

Policy Briefing Summary

City Council



Regarding:	2026 Regional Solid Waste Management Plan for the Thomas Jefferson Solid Waste Management Unit
Staff Contact(s):	Kristel Riddervold, Director of the Office of Sustainability, Steven Hicks, Director of Public Works, Victoria Kanellopoulos, City Planner
Presenter:	Kristel Riddervold, Director of the Office of Sustainability, Isabella O'Brien (TJPDC)
Date of Proposed Action:	August 17, 2026

Issue

City staff and staff from the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC) are presenting City Council with the updated TJPDC Regional Solid Waste Management Plan. The presentation will cover the legal requirements, the process (including community engagement), and will focus on the implementation plan for the City of Charlottesville. At the September 8, 2026, City Council meeting, approval will be requested to adopt the updated TJPDC Solid Waste Management Plan.

Background / Rule

The Thomas Jefferson Solid Waste Planning Unit Regional Solid Waste Management Plan establishes the region's principal framework for managing solid waste, recycling, reuse, and related materials management activities through 2046. The Thomas Jefferson Solid Waste Planning Unit (TJSWPU) includes Albemarle County, Fluvanna County, Greene County, the City of Charlottesville, and the incorporated Towns of Scottsville and Stanardsville. The Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission coordinates the plan on behalf of the member localities.

The TJPDC also conducts the annual Recycling Rate Reporting assessment. This annual report to the State is used to ensure that the TJ-SWPU meets the state mandated minimum recycling rate of 25% on an annual basis.

Per State Code, the Solid Waste Management Plan must be updated every 5 years and has a 20-year planning horizon. The current Plan was adopted on March 3, 2022. The Plan documents existing facilities and programs, summarizes reported recycling and disposal data, identifies known data limitations, evaluates future needs, and establishes a structure for coordinated regional action.

The TJPDC convened a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to develop implementation plans for each locality. The Plan development process began in September 2025 and included a project kickoff, 5 TAC meetings, a public survey and workshop, and draft plan development with TAC review. A summary of community input results is provided as Attachment 2.

The final steps include a 30-day public comment period (August 1-30), the opportunity for public comment through each locality's process, adoption of the Plan by each locality and the TJPDC, and submission of the Plan to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The relevant schedule for the City includes:

- August 17: Charlottesville Presentation
- September 3: TJPDC Public Hearing & Presentation
- September 8: Charlottesville Adoption (Consent Agenda)
- October 1: TJPDC Adoption

- Before October 24: Final Submission to DEQ

Analysis

Per State Code 9VAC-130-120 & 9VAC-130-125, each SWMP must include objectives for the 20-year planning horizon, discuss plan implementation and tracking, provide facility names, capacity, and lifespan, provide a strategy for funding and resources with descriptions of each, include a public education and information strategy, consider public-private partnerships and private sector participation, and maintain at least a 25% recycling rate.

The main changes between the current (2022) and updated SWMP are: updated existing conditions data and future projections, updated and expanded recycling analysis, discussion of recycling rate reporting limitations, new implementation framework and objectives, addition of plan maintenance and amendment procedures, and updated and expanded documentation of public engagement.

The updated implementation framework for the City continues many strategies from the current SWMP and incorporates community feedback and the 2021 Comprehensive Plan. Updated strategies address recycling data collection and public education, enhanced reporting metrics, implementing the City's recently adopted High-Performance Building Standards, engagement with multifamily housing residents and managers to expand recycling, and increasing diversion of yard waste and food scraps.

Financial Impact

There is no budget impact associated with this report.

Recommendation

Staff recommends City Council review the updated TJPDC Solid Waste Management Plan in advance of the request for adoption scheduled for September 8, 2026.

Recommended Motion (if Applicable)

N/A

Attachments

1. Attachment 1 - Draft Regional Solid Waste Management Plan link
2. TJSWPU Solid Waste Management Plan Update - Charlottesville