



The National Capital Planning Commission Introduced the Region's Newest Player - RIC

The National Capital Planning Commission (NCP) presented Meet RIC on March 29, 2011. The panel discussion introduced the concept of a Regional Innovation Cluster (RIC) as a tool to drive economic development that builds on a region's existing industry strengths. While federal development already underway at Washington's St. Elizabeths campus (St. E's) was a major focus of the discussion, other jurisdictions presented strategies to grow the existing homeland security economy within their communities. These individual local efforts will cumulatively inform the regional homeland security cluster strategy currently under development with funding from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA).

With nearly 100 attendees, Meet RIC continued NCP's tradition of attracting a large regional audience to its Speaker Series events. Special outreach to economic development professionals and residents from Ward 8 and Prince George's County brought in many attendees who had never before attended an NCP event.



[L. Preston Bryant, Jr.](#)

Following a welcome from NCP Chairman **L. Preston Bryant, Jr.**, **Carol Mitten**, Executive Director for Urban Affairs and Headquarters Consolidation for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), described the investments at St. E's West Campus as critically important for achieving the agency's mission objectives. The new facility and consolidation will reduce the number of DHS offices from over 50 to just 7-8 locations, with 14,000 of the region's 26,000 employees relocated to St. E's. DHS recognizes that St. E's can spur new investment and redevelopment in surrounding areas including Anacostia and Congress Heights, but only through collaboration with the District, community residents, and other federal agencies.



[Carol Mitten](#)

As event moderator, **Dave Robertson**, Executive Director at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, stressed that the size and scope of the St. E's project warrants regional attention. "If a private enterprise located the same square footage and number of employees anywhere else in the region, it would make front page news."



[Dave Robertson](#)

Barry Johnson, Senior Advisor and Director of Strategic Initiatives at EDA, explained the Administration's focus on RICs as a framework for economic development planning and activities. Rather than competing to attract individual corporations or chasing the hottest industries, local governments should work collaboratively to fortify the region's strengths and increase their advantage in the competitive global marketplace.



[Barry Johnson](#)

The President's FY12 EDA budget includes \$40 million for a national competition for regional cluster planning and implementation strategies. Funding is leveraged with investments in R&D, innovation tax credits, entrepreneurship support, and \$100 million to train science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) educators.

Harriet Tregoning, Director of the DC Office of Planning, shared the District's vision for redevelopment of St. E's East Campus. Since DHS' \$14 billion annual procurement includes acquisition of new technologies for America's 25 million first responders, TSA, border patrol, and other security operations, the District is analyzing opportunities to provide education and workforce training programs, business incubators, research labs, and meeting space on the East Campus. This analysis also identifies direct career pipelines for Ward 8 residents, and opportunities to work with area schools to steer students towards STEM education to support future employment in homeland security related fields.



[Harriet Tregoning](#)

Terry Holzheimer, Director of Arlington Economic Development, described Arlington's Fostering Emerging Technology Sectors strategies which aim to improve government-business-university linkages so high-tech industries can remain innovative, resilient and competitive. Since release of the 2004 report, Arlington has focused on managing the loss of 17,000 direct jobs through BRAC by negotiating to retain several Department of Defense research facilities that will continue to support innovation.



[Terry Holzheimer](#)

Christian Johansson, Maryland's Secretary for the Department of Business and Economic Development, presented CyberMaryland, an economic development strategy to position the state as the "epicenter for cybersecurity in the U.S." Implementation priorities include establishing a National Center for Excellence for cybersecurity, strengthening tech transfer and commercialization, developing an educational cybersecurity pipeline, and creating a multifaceted marketing program to promote economic opportunities.



[Christian Johansson](#)

Christina Gabriel from Carnegie Mellon introduced her role as leading two EDA-funded efforts to develop homeland security strategies for the both the District and the region. She drew parallels between the District and Pittsburgh, where the economy rebounded after the loss of steel manufacturing by embracing advanced materials and innovative infrastructure technologies. In Pittsburgh, philanthropy was the key to generating economic opportunities within low-income neighborhoods.



[Christina Gabriel](#)

Next steps for this project involve identifying key opportunities for collaboration at a regional scale.



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