

THOMAS JEFFERSON PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

Summary of Activities January through March 2022

Environment:

TJPDC continues to assist localities with compiling GIS shapefiles and land cover changes related to the **Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) Assistance Program**. Staff also shares pertinent information regarding environmental justice efforts, grant deadlines and webinars with local planning and environmental staff. The TJPDC partners with the Rivanna Stormwater Education Partnership on the #LoveYourWatershed social media campaign and other timely environmental topics through the RRBC Facebook page and TJPDC Facebook page. The WIP Program is being carried out by Planner Isabella O'Brien for the remainder of the year.

The **Rivanna River Basin Commission (RRBC)** continues to provide technical assistance to the WIP contract. Staff has been developing a work plan for the RRBC for the upcoming fiscal years. A benchmark has been compiled of local comprehensive plan goals pertaining to the Rivanna River, and an inventory of local nonprofits and organizations involved in efforts pertaining to the Rivanna River has been done. Staff also has been conducting interviews with local planning staff and previous RRBC members to identify ways the RRBC can continue to steer the WIP, carry out its annual Fall conference, and create further value for Rivanna watershed communities.

Staff has been working to complete the **recycling rate report** for the Thomas Jefferson Solid Waste Planning Unit, which consists of Albemarle, Charlottesville, Greene and Fluvanna. The final report will be submitted to the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) in April. The recycling rate report collects information on the amount of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) generated in the planning unit and the percentage of such waste that has been sent to a recycling facility.

Work on the **Regional Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan** continues, to include a review and formal revision of the 2018 Plan's Goals and Objectives, which are the categories under which each mitigation action can be found. These goals and objectives guide the types of action steps that localities plan to take over the next five years related to natural hazard mitigation. Staff also conducted a meeting to allow members of the public to review the revised HIRA, as well as provide input on the goals and objectives the working group reviewed. Staff prepared materials to send to all localities to help them review their 2018 mitigation action items, to catalogue their progress and to generate new mitigation action items. Further work was also conducted on the estimated losses for each natural hazard. A draft plan update should be ready for public comment by summer.

Housing:

Staff reviewed Proof of Concepts selections and sent out full applications to potential development partners for the **Virginia Housing PDC Housing Development Program**. This application was intended to collect important details about each potential development partner's finances, background, construction and development schedule, and development history. Staff assembled a review panel of affordable housing experts and the TJPDC Chair to review the applications. The review panel indicated that all proposed development partners possessed feasible and important affordable housing proposals and indicated that staff should move forward with selected development projects. Staff prepared a presentation and resolution for consideration at the TJPDC Commission's April meeting.

The **Central Virginia Regional Housing Partnership (RHP)** continued its strategic planning process. In January, there was a work session/retreat, facilitated by the Spark Mill, the consultants

conducting the strategic planning process, and the CVRHP's Executive Committee. This meeting allowed members to discuss findings and results of the Spark Mill's focus group and interviews with the region's affordable housing stakeholders. This group reconvened in February to review the Spark Mill's preliminary findings report, which synthesized the information collected in interviews, as well as the Executive Committee's input at the January retreat. A strategic planning workshop was conducted in March with the full CVRHP. This session presented the direction of the strategic plan and similar strategic planning activities to the full partnership.

The CVRHP's Events Committee also met each of the past three months to finalize speaker series topics for a Summer 2022 virtual speaker series. A full in-person conference has been proposed, with details of such an event to be explored.

The TJPDC and Piedmont Housing Alliance were awarded a \$250,000 **Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot (VERP)** Implementation Grant in mid-January. This grant is intended to build on a successful VERP Planning Grant, which TJPDC staff completed last Fall. The Implementation Grant will fund two new positions at Piedmont Housing Alliance's Financial Opportunity Center/Housing Hub – a Landlord Navigator and an Eviction Prevention Case Manager – as well as provide money for direct financial assistance to individuals who are at risk of eviction. Staff at the TJPDC and PHA completed the onboarding documents for the grant and returned them to DHCD, and held an advisory committee meeting with regional eviction prevention stakeholders.

Housing:

Data for the **HOME Investment Partnership (HOME)** Annual Action Plan is being collected. A draft of the plan has been posted on the TJPDC website and is available for public comment. A public hearing will be held during the Commission's May meeting. The HOME Action Plan identifies specific activities to be undertaken with the funds during the upcoming program year to fulfill the goals stated in the Consolidated Plan.

The TJPDC is in the process of choosing a consultant to complete a Gaps and Needs Analysis Study for the **HOME Investment Partnership-American Rescue Plan Program (HOME-ARP)** amendment that needs to be added as a supplement to the previously-submitted HOME Action Plan. This is necessary for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to be able to release funding for **HOME-ARP**. The Request for Proposals (RFP) draft has been circulated to the localities for review.

Legislative Services:

The Legislative Services team spent much of this quarter working with the **General Assembly**. Activities included lobbying more than a dozen locality-requested bills and other legislation of interest and concern to PDC localities; regular communications with TJPDC legislators; phone and email communication with local government officials and monitoring of budget and legislative activities, in accordance with the priorities identified in the approved TJPDC Legislative Program. During the session, Legislative Newsletters were produced on a regular basis, which were sent out by email and posted on the TJPDC website. The session adjourned March 12, but without completing action on a state budget for FY23/24 or about 30 bills left unresolved in the regular session.

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

Local/Regional Support:

TJPDC is working with the Department of Housing and Community Development and private sector stakeholders to prepare for implementation of the \$79 million **Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) broadband grant** that was awarded to TJPDC in mid-December. The TJPDC will be the grant administrator for the project.

TJPDC staff supporting the **Blue Ridge Cigarette Tax Board (BRCTB)** processed the first two

months of reports and remittances from distributors for newly-enacted (as of January 1) cigarette taxes in the eight jurisdictions that make up the Board's footprint. Revenues collected exceeded \$200,000 per month for both January and February. The BRCTB met in January and March, but likely will move to having quarterly meetings soon.

Transportation:

The **Charlottesville-Albemarle MPO (CAMPO)** Policy Board held its regular meetings in January and March, and also held a special meeting last month on VDOT's Round 5 SMART SCALE candidate project, the Rivanna River Bicycle and Pedestrian Bridge Crossing (see below for more information). Topics discussed in the regular meetings included amendments to the FY22 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and first review of the draft FY23 UPWP. CAMPO staff began meeting with locality staff to determine next steps for developing applications for the additional three projects that were identified by the Policy Board as priorities for this round (see below). CAMPO staff continues to work with OIPI to pursue technical assistance to develop a project prioritization process that will be implemented as part of the Long-Range Transportation Plan, scheduled to begin in FY23

In March, CAMPO staff presented the Policy Board with the results from an online public survey regarding the **Rivanna River Bike/Ped Bridge Crossing**. More than 800 members of the public participated in the survey and provided input on bridge location and bridge type. The Policy Board decided on the East Market Street (Woolen Mills) location for the bridge and also the type of bridge structure. CAMPO staff, along with staff from the City of Charlottesville, Albemarle County and VDOT, also hosted a public webinar regarding SMART SCALE Round 5 projects. Additional projects included Fifth Street Extended Multimodal Improvements, Avon Street Multimodal Improvements, and a District Avenue/Hydraulic Road Roundabout. CAMPO staff began preparing the Round 5 SMART SCALE applications for the four MPO projects supported by the Policy Board, along with four additional projects sponsored by Albemarle County.

The **Regional Transit Vision** Plan wrapped up its first round of public engagement with over 600 participants in the online survey, which was available in both English and Spanish. The project team facilitated a three-day transit planning workshop with transit providers and planning staff from Charlottesville and Albemarle. This workshop produced an unconstrained transit route map for the TJPDC region. Staff reviewed a transit model tool and draft vision plan memo with the results of the first round of public engagement and continued to keep the project webpage updated.

Work on the **Albemarle County Transit Expansion** project wrapped up in February with the submission for a Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) demonstration grant to implement Micro-Transit services in the Route 29 North and Pantops areas. Activity during the period included hosting stakeholder and public meetings to review the final project recommendations and gather feedback on the draft final report. The project website also was updated to include the final report and project information.

During the quarter, the **Regional Transit Partnership (RTP)** hosted a peer city speaker from Blacksburg Transit. A speaker from Dallas Area Rapid Transit spoke about GoPass, their shared ride planning app, and University Transit Services also presented on their new evening on demand service. The Albemarle Transit Expansion study draft final report was presented during the February meeting. Additionally, the RTP approved a resolution to support an application for a DRPT Technical Assistance grant for a transit governance study. Staff collected proposals from consultants to conduct the study to develop a forum to manage additional revenue for implementing the transit vision. A group of stakeholders met to select a proposal and staff met with the consultants to review their application and updated scope of work. Staff prepared and submitted the application, with matching funding to be provided by Albemarle County, Charlottesville and the TJPDC.

Committees:

The **Rural Transportation Advisory Committee** met in January and March. Staff worked with stakeholders to develop a Fiscal Year 2023 workplan for the Rural Transportation Program. The goal of this effort is to identify further opportunities for collaboration; ensure meaningful engagement with localities and local transportation providers throughout development of the Annual Work Plan; and identify short-and-long-term goals for transportation in the rural parts of the region. The **Bicycle and Pedestrian Staff Coordinating Committee** met in February and March to discuss OneMap, an effort to develop a common shared definition of bicycle and pedestrian facilities among Charlottesville, Albemarle and the University. The **MPO Technical Committee** met in March and received an update on Round 5 SMART SCALE and the FY22 and FY23 Unified Planning Work Programs. The **Citizen Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC)** met in March and heard updates on the online public survey results for the Rivanna River Bike/Ped Bridge Crossing, Round 5 SMART SCALE, and the development of the FY23 UPWP.

RideShare:

RideShare completed the FY23 grant application for DRPT, as well as the FY23 workplan. Both were presented to the TJPDC Commission for approval and support. RideShare continued its partnership with the Afton Express, and joined UVA staff for a promotion event at UVA to inform potential riders about the new bus route and other benefits, such as the Guaranteed Ride Home program. Staff also worked with *Hive Creative* to update and improve marketing of the RideShare program throughout the region. *Hive* staff conducted interviews with regional stakeholders and sent recommendations for updated marketing materials to be developed. In addition, planning has begun for the May Clean Commute promotion, as well as Bike Month. The quarterly park and ride inventory also was completed.

TJPDC:

Ryan Mickles joined the TJPDC staff in January as a Planner III. Ryan previously worked at the TJPDC as a transportation planner, before stints with the City of Charlottesville and the Town of Chapel Hill (NC). He returns to TJPDC to provide support to the MPO and other agency programs and projects.

Lori Allshouse and Ruth Emerick joined the staff in February, both bringing connections to Albemarle County with them. Lori recently retired from Albemarle County, having concluded her time there as Assistant Chief Financial Officer for Policy and Partnerships. She is working part-time as the VATI Program Director. Ruth had served as GIS Program Director in Albemarle for about six years. She is the new Chief Operating Officer/Program Director and will be the lead staff on a number of administrative and programmatic functions of the agency.