

# Summary of Public Involvement in Transit-Related Plans and Studies

This summary describes the public involvement in previous area plans/studies. Each of these planning efforts had different purposes, yet included transit in varying degrees. Viewed collectively, these concepts helped create the working vision for regional transit in the Charlottesville-Albemarle area. The role of transit in each of these plans and studies is summarized in the corresponding, “Summary of Transit-Related Plan and Studies in the Charlottesville-Albemarle Area”.

## Plans and Studies Included in this Summary

2020 Community Plan on Aging  
Albemarle County Neighborhood Model  
Charlottesville Comprehensive Plan (2001)  
Charlottesville Neighborhood Comprehensive Plans (2006)  
Charlottesville Transit Development Plan  
Charlottesville Transit Improvement Study  
Places29  
Shaping Community with Transit: Opportunities for the Charlottesville Area  
Summit on Transportation and Transit  
Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJDPC) Regional Rail Conceptual Study  
Transportation Funding Options Report  
United Jefferson Area Mobility Plan (UnJAM) 2025

## Acronyms

The following acronyms are used in this document:

BRT: Bus Rapid Transit  
CHART: Charlottesville-Albemarle Regional Transportation  
CTS: Charlottesville Transit Service  
JABA: Jefferson Area Board for Aging  
JPA: Jefferson Park Avenue  
MPO: Metropolitan Planning Organization  
TDP: Transit Development Plan  
TJPDC: Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission  
UnJAM Plan: United Jefferson Area Mobility Plan  
UTS: University Transit Service  
UVA: University of Virginia  
VDOT: Virginia Department of Transportation  
VDRPT: Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation

## Timeline of Studies

**2001**

Charlottesville Comprehensive Plan

**2002**

Albemarle County Neighborhood Model (July)

**2003**

2020 Community Plan on Aging (September)  
Summit on Transportation and Transit (October)

**2004**

United Jefferson Area Mobility Plan (UnJAM) 2025 (May)  
TJPDC Regional Rail Conceptual Study (November)

**2005**

Shaping Community with Transit: Opportunities for the Charlottesville Area (March)  
Charlottesville Transit Improvement Study (April)  
Transportation Funding Options Report (October)

**2006**

Places 29 (ongoing since 29H250 Phase I in 2003)  
Charlottesville Neighborhood Comprehensive Plan  
Charlottesville Transit Development Plan (August)

## 2020 Community Plan on Aging (September 2003)

The 2020 Community Plan on Aging was created to help the communities in the Thomas Jefferson Planning District prepare for the dramatic increase in the senior population that will occur within the next 25 years. Goals of the plan include: promoting coordinated and accessible healthcare, supporting maximum independence and lifelong health, offering affordable living options for seniors and support to family caregivers, designing communities to enhance quality of life, fostering vibrant engagement in life, and strengthening caring communities through active citizenship. This plan was created by the Jefferson Area Board for Aging (JABA), which seeks to add dignity, security, independence and fulfillment to the lives of older adults and their families.

### ***Public Involvement Included:***



- A kick-off conference was held in Spring 2001 that included over 90 community leaders and stakeholders. Over the next three months, Jefferson Area Board for Aging (JABA) held seven additional public forums, including at least one in every jurisdiction in the planning district. Forums were held to gain an understanding of what the public considers to be an ideal community for seniors and caregivers.
- Based on input from 359 community participants, the planning process was divided into four focus areas: Cultural and Recreational Opportunities; Citizen Participation; Health; and Infrastructure and Land Use. A work group was assembled for each focus area. Groups included 15-25 members and met every other month from March 2002 through January 2003.
- In July 2003, two focus groups were held for comment on the Plan Summary and recommendations. Feedback was also obtained at the July 2003 meeting of the Virginia Association of Area Agencies on Aging.
- A 2020 Steering Committee (whose members included individuals from various groups including Piedmont Housing Alliance, Sojourner's United Church of Christ, Western Albemarle High School, UVA Health System, and UVA Institute on Aging) provided oversight of the planning process and approved the final plan.
- A survey was administered in June 2003 at JABA in Greene County, Scottsville, and Charlottesville. One hundred self-administered questionnaires were completed.

### ***Next Planning Steps Include:***

- Reconvene 2020 Steering Committee to include available current members and new members who will be involved in implementation.
- Make 2020 Plan on Aging widely available to local governments, community organizations, and representatives of the public and private sectors.
- Provide public information sessions about the 2020 Plan with community groups, church and faith groups, advocacy groups, and other private and public community organizations.
- Convene special work groups as appropriate.
- Continue collaboration with key organizations and local governments to develop a community report card for monitoring and publicizing progress on implementation.

## Albemarle County Neighborhood Model

The Neighborhood Model describes the more "urban" form of development desired for the Development Areas. It establishes the 12 Principles for Development to which new development proposals should adhere. The transportation-related principles include: pedestrian orientation, neighborhood friendly streets and paths, transportation networks and interconnected streets.

- A 23-member committee was comprised of representatives from the local homebuilders association, neighborhood associations, Chamber of Commerce, environmental groups, design professionals, affordable housing advocates, two Planning Commissioners, and two members of the Board of Supervisors. This group met monthly for approximately 3 years to create recommendations for the Model. In some months 2 - 3 meetings were held.
- Public involvement also included two public charettes, a visualization survey, stakeholder meetings with the development community and residents, and at least 3 other public meetings.
- After the Board referred the Model to the Planning Commission, there was a year of public meetings and Planning Commission/Board of Supervisors work sessions before it was adopted.



## Charlottesville Comprehensive Plan (2001)

The Charlottesville Comprehensive Plan will help guide the physical growth of the City for the next 25 years. The Plan consists of the following: an inventory and assessment of current social, economic, and environmental factors affecting growth and neighborhood stability in the community; a statement of goals and policies which serve as a broad directive for future growth and neighborhood improvement and preservation; and an implementation strategy that provides an explanation of how the goals and policies will be put into action. Citizen participation is considered an important element in the Comprehensive Planning Process. NOTE: Charlottesville is currently working on the 2007 Comprehensive Plan.



- The Planning Process involved over 700 residents of Charlottesville during its development. Staff and the Planning Commission conducted approximately 100 meetings with eighteen neighborhoods over the course of eight months.
- The Process emphasized open and free distribution of information relating to procedures being used and actions being considered.

Emphasis was also placed on encouraging public involvement in the formulation of goals, policies, and implementation strategies.

- The objectives in encouraging citizen participation included: assisting local residents in understanding the planning process to enable them to decide the future of their community, incorporating public input into the formation of policies for the future, and communicating these comments to the Planning Commission and the City Council.
- The City conducted a survey of its citizens during the summer of 2000.

## Charlottesville Neighborhood Comprehensive Plan (2006)

The 2006 Neighborhood Plans were developed through a joint effort between neighborhood residents, city staff, the City Planning Commission, University of Virginia students, and a design team from the Charlottesville Community Design Center. Nearly every neighborhood in Charlottesville mentioned a desire to improve transit in their neighborhood.



- Neighborhood Design Day was held on October 8, 2005 and was attended by community residents, professional designers, planners, and student volunteers. The Neighborhood Development Services Department, in partnership with the Charlottesville Community Design Center, designed and facilitated this event at multiple locations throughout Charlottesville.

Residents were asked to envision and design the future of their neighborhoods. The participants examined existing conditions to identify key ongoing issues, neighborhood assets, and future programmatic, policy and design opportunities.

## **Charlottesville Transit Development Plan (August 2006)**

The Charlottesville Transit Development Plan (TDP) offers recommendations to improve Charlottesville Transit Service in both the City and County. The TDP is a five-year plan for CTS. Recommendations are intended to build upon the Transit Improvement Study, incorporating current conditions and new possibilities.

- The public was presented with the opportunity to comment on this plan during the meetings on May 15, 2006 and July 24, 2006.
- CTS facilitated interviews with the Mayor of Charlottesville, members of the City Council, representatives from the University of Virginia, the business community, Piedmont Virginia Community College, and Albemarle County.
- The TDP final report was presented to both the City Council and Board of Supervisors.

## **Charlottesville Transit Improvement Study (April 2005)**

This study examines the operations of CTS, including ridership patterns and route performance, as they existed in 2004. Alternative approaches and strategies are explored to address problems, restore service reliability, and position CTS to expand. Principles to guide the design and analysis of alternative service strategies are established. Costs and service implications of each approach are included.

- On-board surveys were provided to gather information on the characteristics of transit riders, the reasons that they use the system, as well as their travel patterns. Data Smarts, working as a subcontractor to BMI-SG, collected the on-board survey information in this report during the week of April 26 to 30, 2004, while UVA was in session. A total of 615 passengers were interviewed on all CTS routes.



## Places29

Places29 is a Master Planning process for Albemarle County's four Northern Development Areas coupled with a transportation study of the US 29 North Corridor. Places29 and the related US 29 North Transportation Corridor Study are a joint project of Albemarle County, VDOT and TJPDC, in cooperation with the City of Charlottesville and the University of Virginia, with the assistance of an experienced consulting team.

The US 29 North Transportation Corridor Study, led by TJPDC, covers US 29 from the US 250 Bypass north to the Greene County line. This study started with Phases 1 and 2 of the US 29/Hydraulic Rd/250 Bypass Study (29H250) in 2003 and has now been extended to include the full corridor.



- Places29 brings residents, business owners, and others together to map out the best possible shared vision for this critical area of Albemarle County.
- Three public workshops have been held to date.
- Several meetings with neighborhood associations, community groups, and other stakeholders have been held to discuss specific issues and concerns.
- Places29 continues the work done in the 29H250 Phase I and Phase II Projects. Public involvement in these projects included several public workshops and nine focus groups. Additionally, the project was developed through collaborative work by the full City Council and County Board of Supervisors.

### **Shaping Community with Transit: Opportunities for the Charlottesville Area (March 2005)**

This study presents an argument in favor of a streetcar system along West Main Street in Charlottesville. Specifically, the report examines existing conditions in Charlottesville, possible public transit options (including bus, light rail, bus rapid transit, and streetcars), and types of land use and development patterns associated with transit systems. Lastly, the report applies information on streetcar transit and development patterns to Charlottesville and the West Main Street area.

- From October 7th to 12th, 2004, Alliance for Community Choice in Transportation (ACCT) took Charlottesville delegations for brief visits to successful streetcar systems in Portland, Oregon and Tacoma, Washington. The trips were an opportunity to experience these systems in person, and to explore the developments associated with them. Following the trip, participant also shared their thoughts and observations with the ACCT organizers.

## **Summit on Transportation and Transit (October 2003)**

In 2003, the City invited several experts in transportation, transit, and urban design to a summit focused on exploring the potential for enhanced transit. They interviewed key stakeholders and traveled the community. Though their charge was to focus on the City, their recommendations were regional in nature.

- Interviewed a wide range of community stakeholders.
- Traveled throughout the community to inventory the existing transportation system.
- Hosted a public workshop to report findings and gather public feedback.

## **Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission Regional Rail Conceptual Study (November 2004)**

This study explores rail transit options in depth, including light rail, commuter, and intercity passenger rail alignments. The Study was created by the Community Mobility Committee and was accepted by both the MPO Policy Board and the TJPDC Commission.

- The Community Mobility Committee consists of citizen representatives from Charlottesville and Albemarle, TJPDC, MPO, Albemarle County, City of Charlottesville, VDOT, VDRPT, RideShare, JAUNT, CTS, and UTS staff.
- There were opportunities for public comment at the Community Mobility Committee meetings, as well as the TJPDC Commission and MPO Policy Board meetings.

## **Transportation Funding Options Report (October 2005)**

The Funding Options Working Group explored strategies for increasing available funding and accelerating priority projects. The Working Group identified nine of the MPO Priority Projects (as outlined in UnJAM) to include on its short-list of projects and developed a successful strategy to obtain a federal earmark to build the Route 250/McIntire Interchange. The Group highlighted the need for increased transit funding, and included transit, pedestrian, and bicycle projects as roughly one-third of the \$100 million priority project list. The report addresses transportation funding needs and explores alternative revenue sources for projects in the Charlottesville-Albemarle metropolitan area.



- Appointed by the MPO, this wide-ranging stakeholder group includes representatives from Charlottesville and Albemarle (policymaker, Planning Commissioner, neighborhood representative, and staff), UVA, Chamber of Commerce, 5-Cs (Citizens' Committee on City-County Cooperation), Charlottesville-Area Association of Realtors, League of Women Voters, Piedmont Environmental Council, Southern Environmental Law Center, and at-large business representatives. The group began its work in November 2004 by reviewing and discussing the background of transportation projects in the region, including budget shortfall realities.

- The Working Group was focused on strategies to implement the priorities of the UnJAM Plan, which was created based on extensive public involvement and included the six TJPDC jurisdictions (Albemarle, Charlottesville, Fluvanna, Greene, Nelson, Louisa), VDOT, and VDRPT.

## United Jefferson Area Mobility (UnJAM) 2025 Plan (May 2004)

The Charlottesville-Albemarle MPO and TJPDC completed the UnJAM 2025 Plan to define transportation projects that the region will pursue over the next twenty years. In order to highlight the effects regional growth patterns have on the transportation network, the UnJAM 2025 Plan combines the MPO's CHART Plan and the Rural Area Transportation Long-Range Plan.



- To ensure that a broad range of issues and concerns were considered in the development of the long-range plan, the MPO's CHART Citizens Advisory Committee was charged with leading the process of the CHART 2025 Plan development, which included public involvement, research, and analysis. Appointed by the MPO Policy Board, City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County, this Advisory Committee is made of citizens and business people throughout the MPO study area with various areas of expertise.
- The TJDPC appointed the Rural Tech committee to oversee the public involvement process for the rural areas of the planning district. Additionally, the planning commissions of each locality serve as advisors for rural transportation planning. Each county also identified appropriate groups to be trained as facilitators for the public workshops, such as Chamber of Commerce or Comprehensive Plan Committee members.
- UnJAM Workshops were advertised throughout the region through flyers and other announcements both in Spanish and English. Flyers were posted in community centers, on buses, and in other highly visible locations.
- UnJAM Round 1 solicited input from the public as to how the transportation network should look, and what specific areas needed to be addressed. Multiple workshops were held in locations that were convenient for attendees in the entire planning district. Basic concepts were introduced that included innovative, cost-effective solutions that considered the integration of land use, economy, and environment into the transportation network planning.
- Participants worked in groups to discuss those issues and marked up maps to further illustrate their suggestions and concepts. They were also given the opportunity to submit their individ-

ual ideas on a “Quick Pick” form. Those who were unable to attend the workshop were able to access the form from the TJPDC/MPO’s website.

- ‘KidJAM’ activities were offered for families attending the workshop in order to incorporate children’s’ ideas into the plan.
- UnJAM Round 2 workshops presented information to the public that was gathered in the first sessions, to ensure their ideas were captured correctly. Participants worked in groups again during this highly interactive workshop, and were encouraged to provide more detailed input on various options. Each group was given a large, blueprint-sized workbook to mark up based on group discussion.
- Additionally, two formal public hearings were held during regularly scheduled MPO Policy Board meetings. Each of the public forums for input into the UnJAM 2025 Plan were publicized in local newspapers, on the MPO/TJPDC website and by email invitations, and by flyers and posters.