The Board of Trade is also viewed as more focused on issues of immediate rather than long-term regional concern, a gap that some leaders believe might be filled by a new business organization, such as the 2030 Group, for example.

There is a small core of dedicated regional business leaders who have provided leadership over the years for a variety of initiatives. A substantial component of that core is comprised of executives whose business are grounded in the Washington region economy, including local merchants and the local real estate industry, which includes developers, construction contractors, real estate firms, lawyers, architects, and engineers. However, most business leaders in the region are not engaged in local or regional issues.

The executive leadership of large corporations in the Washington area in general is viewed as being less active in regional issues than it was in the 1960s and 1970s, although there was some resurgence in 1990s. Executives of large national and global business firms, to the extent they become involved at all in local and regional affairs, seem more comfortable supporting the arts and charitable organizations than in getting directly involved in controversial regional issues. Large corporations from outside the Washington region, but with a large presence here, tend to contribute to public affairs principally in their own home-towns, often by setting up foundations, think tanks, or research organizations. Experience in the Washington region and in other metropolitan areas suggests that the executives of most of the large business firms are generally unlikely to get involved in large and controversial regional issues unless they are requested to do so by prominent regional leaders, including major government officials, but especially other business, leaders.

The professions, including especially lawyers, architects, and engineers, have been an important source of business leadership in the Washington region. Government supported labs, research institutions, and high tech businesses are also a potential source of regional leadership, as are the region's many think tanks and scholars.

Sub-Regional and Local Business Presence

The principal geographical base for most business organizations with an interest in regional issues is the local political jurisdiction in which they are located. The nature of business organization varies greatly from one local jurisdiction to another, and in some cases there is a significant degree of diversity – some would call it fragmentation – even within a single jurisdiction. For example, in Montgomery County there are, in addition to a county Chamber of Commerce, a dozen local chambers of commerce. The various chambers regularly work together on issues of mutual interest, but maintain independent organizations. Some business leaders in the county view this as unhelpful fragmentation of business leadership, as well as an unnecessary cost.

Over the years proposals have been considered for some form of amalgamation of the various Montgomery chambers of commerce. For example, one such proposal called for the various local chambers to form a county-wide umbrella group that would consolidate the basic "back office" functions of the various chambers, while each would maintain its own independent "front office" and executive functions. The county-wide Montgomery

Chamber of Commerce, meanwhile, would function as a convener and broker for the various local chambers. The principal purpose of such a consolidation was to save money, but it was also viewed as a way to improve coordination among the chambers, while also permitting each to maintain its own independence to function in accordance with the conditions in its local community. The proposal was considered by the local chambers, and favored by some, but in the end rejected in favor of each chamber's maintaining its own complete set of operations and full independence.

Business leaders and organizations in each of the local jurisdictions work through a wide variety of other local organizations both within the business sector and in interaction with the government, nonprofit and civic sectors. For example, business leaders in Fairfax County played a major role in the establishment of George Mason University. George Mason University, in turn, established the George Mason Institute of Science and Technology to serve as a liaison between the university and local high technology firms. The George Mason Institute was then superseded by the Northern Virginia Technology Council, which by 2009 had more than 1,100 members. George Mason University also organized the 123 Club, a group of business and civic leaders lobbying the state government in Richmond on behalf of Northern Virginia. The state government formed a task force on science and technology to study ways to attract more high technology firms to the state. One of the tasks force's recommendations was the establishment of the Virginia Center for Innovative Technology, which serves as a liaison between the academic institutions and technology companies. Prominent business leaders also served on the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors' Committee to Study the Means of Encouraging Industrial Development in Fairfax (popularly known as the Blue Ribbon Committee).

Local business organization throughout the region have also worked to fashion sub-regional, or quasi-regional, institutions, typically focused on a single function. For example, the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce and several other business groups worked together to create the Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance, which focuses on ways to reduce traffic congestion in the area and otherwise advocates for transportation infrastructure improvements. Business leaders also played a key role in shaping aviation in Northern Virginia through the Dulles Policy Task Force, which later became the Washington Airports Task Force, a non-profit whose mission is to promote aviation services for Virginia and the National Capital region. Businesses in Maryland have been involved in similar initiatives to create, for example, the Maryland Technology Council, and the Suburban Maryland Transportation Alliance.

Business and the Regional Public

Public opinion of business in the Washington region is regarded as mixed. The views of a many region residents are shaped by their personal employment relationships and experiences. Those who work for business are in a sense a part of the regional "business community." Some government workers in the region have direct or indirect experience with business through their employing agencies. The views of workers in regulatory agencies, for example, may be shaped by the nature of their particular regulatory regime, or by the nature and behavior of the businesses they regulate.

The public in general is thought to see the business community as a monolithic group, even though it is highly diverse, and the organizations that represent business are often quite fragmented. Even though business executives in the region have been involved in a wide range of civic activities, business leadership is widely viewed as being narrowly focused on such issues as economic development and the provision of supporting infrastructure. The owners of prominent regional businesses, such as major sports franchises, provide some residents with their principal image of the regional business community. The development industry is thought to be viewed by many residents as concerned about their neighborhoods as dominating regional business leadership, with most of its involvement focused on the land use planning and development process.

The business community has an important communication function to play on several levels. Business executives skilled in listening to customers could begin by listening carefully to the many diverse constituencies of the Washington region to better understand their beliefs and desires about the place where they live, work, shop, play, and pray. They could also help to determine how these views compare with what they themselves view as the economic and business realities that confront the region. Public opinion polling, of the kind recently undertaken by the 2030 Group, can provide better information on what the public perceives and feels about regional issues.

Business leaders could also engage their peers in the business community in a probing examination of these diverse views and issues, and especially of the multi-faceted and complex nature of economic development, especially as it relates to other concerns of regional residents, such as transportation, housing, education, environmental and neighborhood protection, and the quality of life. In this manner, regional business leaders could play a role in helping regional residents better understand the nature of the region's increasingly complex economy and diverse business community. And by engaging with the other sectors – government, nonprofit, and civic – business leaders could help raise the general level of understanding about the real nature of these various dimensions of life in the Washington region, and about the challenges and opportunities that confront the region as a whole.

11. NONPROFIT AND CIVIC SECTORS

The nonprofit sector in the Washington region is large and highly diverse, and represents a great store of personal talent and organizational resources. It includes major institutions, such as universities, hospitals, and foundations, as well as a wide array of smaller nonprofits engaged in virtually every area of social concern. Many nonprofit leaders and organization have been active at the regional level. Regional nonprofit organizations often work to bring organizations and people together at the regional level.

However, aside from some regionally oriented nonprofits, such as United Way, some major universities and hospitals, and a few foundations, the nonprofit sector is typically viewed as “not a player in the region.”

The civic sector generally includes the nonprofit sector, but also covers a wider array of activities and organizations, including, neighborhood and community civic organizations, political organizations, professional and trade associations, hospitals, education and research organizations, social service organizations, religious organizations, the media, and the world of sports and entertainment.

For some people in the region, “civic organization” has a very precise meaning, referring specifically to neighborhood and community civic organization, that is, geographically based organizations of home-owners concerned about the value of their property and the quality of life of the neighborhoods, and as a consequence tend to be focused on land-use and development issues. For others, the term “civic organization” refers more broadly to any organization that claims to represent the broad interests of the community, or at least some significant aspect of community life. In this respect, “civic organizations” in the Washington region can be viewed as running the full range of most of the organizations discussed above under the headings of the government, business, and nonprofit sectors. In other words, the “civic sector” is in some ways a de fault category that includes all those organizations that do not otherwise neatly fit into the three more well-defined “sectors.”

There are any number of civic organizations whose activities have encompassed the Greater Washington Region, including, in addition to the previously mentioned United Way, the Cultural Alliance of Greater Washington, Chesapeake Crescent, Chesapeake and Potomac Regional Alliance, Coalition for Smarter Growth, Leadership Greater Washington, Potomac Knowlegeway, Economic Club of Washington, DC and A Greater Washington, among others. Other civic organizations are also active in regional issues, even if they do not necessarily view themselves in that way.

For the most part, however, the civic sector in the Washington region has little unified, organized visibility at the regional level. For example, while there are numerous neighborhood and community associations throughout the region, typically based at the neighborhood level, but also in some instances forming county-wide organizations, such as the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations and Montgomery County Civic Federation, or a coalition that represents a large section of a county, such as the Allied Civic Group in Eastern Montgomery County. There are no region- wide organizations in the Washington area that attempt to consolidate, or otherwise provide an umbrella association, as there are in some other metropolitan regions.

There are also other organizations that play a civic role in various other fields, such as professional associations, religious organizations, education and research groups, the media, and sports and entertainment. Some of these, such as the metropolitan daily newspapers and local news television programs, and popular sports teams, have considerable regional presence and play an important civic role. Others are far more low key or have no little or regional presence**.**

The absence of any single organization viewed as generally representing the regional civic and nonprofits sectors as-a-whole – as MWCOG is viewed for government and the Board of Trade for business – is viewed by some as a critical missing institutional link. There have been some efforts over time to fill that gap. For instance, the nonprofit organization, A Greater Washington, was established in part to provide such an institutional umbrella, but found general interest in the idea low, and funding sources even less forthcoming. Other regions have such regionally oriented umbrella nonprofit and civic institutions, including some that are generally recognized as having successfully initiated and sustained conversations across the sectors on a region-wide basis over time.

Many civic ventures in the region involve people and organizations from across the sectors. For example, the Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts was established in the late 1960s near Vienna, Virginia, as the first national park for the performing arts, through the efforts of many private citizens in Fairfax County and elsewhere in Northern Virginia, and by donations of land, including a hundred acres of farmland which philanthropist Catherine Filene Shouse gave to the U.S. government. Wolf Trap is managed jointly by the U.S. National Park Service and the private Wolf Trap Foundation**.** Similarly, many nonprofit organizations draw heavily on business leadership. For example, business leaders in Fairfax have been active in such organizations as the Northern Virginia Hospice, the Second Genesis drug treatment program, the Potomac Tuberculosis and Respiratory Disease Association, the Northern Virginia Mental Health Association.

12. CONCLUSION: THE REGIONAL GOVERNANCE DEFICIT

The net conclusion that emerges from this brief survey and analysis is that while it has 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.*** Does that matter?

Perhaps not, with luck. It is conceivable that the Washington region could continue to manage reasonably well without a world-class regional governance structure and leadership capacity, precisely because it is so blessed with an abundance of advantages. Because of its basic strength and prosperity, and its unique position as the nation's capital, the National Capital Region, more than most regions, has a substantial margin for error: for false starts, for inertia, for inefficiency, and even for major blunders. What's more, the high degree of independence currently enjoyed by the region's local political jurisdictions to go their own way has a certain value in and of itself. It offers local jurisdictions choices in future direction, provides a wide variety of choice in life-style to both current residents and newcomers, and arguably constitutes a complementarity of diversity, differences, and opportunities for fruitful synergies, in which the regional whole is greater than the sum its parts.

Nonetheless, there are some clear risks involved in the region's continuing to function with a suboptimal regional governance structure and leadership capacity.

First, it leaves the region less able to address long-standing chronic problems that have yet to be resolved, such as traffic congestion and long commute times, deficiencies in mass transit, lack of affordable housing, unsettling divergences in regional wealth and incomes, and air quality that hovers and dips below the standard for healthy living. Such chronic problems cause continued suffering and cost to those most directly afflicted by them, as well annoyance and embarrassment to others indirectly affected. And they are corrosive in eating away at the quality of life and social cohesiveness and general attractiveness of the National Capital Region.

Second, it is less likely that the region will act in time to head off future problems, or do so before the costs of dealing with those problems become unduly burdensome. For instance, there is little doubt that the forces driving the growth of the National Capital Region will continue in the future, generating both new benefits and new problems; the only question is whether and how the region will prepare itself for that growth.

Third, it leaves the National Capital Region less resilient in absorbing and responding to harsh shocks that may lie in the future. These might take the form of economic or financial shocks. Or they might include future terrorist attacks, a possibility that is no fantasy given the 9/11 attack on the Pentagon.

Fourth, it leaves the region less prepared to seize new opportunities in the future. For example, the National Capital Region now possesses one of the world's strongest bases in high technology industries. But in today's highly competitive world economy, small shifts in advantage can generate large consequences that could quickly alter the region's relative position in those industries. Missed opportunities can be costly mistakes.

Fifth, it risks the possibility that the Greater Washington Region will fall back in its relative position *vis a vis* other regions. Some may argue that relative position does not matter so long as the region's absolute prosperity is maintained, and continues to grow. To be sure, the value of relative position is to some degree determined by one's priorities and taste for competitive position and bragging rights. However, relative position can also affect the absolute prosperity of a region over time, if, for instance, it feeds a negative perception of the region's long term condition and prospects, and thereby contributes to a negative image that makes it more difficult to attract resources beyond its borders and can also be self-defeating within them.

Finally, the absence of a world-class regional governance structure and leadership capacity could, over time, leave the region in a weakened state and less able to forestall an absolute decline in its conditions. The prospects for such a turn of events are small, if for no other reason that the continuing presence of the federal government and its enormous spending capacity is likely to provide the region with an ongoing source of prosperity as it has for the past two centuries. But complacency, always a danger, is even more so in today's fast-paced and hyper-complex environment.   As the recent economic downturn has once again demonstrated, wealth is fragile. And while there is no immediate indication that the underlying engine of regional prosperity, the federal government, is likely to significantly reduce its size, especially as long as the economy remains fragile, there are scenarios in which a debt-burdened, high-deficit federal government is compelled by global financial circumstances and domestic political pressure to begin to cut back its commitments and spending, with a consequent reduction in the scale of its activity in the National Capital Region. Nor is it inconceivable, even if it is unlikely, that the federal government might consider a substantial redistribution of federal offices throughout the country. Such a policy might be argued as hedge against terrorist threats, as a way to reduce federal government costs or reduce the growth pressures on the National Capital Region, or as a contribution to rebuilding regional and local economies suffering far more economic distress.

Complacency is even more problematic in today's supercharged and intensively competitive global environment. Regions throughout the world have been updating their own governance structures and leadership capacities precisely to be able to engage in an *intensifying global competition among regions*. Other regions of the world consciously view themselves as global competitors. The European Union invests lavishly in its regions in the belief that they constitute the economic core units of the national and continental European conglomerate. And no one who has witnessed the dramatically changing landscape of Greater Beijing or Greater Shanghais can fail to be impressed that these are great modern regions preparing themselves for world leadership over the course of the 21st century.

If the citizens of Greater Washington Region were to conclude that the absence of a world-class regional governance structure and leadership capacity is a matter to be taken seriously, what options are available to them? Fundamentally overhaul the region's governance structure? Update it? Or simply work more effectively within the existing governance structure by significantly improving the capacity for regional leadership? What, in short, are the options for improving the National Capital Region's ability to more effectively think and act as a region? That is the subject of the companion paper.