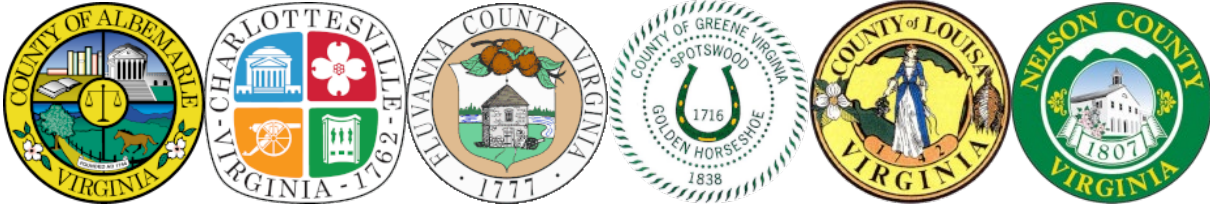


THOMAS JEFFERSON PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

Quarterly Update on Projects and Activities January through March 2023



Environmental

Hazard Mitigation Plan: TJPDC works with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM), and local emergency managers to develop and maintain a regional Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan on behalf of all localities in the region. The Plan documents current natural hazard risk and vulnerability and allows localities to plan for mitigation efforts over the next five years. Adoption of the plan allows localities to access certain federal funding sources.

- The 2023 Hazard Mitigation Plan update was formally approved by FEMA in January. Staff has been working with each locality to adopt the plan. The plan was adopted this quarter by Fluvanna, Louisa, and Nelson Counties, and the Town of Scottsville.

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 Stewardship Mapping and Assessment Project kicked off this quarter in partnership with the USDA Forest Service. The project will result in a comprehensive and publicly accessible map and database of environmental stewards working in the region, their organizational characteristics, network characteristics, and geographic turf.
- TJPDC staff submitted two applications for Urban Tree Canopy BMP projects through the CBPO Assistance Agreement grant opportunity in Albemarle County and the City of Charlottesville.
- Staff joined the Middle James Roundtable Steering Committee, which is a collaborative effort to improve water quality through local and regional community-based watershed projects.

Rivanna River Basin Commission (RRBC): The RRBC, formed in 2007 as a result of 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.

- A stakeholder advisory group meeting was held with local environmental stewards on the Stewardship Mapping and Assessment Project.
- Staff attended the Environment Virginia Symposium in March in Lexington.

Housing

Housing Development Program: In July 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 all 21 Virginia PDCs for new housing initiatives.

- The TJPDC is administering funding for affordable housing development in all member localities with Habitat for Humanity of Greater Charlottesville, Fluvanna, and Piedmont, as well as the Charlottesville Redevelopment & Housing Authority and Virginia Supportive Housing. In total, \$1.8 million will be leveraged to develop 160 new affordable housing units.
- Thus far, 10 units have been completed in Charlottesville, Fluvanna, and Louisa. Staff anticipates the closing of units in Southwood, built by Habitat for Humanity of Greater Charlottesville, in the coming months.

Central Virginia Regional Housing Partnership (CVRHP): The TJPDC has been partnering for the past four 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.

- Staff continued work on strategic planning initiatives and presented at implementation committees in January.
- The Chair and Vice Chair of the CVRHP continued visiting all governing bodies in the region to introduce themselves to elected officials and answer questions about the CVRHP. Thus far, they have visited the City of Charlottesville, Nelson County, and Albemarle County.
- The CVRHP hosted an in-person housing summit at the Charlottesville Omni on March 24. The event was a great success, with a variety of breakout sessions on rural and urban housing topics, a keynote address, and ample networking time to forge connections. Over 215 individuals registered to attend.
- Staff worked with the Virginia Housing Alliance to finalize a job listing for TJPDC to have an Americorps VISTA member, whose role will be to support implementation of strategic plan items. Recruitment will begin in April.

Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot (VERP): TJPDC administers an eviction reduction pilot (VERP) grant from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to address and prevent evictions in Albemarle County and the City of Charlottesville.

- The TJPDC again is working with subgrantee Piedmont Housing Alliance to administer a \$275,000 grant that funds two staff members at PHA (eviction prevention case manager and landlord mediator). The funding also provides direct financial assistance for community members at risk of eviction and a court navigation program that helps connect individuals with resources. This grant was awarded to TJPDC in January. TJPDC maintains and organizes an advisory committee of local governments, housing providers, landlords, and other relevant parties to support these efforts.

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.

- The 2023-27 HOME-CDBG Consolidated Plan is open for public comment. A public hearing will be held at the TJPDC Commission's May 4 meeting.
- Staff compiled an allocation plan for HOME-ARP funds, of which each locality will receive about \$347,000. The allocation plan had a public comment period in January and was presented to the TJPDC Commission in February. The plan has been accepted by HUD and TJPDC staff is

working with locality staff to begin the projects described in the plan. In the plan, the HOME Consortium committed to providing 17 new rental units for low-income seniors, as well as supportive services to homeless or at-risk residents in Greene and Albemarle Counties.

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.

- HPG FFY 2022 funds have been designated to 22 home rehabilitation projects so far, committing over \$73,000 of the total \$182,750 available for the year. These projects serve households with very low or extremely low incomes. Projects include roof repairs, installation of ramps for accessibility, septic replacements and plumbing repairs.

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 legislation program and advocating for locally-requested bills and budget amendments during the General Assembly session.

- Legislative Services efforts this quarter were focused on the two-month General Assembly session. Activities included lobbying locality-requested bills and 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 in late February, but without completing action on amendments to the state budget for FY23/24.
- 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 the Counties of Albemarle, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, and Nelson, and the City of Charlottesville, 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 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.

- As of March, the project had achieved 338 miles of field data collection; 1,617 miles of fiber design; 393 miles of make ready construction; 111 miles of aerial fiber placement; 99 miles of underground fiber placement; 78 miles of splicing and 865 passings.
- During the quarter, TJPDC staff members conducted site visits to assess progress underway in Louisa, Buckingham, and Greene Counties.
- TJPDC and partner Firefly Fiber Broadband facilitated the third stakeholder meeting in early March to provide project updates for all 13 county partners.

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

- At its January meeting, the BRCTB agreed to move BRCTB reserve funds and account accruals to investment with the Virginia Investment Pool. It also discussed data for the end of CY22

related to the number of packs of cigarettes sold and revenue generated by the local taxes.

- The BRCTB's compliance agent continues on-site visits to retail establishments in the Board's footprint that sell cigarettes, educating them about the cigarette tax and stamp requirements and to seek compliance with local cigarette tax ordinances.

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

- Following a kickoff meeting held this quarter, the CEDS regional steering committee plans to meet late this month to review a draft data report.

Transportation

Charlottesville-Albemarle MPO (CAMPO): 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.

- Staff has been making steady progress on development of the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan, *Moving Toward 2050*. The TJPDC wrapped up development of a project prioritization process that was funded through the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment. Staff also held three stakeholder discussion groups to get feedback on the draft goals and objectives.
- Staff prepared the draft Transportation Improvement Plan, a document that is used to approve the expenditure of federal funds on transportation improvements within the MPO area. It will be considered for approval by the MPO Policy Board in May following a required public hearing.
- Following the release of the staff-recommended projects to receive funding through the fifth round of SMART SCALE, staff worked with VDOT to prepare and submit an application to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program for the preliminary engineering phase of the Rivanna River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing, which did not get staff approval in SMART SCALE due to the complexity of the project and high contingency costs. The completion of the preliminary engineering phase will provide information needed to develop more accurate construction cost estimates, increasing the likelihood of the project's competitiveness in the future.
- Staff also has been participating in the Charlottesville Area Alliance meetings and the Blue Ridge Health District's Community Health Involvement Plan.

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.

- Staff supported the Regional Transit Governance Study by completing technical memos, providing project updates to stakeholders and hosting an in-person stakeholder workshop.
- Staff presented regional transit updates to community groups, like Rotary Clubs, to gain support for the Regional Transit Vision Plan and the Regional Transit Governance Study initiatives.
- Staff submitted a grant proposal to DRPT to start a mobility management program designed to improve public transportation services for older adults and people with disabilities.
- The RTP continues to meet, receive updates from transit providers and subject matter experts, and discuss transit related matters.

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 Discretionary Grant Program. The application is for developing a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan for each locality in the region.

- TJPDC received a federal grant award in the amount of \$857,600 at the end of January. When adding in local match, more than \$1 million is being committed to improve roadway safety in the region through this grant. Additional support is being provided through VDOT's Highway Safety Improvement Program.
- Staff has been attending webinars with the U.S. Department of Transportation to prepare for the release of award funding, meeting with VDOT staff to develop the scope for the work to be completed through the Highway Safety Improvement Program, and preparing for consultant procurement.

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 with the localities with other transportation needs.

- The Rural Transportation Advisory Committee held its regular meetings in January and March. In January, the committee received a comprehensive presentation from Jaunt and in March, it discussed their needs for support in identifying and developing bicycle and pedestrian projects in the rural areas.
- Staff supported Stanardsville's Main Street sidewalk project and also attended county Interagency Council meetings to discuss transportation needs for underserved populations.

RideShare: RideShare is a TJPDC program that works to reduce traffic congestion and increase mobility throughout the region's localities 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.

- RideShare submitted grants to DRPT for the annual operating funds for the RideShare program and for Technical Assistance for a Strategic Plan, and also completed the FY24 work program.
- Staff completed quarterly Park and Ride Inventory and assisted with additional inventory of the lots for VDOT.
- RideShare staff gave presentations on the Afton Express to the MPO Policy Board and to the Regional Transit Partnership.
- Staff also attended the ACT Chesapeake Chapter workshop on Micro-Transit in Richmond.