



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**January 8, 2018**

**Contact: Lynnette Johnson Williams**

[Lynnette.Williams@Edelman.com](mailto:Lynnette.Williams@Edelman.com)

**(202) 326-1755 office**

**(202) 255-0565 mobile**

**MetroNow Launches Business, Nonprofit and Grassroots Coalition  
to Reform Washington Region's Transit System**

*Federal City Council, Greater Washington Board of Trade, Greater Washington Partnership, The 2030 Group, Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce, Coalition for Smarter Growth to lead coalition; propose immediate changes to Metro's governance, funding and operations*

**Washington, D.C., January 8, 2018** – Calling on elected leaders region-wide to take immediate action to reform Washington's transit system, business, nonprofit and grassroots groups across the District, Virginia and Maryland today launched the MetroNow Coalition, unveiling an explicit proposal for reforms to the Washington transit system's governance, funding and operations. Building on existing proposals to bring Washington's public transportation system into the future, the Coalition's proposal seeks to capitalize on the opportunities to act this year—when elected officials across all three jurisdictions have voiced the urgency of taking action to reform the system, and several bills are already in play.

Led by an executive committee consisting of the Federal City Council, Greater Washington Board of Trade, Greater Washington Partnership, The 2030 Group, Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce and the Coalition for Smarter Growth; and members consisting of Leadership Greater Washington and the District of Columbia Building Industry Association, the MetroNow Coalition includes broad representation across the business and nonprofit community, from Annapolis to Richmond. The group plans to work with federal, state and District elected officials to enact comprehensive reforms in 2018.

Anthony Williams, former Washington mayor and CEO and executive director of The Federal City Council, said, "Metro is one of the region's greatest assets. With regional collaboration and leadership from Richmond, Annapolis and the District of Columbia, we can put Metro back on a safe, smart and sustainable path in 2018. Attention to funding, governance and operations will bring about the greatest benefit to the regional economy and to the people who depend on Metro every day."

"Reliable and effective transit is an essential resource shared by thriving economies around the world," said Jason Miller, chief executive officer of the Greater Washington Partnership. "If the Capital Region is to remain competitive globally, we must double our efforts to transform all elements of our transportation system, none more central than Metro. MetroNow's powerful voice calling for urgent action underscores just how important Metro is to our region's economy today and for future

generations. We must come together to advance meaningful, long-term reform during this year's legislative sessions."

Kim Horn, president of Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States and chair elect of the Greater Washington Board of Trade, said, "Building on the great momentum we've seen across the region already on this issue, we believe significant progress is on the horizon. It's time."

"The most powerful and effective campaigns combine the business and civic advocacy sectors," said Stewart Schwartz, executive director of the nonprofit Coalition for Smarter Growth. "That's why we are here, and it's a sign of our collective commitment to winning a regional solution for Metro this year."

As a Capital Region that not only runs the federal government, but also attracts [20 million U.S. tourists](#) each year, Greater Washington relies heavily on its transit system to drive future growth. Metro removes more than [1 million car trips](#) from the region's roads each day; without Metro, commuters in the region would experience commutes [25 percent longer](#) than they do currently. The transit system also bolsters state-wide tax revenue in [Virginia](#) and [Maryland](#), as transit-oriented development brings new jobs and new residents to each jurisdiction.

"If we are going to be in position to attract large and innovative corporations like Amazon, we must retain our highly talented workforce, and to do that we must have a Metro system that works," said Bob Buchanan, president of The 2030 Group. "The unprecedented level of regional collaboration behind the coalition indicates how important a priority Metro is to the Greater Washington business community and how willing it is to work to create the environment that is needed for businesses to be created, grow and thrive here."

### **Governance reforms + dedicated funding = operational improvements**

The MetroNow Coalition's proposal for comprehensive reform calls for immediate, concrete action in two key areas—reforming Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)'s long-term governance and funding. Coalition members agree these reforms should, in turn, create operational efficiencies that will enable safe, frequent and reliable transit; increased ridership; and reasonable fares that collectively contribute to the overall quality of life and economic success of the region.

Coalition leaders believe failure to fully address Metro's funding and governance crisis is not an option. The coalition's platform acknowledges the existing strong political will across the region in support of making the substantial changes necessary to sustain the system long term—right now. Recent movement on the issue includes action at the federal level with bills promoting Metro reform from Rep. Comstock of Virginia and Reps. Brown, Delaney and Raskin of Maryland; the Virginia budget proposal includes dedicated funding for Metro; the D.C. Council has proposed a new funding mechanism; and Maryland legislators plan to introduce a bill in the upcoming session surrounding dedicated funding for Metro.

Specifically, the MetroNow Coalition's proposal urges:

- **Governance reforms that replace the current 16-member WMATA board with a smaller, independent board.** A smaller and more effective board can balance political leadership priorities more effectively. Currently, board members have split responsibilities to their jurisdictions, which makes it difficult to look out for the system as a whole. In addition, no

relevant experience is currently required to sit on the board—a loophole the Coalition’s proposal is designed to address.

- **New, dedicated, bondable funding to support Metro’s ongoing development and continual improvement.** Specifically, MetroNow’s proposal includes a minimum of \$500 million in new, dedicated and bondable funding, with the District, Maryland and Virginia each responsible for their fair share, with flexibility to determine their own sources of funding to meet that requirement.
- **A commitment of at least \$150 million annually from the federal government.** Combined with funds from the individual jurisdictions, this investment will leverage no less than \$15.5 billion in bond proceeds over the next 10 years and provide long-term funding to support the regional population, jobs and economic growth.

“Taking these concrete actions—immediately—will enable operational efficiencies we can only dream about today,” said Harry Klaff, managing director, JLL, and chairman of the Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce. “Imagine a Metro system that doesn’t just run safely and on time, but is equipped to take advantage of innovative solutions and evolve with new technologies. We believe that vision is possible, but not without dramatic governance and funding reforms enacted in 2018 to preserve the region’s economic security, quality of life and global competitiveness.”

###

### **About the MetroNow Coalition**

The MetroNow Coalition is a group of regional leaders from organizations representing businesses and non-profit advocates who have come together to ensure that action is taken to put Metro—the backbone of Greater Washington’s transportation infrastructure—on a safe, smart and sustainable path forward in 2018 and beyond. We are dedicated to securing comprehensive improvement of Metro’s governance, funding and operational structures in 2018. Visit [www.MetroNow.com](http://www.MetroNow.com) for more information.

In October, Coalition members commissioned an online [survey](#) of 621 registered voters in the District, suburban Maryland and Northern Virginia, finding that 94 percent of respondents agreed that the Metro system is valuable to the greater Washington region. In the survey, 70 percent also supported an increase in public funding to improve the Metro system, and 90 percent agreed that without an effective governance structure, the Metro system can never reach its full potential.