

**METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**  
**Strengthening Preparedness and Response Capabilities**  
**in the National Capital Region**

**A Proposed COG Work Program**  
**October 12, 2005**

**Purpose**

At the request of the Board of Directors, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) proposes to support member jurisdictions regarding mutual aid in the region to assure local government capabilities in readiness and response plans that are regionally coordinated and include partnership with state and federal agencies and the private sector/non government organizations. The Washington region has a long history of regional collaboration and coordination in emergency planning, preparedness and response, invested in local government preparedness capacity. This was demonstrated in effective, coordinated responses to incidents such as train derailments, highway hazmat, the September 11 attack on the Pentagon, release of anthrax spores at various locations, sniper attacks and Hurricane Isabel to name a few incidents in the region. However, the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and the challenges in the Gulf region has raised concerns about local government capabilities being overwhelmed during catastrophic emergencies and the need for local government response being more coordinated and integrated with state and federal resources and to assure these resources arrive in a timely manner to meet needs of the local government and the residents/visitors in the community impacted by the event. While mutual aid among the jurisdictions in the region will flow seamlessly across state and local jurisdictional boundaries, there is need to evaluate how resources of the State of Maryland, the Commonwealth of Virginia and the District of Columbia will be applied to the region in a timely way and how the flow of federal resources will be managed or directed through all or one of the three states for the National Capital Region.

COG and its member jurisdictions continue to participate in the NCR planning process for the Strategic Plan for UASI Funding. This NCR strategic planning process is on-going and relates to enhancing and developing the capabilities and capacity of the local jurisdictions, its non-government organization partners and residents of the region to protect, prevent, respond and recover from events, man-made or natural that impacts the region.

**Guiding Principles**

1. Strengthen regional coordination among all partners to gain synergy while sustaining jurisdictional authority and enhancing capabilities.
2. Implement homeland security policies and programs while maintaining our constitutionally-based society, particularly the civil rights and civil liberties of the region's diverse population, including persons with disabilities.
3. Prepare for "all-hazards", including man-made and naturally occurring emergencies and disasters.
4. Advance the safety and security of the region in ways that are enduring, relevant, and sustainable.
5. Foster a culture of collaboration, respect, communication, innovation, and mutual aid among all homeland security partners across the region.

6. Adopt best-practice, performance-based approaches to staffing, planning, equipping, training, and exercising for all homeland security partners.
7. Strive for an optimal balance of preparedness capabilities across the region that recognizes differing risks and circumstances, and leverages mutual aid agreements.

### **Timeline for Short Term, Mid term, and Long Term Objectives**

#### **Short Term (30 – 120 days)**

1. Identify improvements in emergency preparedness since 9/11 and initiate a review existing jurisdictional Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs) to include School Plans and Evacuation Plans to determine where their plans rely upon state and federal resources and to determine if there are regional opportunities for providing such resources if neither state or federal resources are available in a timely manner by March 31, 2006.
2. Initiate and facilitate appropriate forums with federal, state, and local organizations in the NCR to discuss the appropriate means to obtain state and federal resources in a timely way for local jurisdictions if all regional and mutual aid resources are exhausted. Review procedures regarding the manner in which the three states will coordinate the provision of state resources to any NCR local jurisdiction as well as the procedure for one or all three states to request and receive EMAC and/or federal resources in a timely manner.
3. Identify individuals to serve on a New R-ESF#14 (Long-Term Recovery and Mitigation) and obtain the services of a consultant to begin developing this New R-ESF#14.
4. Support completion of EMAP assessment of the NCR to determine if the region meets the EMAP Standards (Region appropriate) that are based on National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 1600 by March 31, 2006.
5. Support the Exercise and Training Oversight Panel (ETOP) in completing a Training Gap Analysis for the National Capital Region by March 31, 2006.
6. Initiate an update the RECP to reflect the changes in the New National Response Plan, the National Incident Management System, and other ODP documents by March 31, 2006.

#### **Mid Term (3-8 months)**

1. Work with R-ESFs/Committees and in partnership with local jurisdictions, states, and others to review and update the Regional Emergency Coordination Plan to reflect the changes required as determined above to obtain timely state and federal resources for NCR jurisdictions by June 30, 2006.
2. Incorporate results from the “Proposed National Process Review of Emergency Plans” in the update of the Regional Emergency Coordination Plan for review by the CAO Committee and the COG Board of Directors by June 30, 2006.
3. Upon direction from the CAO’s and the COG Board, coordinate with the Regional Exercise and Training Oversight Panel (ETOP) to commence planning for a NCR Table Top Exercise in 2006 involving local jurisdictions as the focal point for NIMS response, mitigation and recovery to test the procedures identified above for use of all available regional and mutual aid assistance, to determine the duration and capacity

of such resources and to obtain federal and state assistance as required at the time needed.

4. Develop a Work Plan to address EMAP Standards (Region appropriate) that the region did not meet during the assessment by June 30, 2006.
5. Support the Exercise and Training Oversight Panel (ETOP) in making significant progress in addressing shortcomings identified in the Training Gap Analysis by June 30, 2006.
6. Under direction of the COG Board, re-examine the purpose, structure, and intended outcomes of the National Capital Region Emergency Preparedness Council as it relates to efforts undertaken by the Chief Administrative Officers Committee, the Senior Policy Group, and other COG committees, and in support of the National Capital Region Strategic Plan for emergency preparedness and homeland security and the EPC's functions as part of the Urban Area Work Group by June 30, 2006.

### **Long Term (6 months – 14 months)**

1. Complete the update of the Regional Emergency Coordination Plan to include development of a New R-ESF#14 to insure that the document is consistent with the New National Response Plan, National Incident Management System, and other ODP documents by September 30, 2006.
2. Provide training on policies and procedures found in revised/updated Regional Emergency Coordination Plan by September 30, 2006.
3. Complete the design and development of the NCR Table Top Exercise by September 30, 2006.
4. Conduct the NCR Table Top Exercise, including local, state, federal, and private/volunteer partners by December 31, 2006.
5. Revise and update Regional Emergency Coordination Plan and training on the plan subsequent to the NCR Table Top Exercise.
6. Achieve significant progress in correcting shortcomings identified in the Regional EMAP Assessment Work Plan by December 31, 2006.

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments will provide project oversight and management for these Short Term, Mid Term, and Long Term objectives under its current UASI agreement except as noted where additional grant funds will be needed. It is anticipated that most Short Term tasks will be accomplished using existing funding, with the approval of the UASI project management office. Mid and Long Term tasks may require a reprogramming of current UASI funds and/or additional funds, especially if specialized consultant support is required. COG will submit a modified budget and/or new funding request to the UASI project management office. COG will be working through R-ESFs/Committees and others to complete the objectives. R-ESF#5 (Emergency Management) will play a key coordination and communication role in this process. Broad policy guidance will be provided by the Emergency Preparedness Council and the Chief Administrative Officer's Committee.