

Regional Reference B: Quotes on the Subject of Regionalism

A. From various sources

- “Whoso desireth to discourse in a proper manner concerning corporated towns and communities must take in a great variety of matter and should be allowed a great deal of time and preparation ... The subject is extensive and difficult”. Thomas Madox, British Historiographer, 1726 (The Law of Government Operations, Rhyne, p.1)
- “Manage the future, or be managed by it”, a quote by the ‘Mayor of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County’ during a visit of Hampton Roads leaders to his newly re-structured, metropolitan city.
- “Given Virginia’s preference for cooperation rather than coercion as the de facto organizing principle for regional policy, this means just one jurisdiction, either a county or a city, can veto regional efforts. One local business man calls voluntary regionalism ‘dancing with your sisters’. “, State of the [Hampton Roads] Region - 2001 Report, page 109
- “Diversity among neighbors injures the entire region’s ability to compete economically with other regions”, State of the [Hampton Roads] Region - 2001 Report, page 112
- “Citizenship in Virginia has made its way back into the public purpose realm with creative involvement in diverse waysHowever, the future may not work for all of us as well as it can if we do not broaden citizenship to include a significant regional dimension”, State of the [Hampton Roads] Region - 2001 Report, page 114
- “I don’t see an irreconcilable conflict between cities and suburbs. We all do better in a region when we cooperate together”. Timothy M. Kaine, Virginia Governor-elect, The Virginian Pilot, November 14, 2005, p. A.14

B. From Neil R. Peirce, author of “Citistates: How Urban America Can Prosper In A Competitive World” , and one of the nation's foremost authorities on regionalism.

- “America's future is the future of its city-states - the 314 metropolitan regions where 80 percent of us live. They are our great engines of economic progress. They are our cash cows”.

- “If regions are free to strategize, to set their own plans for strong and sustainable economies, you will be assured of a successful 21st century”.
- “While 80 percent of Americans live in metro areas, these urban regions account for 84 percent of all jobs. In financial services, the metro areas have 90 percent of the jobs. In both high technology and business services, it's a phenomenal 93 percent”.
- “When metro areas thrive, the nation thrives”.

C. From William R. Dodge, Principal, Strategic Partnerships Consulting, and author of several books on regionalism, including “Regional Excellence: Governing Together To Compete Globally and Flourish Locally”

- “Regions are the new communities of the 21st century. They have emerged just as villages, towns, cities and counties did before them... and now they determine our fates”.
- “Regions drive local, state, national and global economies. The largest ten regions in the country out produce 31 states. Regions worldwide capture almost half - 47 of the first 100 slots in the combined list of top regional and national economies”.
- “Regions connect us to the places where we work, play, recreate, shop, pray and learn”.
- “It takes the whole region to live the good life”.
- “Most major economic, environmental, and social challenges require regional cooperation. Regions are our most organic settlements, cutting across local, state, and even national boundaries and engaging public, private, and civic sectors”.

D. From “New Visions for Metropolitan America”, 1994, by Anthony Downs of the Lincoln Institute for Land Policy for the Brookings Institution

- “Although many local governments try to deal with them in isolation, growth-related-problems are regional rather than local in nature”, p. 26

- “Local growth management policies have significant impacts on the overall growth of metropolitan areas. In the long run they restrict the supply of new properties or increase the costs of producing the supply or both”, p. 39
- “The belief among suburbanites that they are independent of central cities is a delusion. So is the belief that central cities are obsolete”, p. 52
- “No jurisdiction is an island. Every suburb is linked to its central city and to other suburbs”, p. 58
- “The very idea of setting [regional] priorities ... implies that some agency exists that can make such decisions”, p. 113
- “Coordinating the growth of job centers with the creation of a public transit network connecting them would require centralized planning and control of both land use and public transportation facilities in the metropolitan area”, p. 162
- “The most powerful form of metropolitan area governance would be the “pure” metropolitan government A second possible form of governance ... would be a regional government with limited functions”, p. 162
- “Overcoming the deeply entrenched resistance of local governments to sharing any of their authority over land use is the biggest obstacle to carrying out cohesive strategies for metropolitan area growth. Among the alternatives I have considered, the two with the greatest potential are regional agencies to coordinate [both] federal funding in each metropolitan area and state requirements for local governments to engage in comprehensive planning within a state-established framework”, p. 182

E. From “American Metropolitcs: The New Suburban Reality”, 2002, by Myron Orfield, former Minnesota state legislator and Chairman, Metropolitan Area Research Corporation

- “As a group, metropolitan areas [in the U.S.] are consuming new land much faster than they are gaining population”, p. 49
- Sprawling metro areas – those that consume land at the fastest rates compared with their population growth – have growing suburbs with weaker resource bases and less growth in these resources than their counterparts in places that manage growth more efficiently”, p. 49

- “The many challenges facing America’s metropolitan areas can be attacked effectively only through a coordinated, regional approach”, p. 67
- “[An] aspect of local government’s pursuit of positive fiscal dividends is the competition among them for desirable commercial and industrial properties. That competition, which pervades metropolitan areas ... is likely to be wasteful and biased ... wasteful, because the resources expended do not enhance the overall regional economy ... and biased, because it creates the potential for a vicious, self-reinforcing cycle of decline in places that “lose” early in the game”, p. 91-92
- “Nor does institutional reform necessarily imply designing a regional government from whole cloth. New or existing cooperative arrangements in which the argument for regional control is strongest (water management and transportation, for instance) can be the building blocks for future [regional] reform”, p. 110
- “Because land-use decisions have such a wide-ranging impact on real and perceived quality of life, this area of reform is often the most visible and talked-about part of a regional reform agenda”, p. 111
- “Regionalizing infrastructure planning and provision helps guide development in more efficient and equitable ways”, p. 121
- “Evidence of the continued interdependence between cities and their surrounding suburbs and of the heightened importance of regional efficiency and productivity in the competitive global market provides additional economic incentives for cities to abandon parochial laws and attitudes in favor of collaboration and, ultimately, structural reforms of government systems”, p. 130
- “Responsible for planning and programming transportation investments, metropolitan planning organizations [MPOs] are the most widespread form of regional governance in the United States today”, p. 137
- “Most critics of regional governance argue that it would violate the principle of local autonomy and unnecessarily add another layer of government. However, effective, efficient regional governance strikes a balance that allows local control over issues best addressed by smaller local governments (such as public safety, licensing, street maintenance, garbage collection, and purely local land-use or zoning issues), while promoting cooperation among local governments on larger issues affecting the entire

region (such as highway and sewer investments, affordable housing, transit, land-use planning, air and water quality, and economic development)", p. 148-149

F. From the Report by the Virginia Metropolitan Areas Study Commission (the Hahn Commission), 1967

- "The Report summarizes the increasingly critical problems facing Virginia's growing metropolitan areas. It offers a series of recommendations, a Program of Action, through which the State can assume a positive role in encouraging the localities in each metropolitan area to work together on matters involving area-wide resources and needs, in the interest of local government, the metropolitan area, and the Commonwealth". p. 3
- "The metropolitan area has become the heart of Virginia's industrializing economy. If that economy is to expand as rapidly as possible, and if Virginians are to enjoy maximum opportunities for economic advancement and the most beneficial environment, then positive, constructive steps to deal more effectively with the problems of the metropolitan area are essential". p.3
- "Delay in meeting the growing problems of urban and metropolitan Virginia will exact an immeasurable cost in money, in the well-being of many citizens, and in the economic and social development of the Commonwealth". p. 3
- "Citizens in metropolitan areas expect ... to travel easily to and from places of work, commerce, and recreation. They understand intuitively what many government officials may recognize consciously: problems are not confined to local government boundaries". p. 7
- "[T]he cooperation and coordination of local governments, in resolving problems of area-wide concern, free resources for meeting local problems and needs. Thus, local government as a strong participant in area-wide affairs can also mean local government with greater potential to fulfill its purely local role". p. 8
- "The fragmentation of governmental units and powers is one of the most difficult problems facing metropolitan areas throughout the nation and often results in expensive duplications of services and facilities, uneconomical operating levels, and problems of coordination". p. 11
- "Careful analysis of ... problems indicates that neither the State nor the metropolitan areas themselves can depend on local agreements and contracts for solutions alone. A compelling need is apparent for permanent arrangements for coordinated area-wide planning, policy decisions, and implementation. Such arrangements must possess the full legal, organizational, and financial base required to deal effectively with area-wide service problems". p. 12

- “The principle difficulty of [the Public Service Authorities] approach is that it complicates rather than simplifies governmental coordination in a metropolitan area. ... The tendency to rely on single purpose authorities may indicate a lack of governmental leadership and foresight, leading ultimately to serious aggravation of metropolitan problems. ... Such authorities contribute to fragmentation of governmental powers in metropolitan areas. Their effectiveness is limited”. p. 13-14
- “There is little question of the significant advantages offered by a governmental structure in which those governmental functions which can best be provided on an area-wide basis are performed by an area-wide governmental unit, and those functions which should be performed locally are retained by local governmental units”. p. 14

G. From Lester Thurow, Professor of Economics and Management and Dean Emeritus (1987-1993), Sloan School of Management, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

- “There are no such things as cities and counties; they are irrelevant units”.
- “The only relevant unit is an economic unit, and that cities, at one time, were relevant economically but they aren't anymore”.
- “If you define a city as a geographical location with a boundary and a wall around it, that's not a viable economic unit, nor is a county a viable economic unit”.
- “Until you start to think outside of the circle or whatever the configuration is, and start to think of a city and a county together as a metropolitan region, you are not thinking about a viable unit for strategic planning purposes”.
- “The regions are the competing entities, both nationally and internationally”.

H. From “Guiding Principles for Successful Regionalism. Insights and lessons from Atlanta, Charlotte, Louisville, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Phoenix, and Portland” , a cooperative study by the University of Cincinnati, Northern Kentucky University and Xavier University:

- “Every one of the cities we visited had its own particular set of successes and failures from which to learn. We discovered three common threads which we will call guiding principles. They are:”

- “Successful regions present a unified front to prospective customers”.
- “Successful regions provide a single-source contact for regional data and information”.
- “Successful regions emphasize education and workforce development”.
- “Workforces are inherently regional. The development and viability of a strong labor force is an area in which an entire region must work together”.
- “Collaboration in workforce development is made easier by the fact there are fewer parochial interests. Companies looking to locate within the Greater Cincinnati region draw from a pool of workers from both sides of the river. Skilled workers trained and living in Northern Kentucky can easily work in any part of the region. Beyond competitive reasons, a skilled, well-educated workforce is important in creating a high quality of life and increasing incomes as widely as possible”.

I. From Dr. Marc A. Weiss, “State Policy Approaches to Promote Metropolitan Economic Strategy “, published by the National Governors Association Center For Best Practices:

- “A key issue to emerge from this initiative (State Leadership in the Global Economy) is that economic activity occurs in a regional context, and policy makers ignore this at their own peril”.
- “Because metropolitan regions are the main engines of jobs, business, and income growth in the New Economy, taking the initiative to generate metropolitan collaboration and teamwork that invests in the fundamental regional assets and grows the dynamic metropolitan industry networks is one of the most effective actions any state can take to benefit all of its citizens - in urban and rural areas, alike”.
- “By approaching metropolitan regions as among the state's most precious and strategic economic strengths, Governors and state government - working closely with local private, public, civic and community leadership - can greatly enhance prosperity and quality of life within each metropolis and throughout the entire state”.

Acknowledgements: Quotes gathered from members of the Future of Hampton Roads, Inc., (FHR) Editorial Committee and from the Hampton Roads Partnership’s (HRP) organizational website