

FEDERAL CITY COUNCIL

CATALYST

federalcitycouncil.org | 2020 Fall



District Strong:
From Crisis
to Recovery

+

Advancing
Racial Equality

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Letter from the CEO and Executive Director

Dear Trustees,

First and foremost, I would like to thank you, our Trustees, for what you have done already to support the Federal City Council (FC2) and the District of Columbia as we cope with these unprecedented times. Your commitment has made all the difference.

We would also like to reassure you that as an organization we are resilient and are effectively responding to this crisis. Over the course of 70 years, the FC2 has seen – and surmounted – many challenging moments. We are convinced that we will master this one as well.

Our theme for this issue is District Strong. It adopts the title from our much-lauded series of virtual conversations we launched in the wake of the coronavirus shutdown. These dialogues with governmental, non-governmental, academic and private sector leaders have brought together our Trustees and some of the brightest minds of our time. We have always been a force multiplier and convener in D.C., and our unbridled convening power deepened the conversation to galvanize our community to come together, work together and succeed together.

Over the course of 70 years, the FC2 has seen – and surmounted – many challenging moments. We are convinced that we will master this one as well.

As we look forward to this fall, chief among our areas of focus is racial equity. In the aftermath of George Floyd's tragic death, we as an organization felt it was important to focus intentionally and deeply on projects that have the potential to reduce racial disparities in our city.

In this *Catalyst*, we'll share more information with you about our plans to double down on our projects to foster racial equity in the District. We share the concern and outrage of protesters about institutionalized racism and we are committed to racial equity.

In our TONY Talks, we share our District Strong conversation with Harvard University economist Ed Glaeser where he discusses the economic outlook for American cities, how the coronavirus has and will continue to impact cities, and opportunities for intervention by federal and local leaders.

Finally, we'll introduce you to a new feature for *Catalyst* called "FC2 by the Numbers." It examines the impact our programs have had through direct and indirect assessments and data. The first quantitative analysis looks at our District Strong conversations.

I am inspired by the way our Trustees have risen to the challenges presented by the pandemic and the fight for greater equity. Thank you for your strength, flexibility and creativity. Let's keep working together to return to a vibrant, safe and healthy D.C.

Sincerely,



Tony Williams



FC2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

Racial Equity Through a Project Lens

As the Black Lives Matter protests swept the country in the wake of George Floyd's death, the Federal City Council (FC2) sought to bring its commitment to advancing racial equality and justice even more to the fore, redoubling its work to progress equity through its programs and initiatives.

Through the Washington Housing Initiative, a focus on K-12 education reform and much of its transportation work, the FC2 has been working to address inequities since long before the current crisis.

More is needed now. The FC2 is launching new efforts to intensify its current workforce development initiative and to consider a second project aimed at closing the digital divide which could make a profound difference in the lives of the District's African American youth and families.

"We think it's important to highlight racial equity in a new way," says Anthony Williams, FC2 CEO and Executive Director. "From the very beginning, the Federal City Council was pro-civil rights and pro-home rule. We've always been behind these important activities in the District. Clearly, what the young people are saying and the protesters are saying is that there's a lot of work undone. We have a lot to contribute in this area, and we should and will."

In light of the protests and police violence, nonprofit organizations and corporations in the District—more than 40 are organizations of FC2 Trustees—issued statements of solidarity with peaceful demonstrators and the African American community. The FC2 compiled and shared the statements as "voices" of the city's civic community.

The FC2 considered that an important start, yet more was needed—purposeful action. Williams encouraged Trustees to contribute to a deeper conversation about how the FC2 can be an agent for greater racial equity by lending their voices to our efforts.

Closing the Digital Divide in D.C.

With more than one in five District residents living without access at home to broadband Internet service or a computer, the coronavirus pandemic and the resulting drive to learn and work at home revealed how deep and wide the digital divide is in the District.

The gap in access to digital services and goods remains a serious problem in the African American community in D.C. The Alliance for Excellent Education reports that 27 percent of black households in the District do not have access to

broadband Internet speeds, compared to only 5 percent of white households.

Moreover, the broadband adoption rate is nearly 20 percent lower in Wards 5, 7 and 8 than in other wards. Lower-income households can also pay up to \$0.48 per mbps, which is almost three times what the average consumer pays in D.C. Forty-five percent of D.C. households that make between \$20,000 and \$34,999 do not have a broadband subscription plan, according to the Alliance.

“What we’re hoping to do is create as much momentum as we can,” says Kevin Clinton, FC2 COO. “We want to move the needle on Employers for Equity and closing the digital divide. We want to do more work in understanding the issues around implicit bias and structural racism.”

The FC2 is joining with other D.C. organizations to advance initiatives designed to reduce racial-equity barriers in technology access, including addressing minimum speed requirements for broadband, ensuring transparency in broadband labelling, establishing connected community centers, providing digital support services to small businesses and studying the viability of fiber optic or mesh network designs for D.C.

Advancing diversity amid persistent racial economic and social exclusion demands that organizations and communities be more aggressive in adopting and implementing programs that focus on racial equity and social justice. For cities like D.C., that focus will be critical to its growth, diversity and innovation, and the FC2 sees its roles as both a foot soldier and a leader in this endeavor.

“You have more organizations speaking to this and committing to this, bringing a unity of purpose,” says Williams. “You get more energy directed at the outcome and the target. My hope is that because we are an organization with stature, it sends a powerful message about what we can and should be doing on racial equity.”

Connecting African American Youth to Meaningful Employment

To strengthen its current racial equity work, the FC2’s workforce development initiative has been elevated

to **Employers for Equity**, a coalition of committed regional companies actively preparing pathways to employment for DC youth. The FC2 is housing the coalition’s work as it seeks to expand opportunities for employment, increase social mobility, and address the business community’s need for proven talent.

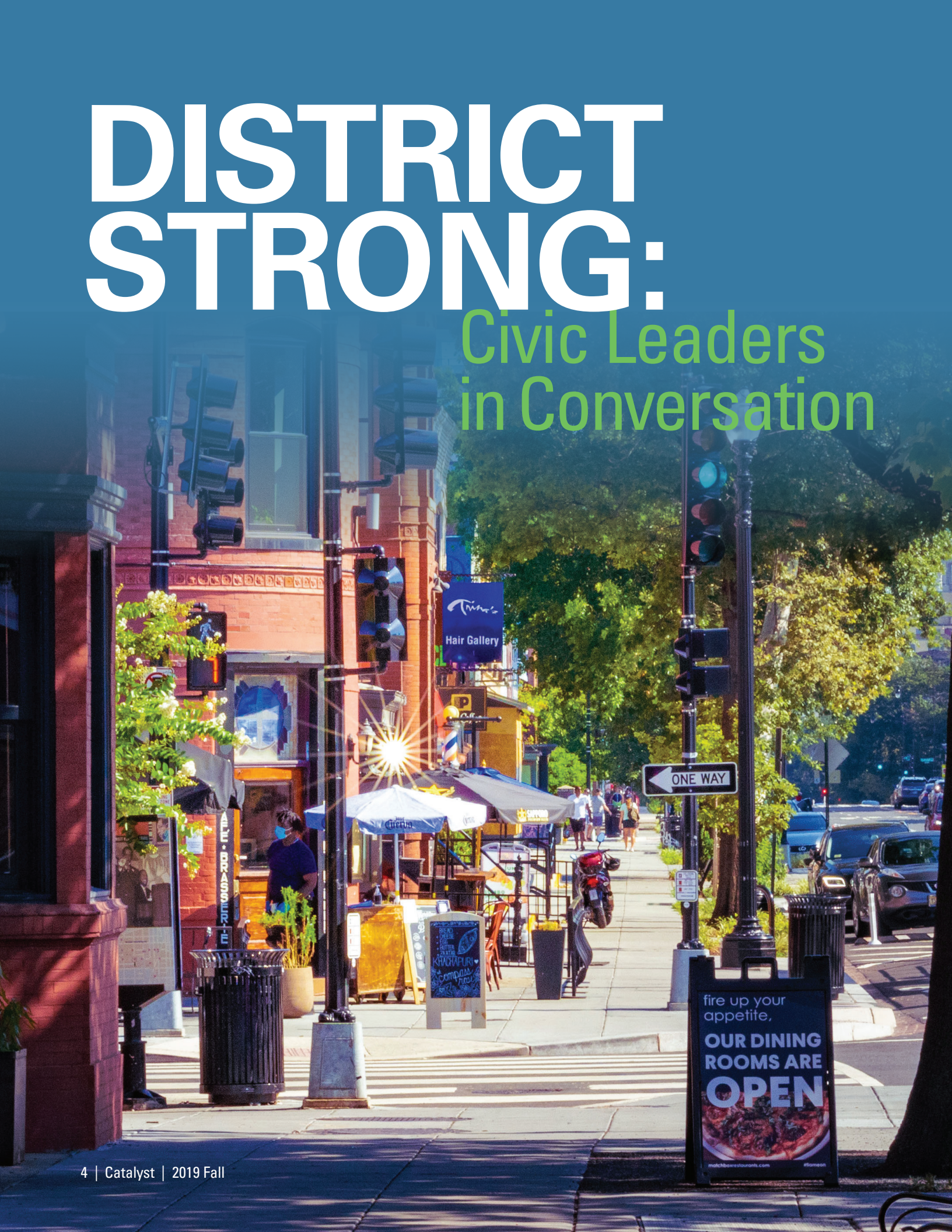
Only 14 percent of D.C. 9th graders complete a two- or four-year postsecondary degree within six years of high school graduation. The vast majority of these young people are African American. The coalition’s goal is to create new avenues for youth, many of whom experience disparate access to career opportunities and professional development, and lead the way in creating more racially inclusive workplaces.

The FC2 has also been collaborating with CityWorks DC’s Jennie Niles to launch CareerWise DC, a citywide modern youth apprenticeship program for D.C. high schoolers in high-wage, in-demand occupations, including Information Technology and Business Operations. The CareerWise model, in its fourth year in Colorado and with sister programs recently launched in New York City and Indiana, brings real work experiences, professional networks and early credentialing forward in a young person’s career. Participating employers build a local, diverse talent pipeline for hard-to-fill positions, increase employee retention, lower recruiting costs and increase productivity. Post-apprenticeship, young people will pursue further postsecondary education and employment in various interwoven ways. The first cohort of junior high school students from KIPP DC and Friendship PCS begin working at companies such as Accenture, Enlightened and Kastle Systems this fall.

Working with CityWorks DC, Employers for Equity will develop a range of employer-driven solutions that will expand high-quality, work-based learning opportunities for D.C. youth based on the specific needs and capacities of each employer and that builds on the rich ecosystem of providers and education partners. The added benefit of employers leading the campaign is that they help define the needed skills, host trainings and build a more efficient workforce pipeline. ■

DISTRICT STRONG:

Civic Leaders in Conversation



Across the District of Columbia last spring, civic leaders and business executives rose to meet the economic, workforce and health challenges presented by the coronavirus pandemic, the economic shutdown and later by the Black Lives Matter protests.

Asking itself how it could best respond to this moment, the Federal City Council (FC2) went back to its roots. It had always been a trusted and respected convener, opening opportunities for civic dialogue in the District and the region. Why not continue down that path, but virtually?

Enter District Strong, a forum for FC2 Trustees and respected leaders to share their insights about how to respond to these crises. With strict guidelines on face-to-face interactions, the FC2 developed a virtual forum and began to rethink its strategy around bringing Trustees together on a weekly basis.

“We need this dialogue and exchange to continue even though we’re working remotely,” says Anthony Williams, FC2 CEO and Executive Director. “It’s an ongoing conversation about what is happening today. It’s a movie and not a snapshot. It has been extremely helpful.”

The FC2 was exceptionally well positioned to work with city leaders to identify responsive options to ensure the District and the region recover from both the health and the economic effects of the pandemic. To ensure the FC2’s continued organizational impact, it vowed to:

- Be the preeminent point of access to information and decision-makers for current and prospective Trustees;
- Synthesize information and lead the development of an effective response strategy on behalf of the business community; and
- Strengthen the relationships and value of the FC2’s work to local elected officials.

District Strong placed the FC2 in the role of convener, of course, but also as a thought leader in identifying and sharing public and private responses to crisis and recovery. These important conversations became a rare moment for civic leaders looking for ideas and innovations to resolve this watershed moment.

The list of speakers at the weekly conversations—often three times a week—was long and continues to grow. While District Strong took a brief hiatus in August, the

FC2 is presenting the program virtually through the end of the year.

Distinguished speakers ranged from corporate executives to economic analysts to cultural and sports leaders to university presidents. One of the benefits of the talks has been the ability to bring together officials to examine more deeply the impact of the pandemic on industries and sectors such as the arts, K-12 education, higher education, small business, air transport, social welfare, health care and banking.

District Strong frequently hosted government officials, including Mayor Muriel Bowser; Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton; District of Columbia Attorney General Karl Racine; Metropolitan Police Department Chief Peter Newsham; John Falcicchio, Deputy Mayor in the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development; Lindsey Parker, Chief Technology Officer in the Office of the Chief Technology Officer; and Jenny Reed, Director of the Office of Budget and Performance Management.

National leaders dropped by to make the case for urban resiliency and civic leadership, including U.S. Sen. Tim Scott, a Republican from South Carolina; DC’s renowned chef and philanthropist José Andrés; Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution Lonnie Bunch; and Gary Cohn, former Director of the U.S. National Economic Council and past President and COO of Goldman Sachs.

District Strong pushed beyond typical government and business boundaries to deepen conversations by focusing on faith. FC2 hosted three of the region’s leading religious leaders: Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory, the seventh Archbishop of Washington for the Roman Catholic Church; Reverend Randolph “Randy” Hollerith, 11th Dean of Washington National Cathedral; and Reverend Stacey Cole Wilson, Executive Minister of Justice and Service of the Baltimore-Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church.

“District Strong has allowed the Federal City Council to reach out beyond our strict composition to include some of our allies in other projects and initiatives,” says Williams. “It also allows our Trustees to bring employees and colleagues from their firms in to listen to the calls, and we are able to expand our footprint.” ■

TONYTalks : Ed Glaeser

The Future of Cities

In our District Strong conversation with [Professor Edward Glaeser](#), an international expert on urban and public economics, we explored the profound effects of the coronavirus on cities and how cities have long had a complex relationship with pandemics.

Glaeser is the Fred and Eleanor Glump Professor of Economics in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Harvard University, where he has taught since 1992. He has written extensively on cities, economic growth, law and economics.

The FC2's Anthony Williams spoke with Glaeser in July about his vision for the future of cities in the near and long term, particularly as we navigate the uncharted waters of COVID-19. The conversation was edited for length. Listen to the full audio file [here](#).

AW: In your [well-reviewed book, *Triumph of the City*](#), you offer a history of cities and the drivers that make cities great places for ideas and innovation. How can history help us understand where we are today?

EG: "There are many magical things that come when people live very close to one another as well as many demons. The most terrible of these is contagious disease. We have enjoyed a blessed century in which almost nothing, with the exception of AIDS, has really felt like it was striking at the core of our urban world. And that's a very unusual thing. If you look at the past 2,500 years, plague and the city have a long history together. A boy born in NYC in 1900 could expect to live more than six years less than a boy born in rural America, primarily because of contagious disease.

"Somewhat amazingly, despite all this death, our cities continued to grow. This tells us two things, one of which is that the advantages of density are just enormous, but secondly, we needed to make investments in the 19th Century to make our cities livable then and we almost surely need to make equivalent investments today."

AW: Your recent research on the impact of COVID-19 on cities brings to light this idea of the "last mile" as it pertains to the disproportionate impact of COVID on the African American community.

EG: "There's a strong positive relationship between those who take public transportation and the spread of disease across counties, but it's not true across zip codes. If you look at zip codes, it's the share of workers in essential services that lead to higher infection rates. These workers are disproportionately African American.



Tony Williams



Ed Glaeser

"Within Manhattan, there were more cases in places where you have more public transit but some of the highest cases were north of the Bronx, where public transit is low. That's partially because these inner parts of NYC were able to switch to telecommuting. So, the places where you had the heaviest public transit use were the places where you had the strongest reduction in the number of trips. As soon as COVID hit, those people stopped traveling. Whereas the people further out, the poorer people, were not able to shift their behavior. They got COVID and died. The same pattern can be detected for Chicago."

AW: Have you looked at the effect on cities if remote work continues?

EG: "Many of us worry that this current boost of remote working will become permanent. But it's worth remembering that for decades before today, the cyber prophets and the seers of the Information Age have been predicting that our cities would die because they'd be replaced by electronic communications. None of those predictions came to pass, but maybe today is different. In our survey from the National Association of Business Economists, we found about 36 percent of firms predicted that 40 percent or more of their workers who switched to remote will stay remote. That's almost half. It's not 100 percent, but that's a pretty big number."

AW: What does your crystal ball tell us about the future of cities with the pandemic?

EG: "There will be short-term shifts, if we only have this pandemic and we don't get another pandemic in the next five years, or the next 10 years. Even that probably requires real investments by the federal government in things like preemptive vaccinations and better techniques for making sure that a pandemic that starts somewhere doesn't spread globally. But even in that best-case scenario, prices will drop for both commercial space, especially, and residential space.

"If the shock doesn't end quickly, if pandemics reappear, then the changes in our urban world could be enormous. It will also shatter the urban service industry and create just enormous economic harm for almost every one of the Americans who work in leisure, hospitality and retail trade. But if that world does come about, it's both very terrible for cities and for everyone who can't shelter in place and use electronic technology."

AW: If you were a mayor or a county executive, how would you try to benefit from this economic correction of either short-term or long-term duration?

EG: "I think it depends a lot on the city's comparative advantage. If you were in the pleasant situation of being a mid-density, attractive place, say a college town like Charlottesville, you'd sell your city as a place where there's still a lot of green space, where people could move to from those dense areas and telecommute from home or gather in the remote work spaces you set up for them to get together with their mates."

"If you are in a city like Boston, New York or Chicago, you have to try to figure out how to make sure there are new businesses that replace the old businesses. Part of this is thinking about the barriers that you once had in place that made it difficult for entrepreneurs to get started. There is an enormous amount of work that needs to be done around public transportation, the lifeblood of our cities. If ridership is down 30-40 percent, that's going to make the finances around that enormously hard and will require a very specific fix."

AW: Do you see the pandemic prompting a big outmigration from cities?

EG: "Outmigration will unquestionably go on, but that doesn't mean large-scale vacancies. If you think about areas like Washington, D.C., where the real estate market was so hot over the last 10 years then, sure, maybe the prices will drop 10 percent, maybe 20 percent. That doesn't mean they'll become vacant. Those homes will be filled by different people, people we're probably happy to have in the city. They will be filled by people who are less rich, younger and more diverse. I don't view that hit to many of our highly priced urban property markets as being such a terrible thing."

AW: What could the federal government intelligently do to introduce the right kinds of actions for cities along the lines that you're saying?

EG: "Let's take on three things: When it comes to epidemiology and preemptive vaccination development, that's a federal thing. We've learned that this kind of pandemic can cost trillions and trillions of dollars, and it's worth spending billions and billions of dollars to make sure that this never happens again. If you were talking to a president coming into the Oval Office next year, that has got to be job No. 1."

"Infrastructure is going to be a natural thing that any president of either party will want to do. There's plenty

of enthusiasm for infrastructure. The problem is turning infrastructure into jobs. Much of our infrastructure is very capital intensive, so we're going to need to be smart and figure out what we can do that makes sense in this new world."

"There are people out there who are big fans of things like universal basic income. I am not, apart from this current crisis. We need to figure out the right combination of economic incentives, eliminating the barriers to entrepreneurship that actually get people back to work. That means not creating incentives that deter working, like universal basic income, but actually doing more to incentivize working."

AW: A lot of cities are going through their budget cycle now. What would your top priorities be in your budget?

EG: "I always come back to the basics, and I'm always about schools and then safety. Figuring out school funding, as you know better than I do, is enormously difficult. You're more qualified than I am to actually talk about this, but the safety issue is really important. In terms of time, I would be spending a bunch of time figuring out how to make entrepreneurship easy."

AW: How should states and cities be thinking about their revenue structures, especially a city like D.C. that derives an incredible amount of its revenue from the hospitality industry?

EG: "There are two things that are involved with this. One is a temporary shock of enormous proportions, and the second of which is a perhaps permanent reduction that is smaller but it's still permanent. The permanent reduction comes from maybe some permanent reductions in hospitality and maybe some permanent reductions in property taxes, depending on where your revenues are coming from."

AW: Do you have recommendations that you can share for reducing income inequality? I'm curious whether minimum wage is included among those strategies that you would look to?

EG: "I am very rarely in favor of making job creation harder. If what a minimum wage means is that I'm going to once again ask the employers of lower-wage Americans to pay more, I'm very unlikely to be particularly enthusiastic about that. Let me offer you an alternative. We're going to still manage to raise the effective minimum wage, not by imposing the regulation on businesses but with an employment credit. We're going to have the federal government come in and top off salaries so you get to a higher minimum wage, but you don't actually ask the business to pay for it. In that way, you're going to be encouraging job creation, rather than discouraging it, and you're going to be making sure that a little extra money gets in the hands of poor people." ■

Please visit federalcitycouncil.org for more of Tony's conversations with local and national thought leaders.

DISTRICT STRONG: By The Numbers



District Strong is the Federal City Council's effort to galvanize its members to support DC's response to and recovery from the COVID-19 virus.



Total Webinar Attendees **2,925**
Average Attendees Per Webinar **61**



Average Overall
Satisfaction Rating
9.45 out of 10.00

Top Webinar Themes



1.
Economy



2.
Education/Child Care



3.
Social Justice



4.
Vulnerable Populations



Number of Webinars by Month

- Mar: 3
- Apr: 12
- May: 11
- June: 8
- July: 7
- Aug: 4



Total Individual Speakers: **77**

Local Speakers: **58**
National Speakers: **19**

Most Attended

1

May 13
Ted Leonsis:
106 attendees

2

April 27
Jeff DeWitt:
96 attendees

3

April 29
Eleanor Holmes Norton:
91 attendees

Transit Proves Critical in Pandemic

The pandemic and the subsequent economic shutdown have changed transportation patterns in the District. Traffic nearly disappeared during the stay-at-home order, creating an opportunity to accelerate investments in the road network. Such limited transit capacity exposed the importance of a robust public transit system, as essential workers and others looked for ways to safely commute to their jobs or travel across the city. As D.C. moves further towards recovery, the city has an opportunity to do so in a way that accelerates our transportation agenda and makes D.C. a more attractive place to live and do business.

Given this reality, the FC2's Infrastructure and Transportation team is focused on advancing everything from transit funding to building out additional bus-only lanes to further exploring the viability of a gondola route from Georgetown to Rosslyn.

"We have a chance this year to take a look at our long-standing goals for multimodality, safety and sustainability,

and identify near-term opportunities to make progress towards them," says Maura Brophy, FC2 Director of Infrastructure and Transportation.

While transit funding overall remains a top priority, the bus system was a critical service for the District and the region during the pandemic. Initiating the bus network redesign process could increase transit efficiency significantly in the region during the pandemic and maximize benefits for transit users.

"The bus line has maintained 20 to 40 percent of its ridership," says Laura Miller Brooks, FC2 Senior Transportation and Infrastructure Associate. "The bus has proven to be a resilient lifeline for the region."

In keeping its focus on longstanding priorities in the District, the FC2 is also supporting the advancement of the Washington Union Station Expansion Project. The FC2 is collaborating with other District groups to insist upon a final plan with the maximum possible benefit to the District. ■

Federal City Council and Affiliates Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2019

	2019	2018
ASSETS		
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	\$705,093	\$237,196
INVESTMENTS	\$108,019	\$101,507
ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE	\$107,168	\$337,005
PREPAID EXPENSES	\$22,320	\$26,884
SECURITY DEPOSIT	\$17,068	\$48,782
PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT, NET	\$526,851	\$619,595
TOTAL ASSETS	\$1,486,519	\$1,370,969
LIABILITIES & EQUITY		
LIABILITIES		
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE	\$93,308	\$462,635
DEFERRED LEASE LIABILITY	\$547,969	\$478,406
CAPITAL LEASE OBLIGATIONS	\$32,532	\$40,665
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$673,809	\$981,706
NET ASSETS		
WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS		
UNDESIGNATED	\$560,593	\$197,280
BOARD DESIGNATED	\$106,424	\$99,911
WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS	\$145,690	\$92,072
TOTAL NET ASSETS	\$812,707	\$389,263
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	\$1,486,519	\$1,370,969

Federal City Council Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities

YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2019

	2019		2018	
	WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS		WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS	
	UNDESIGNATED	TRUST FUND		TOTAL
SUPPORT AND REVENUES				
MEMBERSHIP CONTRIBUTIONS	\$2,089,450	\$0	\$0	\$2,089,450
CONTRIBUTIONS AND GRANTS	\$0	\$0	\$225,000	\$225,000
SUBLEASE INCOME AND REIMBURSEMENTS	\$0	\$0	\$565,405	\$565,405
DONATED SERVICES	\$90,003	\$0	\$0	\$90,003
PROJECT REVENUE	\$60,250	\$0	\$13,000	\$73,250
INTEREST AND IDIVIDENDS	\$296	\$2,354	\$0	\$2,650
UNREALIZED GAIN/(LOSS)	\$0	\$4,158	\$0	\$4,158
TRANSFERS	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM RESTRICTION	\$749,787	\$0	(\$749,787)	\$0
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUES	\$2,989,786	\$6,513	\$53,618	\$3,049,917
EXPENSES				
PROGRAM SERVICES	\$1,861,571	\$0	\$0	\$1,861,571
SUPPORTING SERVICES:				
GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE	\$410,375	\$0	\$0	\$410,375
MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT	\$354,527	\$0	\$0	\$354,527
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$2,626,473	\$0	\$0	\$2,626,473
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	\$363,313	\$6,513	\$53,618	\$423,444
NET ASSETS - BEGINNING OF YEAR	\$197,280	\$99,911	\$92,072	\$389,263
NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR	\$560,593	\$106,424	\$145,690	\$812,707

NOTE: For more information, please review the audited financial statements available on the Federal City Council [website](https://www.federalcitycouncil.org) and the accompanying notes, which are an integral part of these consolidated financial statements.

This financial summary represents the most updated financial position for the Federal City Council. It is presented here in lieu of an annual report.

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