

February 14, 2018

### **Testimony by Stewart Schwartz to Council of Governments regarding Metro Funding**

Chairman Letourneau and members of the Board -- thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your leadership on Metro.

I speak today in strong support of the regional commitment of \$500 million in new long-term, dedicated, and bondable funding for WMATA allocated under the existing formula with \$154 million from Virginia, \$167 million from Maryland, and \$178 million from the District of Columbia. I'm joined in supporting this funding by the 22 non-profit organizations in the Fund it Fix it campaign. My organization, CSG, has also joined and proudly serves on the Executive Committee of the MetroNow coalition in supporting funding and reform for WMATA to return the system to world-class status.

Metro is critical to this region and the city, to our economic competitiveness, to a functioning transportation network, for access to jobs, and for a sustainable future – reducing air and water pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Without Metro, the region simply could not function. Access to transit – rail and bus – is critical to access to jobs and the ability to escape poverty. Metro is a competitive advantage in attracting Fortune 500 companies, and essential to retaining a significant proportion of federal government and contracting jobs. 86% of new office construction is within ¼ mile of a Metro station and 54% of the region's jobs are within ½ mile of a Metro station. Marriott, Choice Hotels, Hilton, Nestle and now possibly Amazon are moving to Metro stations.

Metro, and other supportive transit and bicycle/pedestrian investments, along with parking reforms, has made it possible for DC to absorb 120,000 new residents in a decade. Metro makes possible the focusing of jobs and housing at suburban Metro stations, which is the most effective way we can reduce vehicle miles travelled, traffic, and greenhouse gas emissions. Metro and TOD are at the core of COG's Region Forward vision, Place + Opportunity, the TPB Regional Transportation Priorities Plan and the recent priorities in the TPB Long Range Plan Task Force resolution.

I commend our allies in the business community and their on the ground lobbyists with whom we are working closely in the three jurisdictions. They are putting a major investment into this effort to win full funding, as is my organization. I commend the General Manager whose efforts have given the region

confidence in progress at WMATA and who has been appearing before legislative committees in DC, Richmond and Annapolis. Local elected officials have also made the journey to Annapolis and Richmond to make the case. The WMATA government relations staff and local government staff have been informed and essential advocates as well. And leaders in the three jurisdictions are in frequent contact.

Yesterday in Virginia we helped to move a bill out of each house and in Maryland we had about 20 business, non-profit and labor groups testifying before House Appropriations. We have never had such a broad coalition nor have we ever had all three jurisdictions working this closely together on dedicated funding for Metro.

We thank you for your efforts over the past year and I urge you to and your fellow local elected officials to be in non-stop contact with the Governors, Mayor, and legislators to win the full \$500 million in funding and consensus on reforms. The time period between now and the Virginia veto session on April 18 will be the critical period during which all three states must reach agreement.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stewart Schwartz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Stewart Schwartz  
Executive Director  
Coalition for Smarter Growth