

District Waterways Advisory Commission

Wednesday, July 22, 2026



AGENDA

1. Call Meeting to Order
2. Commission Logistics
3. Review Meeting Objectives and Goals
4. Topic Area #7: Interagency and Regional Coordination
5. Topic Area #8: Local Control
6. Next Steps
7. Adjourn



Commission Logistics



Meeting Objectives



Meeting Objectives

Today's meeting is the fourth of four meetings focused on the eight topic areas.

	Mar 2026 <i>In-Person</i>	Apr 2026 <i>Virtual</i>	May 2026 <i>In-Person</i>	June 2026 <i>Virtual</i>	July 2026 <i>In-Person</i>
Kickoff & Topics	• Introductions and Plan Objectives and Visioning	• Boating and Recreation Uses • Environmental Conservation and Management	• Economic Growth • Public/Private Uses of Property and Infrastructure	• Safety and Security • Transportation Gaps	• Interagency and Regional Coordination • Opportunities for Local Control
Updated	Sept 2026 <i>In-Person</i>	Oct 2026 <i>In-Person</i>	Jan 2027 <i>In-Person</i>	Mar 2027 <i>Virtual</i>	
Plan Development and Approval	• Review Decision Matrix and Discuss Goals and Strategies	• Review Draft Implementation Analysis	Draft Advisory Plan, Informed by Implementation Analysis	Approve Draft Plan & Release for 60 Day Public Comment	
		Working Groups & Rec Development →			

Meeting Objectives

The goal of these topic-specific meetings is to:

1. **Identify existing conditions and key challenges and opportunities** for the topics.
2. **Discuss a set of preliminary goals** for topic areas:
 - Interagency and Regional Coordination
 - Local Control

Waterways Advisory Plan

Vision

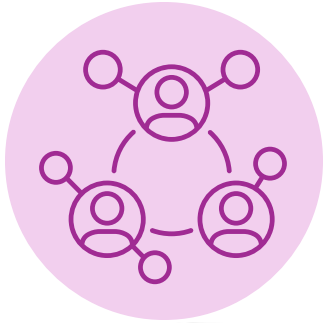
Today's
Meeting

Three Goals Per Topic Area

Three Strategies Per Goal

Topic Areas

Today's meeting will focus on:



Topic 7 – Interagency and Regional Coordination:

Interagency and regional coordination on issues relevant to the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers, the Washington Channel, and adjacent property.



Topic 8 – Local Control:

Opportunities to increase local control of the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers, the Washington Channel, and adjacent property.

Topic Area #7: Interagency and Regional Coordination



Contextualizing the Topic

Many of the six preceding topic areas require some form of interagency and/or regional coordination.



**Boating and
recreation**



**Environmental
conditions**



**Coordinated
economic growth**



**Public/private property
and infrastructure**



Safety and security



Transportation gaps

When is Coordination Worthwhile?

- Jurisdiction is overlapping, limited or unclear;
- Entities lack the capacity or expertise to be effective alone; and/or
- Benefits outweigh costs (fiscal, economic, environmental, etc.)

Current Conditions

Across regional planning, federal enforcement, and interagency development, there may be a need for improved coordination.

Evidence



The impact of Long Bridge design on emergency response raise questions about **how District public safety considerations are factored into waterways** infrastructure planning.



The **District's jurisdiction to enforce regulations on federal land and docks is limited**; the presence of unregistered charter operators and abandoned vessels points to a need for greater federal coordination or increased local authority.



Multiple different District and federal agencies **control and manage water-adjacent parks**, and other regional/federal entities **regulate the water**. This split in authority requires local, regional and federal coordination on maintenance, including environmental planning.



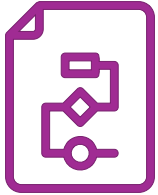
Alexandria recently approved the redevelopment of the former Potomac River Generating Station into **a mixed-use neighborhood with 800+ homes, retail, and 10 acres of parks**.

Actions To Consider

1. Determine whether there are planning gaps for infrastructure projects involving state/regional/District authorities
2. Work with the federal government and regional partners to reduce gaps in regulatory enforcement, maintenance, and associated funding.
3. Explore opportunities to promote an enhanced and interconnected regional waterfront experience for residents and visitors.

Office of District Waterways Management

ODWM is a key asset for coordination. The core functions of ODWM are to:



Support development of the Waterways Advisory Plan



Facilitate communication between agencies, jurisdictions, businesses, community organizations, and the public



Advise the Mayor and Council on issues regarding the waterways and adjacent properties

Question to Consider

1. How could ODWM be best equipped to support necessary coordination of waterways matters?
2. How can the Advisory Plan goals and strategies build on and complement the existing ODWM structure?

Activity

PROMPT:

- What is an example where coordination is going well?
- Where are there opportunities for increased coordination?

Instructions:

1. Individually, consider and write down your ideas on sticky notes and place them on the respective boards (5 min)
2. When instructed by facilitators, use the circle stickers to vote on the example you would like to discuss further



Image Credit: Greg Kullman

Activity

Join discussion Group 1 or Group 2 based on the topic about which you are most knowledgeable.

In your group, unpack the topic:

1. What coordination is needed that is not happening?
2. Who needs to coordinate with each other?
3. What is preventing the type of coordination needed? Authority? Capacity? Clarity of roles/responsibilities?
4. What action may help achieve the coordination that is needed?
5. What do we not know that we need to?

Interagency and Regional Coordination – Initial Goals

What are your reactions to these preliminary goals?

Goal 1

Better equip ODWM to effectively serve as the District's waterways coordinating body

Goal 2

Resolve District enforcement, maintenance, and environmental management gaps on and near the water

Goal 3

Ensure waterways-adjacent land can be developed in ways that support how people experience and connect to the water while preventing undue environmental harm.

Topic Areas #8: Local Control



Context

Topic: Opportunities to increase local control of the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers, the Washington Channel, and adjacent property.

Guiding Questions

Relationship to Topic Areas

What goals from other topics are **contingent** on increased local control? Which can be accomplished **without it**?

Boating & Recreation

Environmental Conservation

Safety & Security

Property & Infrastructure

Transportation Gaps

Economic Growth

Necessity & Feasibility

On what issues is more local control **most** needed? Is it **feasible** to secure this control? What would **enable** it?

Prior Experience

What can be learned from **prior efforts** to shift control to the District? What are the limitations?

Degrees of Control

The degree of local control varies based on land ownership and where specific activity is occurring.

Most Control

District-owned land

The District owns a limited amount of land where it has the most control. It still must comply with Federal regulations but overall has the most flexibility.

Some Control

Private land

There is private land the District has some control over through the power of zoning and regulations.

Limited Control

Activity on and what goes into the water

There is activity on the water, in which case the District and federal government share jurisdiction depending on the function and place. From an environmental standpoint, a combination of federal and regional entities have primary control.

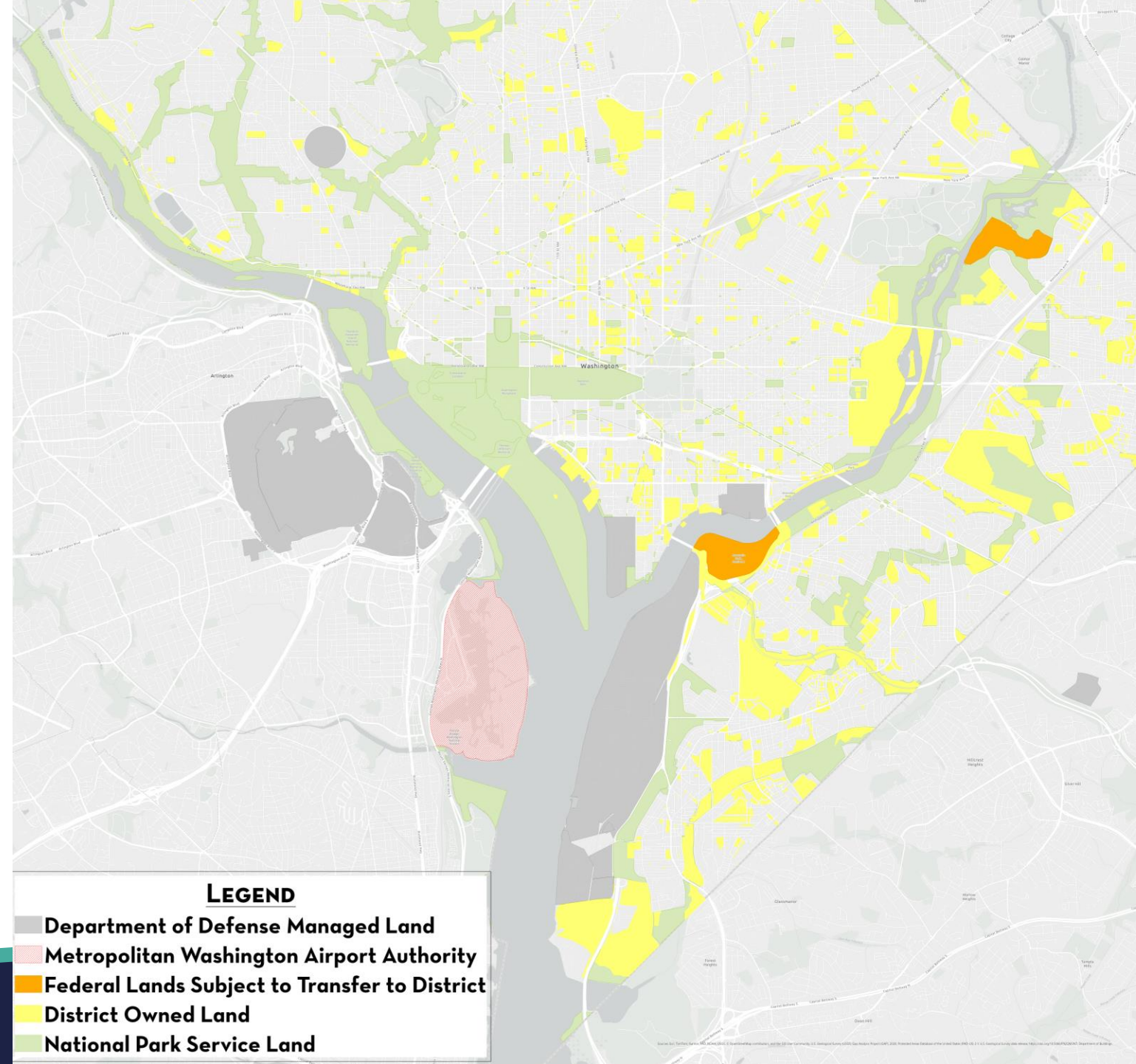
Variations

A **fee conveyance** transfers title outright and requires congressional authorization. Under either, DC assumes responsibility for maintenance and long-term stewardship.

A **transfer of administrative jurisdiction** gives DC control but not title, proceeding either under the District's standing authority or through an act of Congress.

Land Ownership

The National Capital Planning Commission estimates that **85% of DC shorelines are owned by the federal government.**



Existing Context

DC can acquire federal land or maintenance/stewardship responsibilities two ways: a transfer of administrative jurisdiction or a fee conveyance. These approaches result in different transfer processes.

Evidence



The federal government owns the **waterway riverbeds**, which adds time and cost to restoration work.



A **cooperative management agreement** for Franklin Park enabled the District to invest capital funds at the NPS-owned park, facilitating its revitalization. In 2023, the District's Ready2Play master plan called for pursuing new CMAs or TOJs with NPS to expand access to recreational amenities.



The District largely does not control the **health of the water** that enters its waterways from watersheds in Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia. Additionally, the water is regulated largely by EPA.

Questions to Consider

1. What are the pros and cons of increased District control of the riverbed?
2. How should the District balance funding and operations needs of potential NPS CMAs/TOJs against existing park maintenance responsibilities?
3. Is increased local control of water health a viable goal, or is improved coordination a sufficient path? What action is most needed from whom to improve water quality?

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On what issues is more local control **most** needed? Is it **feasible** to secure this control? What would **enable** it?

Prior Experience

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Local Control – Initial Goals

What are your reactions to these preliminary goals?

Goal 1

The District should identify a process to prioritize land transfers, align local leaders, and systems to sustain that activity

Goal 2

Increase recreational opportunities and access points along the waterfront

Goal 3

Enhance and maintain property and infrastructure to create new economic opportunities

Next Steps



Updated Schedule: Fall 2026-Spring 2027

	Aug 2026 <i>Stakeholders</i>	Sept 2026 <i>Commission/WGs</i>	Oct 2026 <i>Working Groups</i>	Nov 2026 <i>Working Groups</i>	Dec 2026 <i>Working Groups</i>
Strategies Development [same as prior slide]	• Commissioner Survey & Mapping • Attorneys: local control focus group • Walk & Talks: River Terrace, Anacostia, Georgetown (2-3) • If Second: Safety Stakeholders focus group	• Full Commission: Decision Matrix, Draft Goals & Strategies • Ferry/transportation gaps 1 • Communication to Improve Access & Safety 1 (+field trip)	• Infrastructure & Recreation 1 • Safety on waterways: Regs & Enforcement 1 • Ferry/transportation gaps 2	• Safety on waterways: Regs & Enforcement 2 • Infrastructure & Recreation 2 • Local Control & Regional/Interagency Collaboration & Governance 1	• Local Control & Regional/Interagency Collaboration & Governance 2 • All WG recommendations completed
	Jan 2027 <i>In Person</i>	Feb 2027 <i>No meeting</i>	Mar 2027 <i>In person</i>	Apr 2027 <i>Commission</i>	May 2027 <i>Commission</i>
Plan Finalization	• Full Commission: Implementation Analysis & Updated Goals and Strategies (mid-late month)	• Submit draft plan to DOEE and share with Commission for review	• Full Commission: Approve draft plan and release for 60-day public comment (early month)	• Public meetings (2)	• Full Commission: Approve final plan (mid-late month)

Next Steps

1. Look out for Input Form (goals & strategies, working groups, map)
2. Sign up for a Walk & Talk (if desired) and share with any interested parties
3. Next meeting (in-person):
Wed., September 16 at 10am



Image Credit: Stephan B. Goodwin

District Waterways Advisory Commission

Wednesday, July 22, 2026

