

For More Information, Contact:
Emily Weberman, ULI Washington
240-497-1919
Emily.Weberman@uli.org

NEWS RELEASE

Ashby Heath, Harrison Communications
410-377-9015
maheath@gmail.com

ULI Washington Survey Points to Lack of Regional Plan As The Greatest Impediment to Job Growth in Washington

Federal Government and Educated Workforce are Seen as Greatest Competitive Advantages

Bethesda, MD – December 10, 2012— In a survey of regionalism experts conducted at an event held last month by ULI Washington, one of the largest District Councils of the Urban Land Institute, 28 percent of the attendees reported that the lack of a regional plan is the greatest impediment to future job growth and economic competitiveness.

Sustained transit funding (21 percent) was the second biggest impediment, according to the survey. Federal budget uncertainty and lack of economic diversity were the third largest threats, ranked by 18 percent of the respondents.

The ULI Washington event, “Regional Leadership: Vision to Action,” featured two keynotes: former Mayor Anthony Williams and Deputy Undersecretary Polly Trottenberg from the U.S. Department of Transportation, as well as panels of local and national experts on regionalism. The event explored the biggest barriers and opportunities related to economic competitiveness and quality-of-life in the national capital region and laid a foundation for action to address those barriers. Attendees were surveyed several times during the half-day program.

According to survey respondents, the area’s greatest competitive advantages are the federal government and its educated workforce, with public transit infrastructure coming in third.

Additional Survey Findings:

- From a business environment perspective, high cost of living (29%), lack of affordable housing (22%), and fragmentation of government leadership (20%) were considered to be the region’s greatest impediments. Unbalanced growth throughout the region was also viewed as an issue (16%).
- Nearly two-thirds of respondents (60%) believe a new program or strategy needs to be implemented, and 66% think an improved partnership between existing regional organizations should take the lead on addressing these issues.
- Nearly all (92%) respondents said they would support some form of new taxes or fees for transportation and infrastructure in the region. The two most widely supported ways were a dedicated gas tax (49%) and vehicle miles traveled tax/fee (36%)

- Nearly three quarters of respondents believe it is unlikely that the region's upward economic trajectory will continue. 40% reported that it's somewhat unlikely and 30% said its very unlikely.

“ULI Washington’s Regionalism Conference was created to provide a forum to discuss the challenges and obstacles we face in creating a strong regional strategy, as well as to learn best practices from national experts on the subject,” said Doug Cooper, chair, ULI Washington’s Regional Initiative Council and principal, Union Realty Partners, Inc. “The survey confirmed that the private sector plays a critical role in establishing a regional strategy for economic growth, and we look forward to using the information we learned to make the Washington, DC region better than ever.”

** For a copy of the complete survey results or for comment, please contact Ashby Heath at maheath@gmail.com*

About ULI Washington

The Urban Land Institute is a global nonprofit education and research institute supported by its members. Its mission is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in sustaining and creating thriving communities worldwide. Established in 1936, the Institute has nearly 30,000 members representing all aspects of land use and development disciplines. ULI Washington is one of the largest District Councils of the Urban Land Institute with more than 1,800 members. For more information, visit www.washington.uli.org

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