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Capital Region's Leading Employers Declare Inclusive Growth the Defining Economic Future of the Region

Sheila Johnson and Jason Wright to lead Greater Washington Partnership's New Inclusive Growth Strategy Council

Washington, D.C.— Today, Sheila Johnson, Founder and CEO of Salamander Hotels & Resorts and Jason Wright, President of the Washington Football Team have been named Co-Chairs of the Greater Washington Partnership's new Inclusive Growth Strategy Council. This Council will bring together 34 business leaders from across the region that will work together to make the Capital Region a national model for advancing equitable economic solutions.

The Greater Washington Partnership recognizes inclusive growth as the preeminent moral and economic imperative for the Capital Region and is committed to fostering cross-sector collaboration to make sustainable progress. Over the next year, the Partnership will convene a broad coalition of experts, advocates and community organizations from Baltimore to Richmond to catalyze solutions to help close the equity gap.

The Council will focus on three major initiatives:

- 1) Create an actionable set of regional solutions and actions through a **blueprint for inclusive growth** that supports regional business, government, and community leaders in making the region the most inclusive economy in the nation within ten years;
- 2) Define critical issues and identify communities that lack access to opportunity through the creation of a new **regional economic indicators dashboard**; and
- 3) Drive **collaboration among regional organizations** to align initiatives and deploy resources at scale toward critical inclusive growth challenges.

Sheila Johnson is a renowned entrepreneur in sports, entertainment, and hospitality, as well as a philanthropist and a champion for workforce diversity and equity. Jason Wright is a prominent voice in public discussions regarding racial equity in corporate America. Prior to his role with the Washington Football Team, he led McKinsey & Co.'s global inclusion strategy and co-founded the Black Economic Institute, a research entity that analyzes the racial wealth gap.





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"The business community is seizing this historical moment and I am pleased to lead this regional effort in taking actionable steps toward creating opportunity and shared prosperity. Together, we can make progress in dismantling systemic injustices and laying the groundwork to create the most inclusive and economically competitive region in the country," says **Sheila Johnson, Founder & CEO of Salamander Hotels & Resorts**. "The hospitality industry has been especially hard-hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, exacerbating issues of inclusion and equity. Our region needs to chart a comprehensive course that prioritizes inclusivity and equity in order to recover and reach our full potential."

"The racial wealth gap is driven by a disparity in the deployment of capital – financial capital, intellectual capital, relational capital. Access to opportunities to this capital remains one of our most pressing challenges," says **Jason Wright, President of the Washington Football Team**. "The work of the Strategy Council is more important now than ever. In consultation with stakeholders from all sectors, we can collectively define an inclusive growth strategy that creates a shared vision for our region. I look forward to working with my fellow leaders and stakeholders from across sectors to ensure that our region is the most inclusive place to live and work for all people."

Newly recruited regional employers signed on to support this work, including **AstraZeneca, the Baltimore Ravens, Bank of America, Exelon, Gensler, The Harbor Bank of Maryland, Howard University, Salamander Hotels & Resorts, and the Washington Football Team**.

The Partnership's full Board of Directors has reaffirmed their commitment to Inclusive Growth through their support of the Council. They are: **Amazon, Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP, CapitalOne, Clark Construction Group, Deloitte, Dominion Energy, Ernst & Young LLP, General Dynamics, Georgetown University, Inova Health System, JBG SMITH, Johns Hopkins University, JPMorgan Chase & Co., McKinsey & Co., MedStar Health, Microsoft, Monumental Sports & Entertainment** including the **Washington Capitals, Washington Mystics, and Washington Wizards, Northrop Grumman, Rally Health, Ramsey Asset Management, and T. Rowe Price**.

"I am proud of the Partnership's Board and their collective commitment to inclusive growth which led to the creation of the Strategy Council," said **Tony Pierce, Partner in Charge of the DC office of Akin Gump Strauss Hauer Feld LLP and Chair of the Partnership's Inclusive Growth Committee of its Board of Directors**. "These leaders are committed to taking direct action to foster inclusive growth which is vital to our region's success and long-term economic competitiveness. I look forward to engaging additional players in this critical effort and to creating opportunities that benefit all of our region's residents."





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The Council's work will create immediate impact by building on inclusive growth efforts already underway at the Partnership, such as: helping to facilitate a regional capacity-building strategy for Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) and Minority Depository Institutions (MFIs); supporting national racial equity initiatives like [Management Leadership for Tomorrow](#) (MLT) and [OneTen](#); the [Capital Region Rail Vision](#); and a commitment to support 22,500 minority students in [digital tech education](#). Through partnerships with universities, the hospitality industry, and professional sports teams, the Council will focus on solutions to accelerate **inclusive recovery** with an initial look at industries that disproportionately employ underrepresented populations.

"Inclusive growth is an imperative for the region and the Inclusive Growth Strategy Council is the next phase of the Partnership's work to make this vision a reality," says **Peter Scher, Vice Chairman of JPMorgan Chase & Co. and Partnership Board Chair**. "We are at a unique time in history where this region can not only create an intentional strategy but one that is backed by commitments from corporations across the region that will drive real change over the long haul. I look forward to working with Sheila and Jason as they guide the Council's efforts, and I'm grateful to Tony for his ongoing, visionary leadership."

At the outset of the Council's work, research and consulting support will be provided by Partnership Board organization, **Deloitte**, whose strategic guidance, regional commitment, and racial equity leadership will help drive a representative, impactful, and measurable blueprint for inclusive growth. Further, Partnership Board organization **McKinsey & Co.** will build on their prior efforts supporting the GWP's regional inclusive growth diagnostic and dashboard to support minority-owned small businesses in the Capital Region. Additional pro bono consulting support for the Strategy Council will be provided by Partnership Board organization **EY**.

The more organizations and stakeholders signed on to this commitment, the more inclusive the region will become. For more information and to inquire about the Council, please contact Francesca Ioffreda, VP for Inclusive Growth, at fioffreda@greaterwashingtonpartnership.com.

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About the Greater Washington Partnership: *The Greater Washington Partnership is a first-of-its-kind civic alliance, drawing from the leading employers and entrepreneurs committed to making the Capital Region— from Baltimore to Richmond—one of the world's best places to live, work and thrive. Working in collaboration with leaders across our communities, the Partnership connects and leverages the region's extraordinary assets to advance inclusive, actionable solutions that strengthen Capital Region as a leading global region and center*

