

THOMAS JEFFERSON PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

Summary of Activities January through March 2012

Environment:

Over the last quarter, TJPDC has shifted from analyzing hazards in our region to facilitating public participation to determine effective mitigation strategies. **The Hazard Identification and Analysis and Vulnerability Assessment** sections of the Hazard Mitigation Plan have been approved by the Virginia Department of Emergency Management. The mitigation strategy phase was kicked off with a public meeting, and continued through a second public meeting held February 8th focusing on goals to educate the public to be personally prepared for disasters, to reduce the impact of hazards on regional infrastructure, and to protect people, especially vulnerable populations, from harm during hazard events. Input is also being collected with an online survey, which all residents in the region are encouraged to fill out. TJPDC staff is working with the Hazard Mitigation working group, Local Emergency Planning Committees, and local government staff to generate a series of recommended action items specific to each locality.

TJPDC Executive Director Steve Williams participated in the **Eco-Logical Peer Exchange** held March 21 and 22 in Washington, DC. The Federal Highway Administration awarded an Eco-Logical grant to TJPDC to support the integration of regional green infrastructure planning with its transportation planning program. The project resulted in the development of several tools to assess conflicts between regionally-important natural resources and transportation projects in the planning phase of infrastructure development. TJPDC is using the tools as part of its update of the Long Range Transportation Plan.

The TJPDC, in partnership with the Rivanna River Basin Commission (RRBC), is working under a Small Watershed Grant from EPA's Chesapeake Bay Program via the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, to provide **assistance to TJPDC local governments in developing plans to meet Chesapeake Bay cleanup requirements**. The TJPDC and RRBC worked together to provide technical assistance, including data compilation and analyses of alternative scenarios, to assist local governments in determining the most cost-effective solutions to achieving Chesapeake Bay clean-up goals.

Human Services:

Housing:

The City of Charlottesville and the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC) invite all interested citizens to comment on the **draft Year 2012-2013 Action Plan of the Consolidated Plan**. The Consolidated Plan and the Action Plan guide the use of federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds in the City of Charlottesville and federal HOME funds in the TJPDC region (City of Charlottesville and counties of Albemarle, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, and Nelson). Funding levels for the coming year are estimated at \$587,250 for HOME and \$425,318 for CDBG. Comments will be accepted through April 26.

On March 30, TJPDC **completed work on its third grant from the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities for work on the Transportation and Housing Alliance (THA)**. This grant, which began in October, 2010, was to be used to increase the use of the THA Toolkit, the first edition of which was unveiled in June, 2007. This was followed by a continuation grant that awarded funds to use the toolkit to carry out projects. Feedback from sub-grantees helped shape the second edition, which featured fact sheets on using the Toolkit for specific planning products and a new section on jobs. The third grant focused on increasing the use of the Toolkit across the state and included the following work:

- Training at statewide and regional conferences and seminars on the THA Toolkit and its application in planning work.
- Case studies with the six member localities in the planning district on zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations and development review process to identify barriers to inclusive and accessible communities.
- An assessment tool to evaluate local policies and procedures, identification of common barriers and model language for revision of ordinances, regulations and processes.
- Four regional training sessions, training over 120 planners and Planning Commissioners across the state.

Legislative Liaison:

The Legislative Liaison spent most of this quarter **at the General Assembly**. Activities included lobbying 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 all budget and legislative activities. Eight newsletters, widely distributed throughout the region, were produced during the time and continue on a monthly basis.

Following conclusion of the regular session, the liaison prepared letters to the governor requesting action on retirement legislation (from the Commission) and transportation legislation (from the MPO). The General Assembly convened in special session following the regular session to complete action on the biennial budget and our legislators were informed of regional positions on competing items in the spending plan. The liaison also began **reviewing and analyzing approved legislation** and drafting a final summary of the legislative session.

The liaison also **presented updates of General Assembly action** to the February and March TJPDC Commission meetings. He also planned and led discussion on legislative matters at the January meeting of the Mayor & Chairs/CAOs meeting.

Local/Regional Support:

Several successful training events were held in the fall as part of the TJPDC's **Public Service Training program**. A Transportation and Housing workshop was held in late January. The session included an overview of the THA Toolkit as a way to provide tools for planners to use to assess their locality, highlight common barriers to inclusive communities, and present possible changes to ordinances and processes to serve all residents. In early February, a Hazard Mitigation session was held. It included a presentation of the goals and objectives developed from input from the Hazard Mitigation workshop held last October, a review of responses to an on-line survey and small-group work to generate ideas on actions to take to ensure more resilient communities. Finally, in early March, the Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association held a free AICP exam orientation for planners interested in attaining certification. The session provided an informal opportunity for those planning to take the exam to improve their understanding of the exam process and content.

Local Assistance:

In January, Fluvanna County requested that the TJPDC develop a **fiscal impact analysis on a proposed water infrastructure project in the Zion Crossroads area**. The proposed waterline would extend to the Women's Prison from the Lake Monticello system and would then expand to the remainder of Fluvanna County's Zion Crossroads Community Planning Area. The purpose of TJPDC's Return on Investment (ROI) study is to provide insight to local decision-makers on whether this waterline would be cost effective for the County. The final results provide figures for the short- and long-term implications of an expanded public water and sewer system and also identify ways the area could develop under different growth scenarios. These growth forecasts will help guide zoning and land use strategies in the Zion Crossroads area. By the end of March, staff completed the ROI model and then presented its results to the Fluvanna County Board of Supervisors in early April.

The **Livable Communities Project** completed its Community Outreach Workshop series the end of March with the session on Historic and Scenic Resources. The six-event series solicited public input for the updates of the Comprehensive Plans for the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County, and the Long Range Transportation Plan. The Livable Communities Project is a nearly \$1 million endeavor awarded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning grant program. TJPDC received the award on behalf of the Charlottesville-Albemarle MPO to develop a full, regional implementation plan for the MPO area.

Transportation:

For much of the beginning of 2012, the **Charlottesville-Albemarle Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)** has been developing the *Cville Bike mApp*, a free, bike mapping application for iPhone and Android phones. The App allows cyclists to record their trips and send trip information to the MPO for transportation planning purposes. This input-gathering effort will help inform the cycling portion of the Long Range Transportation Plan.

The App will be available for download from iTunes and Google Play. When activated, the App taps into a phone's GPS. During the trip, the App records GPS points every few seconds. Once the trip is complete, the user can anonymously upload the information to the Charlottesville-Albemarle MPO. The App also records some qualitative data such as trip purpose, weather, cyclist capability (beginner, intermediate or advanced) and affiliation with the University of Virginia. The MPO will be collecting cycling data between mid-April and mid-May.

RideShare:

The Commuter Information Team, which includes RideShare, has been **preparing to host the 22nd annual Clean Commute Day in the Central Virginia region on Friday, May 4.** Area commuters are encouraged to take the "Clean Commute Pledge," promising to use a commute option other than driving alone for at least one day. Participants who make the pledge are eligible to win valuable prizes, with the grand prize winner to receive two tickets on Amtrak's Northeast Regional Service, good for travel to any location along the route from Charlottesville to Boston.

RideShare participated in the **Better Business Challenge workshop** in late March entitled "Stop Throwing Your Money Down the Drain." The workshop focused on things businesses can do to use less of our valuable resources that we all depend on – water and fuel. RideShare Program Manager, Lisa Horanyi, gave a presentation on the tools that RideShare offers, as well as what some employers in the area are doing to make better use of these resources. Participants learned ways to save by making smarter purchases as well as making small changes to habits with water usage and driving.

RideShare is working to **update the Park & Ride lot map** with four additional VDOT-owned lots that may be convenient to commuters in the region. These lots are described as follows:

- Augusta County: Greenville Park and Ride Lot, on Rt. 11 past Riverheads High School.
- Nelson County: Roseland Park & Ride Lot, located off of Route 655 just before the intersection with Route 151 in Roseland.
- Rockingham County: Bergton Park and Ride Lot, located at the intersection of Rt. 259 and Rt. 820 (which takes you into Bergton).
- Rockingham County: Mauzy/Timberville Park and Ride Lot, located just off of I-81 at the Mauzy/Timberville exit, on Rt. 259 West in front of the Rockingham County Refuse and Recycling Center.

