



COALITION FOR SMARTER GROWTH

November 24, 2009

Sharon Bulova
Chair, Greater Washington 2050
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capital Street, NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC

Dear Chairman Bulova and members of the GW2050 Committee:

We have been honored to have had the opportunity to participate in the Greater Washington 2050 (GW2050) effort. As you know the Coalition for Smarter Growth (CSG) and its partner groups have produced a series of important policy reports including WRN's "A New Approach: Integrating Transportation and Development in the National Capital Region"; CBF/EDF's "Network of Livable Communities"; and CSG's "Blueprint for a Better Region." CSG also helped to organize with ULI and COG the 2005 Reality Check exercise which identified core principles shared in common including: preservation of farmland and open space, transit-oriented development and mixed-use development and addressing the east-west economic divide.

We are very pleased to see the strong focus on sustainability principles in the GW2050 Region Forward report. The report also takes advantage of the significant research and analysis completed by COG as part of its activity centers project, the regional mobility and accessibility study, and the climate change report. It recognizes the issues highlighted in Brookings' 1999 "Region Divided" report and takes into account the extensive survey of public thinking about the future of the region.

That survey demonstrated that when it comes to allocation of resources, the public ranked transportation in the middle of the pack, and when it came to their long-term priorities for the future and their grandchildren, "better roads/less traffic" ranked in the bottom of the pack. In contrast, education, jobs, safety, and cultural diversity were among the highest ranking issues for the long term. In the near term, the poorer performing areas where the public wanted to see focus were: schools, safe streets, health care, jobs, housing, planning, and helping those in need.

Many experts see planning as a core issue – that "where and how we grow" ties to the affordability of housing and transportation, and to equitable access to jobs, health care, quality public education, and safe streets. When combined with long-term high energy prices, the need to fight climate change, shortfalls in public resources for infrastructure, and changing demographics, we believe that the future for the region must rest in "location efficient" development – green buildings in mixed-use, mixed-income, walkable/bikeable, and transit-oriented communities. We see the GW2050 report as recognizing the necessity of this approach to regional development.

We wish to offer our strong support for the GW2050 report and its focus on sustainability, energy, climate change, affordable housing, education, health care, jobs and equity, mixed-use walkable development and reduction in per capita vehicle miles traveled. We also join our partner groups in

offering a few recommended edits and a range of indicators to strengthen monitoring and the progress we make in achieving a greener, more sustainable future (attached).

Thank you again for your leadership in this critical endeavor.

Sincerely,

Stewart Schwartz
Executive Director