

SURE Meeting, as part of the METREX Conference in Amsterdam

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Guest: Chuck Bean, executive director, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

Participants: Erik Pasveer, Dagmar Keim, Nina Sehovic, Dirk Temmerman, Frenk Bekkers, Peter Pol, Emma de Wijs, Alankrita Sarkar, David Dooghe.

Washington is a region with 1 million people or more.

The urban growth started 56 ago. In the 60's, began bigger by Johnson. Washington was smaller in the 80's under president Reagan. We were focused on transportation, regional planning and housing. Federal requirements were part of the organization's mission.

We are a voluntary collaboration. This includes drinking water security, waste water agreements, store water management, public safety (new memorandums between law enforcement). We try to finding win-wins and partnerships. On the level of 'Empire', we make the agreements.

Some work is Federal mandated, some work is win-win. We belong to the National Association of Regional Councils of the Government. About 200 metropolitan areas are across the United States. Some metropolitan areas are more rural. Metro's-group have 50.000 people and higher. These metropolitan areas are the most valuable group, that consists of the cities/areas Chicago, Washington, Boston, New-York, Philadelphia, LA, Cansas, Miami. The major Metro's-group is peer learning and sharing. We meet every two weeks with a different topic. Subjects could be water, bicycling and funding opportunity in one week.

The NARC in the US is like METREX in Europe. We would like to build a connection between the NARC and METREX. In major Metro's-groups, there is an interest in energy transition, transit oriented development, hydrogen and bicycling. They have a task force explanatory NARC-METREX.

We would like to invite members of the METREX to join the NARC. Generally, we organize 3 conferences in Cansas city. In January 2022, a more policy oriented conference will be in Washington DC. In June 2023, there will be the national conference of NARC. *Phrase: it is shooting in the dark.* We would like to make a faster connection.

MPO is the acronym that stands for Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Every USA state does need a MPO. The major Metro's-group is developing a large regional development plan. Carrot and stick. Every transportation project must be in a regional plan, in order to get federal funding. MPO has an independent board of directors.

MPO has long run plans. We don't use a wish list, but a combination of local state and federal funding. We will do a physical performance test of roads and transportation. CAK contains the MPO, not all CAK's contain a MPO. In the late 60's, there is an agreement signed. One commute shed in an urbanized area. CAK and MPO stands sometimes alone. In Washington, the CAK and MPO are both. Federal funding is the key. One of the federal rules is environmental justice analysis: the socio-economic environment. Low bar benchmark is to analyze the whole plan. Then, we overlay all plans: more transit and more roads. The environmental analysis studies the question: Are low income communities better or worse off? How can we expand the need and expand the voluntary capacity?

Question:

- *How do you manage to work under different federal governments, such as Trump?*

In my 4 years before Biden, Chuck hoped that nothing too bad happened for his organization. The secretary of transportation had survived. With Biden, there became a main focus of this administration on Sustainability and Equity: Inclusive Economic Development and Climate & Energy. It also includes communities of color. Communities are the end-goal. We are 'retrofitting' from auto-centric century into more focus on transit-oriented development. Since 70's, when the Metro system began, than we had a lot of transit-oriented communities instead of development. It brought the development of mixed-use. Now, one of the top 2-3 challenges is housing and transit-oriented communities as mixed use and mixed income. It is difficult to build more housing nearby transit. We have a battle with the zoning practice of 20th century. That is changing in cities nearby Washington DC. We do two years study of missing middle housing. We have apartments of single family housing. What is in the middle? The objective is to create different modern housing in all jurisdictions.

Question:

- *Are you aware with other cities in the Eurodelta?*
- *Are you funded by the national organisation?*
- *What is the business model?*

My organization is independent on funding. It depends on the members: a funding is paid to the National Association. Organizations come together for Federal funding. There are also projects for Federal funding, for instance: greenhouse gas for inventory. The major Metro's-group would be the most interesting.

The question of megaregions, from personal experience, We would like to see easier cooperation with Baltimore, Richmond et cetera. That would be a 10 million megaregion. There is a partnership focusing on Baltimore-Richmond. We appreciate this partnership, with the metro region. Transportation looks at bottlenecks on the roadway system (a bridge tunnel is for instance too small). Some advocacy is needed to get it fixed. How can we solve and develop more high speed rail? Some rail lines are owned by a freight company, that has dominance on the rail. Commuting persons have to wait for the freight transport.

Amazon had created its second headquarter in the region. That had unleashed a lot of new ideas of economic opportunity between Arlington and Washington DC and Arlington and West-Virginia. It is not adding on rail. There is a dynamic on northern Virginia and the rest of Virginia. How can we conceptualize and think about the affordable housing and the labor market (amounts of unfilled jobs)? *Invite: Maybe, we can do a call on MS Teams in one hour.*

Question:

- *Do you have already other collaborations on certain scale of action?*
- *How do you look onto other collaborations in networks (other than Europe or METREX)?*

No, we don't have already other collaborations. METREX in Europe is all what Chuck knows. There is also the Eurocities Network.