



The Honorable W. Sheppard Miller III
Office of the Secretary of Transportation
Patrick Henry Building
1111 East Broad Street, 4th Floor
Richmond, VA 23219

September 4, 2025

Dear Secretary Miller:

The Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC) submits this letter formally requesting that the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) change the TJPDC rural Area Type from Category “C” to Category “D” for Round 7 and future rounds of Virginia’s SMART SCALE project prioritization process. This change would not impact the urban Area Type of the Charlottesville-Albemarle Metropolitan Planning Organization (CA-MPO), which is presently categorized as Area Type “B” and is not requesting a change at this time.

The TJPDC represents the following rural jurisdictions: the counties of Greene, Louisa, Nelson, Fluvanna, and the non-urbanized portion of Albemarle. Following the conclusion of SMART SCALE Round 6, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and TJPDC staff began discussing Area Type categories, the associated weighting of the scoring factors, and their impacts on project scores.

The results of that analysis showed that the TJPDC is an outlier in the Commonwealth as being the only rural area (area not within an MPO) that is categorized as Area Type C. All other PDCs with rural areas are categorized as Area Type “D”, in which the highest weighted factor is safety. Additionally, the analysis illustrated that projects within the rural areas would have generally scored more competitively in SMART SCALE had the TJPDC been Area Type “D” instead of “C”.

Staff presented this topic to the TJPDC Rural Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC), which is comprised of staff from all impacted rural jurisdictions. At the June 17, 2025, meeting, the RTAC unanimously voted to recommend that the TJPDC Commission, the RTAC governing body, submit a request to change the PDC’s Area Type from “C” to “D”. Staff then sent a memo to the Chief Administrative Officers of each of the TJPDC’s rural member jurisdictions to seek guidance and feedback on requesting the Area Type change.

Finally, staff presented the completed analysis to the TJPDC Commission at its August 7, 2025, meeting as informational. At its September 4, 2025, meeting, the TJPDC Commission voted unanimously to pass a resolution requesting the change in Area Type.

We believe that this change in Area Type is in the best interest of the TJPDC and its rural member jurisdictions and has broad support across the region. We appreciate the CTB’s consideration and look forward to participating in future rounds of SMART SCALE.

Thank you,

Keith Smith, Chair
Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission

Christine Jacobs, Executive Director
Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission

Date

Date

Attachments:

Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission Resolution
VDOT SMART SCALE Area Type Weighting Comparisons
VDOT SMART SCALE Scoring Scenario Comparisons

CC:

Mr. John Lawson, Deputy Secretary of Transportation
Mrs. Ronique Day, Deputy Director of the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment
Mrs. Brooke Jackson, SMART SCALE Program Manager
Captain Darrell R. Byers, Culpeper District Commonwealth Transportation Board Member
Mr. Ned Gallaway, Albemarle County Board of Supervisors
Mr. Mike Pruitt, Albemarle County Board of Supervisors
Mr. Philip D’Oronzio, City of Charlottesville Planning Commission
Mr. Michael Payne, City of Charlottesville City Council
Mr. Tony O’Brien, Fluvanna County Board of Supervisors
Mr. Tim Goolsby, Greene County Board of Supervisors
Mr. James Higgins, Greene County Citizen Representative
Mr. Manning Woodward, Louisa County Board of Supervisors
Mr. Tommy Barlow, Louisa County Board of Supervisors
Mr. Ernie Reed, Nelson County Board of Supervisors
Mr. Jesse Rutherford, Nelson County Board of Supervisors