



FEDERAL CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MAY 2011

Over five decades ago, then-*Washington Post* publisher Phil Graham founded the Federal City Council based on a belief that the business leadership of the District of Columbia had an obligation to improve the nation's capital for all who work, live and visit here. Today, members of the Federal City Council can look back on a number of successful partnerships with federal and local government officials that have resulted in a succession of major accomplishments, including the creation of the Metro transit system, rehabilitation of Union Station, a major downtown sports arena, and the Ronald Reagan International Trade Center. Beyond its brick-and-mortar projects, the Federal City Council has also been a champion of the District's efforts to improve its financial health, public safety, and public education system. These initiatives have helped the nation's capital become a vibrant, diverse, and attractive place to work, visit, and live.

In 2010, Federal City Council leadership reviewed and assessed the organization's accomplishments and interests of its members. A strategic planning committee was formed to ascertain the project interests of the District's business leaders, solicit input from elected officials, and create a plan for the Council to address several critical long-standing challenges impeding the city's progress. This strategic plan reaffirms the Council's mission to commit the knowledge, experience, access, networks, and resources of its members to help bring about long-term positive change for the District.

Members settled on four key areas of focus to allow the Council to allocate resources to maximize its impact and effectiveness.

- **Reducing unemployment through job creation and job readiness:** The District of Columbia must do a better job to create jobs and help District residents prepare to fill existing and new jobs. To help reduce the city's unemployment rate, which is as high as 30 percent in some neighborhoods, the Federal City Council plans to partner with local officials and universities to support the growth of new industries and to leverage opportunities created by expansion and relocation of federal agencies in the D.C. area. In addition, the Council will work to improve adult literacy, promote the growth of an independent and fully accredited community college, and strengthen workforce development initiatives that are effective in training and preparing residents for work.
- **Ensuring fiscal stability and integrity:** The District of Columbia's fiscal health is stable, but weaker than it has been in some time. Although the economic recession has sharply

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reduced revenue growth, city spending has been slow to adjust to the new revenue environment, forcing city leaders to draw down city reserves during the most recent budget cycles. The Federal City Council plans to work with the city to ensure that the city is positioned to emerge from the recession with a strong financial foundation. This work could include initiatives to find savings and efficiencies in the government's operations and identify the types of investments that will generate future revenues for the city. In addition, the city must tackle the challenges facing its Medicaid and special education programs, both of which are major cost drivers of the D.C. budget.

- **Improving infrastructure and reducing traffic congestion in the District:** The District of Columbia remains one of the strongest commercial real estate markets in the world, but it is also among the most congested urban areas in the country. As the economy improves, the pressure on the downtown transportation network will only increase, creating problems in gaining access to the District (particularly east-west access) and exacerbating congestion. The Federal City Council is looking at opportunities to improve east-west traffic flow by re-opening E Street near the White House, strengthening downtown traffic management, and creating opportunities to reconfigure K Street as a major multi-modal thoroughfare. In addition, the Federal City Council will continue to work with the leadership at the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority to increase funding stability for the transit system. Finally, the Council intends to undertake an assessment and long-term investment plan for the District's infrastructure, including its transportation network, water and sewer, and utilities.
- **Continuing public education reform:** The Federal City Council has worked for more than thirty years to improve educational outcomes for students. In part, due to the Federal City Council's recent contributions, the public school system is reaching an important turning point. The changes that have been instituted over the last four years are fragile and require steady and unflagging support from business leaders who know that a strong public school system is necessary to produce a strong workforce. It is critically important that the Federal City Council continue to monitor the current pace and direction of public school reform during this crucial transitional period.

To assure success in addressing each of these major areas, the Federal City Council is committed to the following organizational priorities:

- **Enhancing member engagement in projects.** Federal City Council members have expressed their interest in being directly involved on the "front lines" of these efforts to enhance the city.
- **Strengthening performance and accountability monitoring.** The Council must continue to measure its progress against its aspirations and strategic plan. Project committees must be outcome-focused and supported by sufficient staff and resources.

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- **Maintaining strong relations and alignment with federal and local officials.** The Federal City Council prides itself on working collaboratively in partnership with public officials to achieve long-term change and progress. To do this, the Council must continue to actively maintain its access and relationships with high-level policymakers.
- **Updating the roles and responsibilities of Federal City Council leaders.** The Council must continue to adjust to effectively meet the needs of its members and the city. This means strengthening the leadership structure to do the business of the Council, engage members, raise funds, and communicate with members regarding the work and progress.

In implementing its strategic plan, the Federal City Council anticipates that, over the course of time, other opportunities for partnership with the city will arise. In order to maintain the flexibility needed to respond to these opportunities, the Federal City Council will continue to monitor areas of potential interest, a number of which have already been identified. Members of the Council will apprise the Executive Committee of emerging opportunities to become directly engaged on projects with the city. The list of interest areas is not fixed and could continue to grow based on the suggestions of members:

- **Increasing affordable housing:** With the building of housing along Suitland Parkway in Ward 8, redevelopment of Barry Farms and other projects in various stages across the city, the Federal City Council is interested in helping the city maintain and expand affordable housing options, including workforce housing, for residents.
- **Effective development in key areas of the city:** The city is working on a number of economic development projects. The Federal City Council will actively monitor the city's progress in developing the Saint Elizabeths East Campus, the Walter Reed Medical Center property, McMillan Reservoir, Reservation 13, and the Southwest Waterfront, including the 10th Street SW corridor connecting the National Mall to the marina.
- **Managing the improvements in and around Union Station:** The Union Station Redevelopment Corporation is developing a master plan for future growth and transportation activity. The Federal City Council is interested in preserving this historic landmark but also facilitating the investment and development that can anchor a revitalized nearby commercial and residential market.
- **Ensuring access to healthcare:** The city continues to focus on ensuring access to healthcare for the most vulnerable. In this spirit, the D.C. government took over the troubled United Medical Center hospital in southeast D.C. The Federal City Council is interested in ensuring that the healthcare network serves all residents, but also that the United Medical Center does not become a long-term fiscal liability to the city.

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- **Continuing to improve public libraries:** The District of Columbia has invested significant resources to develop state-of-the-art neighborhood libraries in all parts of the city. The Federal City Council is interested in ensuring that public libraries serve as hubs of learning for children and adults as well as anchors for neighborhood economic development.

The Federal City Council continues to have an important role in the life of the District of Columbia. The business community clearly has the knowledge, experience, networks, and resources to help address the very real needs of the District and thereby improve both the city and the region. Focusing its attention on the four major areas identified for the near term, while monitoring other areas of need and opportunity, will allow the Federal City Council to build on a legacy of effective partnership with the city and to continue the Council's long-term positive impact on the future of the nation's capital and its residents.