

# Metropolitan Setting <sup>1</sup>

## GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Washington, D. C., is unique in being a city of national and international significance as well as a regional center. Its metropolitan area is 2,400 square miles and includes two States and the District of Columbia. The Federal Government owns a sizeable proportion of the land.

Washington, D. C., is the focus of one of the Nation's fastest growing metropolitan areas. Washington ranked twelfth in population among Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSA's) in 1940 and had moved up to seventh rank by 1970, expanding as the role of the Federal Government expanded, but this trend slowed during the 1960's. The suburbs in the meantime have continued to grow, gaining over 60 percent population between 1960 and 1970 (see Figure 2). The fastest growing sections of the SMSA during the 1960's were Prince William, Prince Georges, and Fairfax counties. The SMSA population density in 1970 was 1,216 persons per square mile, and the District of Columbia density was 12,231.

Washington has an exceptionally high proportion of jobs in the center city. In the "Journey to Work" survey from the 1970 Census, only two of the top eight cities have a higher proportion of total SMSA jobs in the central city—Philadelphia and Chicago. However, although total work trips rose by 44 percent between 1960 and 1970, by far the greatest portion of the increase occurred in trips beginning and ending in the suburban ring. The relative proportion of trips carried in private automobiles rose during the decade, while the proportion of transit trips fell (see Figure 3).

## EXISTING PASSENGER TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

The region's major highways include an interstate loop, Route 495 (the Capital Beltway). The recently upgraded Interstate 95 enters the District from the south, terminating just north of the

Capitol Building, and picks up again north of the region at the Beltway. Interstate 295 approaches Washington from the Beltway south of the city, stopping after crossing the Anacostia River. Interstate 66 approaches from the west, terminating at the Beltway. Interstate 270 connects with the Beltway northwest of the city. Major parkways lead west along both banks of the Potomac and south along the Virginia bank.

Washington's highway system is one of the most congested in the Nation during peak hours. It has been targeted for major upgrading and new construction since the late 1950's, but most of the improvements have been stymied by public opposition.

Bus transit service in the region is criticized for being slow, expensive, and uncomfortable. Although streetcars have been out of circulation since 1962, many of the bus routes still follow old streetcar lines that no longer conform to the pattern of urban development. After 1950 the spectre of financial mismanagement lowered public esteem for the privately operated D.C. bus system, and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) took over operations in 1972. The riots of 1968 accentuated fear of crime, and ridership plummeted. Within the past 2 years, however, patronage has held generally steady.

The area's regional rapid rail system has been under construction since 1969, and a 4½-mile segment is due to open in early 1976. The Metro system (see Figure 4) currently is scheduled for completion in 1981, Table 1 shows a summary of Federal grants to area transit operations, exclusive of support for Metro.

TABLE I.—Federal Assistance to Washington, D. C., Transit Programs From F.Y. 1962 to May 31, 1975

Type of Assistance	Federal Share	Total Costs
Capital Grants . . . . .	\$79,958,000	\$118,525,000
Capital Loans . . . . .	57,000,000	58,900,000
Technical Studies . . . . .	6,020,000	10,014,000
TOTAL . . . . .	142,978,000	187,439,000

<sup>1</sup>See figure 1, pp's 14 and 15.

Source Urban Mass Transportation Administration

LAND AREA (1970)

(square miles)

Suburban Ring	2,291.6
District of Columbia	61.4
Entire SMSA	2,353

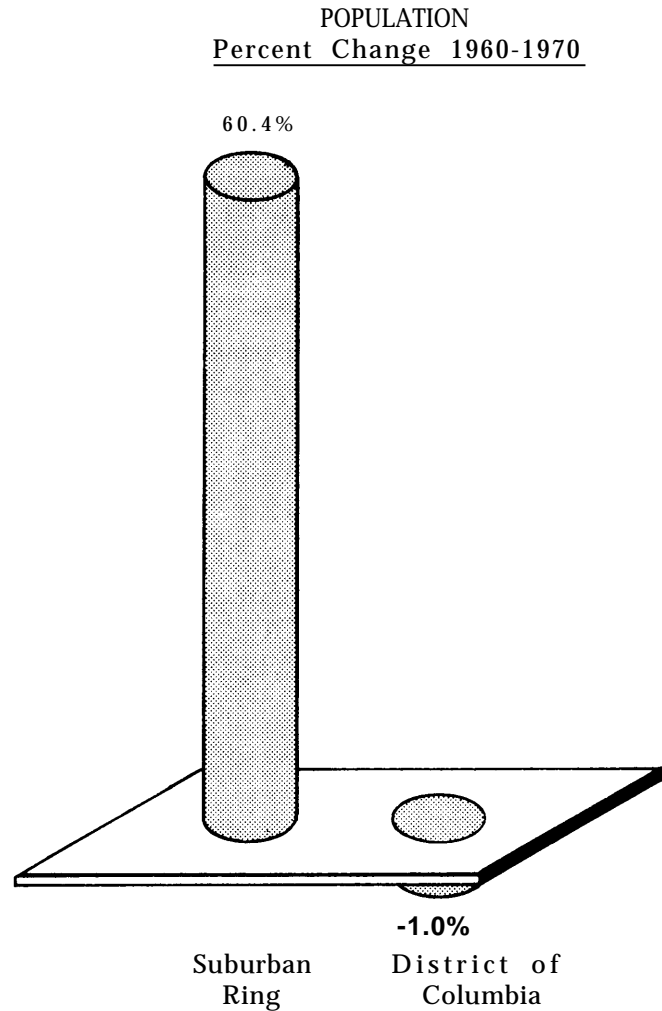
POPULATION

	<u>Suburban Ring</u>	<u>District of Columbia</u>
1960	1,312,654	763,956
1970	2,105,238	756,510

DENSITY

(Population/square mile)

	<u>Suburban Ring</u>	<u>District of Columbia</u>
1960	573	12,422
1970	919	12,321

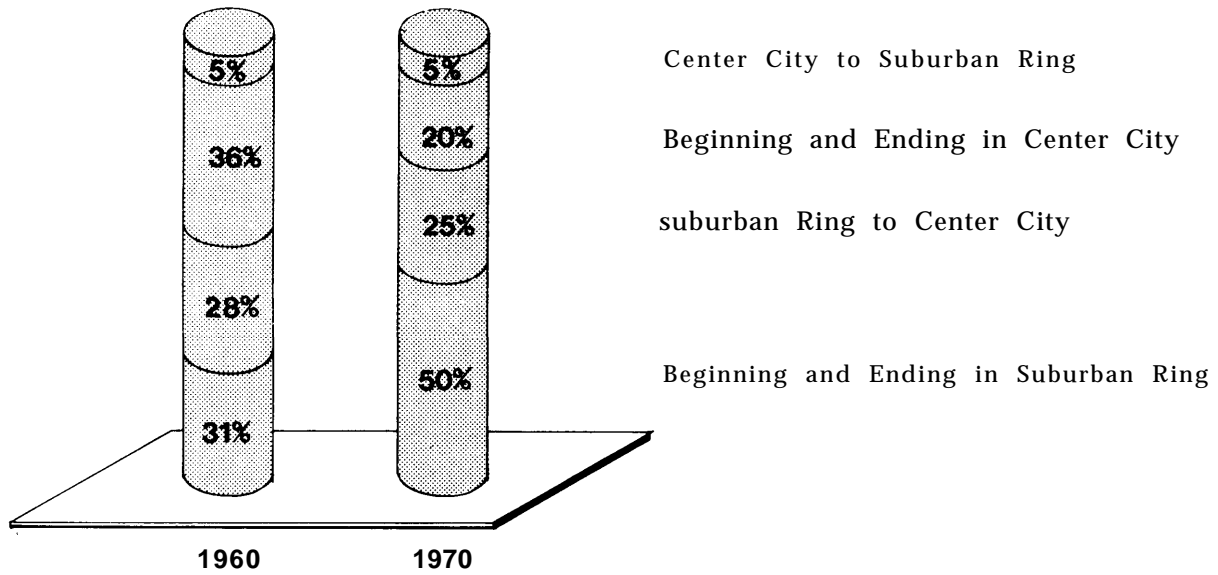


**FIGURE 2: WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN CHARACTERISTICS**

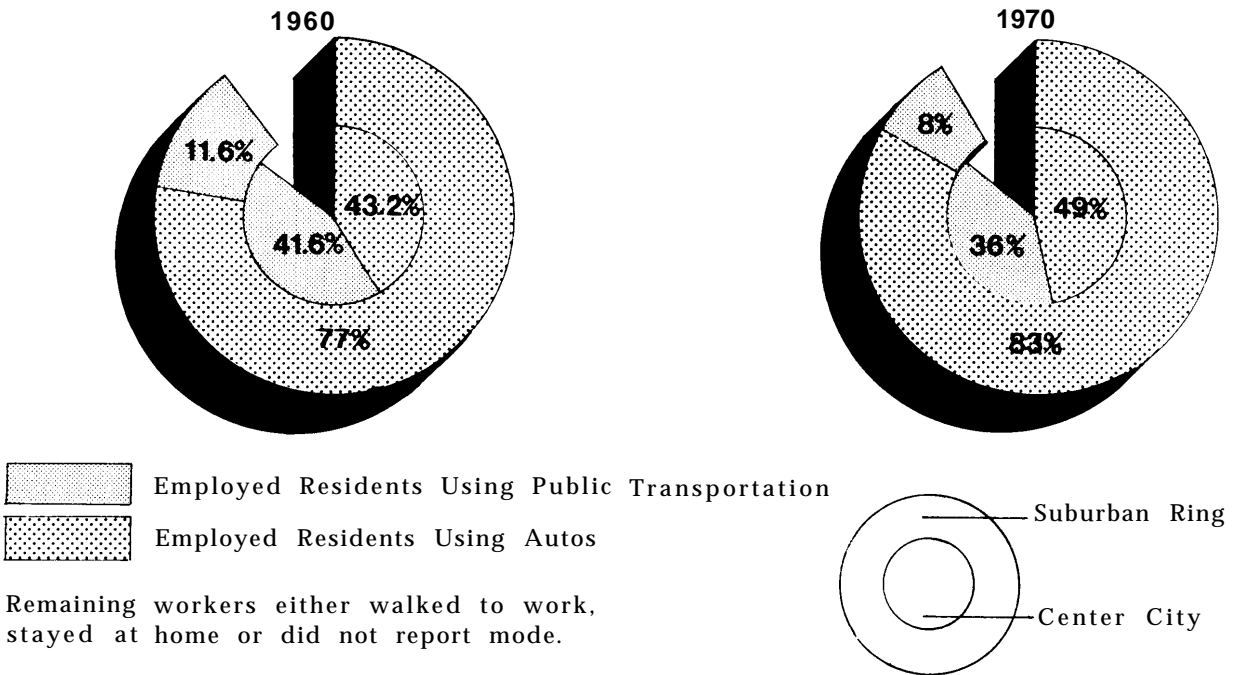
Source: Urban Transportation Fact Book, American Institute of Planners and the Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association of the U.S., Inc., 1974.

A Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA) includes a center city (or cities) , usually-with a population of at least 50,000, plus adjacent counties or other political divisions that are economically and socially integrated with the central area,

**WORK TRIP DISTRIBUTION**



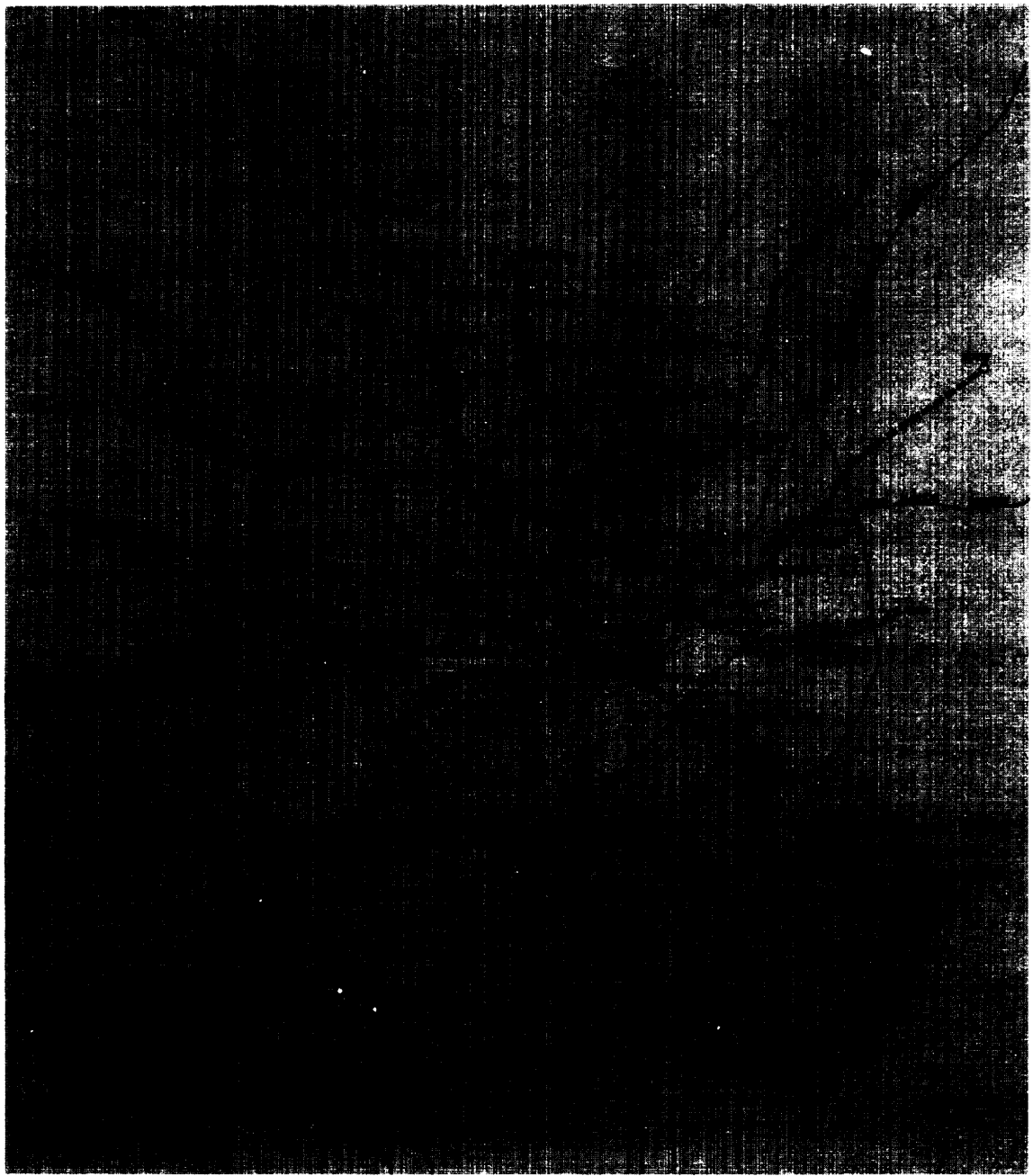
**WORK TRIP MODE**



**FIGURE 3: WASHINGTON SMSA TRAVEL CHARACTERISTICS 1960-1970**

Source: Urban Transportation Fact Book, American Institute of Planners and the Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association of the U.S., Inc., 1974.

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**FIGURE 4: WASHINGTON, D. C., REGIONAL METRO SYSTEM**

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## TRANSPORTATION PLANNING INSTITUTIONS

A large number of institutions currently participate in the transportation planning process in the Washington region due to the area's jurisdictional peculiarities. Most of them, however, play only minor roles.

**TABLE 2.—Federally Recognized Regional Agencies**

Designation	Agency
A-95	Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (Transportation Planning Board)
MPO	Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (Transportation Planning Board)

### The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)

WMATA is an interstate compact signed in 1966. It is empowered to “plan, develop, finance, and cause to be operated improved transit facilities.” It was originally precluded from directly operating transit services, but in 1972 WMATA was given authority to take over and operate the four private bus companies in the region. The six members of WMATA’s rotating board are appointed, two each by the D.C. City Council, the Washington Suburban Transit District, and the Northern Virginia Transportation District.

### The Northern Virginia Transportation District (NVTD) and the Washington Suburban Transit District (WSTD)

These two suburban transit authorities (representing Virginia and Maryland suburbs, respectively) were established in 1964 and 1965 to provide funding conduits to WMATA. The commission memberships are comprised principally of elected officials from local jurisdictions.

### Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) and the Transportation Planning Board (TPB)

COG, the regional A-95 agency, was created in 1966. Its staff prepares regional land use, employment, and population forecasts and does areawide comprehensive planning.

TPB was created in 1965, prior to COG, to be responsible for “3-C” coordination. It has since

affiliated with COG and shares some of the COG staff. The board members come from 17 local jurisdictions and include representatives from State and District of Columbia highway departments.

### National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC)

This agency and COG’s predecessor, the National Capital Regional Planning Council, supervised the first transit needs study in the region. Both were Federally appointed bodies. Until recently NCPC was the planning body for the District of Columbia, but since home rule was granted its interest has been limited to planning for Federal land in the region.

### Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC)

The M-NCPPC is a State agency. It shares responsibility for the planning function with the two counties in the Maryland portion of the national capital region. The Commission prepared the general plan for the bicounty region and a master plan of highways. It has both advisory and administrative responsibilities for zoning and subdivision regulations, but the county governing bodies approve plans and make final decisions on zoning amendments. The county planners have undertaken Metro development impact studies.

### Northern Virginia Planning District Commission

This is a State agency with advisory powers for regional planning in the Northern Virginia suburbs

• <sup>2</sup>Circular A-95 of the Office of Management and Budget requires one agency in each region to be empowered to review all proposals for Federal funds from agencies in that region. Circular A-9.5 replaced Circular A-82, which was created to implement Section 204 of the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 3301).

<sup>3</sup>Originally the “3-C” regional highway agency, TPB (with COG) recently was named the area’s Metropolitan Planning Organization. The Urban Mass Transportation Administration and the Federal Highway Administration require Governors to designate a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in each area to carry out the “continuing, comprehensive transportation planning process . . . carried out cooperatively . . .” (the “3-C” process) mandated by the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962 and the Urban Mass Transportation Assistance Act of 1974. According to joint UMTA-FHWA regulations published in September 1975, MPO’s must prepare or endorse (1) a long-range general transportation plan, including a separate plan for improvements in management of the existing transportation system; (2) an annually updated list of specific projects, called the transportation improvement program (TIP), to implement portions of the long-range plan; and (3) a multiyear planning prospectus supplemented by annual unified planning work programs.

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of Washington. It is coordinating Metro development planning in the area.

#### **District of Columbia**

Until 1968 the District Government was composed of three Federally appointed commissioners with military backgrounds. In 1968 the administration of District affairs was turned over to an appointed City Council. The Council has been an elected body since November 1974.

The District's main involvement in transportation has occurred through its highway department. The City Council has a transportation committee. Its members are councilmen, and it has one staff assistant. The director of the Office of Transporta-

tion Systems Coordination in the Mayor's office attends WMATA board meetings as an advisor to the District's delegates to the WMATA board.

#### **U.S. Congress and the Federal Government**

Congress and the executive branch are principal participants in transportation planning in the national capital region. The House and Senate Appropriations Committees control disbursement of the Federal and District of Columbia shares of Metro capital costs. Decisions concerning new financing plans for Metro must be made with advice from two executive agencies, the Office of Management and Budget and the Urban Mass Transportation Administration.