

INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

The Transportation and Mobility Planning Division (TMPD) of the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is working with other modal agencies to develop *VTrans 2035*, the Commonwealth's multimodal long range plan and a more detailed subset report known as the *2035 Surface Transportation Plan*. The highway element of the *2035 Surface Transportation Plan* will include proposed improvements on Virginia's federal functionally classified roadways. This *Rural Long Range Transportation Plan* is one piece of the 2035 Plan. VDOT, Virginia's Planning District Commissions (PDCs), and the local governments they represent, are partners in the development of this new initiative to create regional transportation plans in rural and small urban areas that complement those in Virginia's metropolitan areas.

The transportation system within the rural areas for each region was evaluated, and a range of transportation improvements - roadway, rail, transit, air, bicycle, and pedestrian - are recommended that can best satisfy existing and future needs. Some of the PDCs contain urbanized areas whose transportation needs are coordinated by a metropolitan planning organization. In the case of the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission's region, only the rural portion of the region was analyzed and is addressed in this report. The Charlottesville-Albemarle Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) conducts the transportation planning for the urban portion of Albemarle County and the City of Charlottesville.

The TJPDC is unique in the Commonwealth in that it has developed a plan, the United Jefferson Area Mobility Plan (UnJAM), that has already analyzed the deficiencies and needs of the region's transportation network,



including the rural areas. The first of these plans was UnJAM 2025 which was prepared by the PDC and adopted by the MPO Policy Board in 2004. UnJAM 2035 is the current update, which was approved by the MPO Policy Board in May 2009.

Each rural regional plan has a horizon year of 2035 and addresses the anticipated impacts of population and employment growth upon the transportation system. This plan will be reviewed and updated as needed. Each rural plan was developed as a vision plan, addressing all needs of the transportation system studied regardless of anticipated funding availability. It is envisioned that each regional plan will be used as a basis to identify transportation funding priorities.

STUDY APPROACH

- Development of regional transportation goals and objectives,
- Public involvement,
- Data compilation and collection,
- Data Analysis,
- Identification of transportation deficiencies and recommendations, and
- Environmental overview.

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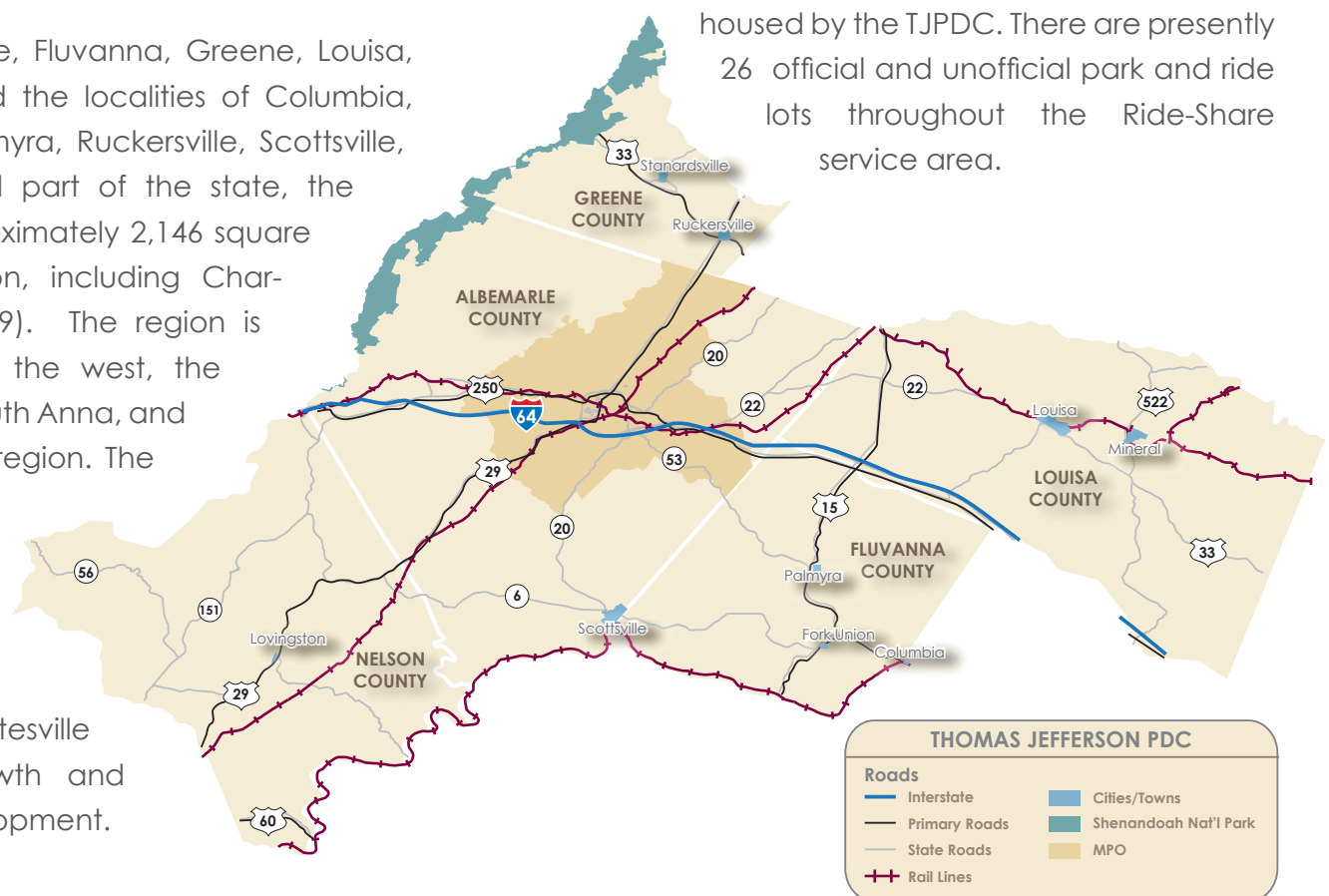
OVERVIEW OF THE REGION

Description and Function of the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission

The TJPDC serves the counties of Albemarle, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, and Nelson, the City of Charlottesville, and the localities of Columbia, Fork Union, Louisa, Lovingston, Mineral, Palmyra, Ruckersville, Scottsville, and Stanardsville. Located in the central part of the state, the Thomas Jefferson region is an area of approximately 2,146 square miles, with a current estimated population, including Charlottesville, of 225,381 people (Weldon, 2009). The region is defined by the Blue Ridge Mountains to the west, the James River in the south, with the Rivanna, South Anna, and North Anna rivers meandering through the region. The geographic setting is characterized by rolling topography blending into the Blue Ridge with small, traditional towns in the rural areas surrounding the City of Charlottesville. The region is primarily rural, but the metropolitan area surrounding Charlottesville is currently experiencing population growth and additional residential and commercial development.

Summary of Transportation Network

I-64 is the primary east-west corridor in the region. The primary north-south corridors are US 15 and US 29. Public transportation services are provided by Charlottesville Area Transit, University of Virginia Transit Service, JAUNT, and Greene County Transit. US Bicycle Route 76 is the region's major bicycle facility, totaling 136 miles east to west across the region. Norfolk Southern and CSX own the freight rail lines in the region. Access to three Amtrak passenger rail routes is in the City of Charlottesville. A range of travel demand management services is available through RideShare, housed by the TJPDC. There are presently 26 official and unofficial park and ride lots throughout the Ride-Share service area.



Goals and Objectives

Needs for each regional plan were developed based on regional and statewide goals and objectives. Similar concepts within the goals of the PDCs were found and used to shape common regional long range plan goals (at right) to address rural transportation planning across the Commonwealth. A basic goal for all transportation programs in Virginia is the provision for the effective, safe, and efficient movement of people and goods. Each PDC developed transportation goals and objectives that were used to guide the development of the Rural Long Range Transportation Plan for their area. The UnJAM process resulted in three overarching goals:

- Improve connections throughout the region;
- Improve mobility within neighborhoods, towns, and counties; and
- Make transportation choices that help foster livable communities.

The UnJAM process also developed regional mobility goals including:

- Improved, expanded roadway network;
- Efficient transit system integrated with other travel modes;
- Pedestrian friendly streets and roadways;
- Complete bicycle network and amenities;
- Improved integration and support for ridesharing and travel demand management;
- Safe and efficient freight movement; and
- Policy and regulatory changes.

Each County within the TJPDC has developed its own set of transportation objectives. These objectives were cross-referenced to develop a list of shared objectives as a part of the UnJAM process.

- OBJECTIVE 1** Improve primary roads as needed between designated growth areas and within the region.
- OBJECTIVE 2** Increase the use of transit and travel demand management to lessen the impacts of commuter traffic on rural roadways and improve mobility.
- OBJECTIVE 3** Preserve the rural character of the region.
- OBJECTIVE 4** Focus growth in designated growth areas.
- OBJECTIVE 5** Encourage safe opportunities for walking and bicycling within and between growth areas.



Common Rural Long Range Plan Goals

In addition to the regional goals, a number of goals have been developed to address rural transportation planning across the Commonwealth. These were developed using input from each of the 20 PDCs in Virginia that include rural areas within their boundaries. These goals are consistent with those of VTrans 2035 and are listed below:

- GOAL 1** Enhance the connectivity of the existing transportation network within and between regions across all modes for both people and freight.
- GOAL 2** Provide a safe and secure transportation system.
- GOAL 3** Support and improve the economic vitality of the individual regions by providing access to economic opportunities, such as industrial access or recreational travel and tourism, as well as enhancing intermodal connectivity.
- GOAL 4** Ensure continued quality of life during project development and implementation by considering natural, historic, and community environments, including special populations.
- GOAL 5** Preserve the existing transportation network and promote efficient system management in order to promote access and mobility for both people and freight.
- GOAL 6** Encourage land use and transportation coordination, including but not limited to, development of procedures or mechanisms to incorporate all modes, while engaging the private sector.