SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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Representing 22 towns, cities, and boroughs in Southeastern Connecticut.

SECOG December 2025 Executive Committee Meeting Summary

FY 2027 Budget Review

• Ms. Kennedy presented the draft 2027 budget and pointed out major changes from 2026.
• The major items reflected in the current budget include $400,000 for two additional positions concerning housing and stormwater/solid waste.
• Other reflected changes include capital improvements, IT expenses, and a couple of new grants.
• The budget currently shows a return to reserve at the end of the year.
• Tom DeVivo and Cheryl Blanchard agreed that the budget should be presented to the full board.
• There was a discussion regarding the risk of grants not materializing. SECOG has been careful to write agreements with subrecipients (for projects and consultants) such that if a grant is terminated or payment is not received, the organization is not obligated to continue paying them. While there is a fear of grants not coming through, exposure has been limited, meaning finances would not be hurt, although a project might have to be stopped mid-project.

Discussion of Housing Bill (HB 80002)

A significant portion of the meeting was dedicated to Governor Lamont signing HB 8002 into law on Wednesday, establishing a new process for developing housing plans at the state, regional, and local levels.

Upcoming Actions and Briefings:
• A meeting is scheduled with SECOG's municipal planners on Wednesday to brief them on the bill, answer questions, and gather their comments.
• It was suggested that a schematic flowchart approach detailing key decisions for Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and Planning and Zoning Commissions would be helpful.
• Attendees agreed that a presentation to the COG in January would be helpful.

Bill Requirements and Timelines:

• The process is set up as a three year endeavor where the state first develops a housing needs assessment with regional targets for housing growth.
• Municipalities are required to adopt housing growth plans, either produced locally at the town level or through opting into a regional housing growth plan developed with the COGs.
• A plan, whether local or regional, must be formally adopted by the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or governing body of each town.
• Timeline milestones include:
    ◦ End of 2026: OPM develops its needs assessment and regional targets.
    ◦ Six months following OPM's targets: COGs must develop their own housing needs assessment and local targets (recommended affordable housing goals). This is when towns decide whether to work with the COG.
    ◦ One year from that point: The regional housing growth plan must be developed, adopted, and submitted to OPM.
• Opting to work through the COG is theoretically less work for towns, especially smaller ones, as the COG would produce interim products like an inventory of developable land
• The final decision on whether a town participates in the COG plan or develops a local plan must be made by June 2027, which will require beginning conversations on this process in early 2026 at both the COG and municipal levels..

COG Capacity and Funding:

• SECOG believes they are well-positioned to complete this new work efficiently, having already performed similar tasks like housing needs assessments and buildout analysis.
• The state provides $200,000 per year to support a position and associated costs for technical assistance.
• SECOG plans to move ahead with hiring a second position (funded by the $400,000 in the budget) for stormwater technical assistance to continue and increase MS4 assistance.
• This inclusion appears to be driven by the state's desire to regionalize technical assistance for storm water through the COGs.
• While not directly related to housing, the bill does include provisions for assistance with sewer planning and funding sewer extensions.
• Tom DeVivo emphasized the visible pollution, including "junk" and "brown water" pumped into rivers, particularly near outfalls in Norwich, noting that this issue is more evident when traveling in a kayak or canoe than in a motorboat.
The goal moving forward is to reduce duplication of effort and provide town leaders with analysis early enough to make informed decisions about whether to pursue the COG plan or a local plan.

LOTCIP

It was recommended for the LOTCIP Endorsement for New London (Williams St/Broad) St to go to the board to allow the project to start in the Spring of 2026.

Summary prepared by Taylor Lussier.