

National Capital Region Emergency Preparedness Council

Work Program for Calendar Year 2007

Outcomes

I. BACKGROUND

The National Capital Region Emergency Preparedness Council (EPC) is an advisory body established by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) Board of Directors. It derives its authority from a Charter adopted by the COG Board on November 13, 2002. The EPC makes policy recommendations to the COG Board and makes procedural or other recommendations directly or through the COG Board to various regional agencies with emergency preparedness responsibilities or operational response authority.

After the creation of the US Department of Homeland Security-sponsored Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI), the EPC later voted to act as the region's UASI-required Urban Area Work Group (UAWG). In this capacity, EPC added federally sponsored coordinating actions to its already existing regional efforts, and continues to function as the region's central coordinating body on emergency preparedness.

The EPC will continue to work in conjunction with the Senior Policy Group, the Chief Administrative Officers, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office of National Capital Region Coordination (ONCRC), and others in the enhancement of regional preparedness activities and acquisitions. It manages the Regional Emergency Coordination Plan (RECP), helps to coordinate activities of various support function working groups, and assists in the development and conduct of preparedness training and exercises.

II. MEMBERSHIP

The EPC is made up of elected officials, COG committee chairs, and representatives of homeland security, emergency management services, and transportation, along with the nonprofit and business communities. The EPC is the most broadly defined advisory body in the National Capital Region focused on emergency planning, preparedness, response and recovery and is an excellent forum for information exchange, advocacy and policy guidance to public and private sector stakeholders and first-responder agencies.

The EPC is currently comprised of:

- Nine elected officials representing COG member jurisdictions, at least two each from the District of Columbia, the State of Maryland, and the Commonwealth of Virginia;
- The Chairs of the COG professional and technical committees of chief administrative officers, Regional Emergency Support Functions and Regional Program Working Groups to include police chiefs, fire chiefs, public health officers, emergency management

administrators, attorneys, and other internal COG committees determined to have subject matter jurisdiction over significant aspects of disaster preparation and response;

- The directors of emergency management of the District of Columbia, the State of Maryland, and the Commonwealth of Virginia;
- Representatives of the Departments of Transportation of the District of Columbia, the State of Maryland, and the Commonwealth of Virginia;
- The chairs or other designees of the Homeland Security Councils of the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia;
- The COG Executive Director; and Representatives of such institutions and agencies of the Federal government and organizations representing the private, quasi-public, and non-profit sectors as may be jointly designated by the Council Chair and the COG Board Chair, and invited to participate, such designations to include the Office of National Capital Region Coordination, the Joint Force Headquarters-National Capital Region, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, the Greater Washington Board of Trade, the Washington Area School Study Council, the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority, the American Red Cross of the National Capital Region, the Non-Profit Roundtable of Greater Washington, and others.

III. PRIORITIES FOR 2007

The priorities delineated below represent the EPC's focus for 2007, and provide a strategic framework for the EPC's activities.

PRIORITY 1: National Capital Region Strategic Plan for Preparedness

Background:

The Office of National Capital Region Coordination (ONCRC) continues to be responsible for coordinating federal emergency preparedness efforts in the Washington metropolitan region. ONCRC supported, with broad stakeholder input, the development of the first comprehensive National Capital Region Homeland Security Strategic Plan that was approved by the EPC on September 13, 2006. The EPC will support ONCRC and the Senior Policy Group by continuing to serve as the "custodian" of the Strategic Plan going forward, advising key stakeholders concerning implementation progress and any recommended future updates.

Activity:

The EPC, as the custodian of the region's strategic plan for preparedness, will guide, review and oversee the process for completing the 30 Initiatives in the plan and subsequently updating the plan as necessary. The EPC will also review and update its bylaws and membership, consistent with the National Capital Region Strategic Plan for Preparedness, to enable it to better fulfill its expanded mission and goals.

Outcome:

The EPC guided, reviewed, and oversaw the process of updating and completing the 30 initiatives. Services of a consultant were obtained and the consultant met with the lead individual responsible for each of the initiatives and updated the associated milestones for each task. The updated milestones for each task to include target date for completion and progress to date were

briefed to and approved by the EPC at its July meeting. Once the Senior Policy Group and the Chief Administrative Officers approved Project Plans allocating FY07 UASI funds, the DC HSEMA, Grants Management Office identified the projects and funding that had been identified to address the 30 initiatives in the National Capital Region Strategic Plan. This information was briefed to the EPC at its October meeting and they recognized the need for continued funding to complete the initiatives. The EPC will receive another update on the progress being made to complete the 30 initiatives in the plan at its first meeting in 2008.

PRIORITY 2: Regional Emergency Coordination Plan

Background:

In the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, COG convened the National Capital Region Task Force on Homeland Security, the predecessor to the EPC, to develop a region-wide plan to coordinate emergency response and preparation efforts. The resulting publication, the Regional Emergency Coordination Plan (RECP), provided a framework for these activities, and the EPC serves as the “custodian” of this plan. At its September 2005 meeting the COG Board directed staff and the CAO Committee to develop a work scope, milestones and timetable to re-examine the RECP and other relevant area plans to incorporate items from the new National Response Plan and the National Incident Management System as well as lessons learned from the experiences of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the EMAP Assessment, and the National Plan Review.

Activities:

1. The EPC will provide input and guidance to update the RECP and for the re-examination of area emergency plans, focusing on areas of potential vulnerabilities, clarification on state and federal resources, and more aggressive, fully coordinated, outreach to residents, visitors and citizens, as well as transportation and evacuation planning and coordination.
2. The EPC will also provide guidance and advocacy for additional training and preparedness exercises – and related resources - in order to test existing and soon to be augmented emergency plans.
3. As a real time companion to the RECP, the Regional Incident Communication and Coordination System (RICCS) was developed as a means to bring key stakeholders and critical decision makers together at a moment’s notice to address emergency situations. The EPC will continue to provide guidance for the management and expanded use of RICCS.

Note: Priority 2 was a carryover from 2006 because of the limited UASI funding received to support this activity. This item was included in a request for planning that was not favorably considered for 2006 UASI funding. The EPC will work with the CAO/SPG to obtain resources to update the RECP

Outcome:

The Senior Policy (SPG) and the Chief Administrative Officers (CAO) approved \$7,000,000 in FY07 UASI funds for planning in the National Capital Region. These funds will be administered by the Emergency Managers Committee in accordance with the approved Project Plan and under

the supervision of the SPG and the CAOs. The Emergency Managers Committee has assured COG staff that an update of the Regional Emergency Coordination Plan (RECP) will be included as part of the planning initiative for the NCR. The states and local jurisdictions are in the process of hiring or contracting for staff to complete the planning in accordance with the Project Plan over the next two years. Once the planners are in place, the Chairs of the Chief Administrative Officers and the Emergency Manager's Committee will be requested to brief the EPC on this major planning effort to include an update of the RECP. It is essential that the RECP update be consistent with the updates of local and state emergency operations plans.

PRIORITY 3: Senior Leader Seminar

Background:

The EPC, in coordination with the SPG and CAO's, requested that the Exercise and Training Operations Panel (ETOP) develop a Senior Leader Seminar to demonstrate preparedness for, response to, and recovery from a worst case disaster impacting the NCR. The disaster scenario should have a significant impact on jurisdictions in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The purpose of the Senior Leader Seminar is to educate members of the EPC on situational awareness and the status of preparedness in the region and the ability to respond to and recover from a major disaster.

Activities:

1. The EPC will plan, conduct and evaluate the results of a Senior Leaders Seminar, tentatively scheduled for the third quarter of 2007, date and location to be determined by the planning subcommittee.
2. The Senior Leader Seminar Leader should be interactive and emphasize high level, major decisions that regional elected and appointed officials may need to make subsequent to a major disaster. This should include necessary coordination with the State of Maryland, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the District of Columbia as well as the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
3. The Senior Leader Seminar should highlight how the region would communicate with the public and media in preparedness for, response to, and recovering from a disaster using a consistent message. The focus will be on the coordination in place to insure one message many voices.
4. The NCR has been provided more than \$200M in UASI funds in recent years and it would be beneficial for the Senior Leader Seminar to demonstrate how the resources procured with these funds have improved the ability of the region to prepare for, respond to, and recover from a major disaster.
5. An After Action Report will be prepared subsequent to the Senior Leader Seminar that will highlight lessons learned and recommendations to correct any shortcomings. The EPC will be briefed quarterly on any and all shortcomings until they are corrected.

Outcome:

The Emergency Preparedness Council (EPC) Senior Leader Seminar (SLS) was developed and conducted by a Planning Team supported by Beck Disaster Recovery, Inc on September 20, 2007. The three objectives of the EPC SLS were to develop an understanding among EPC members on an “Event of Regional Significance,” as defined by the NCR Hazard Identification and Risk Analysis (HIRA), and how regional emergency disrupts continuity; to become informed on the fundamental operational decision process of responses, federal, state, and local authorities, communication and coordination protocols among federal, state, local, private, and non-profit organizations in the NCR, and mutual aid resources available to local jurisdictions responsible for response to an event of regional significance; and to identify potential issues that may impede effective regional coordination during a response, and summarize key strategic issues for follow up. Individuals who attended the EPC SLS were most complimentary and many indicated the seminar far exceeded their expectations. Some CAOs thought that the EPC SLS was the most successful regional exercise ever conducted in the region and are using the scenario to conduct exercises in their own local jurisdictions. Attendees recommended that similar exercises be conducted in future years. Finally, the EPC SLS was very successful in achieving the identified objectives and contributed to improved preparedness in the region.

PRIORITY 4: Citizen Engagement on Preparedness

Background:

Generating and disseminating clear region-wide emergency preparedness messages to the public have been identified as a priority by the EPC. The theme *Common Message --- Many Voices*, developed by the region’s public information officers, is the under-girding principle for this campaign. Also key to the EPC’s mission is its role as an advocate for the region’s accomplishments in coordinating preparedness efforts. Further, the private sector, from the business community to non-profits, is a key stakeholder in regional preparedness. Crucial assets and services owned and managed by private sector organizations form part of the core capacity that first responders rely on in emergency situations.

Activities:

1. The EPC will direct R-ESF 15 external affairs to develop a short-term action plan for an expanded citizen outreach and engagement plan using FY07 UASI funds. In addition, R-ESF 15 will be asked to identify continuing “evergreen” elements of a citizen engagement and outreach plan that can be integrated into public, community and business work programs and budget and that will sustain this effort without a reliance on UASI funds.
2. The EPC will request that R-ESF 5 planning present the findings of the outdoor warning system pilot program and develop a recommendation for additional action, as warranted.

Outcomes:

1. During FY 2007, RESF 15 External Affairs took action to extend the citizen Outreach Plan developed in FY 2005. At the July EPC meeting, RESF 15 Chair Merni Fitzgerald (Fairfax County) reported that the committee members continued to give out the “Z cards” that were part of the “Be Ready Make a Plan” campaign because of the need to reach new residents, and people who had moved or were unaware of the campaign in 2005. The committee also

made plans to incorporate preparedness messages in the local jurisdictions' Alert Notification systems. RESF 15 will market the Alert Notification systems as part of an extension of the "Be Ready Make a Plan" campaign. RESF-15 also re-advertised this campaign on television and radio during National Preparedness Month this September, generating 8,634,600 gross impressions. RESF 15 also extended the campaign's website, www.makeaplan.org <<http://www.makeaplan.org/>>, until 2012 and Fairfax County will keep the site current. In July, EPC Chair Connolly held a Business Preparedness summit. RESF 15 members coordinated their messages during September to match the Department of Homeland Security's National Preparedness Month message. As a result, the first week of the month focused on school preparedness, the second week on business, the third on multicultural preparedness and the final week on home and family preparedness. Other RESF 15 outcomes included: creation of a Web portal where members can share information with each other and the public; extension of the Senior Leaders Workshop with a RESF 15 tabletop exercise; participation in the NCR's spring exercise; discussion with the media of specific process for sharing information, and (in the wake of Virginia Tech tragedy) consideration of the use of "social media" during emergencies.

2. Arlington County's emergency managers conducted tests of the WAVES outdoor warning system (OWS) on April 13 and May 18, 2007 to check the volume, clarity and effectiveness of the system. Listeners of the test reported hearing the alerting tone and the test messages quite clearly. The results of the report stated "that an emergency message, especially one that is repeated, should be heard and understood easily." The WAVES (OWS) was successfully integrated with Arlington's emergency managers "system of systems." With 12 outdoor alert systems in place, integrated with five indoor alert systems, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria can effectively reach people who do not have mobile devices, who are visiting the National Capital Region, and who are outside or away from television, radio, and telephones. The system also allows the OEMs to send the right message to the right person by using zones and sub zones without causing panic or disturbing individuals who are unaffected by the threat.

PRIORITY 5: Urban Area Work Group and Regional Coordination

Background:

The National Capital Region has been identified as one of the regions across the nation slated to receive funding for planning, training, exercises, and equipment under the Urban Area Security Initiative, as established under Homeland Security Presidential Directives 5 and 8. Working in conjunction with the Senior Policy Group, the Chief Administrative Officers, and the Office of National Capital Region Coordination, the EPC, in part, functions as the federally required Urban Area Working Group, with oversight responsibility for the UASI process and regional preparedness as it relates to interaction with federal efforts.

Activity:

The EPC will continue to work closely with the Senior Policy Group, the Chief Administrative Officers, and the Office of National Capital Region Coordination to oversee preparedness activities, while strengthening the process to enhance regional coordination by advocating for additional UASI and other federal, state and local resources for the region and for the ONCRC.

The EPC will also work with ONCRC, the JFHQ-NCR, the region's congressional delegation and senior representatives of other federal agencies to improve federal-regional coordination on emergency preparedness and response.

Outcome:

The EPC in coordination with the Senior Policy Group, Chief Administrative Officers, and the Office of National Capital Region Coordination continued to serve as the Urban Area Work Group for the National Capital Region with oversight responsibility for the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) process and regional preparedness as it relates to interaction with federal efforts. During 2007, FY04 UASI funds were 100% expended to address approved initiatives and FY07 UASI funds were allocated to address the most critical needs in the NCR. FY05 and FY06 UASI funds continued to be expended in accordance with approved spending plans. Major General Rowe replaced Major General Swan as the Commander of JFHQ-NCR and Chris Geldart replaced Tom Lockwood as the Director of ONCRC. Both Major General Rowe and Mr. Geldart have briefed the EPC and have assumed their respective positions on the EPC. The EPC Senior Leader Seminar held at COG on September 20, 2007 demonstrated exceptional coordination in the National Capital Region among local, state, and federal authorities as well as the private sector and the non-profit community.

IV. SCHEDULE

The EPC will plan to hold four full meetings in 2007, approximately quarterly, with ad hoc work sessions, as necessary. For example, meetings to finalize plans for the Senior Leader Seminar and the update of the RECP may be conducted as work sessions, to be scheduled by the chair and executive committee. To promote stronger participation by public officials, EPC quarterly meetings will follow the COG Board of Directors meeting on the second Wednesday from 2:15 to 4:15 p.m.:

- January 10
- April 11
- July 11
- October 10

V. LEADERSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP ADDITIONS FOR 2007

Consistent with the EPC bylaws, Gerry Connolly, Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors was appointed to chair the EPC in 2006 by action of the COG Board of Directors on January 11, 2006. He has agreed to serve a second term in 2007. The EPC continues to review and modify its membership and leadership governance structure as necessary to enable it to fulfill its expanded mission and goals. EPC leadership by local elected officials remains a priority for the EPC. The EPC vice chair and executive committee governance structure provides for continuity of leadership and expanded opportunities for executive committee participation.

In addition to the EPC Chair and Vice Chair(s), the proposed 2007 EPC Executive Committee will include:

- Tony Griffin, Fairfax County, Chief Administrative Officers Committee
- Tom Lockwood, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of National Capital Region Coordination
- District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia Senior Policy Group representatives
- A senior leadership representative from a non-profit, service-based organization or association
- A senior leadership representative from a for-profit corporation, association or organization

Consistent with the EPC bylaws, representatives from the Joint Force Headquarters – National Capital Region and the Citizens Corps are now included to better enable the EPC to fulfill its mission and address 2007 priorities.