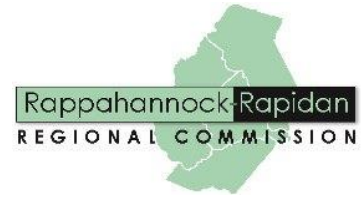


## Executive Director's Report April 10, 2024



The purpose of this 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:

- Updating from February, the two pending budget amendments with potential direct impact on the Regional Commission remain in the budget following the Governor's amendments earlier this month. As it currently stands, the budget includes an additional \$25,000 for each year of the biennium for each of 21 planning districts. The Senate budget includes an additional \$25,000 for each Continuum of Care lead agency, of which RRRC is one and would provide some flexibility for use of other homeless services funding sources.

### Environmental & Natural Resources

- The RRRC Food Policy Council met earlier in April and a primary topic of discussion was the recently released Ag Census data. Staff have compiled summary information for the region, including trending changes over past Ag Censuses, as well as other relevant information on the Food Council webpage: <https://www.rregion.org/foodcouncil>
- RRRC received a grant award from the Department of Forestry to support the regional Urban Heat Island mapping project. A summary of the project is [on our website](#) and this will begin in earnest later in the Spring and will include partnering with Friends of the Rappahannock and its volunteers to collect field data around the region. Results of the analysis may be used to detect hot spots that can be targeted for future tree planting or impervious surface reduction projects when and where support for such opportunities is available.

### Emergency Planning & Hazard Mitigation

- The update to the Regional Hazard Mitigation and Resiliency Plan continues on time with expected draft report available in late Summer or early Fall. The Project Management team met on April 11<sup>th</sup> to review hazard impact and vulnerability data, discuss local and regional capabilities and begin review and update of identified mitigation strategies. We are also seeking to incorporate lessons learned and any pertinent information from recent wildfire activity that has impacted all five counties in the region.

### Transportation

- The RRRC Commuter Services program is completing a mandated strategic plan to meet DRPT requirements for the future direction of, and investments in, the program. This work is being supported by the Berkley Group and a brief survey is now open for feedback from local stakeholders, commuters and others interested in the program. Please feel free to share the link and encourage participation in the survey here: <https://arcg.is/1Pa5f1>
- Kristin Lam Peraza will present the Regional Transportation Collaborative program model at the Virginia Funders Network conference in Richmond in May and at the Community Transportation Association of America national conference in June.

### **Economic Development & Tourism**

- The draft Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy report should be released by the end of April. We will have a mandated 30-day comment period, per U.S. Economic Development Administration requirements, and then make any revisions before presenting the report to the Commission in June for consideration of adoption. Past and current information is on our website at <https://www.rregion.org/ceds>
- Staff continues to meet with, and offer support to, local groups interested in developing VA 250 related exhibits and events. Currently, we are tracking several applications to Virginia Humanities to support such work in Orange, Culpeper and Fauquier counties and have had positive connections with Historical Societies in those three jurisdictions early in 2024.

### **Homelessness & Regional Housing**

- Staff have provided several housing-focused presentations to local governments, non-profits and local roundtable groups in recent months. This includes the Rappahannock County Board of Supervisors, Culpeper Human Services Board, Mental Health Association of Fauquier County housing coalition, and Madison United for Nutrition and Community Health (MUNCH). We are also working with our planners roundtable to maintain housing-related discussions and tracking local discussions as much as possible in support of our ongoing focus on the topic.
- RRRC worked with partnering service providers to submit the region's application to the Virginia Homeless Solutions Program (VHSP) managed by the Department of Housing and Community Development in early April. Partners on the application for funding over two years include the Commission, Encompass Community Supports, Culpeper Housing & Shelter Services, Community Touch and Services to Abused Families (SAFE). We should know more about the available funding by late May.

### **Local Technical Assistance**

- Continued to provide support to Town of Madison staff and Council on pedestrian and downtown planning opportunities, including initial meeting with the project management team and follow-up communications with DHCD
- We have reengaged with Madison County to support the completion of the County's Comprehensive Plan and expect that project to wrap up by end of Summer
- Staff attended various local government and regional meetings since the last Commission meeting including but not limited to: Culpeper Human Services Board, Fauquier County/Towns Liaison Committee, Culpeper CREW, PATH Foundation Community Advisory Committee, Fauquier Conservation Roundtable, Madison MUNCH, PATH Senior Services Collaborative, Rappahannock River Basin Technical Committee, and Carver Food Enterprise Center, Aging Together County Team meetings
- Provided data, general information and support letters to various requests from Town of Madison, Town of Gordonsville, Town of Orange, Town of Culpeper, Town of Remington, Town of Warrenton, Culpeper County, Rappahannock County, Orange County, Fauquier County, Madison County and other local partners between February and April