

**CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA**



Agenda Date:	June 3, 2024
Action Required:	Adoption of the CAT Transit Strategic Plan at June 17, 2024 Meeting
Presenter:	Garland Williams, Director of Transit
Staff Contacts:	Garland Williams, Director of Transit Ben Chambers, Transportation Planning Manager
Title:	Charlottesville Area Transit Strategic Plan

Background

Transit service in Charlottesville is a critical component for providing mobility and access throughout the community so it is important that there is course charted for how Charlottesville Area Transit will adapt and expand to accommodate increasing travel demands in the region. Conducting this planning is also a state requirement that CAT must fulfill in order to access state and federal dollars for transit operations. This required document, called a Transit Strategic Plan (TSP), meets guidelines developed by the Commonwealth Transportation Board and is overseen by the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT). The TSP serves as a strategic blueprint for service planning, operations, and capital needs (including new bus purchases, technology upgrades, and customer amenities). The TSP replaces CAT previous state-approved planning document, the Transit Development Plan, from 2018, and provides a snapshot of the current plans for CAT over the next 10 years. The TSP is a non-binding document that is meant to be regularly updated and flexible but provides DRPT with a forecast of currently anticipated changes. As discussions about transit in the region continue, CAT will be able to provide annual updates to DRPT on how that forecast has changed over the next five years, when the next cycle of major TSP updates will be required.

Planning for CAT's TSP began in early 2023 and aimed to synthesize public feedback on transit service with recommendations from recent planning efforts by CAT and the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission. The first round of outreach occurred in the Spring and Summer 2023 and included public survey, pop-up events, stakeholder workshops, and interviews with bus operators and supervisors. Outreach has continued over the past month in May 2024, with briefings to the Regional Transit Partnership and TSP stakeholder group, virtual public meetings, and a print and digital promotion campaign.

The planned improvements in the CAT TSP were drawn from recent transit planning efforts in the region, including CAT's 2021 System Optimization Plan and the 2022 Regional Transit Vision Plan developed by TJPDC. There are over 40 service improvements from these plans that were included in the CAT TSP. This set of improvements is fiscally constrained by projected revenues and expenditures and phased in over the short-, medium-, and long-term. The TSP also includes a set of "unconstrained" projects and additional recommendations for future study. The improvements, while

fiscally constrained, do anticipate a significant increase in operational funding.

To meet the requirements of DRPT, the City will need to submit an adopted TSP by June 30, 2024.

The draft Transit Strategic Plan may be viewed at the following web page:

<https://www.charlottesville.gov/1666/Transit-Strategic-Plan-TSP>.

Discussion

CAT and City staff, with consultant support, will provide an overview presentation on the CAT TSP during the June 3rd work session. The adoption of the TSP to fulfill CAT's planning requirements to DRPT will be before Council at the June 17th meeting.

Alignment with City Council's Vision and Strategic Plan

This planning effort supports the Comprehensive Plan's goal of "supporting a robust and convenient transit system that increases local and regional mobility and provides a reliable and efficient travel option for Charlottesville's residents, workers, and visitors" and continues the work of the strategies identified in the Comprehensive Plan to develop the Regional Transit Vision Plan, ensure financial accessibility to transit service for all residents, and providing opportunities for public input into the transit planning process.

Community Engagement

The first round of public engagement for the CAT TSP occurred in the Spring and Summer 2023. The second round of public engagement occurred during May 2024.

Budgetary Impact

There is no direct impact to the General Fund from the adoption of the plan. Implementation of planned improvements will require additional funds, which will be a mix of local, state, and federal sources, and Council will be asked to commit local funding for these improvements at a later date.

Recommendation

Adoption of the CAT Transit Strategic Plan (at the June 17th meeting)

Alternatives

Council may request changes to the TSP over the next two weeks, but ultimately will need to adopt the TSP prior to the June 30th deadline.

Attachments

None