Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

# JOINT HOUSING DIRECTORS AND PLANNING DIRECTORS TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES

September 10, 2026
9:30 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.
Walter A. Scheiber Board Room
777 N. Capitol Street, NE, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS

*The following takeaways are based on notes by COG staff taken during small group discussions.*

**Key Themes**

- Affordable housing production and preservation remain top priorities across jurisdictions.
- Need to balance public benefits, affordability requirements, and development feasibility.
- The importance of creative land use strategies, conversions, and mixed-use zoning tools.
- Community engagement processes need to be more inclusive, representative, and effective.
- Funding, staffing capacity, and political continuity are significant implementation challenges.
- Regional approaches may help address housing demand, vacancies, transportation, and housing counseling needs.

**Key Questions Raised**

- How can jurisdictions increase housing production while maintaining affordability goals?
- Are public benefit requirements creating barriers to new housing development?
- What is the right balance between housing preservation and new production?
- How can governments better motivate and engage residents in planning processes?
- How can policies remain stable despite political turnover?
- Can regional collaboration better connect housing opportunities, transportation, and support services?

**Land and Affordability:** Participants discussed long-term affordability tools, including ground leases, identifying publicly owned land, and land banking strategies. Limited land availability remains a constraint.

**Development & Zoning:** Examples included affordable dwelling unit programs, upzoning to mixed-use development, office-to-residential conversions, and incentive-based zoning calibrated to local conditions.

**Market Conditions:** Rising construction and labor costs, shifting developer interest, and imbalances in housing types were identified as challenges affecting production.

**Community Engagement:** Attendees highlighted concerns about uneven participation, trust-building, representation, language access, social media outreach, and unequal access to decisionmakers.

**Funding & Preservation:** Preservation was mentioned as a housing affordability tool that is more cost-effective than new production. Multiple jurisdictions described trust funds, preservation funds, and nonprofit-focused initiatives.

**Regional Coordination:** Participants discussed cross-jurisdictional housing counseling, transportation connections, vacancy patterns, and cooperative housing opportunities.

**Notable Jurisdictional Examples**

- Montgomery County: expedited office-to-residential conversions, mixed-use upzoning.
- Prince George's County: land bank authority and nonprofit-focused housing initiatives.
- Fairfax County: small area plans, housing-economic development coordination, and incentive-based zoning.
- Manassas: housing trust fund identified as a successful tool.
- District of Columbia: District Opportunity Investment Program and discussion of rental payment challenges.

**Overall Takeaways**

Participants emphasized that housing needs, market conditions, and policy priorities vary substantially across the region. Successful housing strategies require balancing community expectations, economic realities, affordability goals, and long-term planning. Several attendees noted the importance of practical, market-responsive approaches that can attract development interest while advancing regional housing objectives.

***The next HDAC meeting will be held online on Thursday, November 12th at 10am.***

***The next PDTAC meeting will be held online on Friday, November 20th at 10am.***

**Reasonable accommodations are provided upon request, including alternative formats of meeting materials.**
**For more information, visit: www.mwcog.org/accommodations or call (202) 962-3300 or (202) 962-3213 (TDD)**