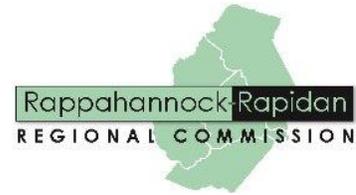


Executive Director's Report December 2, 2020



The purpose of this monthly report is to provide members of the Regional Commission with a summary report of work plan-related activities, staff attendance and participation at local/regional/statewide meetings, and updates on initiatives impacting the Regional Commission and our localities.

Administration:

- Jennifer Little re-joined the Commission staff in early November as a Regional Planner with involvement on housing, community development and project support. Ms. Little worked in our offices as an AmeriCorps VISTA member from November 2019 through October 2020 focused on capacity building for the Foothills Housing Network.
- Staff continue to work staggered schedules based on project and program needs, with 50% to 75% of staff in the office most days. I remain impressed with the flexibility of staff in maintaining effectiveness and efficiency during the pandemic.
- Local budget requests were submitted to Fauquier County in October and are in development for Orange County and Culpeper County before the end of 2020.

Homelessness & Regional Housing

- The Regional Housing Study stakeholder workgroup met in November in follow-up to the October Commission meeting presentation. Comments and suggestions from both meetings are being incorporated into the final draft of the study, which will be brought back to the Commission in February for consideration. I am pleased that summary documents are able to be completed for each County and three larger towns. Commission staff will follow up with other towns to determine how to usefully focus data for those areas. We can also make arrangements to be available for local meetings to discuss the study as needed.
- Foothills Housing Network is in the process of updating its bylaws and provider standards documents. Along with those updates, we are also re-engaging leadership from organizations and agencies that form the membership of FHN. This includes Social Services directors, non-profit organization Directors or Chairs. Questions and connections can be made with FHN Coordinator Rebecca Wareham.
- We will provide a brief update regarding funding that has been received related to homeless services in the region as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. While most of the funding flows to FHN partners, the Commission's role as lead agency has allowed our staff the ability to ensure that funds are directed where the needs have been identified by those partners.

Environmental/Natural Resources

- A draft scope of work is included here for the 2021 Chesapeake Bay Watershed PDC Implementation Program grant through the Department of Environmental Quality. If there are watershed planning or other projects that may benefit from Commission staff involvement, please contact me or Michelle Edwards.
- In October, the Commission approved RRRC to serve as lead applicant on a proposal to USDA Regional Conservation Partnership Program. Unfortunately, budget uncertainty for some of the project's Federal partners and long-term matching fund concerns made an application not

possible for this cycle. We will keep Commissioners updated should partner organizations reengage on the proposal.

Transportation

- The Commonwealth Transportation Board will meet on December 9th and is expected to take action on budget items including the Commission's Commuter Services program. We expect funding to support baseline operations, with limited marketing and outreach funding in FY 2021.
- For those of you that utilize VDOT Revenue Sharing funding, please be aware of changes impacting the timing of those funds moving forward. In the past, these projects were included in middle years of Six-Year Improvement Programs; however, transportation funding challenges will likely push those funds into the final two years of future SYIPs.
- Staff will begin public outreach regarding the Regional Long Range Plan update in early 2021. To date, we have collected and updated much of the background data for the Plan and will seek local input on additional needs and priorities as part of the update.

Economic Development & Tourism

- Staff continues to be in contact with partners at Thomas Jefferson PDC and U.S. Economic Development Administration regarding the application previously submitted for a super-regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) plan.
- The regional Tourism Committee has continued minimal advertising via Facebook for the Tween Rivers Trail focused on safe activities and to highlight TRT member events conducted with appropriate guidelines. We will reconvene the Tourism Committee in early 2021 to determine additional projects and/or opportunities for partnership.

Emergency Planning & Hazard Mitigation

- In October, I reported that VDEM expected several Hazard Mitigation plan update applications with expiration dates prior to the RRRC plan expiration. However, in follow-up discussions, VDEM staff suggested that there would be ample funding for RRRC to submit an application for the plan update. If awarded by FEMA, this project would likely not begin until early 2022.
- Staff participated in FEMA Region III outreach to coordinate local, regional and state responses related to resilient communities and resilient economies. A statewide report was produced by FEMA Region III and can be shared upon request.
- Staff continues to participate with Rappahannock-Rapidan Health District on jurisdiction calls related to COVID-19 and background support for outreach and testing sites.

Local Technical Assistance

- We anticipate processing all funds for the Rappahannock County CARES Act Business Assistance program in December.
- Finalized mapping for the Rappahannock County Comprehensive Plan following public hearings
- Provided supporting documentation to Town of Culpeper staff regarding RRRC Active Transportation Plan
- Coordinating Virginia Outdoors Plan review and update with local staff in all jurisdictions
- Provided statewide transportation funding update to Fauquier County Transportation Committee meeting in November
- Reviewed pedestrian bridge issues for Madison County