

THOMAS JEFFERSON PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

Summary of Activities January through March 2021

Environment:

The renewed contract for the 2021 **Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Planning (WIP) Assistance program** continues to be addressed in conjunction with our environmental partners. When working on the regional Hazard Mitigation Plan, WIP and best management practice (BMP) language are included in considerations. The PDC also continues to assist localities with compiling GIS shapefiles. The TJPDC is working with Greene County on a NFWF Small Watershed Grant to improve BMP infrastructure and design at their Visitor's Center. The PDC also assists the Rivanna Conservation Alliance (RCA) with stream cleanups and stream-clean up kit organization to encourage socially-distanced participation. The Rivanna Stormwater Education Partnership (RSEP) continues the #LoveYourWatershed social media campaign.

The **Rivanna River Basin Commission (RRBC)** continues to provide technical steering assistance to the WIP contract. The RRBC Facebook page and website continue to be the primary location for social media and marketing content, as well as informational guides created by RSEP and other affiliated environmental groups through the #LoveYourWatershed hashtag.

With the **Regional Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan** update now underway, a technical working group consisting of subject matter experts from the PDC localities, UVA, FEMA, and the Virginia Department of Emergency Management met initially to review the project scope and timeline, and has continued to meet regularly to assist in guiding the project. The March meeting focused on virtual outreach opportunities and providing feedback on a draft public survey. TJPDC staff has developed an inventory of data needs and will begin the process of reaching out to each locality for the requisite information prior to beginning the hazard identification analysis.

The five-year update to the **Solid Waste and Recycling Plan** for the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Solid Waste Planning Unit (SWPU) has begun. Meetings and outreach are ongoing with representatives from Charlottesville, the counties of Albemarle, Fluvanna and Greene, and the University of Virginia as part of efforts to update the plan. Also, the TJPDC has begun collecting recycling data and rates from the region's localities and recycling vendors in order to prepare the annual recycling report for the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality.

Housing:

The **Central Virginia Regional Housing Partnership (RHP)** "Regional Housing Locator" website, [PorchLightVA](#), features available, affordable rental units in the region, with the for-sale portion of the site launching at a future date. A collated list of resources by locality is also included. Through the first quarter of 2021, over 200 total listings have been created, with 3,572 available units. The majority of those listings are located in Charlottesville and Albemarle County. There are a total of 78 landlords using the site.

The RHP kicked-off the [Spring Speaker Series](#) in March, with the first of four slated events. The topic discussed was zoning hurdles and incentives. More than 60 people participated in the virtual discussion, and another 22 have viewed the event recording. The upcoming April 15 session is about housing pro forma and financing housing developments. The series is being supported by \$2,000 in sponsorships from organizations in the region.

Chapters of the **Regional Housing Plan** for Greene, Louisa and Nelson Counties have been

prepared and drafts for Albemarle and Fluvanna County soon will be presented to the Strategies and Analysis Committee for review. Discussions also have been held with Charlottesville staff to discuss incorporating the City's affordable housing policy into the regional template.

The **HOME** program has distributed \$160,702 in funds to our sub-grantees. The funds have gone toward down payment assistance for first-time homebuyers, home rehabilitation projects, and building new affordable units in our urban and rural communities. The Annual HOME Action Plan also is being updated with expected performance objectives for the HOME program in the next program year (October 1, 2021, to September 30, 2022). In addition, the **Housing Preservation Grant** program has distributed \$27,083 in funds to sub-grantees for home rehabilitation projects in our rural communities.

Legislative Services:

The 2021 General Assembly session convened virtually, and met in both regular and special session from mid-January to the first of March. Legislative discussions were monitored remotely, while advocacy efforts were carried out primarily via email, text and telephone calls. Four locality-requested bills and a handful of budget amendments were actively pursued. Other legislation of interest and concern to PDC localities also was monitored in accordance with the priorities identified in the approved TJPDC Legislative Program. Periodic updates through Legislative Newsletters and Alerts were sent out by email and posted on the TJPDC website. The session adjourned March 1, with a revised biennial budget for FY21 and FY22 being adopted. Work also began to review and analyze approved legislation and budget actions for inclusion in a final summary of the legislative session to be released this spring.

Also, during this quarter, legislative services held the quarterly meeting of the Mayor & Chairs/CAOs in January and hosted various meetings to discuss formation of a regional cigarette tax board, which the TJPDC could administer.

Local/Regional Support:

In partnership with the Central Virginia Electric Cooperative, Rappahannock Electric Cooperative and Dominion Energy, the TJPDC hosted a **broadband expansion meeting** in early March. The hour-long presentation and discussion session was attended by more than 50 people from our region and bordering areas. Representatives of the three providers detailed their plans to expand fiber infrastructure across a large swathe of Central Virginia over the next several years.

Kittelson & Associates, Inc. completed the MetroQuest survey for the **Zion Crossroads Small Area Plan** in January. The consultants met with the stakeholder committee to review survey responses and their analysis of system performance, and to provide a first round of potential solutions for improving performance at several of the key intersections. Fluvanna and Louisa officials were able to provide an initial round of feedback. TJPDC and VDOT staff attended Fluvanna County's Comprehensive Plan Transportation Subcommittee in March to review the initial findings from the consultants and hear additional feedback about the vision for the transportation system in the Fluvanna portion of the area. The next step will be for TJPDC staff to meet with the stakeholder group to develop additional recommendations that the counties would like included in the plan.

The TJPDC is working with localities in the region and beyond on shaping a **regional cigarette tax administration effort**. On the heels of a December webinar, TJPDC followed up with a discussion session with CAOs and finance staff in February. A smaller working group of local officials is meeting on a regular basis to address details related to the establishment, functioning and administration of local cigarette tax ordinances on a regional basis.

Transportation:

The **Charlottesville-Albemarle Metropolitan Planning Organization (CA-MPO)** Policy Board met in January and hosted a public hearing for a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) amendment, adopted performance and safety targets for the CA-MPO area, and celebrated the award of over \$108

million from Round 4 of Smart Scale, leveraging an additional \$18 million of funding designated for improving capacity and increasing efficiency along Route 29 in the MPO region. At its March meeting, the Policy Board voted to support a request from Albemarle County to change the functional classification of roads within the MPO boundaries and reviewed projects for the FY22 Unified Planning Work Program. Also, the MPO has developed and posted throughout the TJPDC website introductory “101 Primers” for all TJPDC programs. These briefs provide a good general overview of TJPDC programs and how to engage with them.

The **MPO Technical Committee (MPO Tech)** held its regular meetings in January and March. The committee reviewed and updated its membership, reviewed/approved changes to the TIP, reviewed/approved changes to the functional classification of several Albemarle County roadways, discussed the draft FY22 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). It also discussed changes to the Smart Scale scoring process and projects the MPO and localities are considering for submission in the next SmartScale round. It also heard the results of the fall bicycle and pedestrian counts and received brief presentations on the two transit grants and the Route 29 Corridor Study (see below for more details).

The TJPDC has begun the **Route 29 Corridor Study** that will take place over the next 18 months. The study area extends from Airport Road in Albemarle County to Route 33 in Ruckersville, and includes the Charlottesville-Albemarle Airport and UVA Research Park on the southern end. VDOT is providing engineering support and will develop solutions for intersections in the corridor that have not already been addressed.

Work to launch the two Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) transit grants began in earnest this quarter. TJPDC staff released an invitation for proposals from DRPT bench contractors for the **Albemarle County Transit Expansion** feasibility study and implementation plan. A selection committee composed of TJPDC and Albemarle County staff reviewed the two submitted proposals and forwarded a favored proposal to the TJPDC Commission for its support. TJPDC and Albemarle County staff have identified an advisory group of about 10 people for this project; it will meet with the consulting team to kick-off the project later in April. Meanwhile, TJPDC staff worked closely with the Regional Transit Partnership (RTP) to refine the scope of work and other details for the **Regional Transit Vision Plan**, the second DRPT transit grant-funded project. A Request for Proposals should be released for this project soon, and it is expected that a kick-off meeting will be held in May or June.

The **RTP** held meetings in February and March. The Partnership reviewed and updated its membership, set a meeting schedule for the 2021 calendar year, and discussed the following: the Albemarle County Transit Expansion grant; the Regional Transit Vision Plan project; the MPO’s Unified Planning Work Program; Round Five Smart Scale projects; in-person school bus service and other provider updates; and a work plan for the RTP for FY22. This is the first time TJPDC staff is pursuing a work plan for the RTP, in line with our other programming.

The **Rural Technical Advisory Committee** continues meeting virtually on a bi-monthly basis. In January, the committee reviewed the draft of the FY22 Rural Work Program, received updates on the Route 29 North Corridor and the Zion Crossroads Corridor studies, and reviewed upcoming changes to VTrans. At the March meeting, VDOT staff gave a presentation on preliminary scoring results of SmartScale projects submitted this round. Staff from JAUNT are scheduled to discuss transit initiatives in the rural localities at the May meeting.

The **Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC)** met for regular meetings in January and March. The committee reviewed/approved changes to the TIP; reviewed/approved the setting of performance and safety targets for the MPO; discussed the draft FY22 UPWP; discussed changes to the Smart Scale scoring process and projects the MPO and localities are considering for submission; discussed changes to the MPO Public Engagement Plan; learned about the results of the fall bicycle and pedestrian counts; and received a brief presentation on the two transit grants.

The **Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee** met monthly during the quarter. The committee received brief presentations on the transit grants and the 29 Corridor Study and discussed how bicycle and pedestrian considerations might be incorporated into those studies; planned for the spring bicycle and pedestrian count; discussed the draft FY22 UPWP; discussed projects the MPO and localities are considering for submission for Smart Scale, specifically projects with strong bicycle and pedestrian components; and shared ideas and made plans to collaborate for Bike Month activities. The committee also discussed the **One Map project** at all meetings, with technical staff meeting separately to tackle technical issues in detail. As the first phase of the One Map project nears completion, plans have solidified to have UVA Scholar's Lab complete the last of the technical work on the map and share data with classes and researchers; the TJPDC will ultimately host the map on our website.

RideShare:

RideShare continues to promote Telework!VA with DRPT and the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC). A webinar on the free services offered from Telework!VA was offered to local businesses and Chamber of Commerce members in late January. Staff also has partnered with the CSPDC and UVA to explore co-working opportunities to help minimize commutes in the region and has resumed work with the Afton Express branding and marketing in anticipation of the launch of the bus service next year. RideShare staff completed the FY22 operating rant and FY22 work plan, which were approved by the TJPDC Commission. Staff also continues to serve on the Community Climate Collaborative steering committee for the Better Business Challenge and the Regional Transit Partnership. The quarterly park and ride inventory was completed in March. Staff has also begun work on continued DRPT telework promotions for the end of the fiscal year, including bike month promotions and Clean Commute Month.