

# **THOMAS JEFFERSON PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION**

## **Quarterly Update on Projects and Activities** January through March 2025



### **Environmental**

**Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP):** The TJPDC, pursuant to a contract with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), collaborates with DEQ and other partners to provide educational resources and technical assistance related to the WIP to the local governments of Albemarle, Charlottesville, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa and Nelson and regional stakeholders, in an effort to reduce loads of nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment for the Chesapeake Bay TMDL.

- The TJPDC partnered with the Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District and Jack's Shop Kitchen to host a rain barrel workshop in March. The workshop reached capacity and provided 22 participants with rain barrels and kits to install them at home.
- TJPDC's first Regional Environmental Coordination meeting in February fostered shared knowledge and partnerships among local staff. Highlights included a Wetlands Watch presentation on the General Assembly and the Community Flood Preparedness Fund, PDC program updates, and a roundtable discussion.
- Staff continues to share information via the "Words from Your Watershed" newsletter and TJPDC website, as well as on the Rivanna River Basin Commission Facebook page, about funding opportunities, best management practices, and upcoming events to support local water quality.

**Rivanna River Basin Commission (RRBC):** The RRBC, formed in 2007 utilizing state enabling legislation and whose members are Albemarle, Fluvanna and Greene Counties and the City of Charlottesville, recommends programs for the enhancement of the water and natural resources of the Rivanna River and its watershed.

- The Rivanna River Basin Commission has appointed two new representatives, a new Fluvanna County citizen representative, and a new Thomas Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District representative.
- The TJPDC and the University of Virginia's Batten School are partnering on a summer internship to support the Rivanna River Basin Commission Conference.
- The first Commission Board meeting of the year is scheduled for April 10 with the agenda to include discussion of Watershed Implementation Plan updates and the Fall conference.

### **Housing**

**PDC Housing Development Program:** In 2021, the TJPDC was awarded \$2 million from Virginia Housing to work with community partners to develop 20 new housing units in the TJPDC region. This was part of \$40 million committed to the 21 Virginia PDCs for new housing initiatives.



- The TJPDC is administering funding for affordable housing development in all member localities with Habitats for Humanity of Greater Charlottesville, Fluvanna, and Piedmont, as well as with Virginia Supportive Housing. In total, \$1.8 million is being leveraged to develop new affordable housing units. TJPDC is closing in on having nearly 30 units being completed, spread across Albemarle, Charlottesville, Fluvanna, Louisa, and Nelson.
- About \$660,000 of PDC Housing Development Program funds have recently been awarded to Habitat for Humanity of Greater Charlottesville, Fluvanna Louisa Housing Foundation, and Nelson County Community Development Foundation for additional work to build affordable housing in the region. The funds were split evenly between the subgrantees.
- The grant period for all projects is scheduled to conclude in June, though the TJPDC's contract with Virginia Housing has been extended to allow for completed units to be completed by the end of 2025. The TJPDC anticipates that the entirety of the \$1.8 million in programmatic funds will be expended by June 30, 2025. To date, \$794,912.07 has been spent on units in our region.

**Central Virginia Regional Housing Partnership (CVRHP):** The TJPDC has been partnering in recent years with all the region's localities, as well as the private and nonprofit sectors, as part of the CVRHP. It serves as an official advisory board to the TJPDC charged with enhancing regional coordination and effectiveness in addressing the unmet housing needs in the region.

- The *2025 Regional Housing Summit: From Crisis to Solution*, was held March 13, 2025, at the Charlottesville Omni. It was a very successful event, with more than 200 in attendance.

**Thomas Jefferson HOME Consortium:** TJPDC is the administrator for the first regional HOME Investment Partnership Consortium in Virginia. This program provides annual entitlement funding through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for housing rehabilitation, down-payment assistance, or new construction for qualifying households in all localities in the region.

- On-going homeowner rehabilitation is being provided throughout Fluvanna, Louisa, and Nelson Counties, and the City of Charlottesville, using HOME funds.
- The 2025-26 Annual Action Plan is under development and will be made available in mid-April for public comment. A public hearing will be held on May 1 at the TJPDC Commission meeting.
- Services to those at risk of homelessness are being provided through HOME-ARP funds and disseminated through the Blue Ridge Area Coalition for the Homeless (BRACH) and the Greene County Department of Social Services.

**Housing Preservation Grant (HPG):** TJPDC annually receives these funds that are an important supplement to the HOME program, providing additional dollars for rehabilitation projects in the counties of Albemarle (eligible rural areas), Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, and Nelson.

- The TJPDC is leveraging more than \$111,000 through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development for FFY24. With the funding, TJPDC expects to serve about 30 low-income homeowners in need of home rehabilitation across rural Albemarle, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, and Nelson counties. In FFY23, 52 households were served. Currently, 25 projects are underway using FFY24 HPG funds, totaling \$107,812 in committed funds.

### **Legislative Services**

**Legislative Services Program:** This long-standing program represents the interests and positions of the region's localities with state policymakers, producing a regional legislative program and advocating for locally requested bills and budget amendments during the annual General Assembly session.

- Legislative Services efforts this past quarter were focused on the "short" (6 ½ weeks) General Assembly session. Activities included lobbying locality-requested bills and budget amendments, as well as other legislation of interest and concern to PDC localities; regular communications with TJPDC legislators and local government officials; and monitoring of budget and legislative



activities. During the session, legislative newsletters were produced on a regular basis and were sent out by email and posted on the TJPDC website. The session adjourned on schedule in late February.

- The Director of Legislative Services also planned and led discussion at the January meeting of the Mayor & Chairs/CAOs meeting and continues to serve as the Executive Director of the Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions.

### **Local/Regional Support**

The TJPDC supports its member localities by leading or managing various programs that benefit an individual locality or several/all localities in the region. This work currently includes the following:

**Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI):** TJPDC is the grant administrator for the \$287 million VATI (2022) broadband project, in cooperation with partner Firefly Fiber Broadband, which includes rural internet expansion in all TJPDC counties and eight additional counties in central Virginia. On July 24, 2024, TJPDC and Firefly were awarded a \$12.2 million VATI 2024 grant to expand upon this work.

- As of the March, 2025, VATI 2022 progress report, the project had achieved about 1,600 miles of field data collection; 3,624 miles of fiber design; 1,869 miles of make ready construction; seven communications huts set; 1,398 miles of aerial fiber placement; 633 miles of underground fiber placement; 1,587 miles of splicing, and 18,190 passings.
- During the last quarter, TJPDC staff conducted three site visits: two in Madison County (observed completed aerial fiber construction along Graves Mill Road and observed site work underway at the newly set Decapolis Communications Hut); and one in Amherst County (observed completed aerial fiber in the Naola area).
- In early March, TJPDC partnered with Firefly to facilitate the 10<sup>th</sup> quarterly stakeholders meeting to provide VATI project updates for the 13 county partners.
- The VATI 2024 project will provide broadband access to 5,825 additional unserved locations in 10 counties. As of the March, 2025, VATI 2024 progress report, field data collection and fiber design are underway, and the project has completed 17,600 linear feet of fiber and 126 passings.

**Blue Ridge Cigarette Tax Board (BRCTB):** TJPDC provides administrative support to the Board, which includes four PDC localities (Albemarle, Charlottesville, Fluvanna, and Greene) and six jurisdictions outside our region.

- At its January meeting, the Board heard a brief overview of the General Assembly session, followed by a more in-depth explanation/discussion of bills related to cigarettes and vaping that are being considered.
- The Board also received various reports from TJPDC staff, including updates on cigarette packs sold and tax revenue for the first half of the fiscal year, and the compliance agent's on-site visits to retail establishments that sell cigarettes within the Board's footprint.

**Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS):** TJPDC received a US EDA Economic Adjustment Assistance grant to develop a regional CEDS to benefit all TJPDC localities.

- An annual Implementation Committee meeting to review progress and metrics is being scheduled for this summer.

### **Transportation**

**Charlottesville-Albemarle MPO (CA-MPO):** This federally required entity is responsible for conducting ongoing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning and programming in Charlottesville and the urbanized area of Albemarle County. The MPO considers long-range regional projects and combines



public input, technical data, and agency collaboration to develop forward-thinking solutions.

- In February, CA-MPO staff presented the draft FY26 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) to both the CA-MPO Technical Committee and Policy Board for review. The UPWP outlines the planning activities and funding priorities for the upcoming fiscal year. Following feedback from these committees, the final version is scheduled for adoption in April.
- Michael Fontaine from the Virginia Transportation Research Council shared a presentation with the Policy Board regarding a Smart Intersection project in Albemarle County funded by the Innovation and Technology Transportation Fund (ITTF).
- CA-MPO staff provided the CA-MPO Technical Committee and CA-MPO Policy Board with an update of the Move Safely Blue Ridge project, sharing information about the activities completed.

**Regional Transit Partnership (RTP):** The RTP serves as an official advisory board, created by Charlottesville, Albemarle, UVA, and JAUNT, to provide recommendations to decision-makers on transit-related matters.

- TJPDC staff is supporting the newly enacted Charlottesville Area Regional Transit Authority (CARTA) by staffing the CARTA Board and committee meetings. Staff submitted a Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) Technical Assistance grant application to develop an implementation plan for the services outlined in the Regional Transit Vision Plan.
- Staff is participating in the Charlottesville Area Alliance's (CAA) Transportation Working Group to improve transit planning. Partner agencies include the City of Charlottesville, Albemarle County, the Blue Ridge Health District, The Center, and iTHRIV (UVA). The group received an AARP Livable Communities grant to conduct a gap-analysis of transportation needs for seniors in Region 10.
- The RTP continues to hold regular meetings to receive updates from transit providers and subject matter experts and to discuss transit-related matters.

**PATH (Partnership for Accessible Transportation Help):** PATH is a regional mobility management program, funded by the Department of Rail and Public Transportation and administered by TJPDC, that builds partnerships and assists transportation providers with improving and increasing transportation options for non-drivers. PATH has a website and toll-free number to assist older adults and people who cannot drive to find rides.

- During this quarter, PATH staff attended meetings and events targeted at older adults and people with disabilities to share information about the program and its services. Staff also met with potential partner organizations, gave a presentation for special education students at Fluvanna County High School, and submitted DRPT grant applications that were due in January.
- PATH staff answered calls and assisted older adults and people with disabilities with finding transportation services; the main requests have been for rides to medical appointments.
- PATH staff held workshops at Feeding Green Food Bank in Stanardsville and the Charlottesville Redevelopment and Housing Authority, and is working to organize 11 workshops, presentations and travel training sessions for April and May in all TJPDC jurisdictions.
- PATH staff updated the program's website, launched a digital marketing outreach campaign, and continued distributing printed promotional materials. PATH also has partnered with CAT to promote program activities on CAT's bus fleet.
- PATH completed the development of the Transportation Assistance Fund, supported by a \$5,000 grant from the Twice is Nice Foundation, to assist people who have a dire need for transportation and cannot afford it. The program was launched in March, and the first recipient has already received transportation assistance.

**Safe Streets and Roads for All:** The region's six member localities supported and pledged local funds toward a required match for the TJPDC's submittal of a multi-jurisdictional application through the federal Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Discretionary Grant Program. TJPDC is implementing the \$857,600

grant award for developing a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan for each locality in the region. The overall project is named "Move Safely Blue Ridge."

- TJPDC staff conducted the sixth Working Group meeting as a series of one-on-one sessions (one with each jurisdiction) to discuss countermeasures and refine the project scoring framework.
- TJPDC staff hosted a public meeting in Charlottesville to gather community feedback on three proposed safety improvements at the intersections of East High Street, Meade Avenue, and Stewart Street. The input will help determine which concept offers the greatest transportation safety benefits.
- In March, TJPDC's consultant completed work on the draft Comprehensive Safety Action Plan. The plan, which outlines strategies and priority projects to improve regional transportation safety, was distributed to stakeholders for review and feedback before finalization. This Plan, once adopted, will position the jurisdictions to be able to apply for implementation funding in future SS4A rounds.

**Rural Transportation Program:** This program started in 1993 as a cooperative forum for transportation planning in the counties of Albemarle (rural areas), Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, and Nelson. The program provides local planning assistance to the rural governments, maintains the Rural Long-Range Transportation Program, and assists the localities with other transportation needs.

- The Rural Transportation Advisory Committee held its regular meeting in February and approved the FY26 Work Program.
- Staff presented the FY26 Rural Transportation Work Program to the TJPDC Commission at its March meeting.
- Staff met with Fluvanna County staff to discuss Comprehensive Plan update needs.

**RideShare:** RideShare is a TJPDC program working to reduce traffic congestion and increase mobility throughout the region by providing free carpool matching and vanpool coordination and operating a Guaranteed Ride Home Program to provide free rides home in an emergency. RideShare's "Rides and Rewards" app can also be used for transit trip planning and has incentives for commuters to share the ride.

- Staff completed the quarterly Park and Ride Inventory.
- Staff submitted the annual grant request to DRPT for FY26.
- The Commuter Assistance Program (CAP) Strategic Plan was adopted by the TJPDC Commission at its March meeting.

