



Agenda Item Summary Report

Meeting Date:
November 10, 2025

Submitted by:
Michelle Bailey Hedgepeth, Town Administrator

Item Title: Information Memo | Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments (COG) Update | November 2025

This is an update on Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments (COG) Meetings and activities that the Town Administrator attended.

**Work Session Item [X]
Council Meeting Item [X]**

Documentation Attached:

Recommended Action:

INFORMATION ONLY: This has been provided to the Council, and the community has been informed of the Council's and staff's actions.

SUMMARY

The Town Administrator attended the **Winter Weather Operations Meeting for COG on October 30, 2025**, online. Below is a summary of this meeting and its key points:

- The Regional Winter Weather Plan remains consistent in procedures but includes updated contact rosters and new tools to improve situational awareness. Participating agencies include the National Weather Service (NWS), regional DOTs, WMATA, and emergency management offices, ensuring unified operations during snow and ice events.
- VDOT reported readiness across 14,300 lane miles with substantial salt, sand, and brine reserves, a 12-hour shift structure, and a new public snow tracker to increase transparency.
- Maryland SHA highlighted ongoing staffing challenges but continues to operate 17,000+ lane miles with expanded fleet technology and green lighting for visibility.
- DC DPW and DDOT emphasized integrated command operations, AVL tracking, and strong community engagement through Business Improvement District partnerships.
- WMATA outlined its Severe Weather Plan, which includes service tiers based on snowfall.
- The National Weather Service (NWS) predicted a La Niña winter, bringing warmer temperatures and near-normal precipitation, along with elevated risks of mixed precipitation and ice. OPM reaffirmed its centralized role in federal operating decisions to ensure workforce safety and government continuity. All agencies reaffirmed collaboration and readiness for regional winter weather response.

The Town Administrator also attended the Chief Administrative Officers (CAO) Committee Meeting, which was held in person on November 5, 2025. The meeting covered regional updates and focused on homeland security funding.

- UASI Funding Challenges: UASI grant funding fell from \$44M to \$4.4M, requiring new fiscal strategies through 2026.
- Funding Strategy Defined: Regional, sub-regional, and local funding prioritizes critical projects while preparing for potential future gaps.
- Expenditure Controls Implemented: Non-critical spending is frozen; budget exemptions needed for filling grant-funded vacancies.
- Federal Shutdown Effects: Localities use contingency funds for SNAP; varied state responses aim to mitigate assistance disruptions.

- Regional MOUs Distributed: MOUs for regional programs sent for signature; December meeting will finalize funding strategies for upcoming year.
- Economic Outlook Uncertain: Property tax assessments vary; sales tax revenues decline due to reduced consumer spending amid economic challenges.

HSEC UASI Funding Strategy

The group agreed on a funding plan to sustain regional preparedness through fiscal year 2026 despite a severe UASI grant cut.

- The UASI grant funding dropped from \$44 million in FY24 to only \$4.4 million in FY25, forcing a new strategy to maintain personnel funding through fiscal 2026
 - The Advisory Council, composed of subject matter experts, will recommend which projects should continue or sunset starting FY27.
 - This strategy avoids mid-year personnel funding disruptions and provides CIOs clarity for FY27 budget planning.
 - The plan assumes a potential zero UASI award for FY27, requiring local jurisdictions to absorb certain costs.
- Funding decisions were categorized into regional, sub-regional, local, and alternate funding buckets to prioritize critical interoperability projects and allocate responsibility appropriately
 - Regional funding covers essential systems like NCR NET CAD 2 CAD, Everbridge, and COG's Homeland Security support.
 - Sub-regional funding is delegated to Northern Virginia, Southern Maryland, and the District for their respective emergency response systems and fusion centers.
 - Local funding remains for personnel such as regional preparedness staff, with no planned transition to local budgets.
 - Some projects, like the ESSENCE program and RITIS, are recommended for alternate funding sources by SMEs.
 - The Red Cross will cover MassCare cache capabilities, accepting a 24-hour delay in response.
- Expenditure controls and freezes are in place to preserve grant funds until June 30 or September 30, 2026
 - Non-critical spending is frozen; vacancies funded by grants cannot be filled without exemption approval.
 - One-time costs aligned with national priorities, such as radio cache vehicles and 911 studies, are allowed.
 - FY25 grant funds have a 12-month performance window, limiting spending flexibility.
- The grant award remains uncertain due to ongoing litigation, and FY26 funds must be spent on different program areas than current projects
 - Clint Osborne noted that even if the \$4.4 million arrives, it cannot be used to fund many existing projects, further complicating funding continuity.
 - This uncertainty reinforces the need for local jurisdictions to prepare for potential funding gaps starting FY27.

Federal Shutdown Impact and SNAP Benefits

The federal shutdown has forced local jurisdictions to use contingency funds and innovate support solutions to maintain SNAP and related assistance.

- D.C. deployed its contingency cash reserve to fund SNAP benefits locally, anticipating exhaustion within days due to the shutdown
 - SNAP benefits are paid in 10% cohorts over the first 10 days, likely depleting local funds before federal payments resume.
 - Efforts are underway to reconcile partial federal payments with local funding to protect city finances and resident access.

- WIC benefits for November, approximately \$1.5 million in D.C., were received fully, easing immediate pressure on local funds.
- Virginia and Maryland have taken different approaches to maintain SNAP and food assistance amid funding gaps
 - Loudoun County released several million dollars to community foundations to support food pantries and housing assistance outside SNAP.
 - Maryland committed \$62 million to cover SNAP recipients through November, with Montgomery County allocating \$23.5 million for food assistance, including pet food.
 - Virginia offers a reduced Emergency Assistance program paying 25% of normal SNAP benefits weekly until federal funding resumes.
- Localities are expanding support to nonprofits and food banks to mitigate SNAP disruptions
 - Prince William County authorized funding for three nonprofits to provide food assistance, supplementing SNAP recipients since direct EBT supplements are not possible.
 - Arlington increased funding to its food bank in response to record demand predating the shutdown.
 - Rockville offers utility assistance and is monitoring increased demand to allocate additional funds if necessary.
- The shutdown is causing indirect financial strain beyond SNAP, affecting cash flow and reimbursements for federal grants
 - Managers noted delayed reimbursements for federal grants are tightening cash positions, risking halts in federally supported programs if the shutdown extends further.
 - Sales tax growth is flattening partly due to reduced spending, with capital gains from high-net-worth individuals currently supporting revenue growth.
- Jurisdictions continue monitoring political and economic shifts to adjust assistance and budget plans accordingly (39:50)
 - Leaders emphasized the importance of governance and coordination to address ongoing funding uncertainties, especially in Northern Virginia.
 - Some counties are exploring additional funding or policy measures to sustain assistance programs through the shutdown's duration.

Next Steps & Concluding Remarks

The Town Administrator is engaged with the CAO group and will continue to attend meetings on behalf of the Town of Bladensburg. Attached are two documents from the UASI Funding discussion.

She is available to provide further insights if you have any questions or would like additional details.

Budgeted Item: Yes [] No [] NA	Continued Date:
Budgeted Amount:	
One-Time Cost: NA	
Ongoing Cost: NA	
Council Priority: Yes [] No []	Approved Date: