

Memo

To: Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission
From: TJPDC Staff
Date: September 1, 2009

Re: TJPDC's Rural UnJAM and VDOT's RLRP

Purpose: TJPDC staff is requesting that the Commission give guidance on how to best approach each locality's Board of Supervisors in order to facilitate review and approval of both the rural update of UnJAM and the VDOT produced Rural Long Range Transportation Plan.

Background: Over the past few months TJPDC staff has been updating the rural portions of the regional long range transportation plan, known as the **United Jefferson Area Mobility Plan** or UnJAM. This regional update corresponds with VDOT's efforts to create a Rural Long Range Transportation Plan (RLRP) for our Planning District, which is part of a statewide effort to create RLRPs for 20 of the State's 23 planning districts. VDOT and their consultants, Parsons Transportation Group (PTG), are currently developing these plans, with the assistance of Rural Technical Committees and PDC staffs.

While the rural update of UnJAM and the RLRP are separate projects, the two documents aim to achieve the same goals. Both are intended to identify and help meet the transportation needs of the region's rural communities. The rural update of UnJAM is part of the TJPDC's larger regional long range transportation, which includes the MPO. The main focus of this document is to consider our region's transportation system as a single, unified network that does not adhere to jurisdictional boundaries. The final RLRP document only considers the rural portions of the Planning District, excluding the MPO. This plan will also be integrated in the State Highways Plan, which is a major portion of VTrans 2035.

Issues: VDOT's goal in creating the RLRP was to develop a unified plan for all rural areas throughout the State. The Thomas Jefferson Planning District is one of two planning district's that already have a rural long range plan in place, with the UnJAM 2025 document (now being updated become UnJAM 2035). However, for VDOT to successfully coordinate all RLRP's they must craft an RLRP for our region that matches their chosen format for the other rural areas. The critical element for both plans is the roadway project list that is being developed by VDOT's consultants, Parsons Transportation Group (PTG). TJPDC staff is waiting for this roadway project list, which must be included in the rural update of UnJAM and

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presented to the public. VDOT will use much of the general information from the UnJAM plan and public comments from that process for the RLRP document.

Both the rural update of UnJAM and the RLRP will need to be approved by each county's Board of Supervisors. TJPDC staff is writing individual chapters for each locality, so local officials will be viewing those sections of UnJAM that apply to their respective communities. VDOT is creating a single document that covers the rural portions of the entire region, so officials will be considering recommendations and information that are outside their jurisdiction. Moreover, VDOT has requested that we attempt to have both documents approved at the same time.

TJPDC staff is beginning to write its county-specific rural chapters dealing with issues of roadways, transit options, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, travel demand management options, and other transportation-oriented issues. Currently, VDOT's progress on our region's RLRP is difficult to gauge as the timeline for the Parson's Transportation Group is uncertain. It is the hope of VDOT and TJPDC staff that both documents will be ready for approval early next year; however, there is no hard deadline for the RLRP's roadways project list, which means that the UnJAM rural update is delayed until VDOT's RLRP for Planning District 10 is ready.