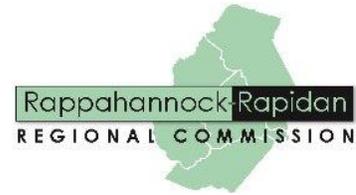


Executive Director's Report February 18, 2021



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:

- Lauren Taft has joined the Commission as a Social Work intern working with Foothills Housing Network through May. Ms. Taft is completing her internship as part of the Social Work program at Mary Baldwin University.
- Staff have completed grant compliance reviews for the Virginia Homeless Solutions Program (VHSP) grants funded through the Department of Housing and Community Development and a Title VI review for our Rural Transportation Work Program grant funded through VDOT. There are two administrative policies requiring Commission approval on the agenda related to the reviews and grant requirements.
- Grant applications for Mobility Management and Commuter Services were submitted to DRPT in late January.
- Budget requests for FY 2022 were submitted to all Counties and Towns requesting specific information by deadlines in January and February.

Transportation

- Preliminary Smart Scale scores for round four were released in January, and error corrected in February. The OIPI/VDOT staff recommended funding scenario (revised in February) includes four projects in Fauquier County and one in Orange County.
 - Route 55/Route 709 Roundabout
 - Route 17/Covingtons Corner Road RCUT
 - I-66, Exit 28 Westbound/Route 17 Roundabout
 - I-66, Exit 28 Eastbound/Route 17 RCUT
 - Route 231/High Street Roundabout (Gordonsville)
- The Regional Transportation Collaborative project is moving forward with significant work completed by subcommittees focused on outreach/community engagement, marketing, paid ride pilot program, and volunteer recruitment. Staff have also coordinated partnership building with the village programs in the region – LOWLINC, Rapp at Home, and the Culpeper Livable Communities (CLAC) group.
- Staff will begin public outreach regarding the Regional Long Range Plan update in early 2021. An update was provided to the Rural Transportation Committee in February with demographic updates, equity mapping, and updated project information. Staff will communicate with local planning staff and chief administrative officers regarding local review and requests for changes.

Homelessness & Regional Housing

- The Regional Housing Study is now in final draft form and is on the agenda for consideration of adoption by the Commission. I will provide a review of the study in follow-up to the presentation from Camoin 310 in October, as well as adjustments made since that time. RRRC

staff have also begun to compile some additional information building off the data provided by the consultant and some of the initial recommendations included in the study.

- I appreciate both Town Council in Culpeper and Warrenton for the opportunity to present the housing study to them in January and February. The offer remains for presentations to other local bodies.
- Foothills Housing Network conducted the annual homeless Point in Time Count on January 27th. We expect the overall numbers to rise, as there are a higher number of individuals and households in hotels paid for by homeless service providers in the region. This year, the count also included an observational count of unsheltered individuals; in most years, the unsheltered count includes direct surveys for unsheltered individuals, but those requirements were adjusted due to COVID-19.

Environmental/Natural Resources

- Staff has provided technical support to the Mountain Run TMDL implementation plan under development by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. This includes participation in agricultural and residential working group meetings and GIS and demographic analysis for the watershed.
- The Rappahannock-Rapidan Food Council met in January and discussed ongoing activities at the Carver Center in Culpeper, as well as revisiting the Farm to School liaison position that was discussed prior to COVID-19 last year. Staff expects to bring that item back to the Commission in April with a recommendation to move forward or hold for another year depending on feedback from school system partners.

Economic Development & Tourism

- Staff continues to work with partners on the Youth Entrepreneurship program proposal for GO Virginia. The next deadline for GO Virginia Region 9 is in early April and outreach to local economic developers, school systems and youth-focused organizations (Boys & Girls clubs, Culpeper Youth, 4-H, etc.) is underway to identify partners that can commit to the project goals and match requirements.
- The application submitted by Thomas Jefferson PDC for a super-regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) plan was not funded by U.S. Economic Development Administration via its CARES Act allocation. EDA staff did indicate that the proposal was eligible and would likely be funded under their Planning grant program, which requires a 1:1 match, and is available on a rolling basis every year. I plan to reach out to local economic development partners to determine interest later in 2021.

Emergency Planning & Hazard Mitigation

- The Commission approved an application to VDEM and FEMA to fund an update to the Rappahannock-Rapidan Hazard Mitigation Plan in December. We are awaiting final confirmation from VDEM staff but based on plan expiration dates across the state and funding available from FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program, our application is likely to be deferred to a future grant round, either the 2021 BRIC program or a Hazard Mitigation Grant Program that may be opened based on any federally declared disasters prior to the next BRIC application period.

Local Technical Assistance

- The Rappahannock County CARES Act Business Assistance payments were processed in December. 20 organizations received funding through the program administered by Businesses of Rappahannock with RRRC serving as fiscal agent for the \$90,000.
- Staff worked with Culpeper County and Town of Culpeper staff on a proposal to the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIPI) Growth and Accessibility technical assistance program. If awarded, the project would provide planning assistance for a small area plan in the Nalles Mill Road/Braggs Corner Road area.
- Provided mapping assistance to Rappahannock County related to Emergency Operations and Management
- Coordinating research into GIS software for local redistricting efforts and providing summary information regarding redistricting timelines based on delayed Census data and changes in Virginia law relating to prison population apportionment. In 2011, the Commission provided assistance to the Counties of Culpeper, Orange and Rappahannock and the Town of Warrenton with redrawing their local voting districts.
- CDBG program and grant application discussions with Town of Washington and Orange Downtown Alliance