

Policy Briefing Summary

City Council



Regarding:	Charlottesville Albemarle Regional Transit Authority Update
Staff Contact(s):	Ben Chambers, Transportation Planning Manager, Michael Goddard, NDS Interim Director
Presenter:	Ben Chambers, Transportation Planning Manager, Michael Goddard, NDS Interim Director
Date of Proposed Action:	October 19, 2026

Issue

Ongoing work of the Charlottesville Albemarle Regional Transportation Authority

Background / Rule

In December 2024, the City of Charlottesville, Virginia ("City"), along with Albemarle County, Virginia ("County"), created the Charlottesville Albemarle Regional Transit Authority ("CARTA"). CARTA, enabled by 2009 state legislation, is able to coordinate regional transit expansion priorities and determine a future dedicated revenue source for regional transit services. Over the past year, CARTA, supported by Staff from Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission ("TJPDC"), the City, and the County, has been reviewing existing transit services and plans to assess the scale of the region's transit needs and determine which priorities would benefit from additional regional funding. As CARTA concludes this study of potential future services, it is looking to clarify the role of CARTA in governing the implementation of those services and recommend changes to its enabling legislation to create a regional source for revenue.

Analysis

CARTA's current Study of Regional Planning Priorities ("Study") reviewed plans from TJPDC, the former Regional Transit Partnership, CAT, Jaunt, the City, and the County, and documented a comprehensive range of options for transit service expansion. The Study identified opportunities for improvements in frequency and span of service for high-ridership fixed service routes, investments in commuter routes, stronger links to major regional destinations and employers like the University of Virginia, the Charlottesville-Albemarle Airport, and the Downtown Mall, and better connectivity across our urban, suburban, and rural communities. In addition to the existing plans for improvement to CAT services that should come online prior to 2030, this Study has identified approximately \$12 million worth of additional annual transit services that would be feasible to implement starting in 2031. The Study has also identified additional aspirational investments beyond this initial set of transit expansions.

Before the City and the County can request changes to state legislation that could enable CARTA to serve as the vehicle for the kinds of investments identified in the prioritization study, CARTA will be working to answer what the role of CARTA will be in terms of governing regional transit decisions and identifying what opportunities could be available to set dedicated revenue for implementing them.

Financial Impact

The Study has identified approximately \$12 million in regional transit priorities that could be potentially implemented beginning in 2031. The direct financial impact of these proposed transit service expansions on the City has not been determined yet, as revenue sources and the roles and responsibilities of regional partners including CARTA itself are still in process of being identified.

Recommendation

None, informational update only.

Recommended Motion (if Applicable)

Not applicable.

Attachments

None