What Are Regions Good For?
21st Century Challenges That Fit

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Core Claim

• Metropolitan regions are the platform on which many key challenges from economic competition to transportation to workforce to quality of life are played out
Critical Mismatch

• We are organized around towns, states and nations but our challenges are emerging at the neighborhood, regional and international levels

• The responses have varied: regional governments, special purpose authorities, strong counties, associations of governments etc.
Critical Misalignment

- Important challenges are emerging at neighborhood, metropolitan regional and international levels and government is organized at the town, state and national levels
- Question: Which locally acceptable ways can we organize to meet these emerging challenges?
Challenges That Fit

• Economic development – state, town and regional (48 states have regional economic development units)
• Transportation – commuter sheds, TOD,…
• Workforce – massive commuting in a large area
• Housing – regional housing market in affordability
Change Drivers

- Cheap energy versus expensive energy
- Wide open versus climate sensitive energy
- 300 million people in 2000 versus 455 million by 2050
- Demographic shift to no majority culture by 2050
- Weak economic competitors versus three with 250 million well trained workers each
Change Driver Snapshots

• US is 24\textsuperscript{th} ranked country for math skills of 15 year olds
• US is ranked 14\textsuperscript{th} county in reading
• US is not in the top 10 in speed or price of broadband access
NOT MAKING THE GRADE IN SCIENCE

Despite living in one of the world’s richest countries, American students perform relatively poorly on science exams.

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**INTERNATIONAL STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN SCIENCE COMPARED TO COUNTRY AFFLUENCE**

- Poorer-performing students in higher-income countries
- Better-performing students in higher-income countries

**GDP PER PERSON (THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS)**

- $24,100 median GDP per capita

**SCIENCE TEST SCORE**

- 489 median test score

**NOTE:** Median values based on the 57 countries in the program for international student assessment survey. Gross domestic product is measured on a purchasing-power parity basis which takes into account relative differences in cost of living and inflation.

Data: Organization for Economic Cooperation & Development, World Bank, BusinessWeek
Hartford Metropolitan Region

- A million people
- Diverse economy
- River in the center
- Crossroads of two interstates
- 100 miles to the second largest economic center in the world (NYC region 1 trillion dollars, second only to Tokyo)
Comparison Region: Charlotte
9.6 miles
Comparison Region: Portland
44.3 miles
Where Are We?

In 10 years and 13 miles subway 14 miles elevated train 68 miles busway underway
A Regional Agenda

• Municipal service sharing
• Transit enhancements and transit oriented development - incentives and facilitation
• Pedestrian friendly retrofits of communities
• Regional workforce and education focus
Core Thought

- We need to change the “template” of cheap energy, high land consumption, “slash and burn” development and auto centered transportation
- “Boutique” demonstrations of partial solutions will not get us where we want to be
Reference

• CRCOG Regional GIS at [www.crcog.org](http://www.crcog.org) regional transportation strategy, regional housing, regional homelessness, regional community design

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