



Memo

To: Rural Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC)

From: Sara Pennington

Date: April 28, 2026

Re: Rural Transportation Needs Assessment Summary

Purpose:

The purpose of this project is to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment of rural transportation planning priorities across rural jurisdictions in the Thomas Jefferson Planning District. By gathering targeted data and engaging with locality staff, TJPDC will be well-positioned to support regional coordination, plan future infrastructure investments, and develop an informed Rural Transportation Annual Work Program.

Survey Results Overview:

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Rural Transportation Needs Assessment survey. Your responses provide a helpful snapshot of current priorities, ongoing efforts, and areas where regional support can be most useful. This memo summarizes key themes that emerged across jurisdictions.

Key Themes from Responses

1. Planning Context and Existing Work

Most respondents indicated that the list of existing plans and studies is generally current and reflective of recent work. Several jurisdictions noted ongoing or recently completed comprehensive plan updates. At the same time, some older small area plans were identified as needing updates.

2. Ongoing and Unmet Planning Needs

A number of jurisdictions highlighted previously identified studies that need updating — particularly small area plans and elements of comprehensive plans. These responses suggest an opportunity to revisit and align older planning recommendations with current conditions and priorities.

3. Shared Transportation Priorities

There was strong consistency across responses regarding top needs:

- **Roadway safety improvements** (consistently ranked as the highest priority)
- **Better coordination between land use and transportation planning**
- **Improved access to public transportation**

These shared priorities point to common challenges and opportunities across the region.

4. Looking Ahead (Next 3–5 Years)

Respondents identified several upcoming efforts, including:

- Comprehensive plan updates
- Corridor and small area studies
- Multimodal planning initiatives

Many indicated interest in coordinating with TJPDC on these efforts, particularly where regional collaboration could add value.

5. Opportunities for TJPDC Support

The most frequently requested areas of support were:

- **Grant identification, writing, and administration**
- **Data collection and analysis**
- **General planning and technical assistance**

These responses highlight the importance of providing flexible, targeted support to help move local priorities forward.

6. Regional Coordination Opportunities

While some jurisdictions are not currently seeking updates to regional plans, others expressed interest in:

- New or updated regional studies
- Coordination on bicycle, pedestrian, and trail connectivity

This suggests continued interest in regional approaches, particularly for multimodal systems.

Key Takeaways

- Safety continues to be the top shared concern across jurisdictions.
- Many localities are balancing ongoing plan updates with previously identified but incomplete work.
- There is strong interest in practical support—especially around funding and data.
- Opportunities exist to build on shared priorities through regional coordination, particularly for multimodal networks.