



**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF A REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
for Consultant Services to Develop a Charlottesville Area Regional Transit Vision Plan**

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission's (TJPDC) Procedures Governing Purchases approved by the Commission September 6, 2007, any purchases greater than \$30,000 require approval from the Commission; and,

WHEREAS, Article IX, Section 7 of the Commission Bylaws further require approval from the Commission for purchases greater than \$30,000; and,

WHEREAS, the TJPDC was awarded a \$350,000 grant from the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) to conduct a Regional Transit Vision Plan; and,

WHEREAS, the TJPDC will seek proposals from the DRPT's pre-approved bench contractors as consultants to develop the Regional Transit Vision Plan at a cost greater than \$30,000; and,

WHEREAS, the TJPDC Commission was presented with a copy of the Request for Proposals for review; and,

WHEREAS, the Regional Transit Partnership of the TJPDC appointed a committee to review all proposals in accordance with the TJPDC's Bylaws and approved Procedures Governing Purchases and to make a recommendation to the Interim Executive Director as to the selection; and,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission hereby authorizes the Interim Executive Director to distribute the Request for Proposals for a consultant in accordance with the provisions of the Commission Bylaws and approved Procedures Governing Purchases; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission hereby authorizes the Interim Executive Director to take all other actions consistent with the Commission Bylaws and approved Procedures Governing Purchases to procure and facilitate the services of a consultant to develop the Regional Transit Vision Plan.

Adopted this 1st day of April, 2021.

Christine Jacobs, Interim Executive Director
Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission

Dale Herring, Commission Chair
Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission

Date

Date

Greetings [CONTACT NAME],

The Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC) invites you to submit a price proposal for the enclosed scope of work for a regional transit vision plan for the Charlottesville and Albemarle area.

A successful proposal will detail how your team will complete each of the tasks outlined in the scope of work. We expect that you will share examples of your team's success with similar projects. Additionally, we expect that you will note your experience with the unique character and needs of the Charlottesville-Albemarle region and/or your plan to familiarize your team with the region in order to ensure successful completion of the project. We welcome suggested changes to the attached scope of work that the consulting team believe would improve the overall project and the intended outcomes.

TJPDC staff and the other project stakeholders value the transit-planning experience and knowledge of all of our potential consulting teams, and we look forward to hearing from you no later than April 27th, 2021 at 5pm.

This invitation for proposals utilizes the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transit's General Transit Planning bench contract with [FIRM NAME], specifically contract number 505-18-CC00[XX]. This planning process is funded, in part, by a DRPT Technical Assistance grant (project number 71321-03).

Sincerely,
Jessica Hersh-Ballering
Transportation Planner
Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission

SCOPE OF WORK: Regional Transit Vision Plan

PURPOSE OF WORK:

The Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission seeks the services of a general transportation planning firm to develop a Charlottesville Area Regional Transit Vision Plan. The purpose of this plan is for local leaders, transit agencies, and a wide variety of stakeholders to collaboratively develop a clear vision for the future of transit in our region. The study area for this project is primarily the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County; however, significant destinations and population centers outside of these localities and within the planning district should also be considered.

First, the community must collaboratively define what a "high-quality" transit system looks and feels like, as well as the outcomes in which it results. Then, we must use a data-driven approach to better understand where transit (and what type/level of service) can be supported in our community and/or is needed to support our community's most transit-reliant residents. Ultimately, we need a clear list of recommended actions – short- and long-term – to help us achieve our vision.

The Charlottesville Area Regional Vision Plan will go beyond existing Transit Development Plans in its examination of existing gaps in the region's transit service, existing and future population and employment conditions, travel patterns and land use development patterns, and public input regarding their needs and desires for transit system improvements. The vision plan should include recommendations for transit-adjacent elements within the purview of the localities and planning district commission that can support transit agencies' efforts to improve regional service, such as travel demand management programming. The vision plan should also address other transit planning issues that will impact local agencies in the coming years, such as the role of alternative fuel and autonomous vehicles, etc.

The Regional Transit Partnership (composed of elected and appointed representatives from City of Charlottesville, Albemarle County, regional transit agencies – Charlottesville Area Transit, JAUNT, University Transit Services, and area public school transportation) will serve as the official advisory group to the hired consulting team. A technical committee (composed of transit agency staff, planning and development staff from the localities and University of Virginia, and others) will support the consulting team by providing some of the necessary technical information to complete the requested work products. Additional engagement with the general public and high-priority stakeholders will be critical to the development of the Charlottesville Area Regional Transit Vision Plan. The consulting team must ensure that the needs and desires of the many populations in our region are thoroughly documented and incorporated in the vision plan.

PROJECT BACKGROUND:

Inspired by the excellent visioning work recently done in Richmond and Alexandria, the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission is interested in working with local transit agencies and

stakeholders to develop a clear vision for the future of transit in our region. This vision plan is an essential step to pull our regional transit agencies out of a “death spiral”¹ and ensure that the region develops a robust transit network that encourages more people to use transit to travel more places.

The area served by the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission has a total population of 234,712, with 43,475 individuals living in the City of Charlottesville and 98,970 living in Albemarle County, according to the 2010 Census. The population of our region was expected to grow by over 11% between 2010 and 2020, with a growth rate of more than 21% within the City of Charlottesville; these anticipated rates of growth are significantly higher than that of the Commonwealth at just over 9%.

Many individuals and families are moving to our region because of our low unemployment rate and amenities, including excellent school systems, parks, and access to natural beauty. However, residents new and old are finding that transportation costs are a hurdle to prosperity. The average household in the City of Charlottesville spends approximately 19% of their income on transportation costs, according to the Housing and Transportation Affordability Index.²

Workers commute across our region. Each day, over 18,000 workers commute into the City of Charlottesville from outside of it, with the largest portion (>12,000) coming from Albemarle County, according to Virginia Works.³ Over 6,500 people commute within the City of Charlottesville. And, each day, over 14,000 workers commute into Albemarle County from outside of it. Over 16,000 workers commute within Albemarle County. These figures are complicated by the fact that the University of Virginia and University of Virginia Medical Center are two of the region’s largest employers whose physical locations are bisected by the City of Charlottesville/Albemarle County boundary lines. Our region’s workers, as well as the residents and visitors traveling to schools and daycares, medical appointments, and many other destinations within our region deserve a robust and reliable transit network as one of their travel options.

Our region is poised to benefit from a well-executed regional vision plan. Our residents are ready for increased investment in transit that will lead to an improved transit system. At a recent community event hosted by the Charlottesville-based Center for Civic Innovation, a diverse group of regional residents – from young professionals to retirees, parents of young children and teens who are looking for increased freedom of mobility – repeatedly expressed their desire to shift away from single occupancy vehicle trips. Nonetheless, they were unable to do so because of an insufficient, ineffective, and unreliable transit network.

While the recently approved Transit Development Plans effectively plan for Charlottesville Area Transit and Jaunt to continue their current levels of service and address some of the current challenges they face, the Charlottesville Area Regional Transit Vision Plan will take a wider and longer view of the transit landscape in our region and, most importantly, envision the ways in which our local transit agencies and other stakeholders can collaborate to create improved, seamless service for local residents and visitors.

¹ <https://ggwash.org/view/75110/could-regional-expansion-solve-charlottesvilles-transit-death-spiral>

² <https://htaindex.cnt.org/fact-sheets/?lat=38.0293059&lng=-78.47667810000002&focus=place&gid=26730#fs>

³ <https://virginiaworks.com/community-profiles>

In recent years, TJPDC staff have worked with local transit agencies and other stakeholders to create the Regional Transit Partnership (RTP), an official advisory board composed of the City of Charlottesville, Albemarle County, Jaunt, and the University of Virginia and in partnership with the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transit. The RTP provides recommendations to decision-makers on transit-related matters, and is intended to establish strong communication and ensure coordination among transit providers and stakeholders and to identify opportunities for improved transit services and administration. The consulting team developing the regional vision plan will be able to leverage the expertise and collaborative nature of the Regional Transit Partnership.

The City of Charlottesville, Albemarle County, and University of Virginia have all developed Climate Action Plans that endeavor to reduce regional greenhouse gas emissions, of which transportation is a major emitter. Encouraging drivers to take fewer single occupancy vehicle trips and, instead, take more transit trips would help these local governments reach their climate goals. As such, we can count on significant support from these stakeholders throughout the vision plan process and into the implementation phase.

WORK DURATION:

The time period for the work described in this scope is approximately 12 months or 365 calendar days from issuance of Notice to Proceed.

WORK PRODUCT:

Initial Work Products:

- 1) *Vision Statement* – will concisely define the community's understanding of what a "high-quality" transit system looks and feels like, as well as the outcomes in which it results.
- 2) *Land Use Assessment* – This document will assess land use plans and zoning codes in the study area, identifying areas that are particularly favorable to transit.
- 3) *Transit Propensity Assessment* – This document will use a multi-factor model of Census and employment data, as well as input from a wide variety of stakeholders, to better understand what kind of transit service is needed and would be supported in the area.

Intermediate Work Products:

- 4) *Corridor-Specific Service Recommendations* – Using the results from the initial work products, this document/map will make recommendations for the type of transit service that can be supported on major corridors in the study area. The document will outline investment priorities for these recommendations to create a relative timeline for implementation.
- 5) *Travel Demand Models* – The consulting team will use travel demand modeling to compare a “no change” scenario to the fully-implemented “Recommended Scenario.”

Final Work Product:

- 6) *Regional Transit Vision Plan* – This document will investigate other broad transit planning questions the region’s providers must grapple with in the visioning process, such as the use of alternative fuel vehicles, equity, safety, and first-/last-mile connections. Ultimately, this document will identify short-term, long-term, and extended long-term actions the region’s transit providers and the Regional Transit Partnership must take to develop and sustain high-quality transit service in our community.

TASK ITEMS:

NOTE: The following task items are not intended to be all inclusive. A full proposal should provide a complete list of tasks, sub-tasks, and delivery dates associated with this project.

Task 1: Project Management and Coordination

Provide project management and coordination with Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission staff, the Regional Transit Partnership, and other stakeholders. The Regional Transit Partnership will serve as the official advisory group for the project. The consulting team should plan to make updates and seek feedback on project components and processes at a subset of the Regional Transit Partnership’s regular monthly meetings.

Upon notice to proceed, the consultant shall develop a refined project scope with input from the TJPDC Project Manager and the Regional Transit Partnership. The consultant shall determine and detail project timeframe and major deliverables and ensure on time delivery and responsive performance.

This task is continuous throughout the length of the feasibility study and implementation plan development period.

Task 2: Public Engagement

The consultant shall conduct public outreach and engagement both online and, when possible, in person at least twice during the project period. The consultant shall notify TJPDC staff in advance of dates for virtual or in-person engagement. TJPDC staff shall be responsible for the logistics of these events – setting up online meetings via Zoom, securing an in-person meeting location, advertising for the event, etc.

The consulting team should also create and maintain a project website that explains the project and timeline and solicits public feedback on the project. TJPDC staff and other stakeholders will use social media and media blasts to notify the public of the website and encourage participation.

Innovative public outreach and engagement strategies are welcome in order to maximize public feedback.

Public feedback should be analyzed according to formal qualitative analytical processes, as the needs and desires identified through this analysis should inform the work products.

The consulting team should work closely with TJPDC staff, the advisory group, and other stakeholders to ensure that members of the public included in the outreach and engagement process are broadly representative of the region's residents in terms of race, color, national origin, income, and age. Members of the public experiencing disabilities and those who would use public transit to travel with children and other vulnerable populations should be included in outreach and engagement.

The consultant shall also provide a minimum of three information-sharing presentations – one presentation to each of the following stakeholder groups: Charlottesville City Council, Albemarle County Board of Supervisors, and the Regional Transit Partnership. These presentations shall occur after the initial and intermediate work products have been completed. The consultants shall rely heavily on the feedback shared by elected and appointed officials, as well as the public, during and following these presentations to identify recommended short-term, long-term, and extended long-term actions the region must take to develop and sustain high-quality transit service. Feedback shared during and following these presentations should also add focus and depth to the other broad transit planning questions (such as the use of alternative fuel vehicles, equity, safety, and first-/last-mile connections, etc.) to be addressed in the final work product.

A fourth, final presentation shall be given to the Regional Transit Partnership following the completion of a draft final work product. Feedback offered by Regional Transit Partnership members should be used to make edits to the final work product.

Task 3: Data Collection and Analysis – Initial Work Products

Initial Work Products:

- 1) *Vision Statement*
- 2) *Land Use Assessment*
- 3) *Transit Propensity Assessment*

The *Vision Statement* will concisely define the community's understanding of what a "high-quality" transit system looks and feels like, as well as the outcomes in which it results.

The statement will be the result of collaborative discussions among the RTP, stakeholders, and the general public. The priorities of the community, as defined in the *Vision Statement*, should be used to guide all subsequent work products.

The *Land Use Assessment* will focus primarily on existing land use plans and zoning codes for the region, while also considering planned significant development projects that might indicate an increased need for transit service. This assessment may also consider the built environment, such as planned pedestrian-focused projects, that might support new or increased transit service in an area.

The *Transit Propensity Assessment* will use Census, employment, and other data, as well as input from stakeholders and the public, to better understand what kind of transit service is needed and would be supported in the area. Some variables that may be considered as part of this assessment

include number and density of workplaces in an area and the number of employees, the number and density of non-employment destinations in an area (parks, healthcare, etc.), vehicle ownership rates, etc. Equity should be a major consideration of the *Transit Propensity Assessment*, such that historically-underserved populations and populations likely to rely on transit to meet daily needs are quantitatively and qualitatively prioritized in this assessment.

The consultant can utilize Charlottesville Area Transit's and JAUNT's 2018 Transit Development Plans, local Comprehensive Plans, and a variety of small area and Master plans, as well as the Regional Transit Partnership's Coordination Study as starting points for their data collection but should expect to consult with the Regional Transit Partnership, technical committee, stakeholders, and the public, as well as actively engage in comprehensive data collection.

Task 4: Corridor-Specific Recommendations – Intermediate Work Products

Intermediate Work Products:

- 1) *Corridor-Specific Service Recommendations*
- 2) *Travel Demand Model*

The initial work products described in Task 3 will guide the development of corridor-specific recommendations for the type of transit service that can be supported. The *Corridor-Specific Service Recommendations* document will identify the different types of service that have been considered for the region (for example, express service, local high-frequency, local low-frequency, demand-response, etc.) and describe how these types of service differ (description of recommended station types, stop spacing, vehicle types, frequency, etc.).

This document will include a map to quickly show which type of service is recommended for each corridor.

This document will recognize that not all changes can be made at once, due to funding and other considerations. This document will identify when a subset of recommended changes to the type of service offered on particular corridors should be grouped for concurrent implementation and prioritize the recommendations to create a relative timeline for implementation.

Just as equity was described in Task 3 to be a major consideration of the *Transit Propensity Assessment*, the consulting team should address how the corridor-specific recommendations consider and prioritize our region's historically-underserved populations and populations most likely to rely on transit to meet daily needs.

The future scenario in which regional transit systems have implemented all of the recommended service type changes will be referred to as the "Recommended Scenario." The consulting team will use travel demand modeling to compare this fully-implemented "Recommended Scenario" to current transit service, referred to as the "No Change Scenario." Variables for comparison might include ridership, transit service hours, operating costs, costs per passenger, population within a quarter mile of a bus stop, etc. The consulting team should address how the "Recommended Scenario" improves equity in our region.

Task 5: Charlottesville Area Regional Transit Vision Plan

Final Work Product:

1) Regional Transit Vision Plan

Ultimately, the consultant shall develop a Charlottesville Area *Regional Transit Vision Plan* that summarizes the results and recommendations of the initial and intermediate work products.

Additionally, this document will investigate other broad transit planning topics that the region's providers must grapple with in the visioning process, such as the use of alternative fuel vehicles, equity, safety, and first-/last-mile connections, providing recommendations on these topics that are consistent with the corridor-specific transit recommendations.

Ultimately, this document will identify short-term, long-term, and extended long-term actions that can be achieved through the collaboration of regional transit agencies, the Regional Transit Partnership, the localities, and other stakeholders. The expected outcome of these actions is to create and sustain high-quality, equitable transit service.

[Document End]