

Greater Washington launches the most comprehensive cross-sector partnership for smart regional growth in the United States

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WASHINGTON, D.C.—Today, the Greater Washington Board of Trade has entered into an agreement with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) and the Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area to form the Greater Washington Smart Region Movement, the most comprehensive cross-sector partnership for smart regional growth in the United States.

The three founding groups collectively represent hundreds of organizations including governments, companies, investors, nonprofits, and academic institutions. These organizations will contribute in various capacities toward building a trusted, secure, and inclusive digital infrastructure (otherwise known as “smart city” technology) for the public good. This will enable the deployment of smart technologies to drive inclusive economic growth; attract companies, talent, and investment to help diversify the economy; and improve the daily lives of all our citizens.

“Our mission is to be the nation’s leading digitally enabled region,” explained **Jack McDougle**, president and chief executive officer of the Greater Washington Board of Trade. “We’re pioneering a model that gives everyone a voice but isn’t all talk—we’re focused on outcomes and headed for real, investment-ready projects that are driven by the community’s needs.”

City leaders around the world are embracing smart technology to make their jurisdictions safer, cleaner, more productive, and more livable. This includes a wide range of smart applications, such as public WiFi, air pollution warnings, and smart traffic lights to better manage traffic flow and make the region’s streets safer. A recent study from McKinsey Global Institute found that smart city projects can reduce commute times by 15-20 percent, reduce crime by 30-40 percent, improve emergency response times by 20-35 percent, increase citizen engagement, and help buildings and people use water and energy more efficiently, among many other benefits.

“Cities that choose to embrace smart technologies are better equipped to drive improvements in critical initiatives including public safety, transportation, connectivity, health services, and disaster management,” explains **Tony Lewis**, board chairman of the Board of Trade and region vice president of Verizon. “The Board of Trade’s partnership with the Council of Governments and the Consortium of Universities is designed to create a productive, competitive environment for industry while driving the very best solutions for meeting the needs of the people.”

“This Smart Region Movement is an exciting opportunity for us to build on our region’s capacity for innovation, make new investments in our infrastructure, and deliver better services to all of our constituents,” said **Robert White Jr.**, COG Board of Directors chair and District of Columbia councilmember. “While we’ve already implemented several smaller-scale smart initiatives, this effort will help us think bigger about our shared needs, reduce taxpayer costs by making joint purchases and working with local businesses, and plan for these technologies to work seamlessly across our jurisdictional borders.”

The founding organizations will now engage in a comprehensive planning process over the next several months. Through this process, they will work with local jurisdictions to define the operations and governance structure needed to objectively prioritize projects, secure funding, select suppliers, and ensure outcomes for citizens. These investments will be planned to narrow the digital divide and ensure that all communities benefit.

“When a city becomes a hard place to live because infrastructure and municipal services are overburdened, the consequences are not felt equally. Many can and will pay a premium to get around those barriers, and those who cannot pay get squeezed out,” explains **Rosie Allen-Herring**, president and chief executive officer of the United Way of the National Capital Area. “We care about making Greater Washington a smart region because it can level the playing field to make it easier for all people to get to work, access the internet, and live in a safe neighborhood.”

Greater Washington’s technology sector has grown in recent years, earning the region a reputation as an emerging technology hub. The Greater Washington Smart Region Movement aims to support that trend and drive solutions to long-term development challenges.

John Garvey, chair of the Consortium of Universities and president of the Catholic University of America, explained, “We have a tremendous opportunity to demonstrate to the rest of the country—and to the rest of the world—that the academic community can work with the regional businesses and governments to ensure that the necessary and prepared talent is present and available to meet the needs of a smart region.”

“I am very pleased to see this broad scale public-private initiative across Greater Washington to create a smart region,” said Dr. **Sokwoo Rhee**, associate director for Cyber-Physical Systems Innovation at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and leader of the Global City Teams Challenge (GCTC) for SMART Cities/Regions. “This team’s comprehensive vision, coupled with their determination to collaborate across the public sector, private sector, and academia is well aligned with the goal of the Global City Teams Challenge (GCTC) program to encourage collaboration between local governments and technology innovators at scale.”

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About the Greater Washington Board of Trade The Greater Washington Board of Trade is the region’s premier business organization and has represented all industry sectors in the District of Columbia, suburban Maryland and Northern Virginia for 130 years. Pro-business and non-partisan, the Board of Trade uses its tremendous convening power to strengthen our regional economy. It is focused on advancing technology and innovation in the region to drive inclusive economic growth and livability. www.bot.org About the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments is an independent, nonprofit association where area leaders address regional issues affecting the District of Columbia, suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia. COG’s membership is comprised of more than 300 elected officials from 24 local governments, the Maryland and Virginia state legislatures, and U.S. Congress. www.mwkog.org About the Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area The Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area consists of seventeen colleges and universities in the District of Columbia and contiguous counties in Maryland and Virginia that serve nearly 290,000 students. Consortium colleges and universities represent every sector of nonprofit higher education, creating strength through its diversity of institutions. www.consortium.org