



FEDERAL CITY
COUNCIL

2021: Year in Review

2021: Year in Review recounts how the Federal City Council deployed its leadership and resources to improve the District of Columbia's economic and social well-being. Its initiatives proved once again that the FC2's contributions are critical to the District and the region.

2021: A Notable Year

The Federal City Council (FC2) was created for moments like this. Major trends and developments related to the COVID-19 pandemic realigned the District's economic and social infrastructure in 2021, presenting both opportunities and challenges for the city. The FC2's response to the pandemic and its aftermath were comprehensive and targeted for troubled sectors and workforce concerns that demanded honest leadership and a perceptive vision.

In mobilizing ideas, policies and resources in 2021, the FC2 was able to advance its core themes—economic leadership and advocacy, workforce and career pathways, education transformation, and transportation and infrastructure—while also mapping out a framework that better leverages people and resources during this difficult time period.

“The Federal City Council has much to celebrate in 2021, and the year ahead promises a new set of challenges that may not be easily resolved. What’s needed is the independence and foresight of the Federal City Council and the leadership of its Trustees, who always answer the call to service.”

— Anthony Williams, FC2 CEO and Executive Director

2021: Year in Review explores FC2's journey over the past year, illuminating the policy and programmatic activities that have guided its investments of time and resources—all aimed at confronting the District's biggest economic and civic challenges. It also offers insight into where FC2 will travel programmatically in 2022 as it continues its commitment to DC and its residents.

District Strong: Leadership & Advocacy

2021 was a landmark year for the FC2 and its service to the DC community. In response to the pandemic, the FC2 effectively activated its Trustees and staff to fortify the District's economic and programmatic opportunities. The main vehicle for much of these accomplishments was *District Strong*, a webinar series for Trustees to learn about and support COVID-19 response and recovery efforts.

Bringing the community together through *District Strong*, the FC2 became a trusted source of communication, connection and collaboration in 2021. It leveraged its standing and experience in order to support the city in rebuilding and ensuring a more robust recovery. The more than 120 virtual conversations kept Trustees informed about the District's public and private responses to the pandemic.

The FC2's most significant achievement in 2021 may be its outreach to the federal government. Under the leadership of the FC2 Board of Directors, the FC2 rallied the business community to recapture federal funding taken from the District during the 2020 negotiations for

the first pandemic relief package, or the CARES Act. In the 2021 American Recovery Plan, the District secured its \$755 million it was shortchanged in the CARES Act and reaffirmed the principle that the District be treated as a state and not a territory in federal appropriations.

The FC2 also continued to champion the interest of business before the DC Council during what many deemed 2021's fledgling economic recovery. The FC2 testified about the proposed ban on noncompete agreements between employers and their workers, along with a proposed high-income-earner tax hike for DC residents. The laws would make the city less competitive. The FC2 also embraced DC statehood as a business issue, with the formation of Statehood Research DC, a nonprofit that examines the historical, economic and legal consequences of statehood.

Finally, with the widespread availability of COVID-19 vaccines in 2021, the FC2 worked collaboratively with other business groups to encourage the safe return of DC workers to their offices. The FC2 remains confident that its leadership in this area will pay dividends in later years, reviving the downtown business district.

For 2022. The FC2 will continue its District Strong programming, providing unique opportunities for collaboration and conversation about the District. The FC2 is also committed to bolstering its working relationship with the federal government, determined that DC will secure its fair share of infrastructure spending and new annual appropriations.

Workforce & Career Pathways

Policymakers, businesses and community organizations have come together with the FC2's direction to develop innovative ideas and programs to improve DC's workforce acquisition for the District's business community and its workers. The status quo has been too costly for everyone involved, from young people, to employers, to the government.

In 2021, the FC2's Employers for Equity, an extension of its CareerWise DC initiative, enlisted employers to create a pipeline for local talent to fill good-paying jobs in the District. The FC2 has consistently made the case for hiring local workers because it provides employers with a ready and trained workforce.

In collaboration with the DC Chamber of Commerce in 2021, the FC2 also established a new coalition, known as [Hire Local DC](#), which is committed to linking DC residents to DC jobs. The Coalition works to overcome employment barriers that DC residents face in getting jobs and to achieve a more equitable recovery.

District employers also helped build career pathways for DC youth by making work-based learning a strategy in their hiring. The FC2's commitment to apprenticeship programs for DC youth proved a reliable conduit to a good job and a lifetime of fulfilling work.

Through programs such as the Greater Washington Apprenticeship Network and CareerWise DC, the FC2, in partnership with other organizations, helped link employers to DC youth and adults.

The FC2 also encouraged employers in 2021 to access national and local funding for internships and apprenticeships, and to build employer partnerships to accelerate DC's progress in driving job growth and worker opportunity, while addressing the needs of the District's underemployed and unemployed.

For 2022. The FC2 will continue to reinforce its belief that workforce competitiveness is a central factor in the District's recovery and its long-term strategy for economic growth. Nurturing workforce development initiatives and apprenticeship programs are the best options to address talent gaps, recruitment issues and employment barriers to expansion.

Educational Transformation

Over the last decade, enrollment in the District's public schools has increased dramatically, from a low of 76,000 students to over 93,000 students currently. Along with these increases in enrollment, the District's public schools have seen rising test scores and graduation rates. Despite all of these improvements, there is still much work to be done. The FC2 continues to support the current system of Mayoral leadership and Council oversight. With Mayoral leadership, the Mayor can set the strategy for public school improvement and all government agencies can work together to support students. Recently, the FC2 publicly testified at the Council in support of this system and in support of the new Superintendent, Dr. Christina Grant.

In order to ensure that all students attending DCPS and public charter schools have a high-quality school building in which to learn, the FC2 recently secured a \$550,000 grant from Education Forward DC to support a new Education Facilities Center and to hire a Director of Education Initiatives. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the quality of facilities is more critical than ever as ventilation, access to outdoor space, and sufficient indoor space all become mechanisms to reduce the spread and incidence of COVID-19. The Education Facilities Center will provide a single point of contact for stakeholders throughout the education ecosystem to access information about and efficiently utilize education facilities in the District. This center will support a number of initiatives including:

- Potential co-locations between public charter schools, DCPS schools, or other government agencies
- Working closely with the real estate / developer community for potential future mixed-use projects to include schools
- Working closely with Councilmembers to support capital plans and proposals
- Dispositions of public buildings for future use by public charter schools

The FC2 is particularly well-positioned to join in these discussions because many of our Trustees with expertise in school construction, real estate development, project finance, and the nonprofit sector are committed to improving education outcomes. The FC2 will work closely with Trustees, public charter schools, other non-profits, and government partners to ensure that all students in the District are learning in a high-quality building.

For 2022. Along with its continued support of Mayoral accountability for DC's education system, the FC2 is hoping to advance the idea of a renovated Spingarn High School that serves the needs of the community. FC2 plans to solicit input from the residents and community members nearby the school to identify potential valuable uses for the building and then advocate for its improvement. Because the building is so large, a multi-use approach that includes the planned Infrastructure Academy along with uses such as childcare, K-12, or adult education is promising.

Transportation and Infrastructure

In 2021, the FC2's activities in the area of transportation and infrastructure were remarkably successful. Through the pandemic, the FC2 collaborated with business leaders, the DC government, and WMATA to leverage federal pandemic-relief funding, like American Recovery Plan Act dollars, to accelerate quick-build, high-impact projects—such as bus transformation, digital connectivity, protected trails and bike lanes—which were all prioritized in the Mayor's FY22 budget.

With the passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), the FC2 hopes the District, WMATA

and region will capture significant capital investment to accelerate strategic priority projects. For some of the FC2 and District's priorities, that hope turned to reality when President Biden signed the IIJA into law.

The FC2 saw two decade-long priorities for WMATA included in the IIJA: The approval of the Metro Safety, Accountability and Investment section, which reauthorized \$1.2 billion in capital funding for WMATA over the next decade, and language strengthening oversight by WMATA's Office of the Inspector General.

The IIJA brings new hope for Union Station funding with historic federal infrastructure investment in passenger rail, specifically \$30 billion dedicated to projects in the Northeast Corridor (NEC). Given this funding opportunity, the FC2 is now entering a new critical phase of federal advocacy and regional engagement to ensure that Union Station receives the \$2.65 billion it needs to unlock its long-anticipated transformation. With intense competition for funding with other NEC projects, the District must do everything it can to complete the environmental review process and rally broad support for significant federal investment.

For 2022. The FC2 will lead the business community's efforts to secure federal funding for Union Station, and support the District, WMATA and region to maximize their return on IIJA capital investment. The FC2 will advocate for infrastructure and technology investments like Union Station, passenger and commuter rail projects, bus transformation, and digital connectivity that facilitate and incentivize mode shift, accelerate pandemic recovery, connect networks, and strengthen the backbone of our next century of economic growth.

"Moving forward in 2022 and later, our success in winning more money for District projects like Union Station is going to depend on having a good federal relationship. In fact, our federal relationship will matter not just in funding priorities but also in bringing federal employees back to the office. We're going to put the 'federal' back into the Federal City Council."

— Anthony Williams, FC2 CEO and Executive Director



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A Knowledgeable and Active Membership

For the FC2 to fulfil its unique role as a thought leader, the continued leadership of its Trustees will be essential in 2022. The FC2's most valuable contribution has always been its Trustees and their participation and input in the FC2's initiatives and programs.

The FC2 offers its appreciation to Trustees for their ongoing dedication to the FC2's mission and their

perseverance and hard work over the past year, despite the immense and unexpected change in their work and family lives. Trustees will be recruited again in 2022 to build alliances among each other and with outside partners to advance the FC2's community initiatives and to progress the FC2's role as a trusted and unwavering leader in the city and region.

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