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Albemarle County Board of Supervisors Joint Meeting with Charlottesville City Council, Tuesday, September 17, 2024

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[00:00:04] I'm pleased to call to order the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors with the Charlottesville City Council. I look around and I see that all six supervisors are present, so a quorum is present.

[00:00:19] I'll turn it over to the mayor to call his meeting to order before we do introductions. Thank you. I call the City of Charlottesville City Council meeting to order, and all five are present and accounted for. Thank you, Mayor. Before we start, I think we should just go around the table and say who we are and our roles, so everyone not only at the table but watching knows.

[00:00:42] And if that's all right, we'll start at this end. Is that all right? Yes. I'm Jeff Richardson, and I'm the county executive for Abmore County. I'm Sam Sanders, city manager for the city of Charlottesville. Ned Galloway, supervisor for the Rio District in Alabama. Lloyd Snook, city council.

[00:00:58] Anne Malley, representing the Whitehall District. Michael King, Charlottesville City Council. Diantha McKeel, representing the Jack Jewett Magisterial District in Elmore County. Jim Andrews, representing the Samuel Miller District. Juan Diego Wade, representing the City of Charlottesville.

[00:01:16] Brian Pinkston, representing the City of Charlottesville. Mike Pruitt, Alamara County Supervisor, representing the Scottsville District. Natalie Osher, Charlottesville City Council. Jameela Pisto-Kirtley, Alamara Supervisor from the Rivanna District.

[00:01:32] James Freese, Deputy City Manager for Operations for the City of Charlottesville. Ann Wallm, Deputy County Executive, alma mater. Thank you, um, maybe at this point we can, there's a table here. Good evening, Alice Rauscher, Architect for the University of Virginia.

[00:01:49] Good evening, Jody Filardo, Community Development Director for County alma mater. I'm Lauren Hildebrandt, I'm the Director of Utilities for the City of Charlottesville. I'm Ben Chambers, Transportation Planning Manager for the City of Charlottesville.

[00:02:05] Thank you, um, I've got to mention that also we have with us, Our Interim County Attorney, Mr. Andy Herrick, our Board Clerk, Claudette Borderson. Yes, our Madam Clerk, Kena Thomas.

[00:02:23] And I also am pleased to say we have Lieutenant Angela Jamerson and Master Police Officer Dana Reeves from the Commonwealth County Police Force here. And thank you for your service today, tonight, and every day on behalf of the people here.

[00:02:44] Also, attention to welcoming, call it Gene, the Senior Vice President for Operations and State Government Relations. Thank you for being. And I'm sure there will be others that will be introduced as we proceed, but I'll turn it over to the Mayor for opening remarks.

[00:03:03] Yes, first of all, we would like to thank the County for hosting this gathering. It's been, I guess, four or five years since we've done it, and I think it's really important that we get together to talk about what we have in common and how we can move forward together.

[00:03:19] We do a lot of this at the staff level and at the elected official level. I was just thinking about the last 24 hours, the last 30 minutes, I had a meeting with Ann, a workforce meeting, and last night, Ms. B and I were able to welcome, what, 70 or 80 tourism people along the whole capital region to our area, Mount Alto.

[00:03:44] And so we are doing things together every day. And so we're doing a lot of things already, but it's good for the public to do it. But to get everyone in the room together, and by the way, to get 11 schedules together and staff, that took a lot of work.

[00:04:04] So thank Sam and Jeff. I know that it took a lot to make this happen. So thank everyone, staff, for making this happen. So we're looking forward to this dialogue and how we can continue to work together and how we can move forward together.

[00:04:21] And so thank you. It's a quick side. I was a planner for the county for 20 years, and this used to be where the Board of Supervisors met. And as a transportation planner, I presented many times. I usually sit right there when I present it.

[00:04:37] And so it's set up different now, so it's good to be back in different capacities. Thank you. I'm also really excited and I'm looking forward to this meeting for some time. It gives us opportunity to appreciate how much we do together, so I share that.

[00:04:54] And I know that will be reflected in some of the things we'll hear about today with the revenue sharing and the partnership list. Personally, I've enjoyed the past few months, particularly getting to know the mayor and the vice mayor and working together with regular monthly meetings with the vice chair.

[00:05:12] And I know that the county works together. The county executive and the city manager meet regularly, as do leaders of many of our departments in economic development matters, safety services, part of our resilient together with the university and others.

[00:05:30] And, of course, I want to recognize the critical significance the university plays in our community, particularly in work we do together on community safety, welfare and resilience and both informal and formal ways.

[00:05:46] So, so many of the issues and opportunities, no geographical boundaries. So, we succeed as a community and I'm glad we get to celebrate that and build on it tonight. Thank you. We'll turn it over to Andrews and Mr. Richards.

[00:06:05] Jeff and I had to decide if we were going to come up here or not. It would be a little formal or a little more comfortable, but I thought it would be a better one so you could see me because I know some of the folks in the back won't necessarily be able to see us.

[00:06:22] But I want to start by just simply saying good evening to City Council Board of Supervisors, our distinguished guests, and members of the public. Thank you for this opportunity to brief you on a couple of critical matters. The things we want to talk about is just our collaborative relationship, specifically as it relates to the revenue sharing agreement and the partnerships that we have between the two jurisdictions.

[00:06:45] In your packet, you received a substantial amount of information from us. And I just want to go over a little bit about both of those things. And Jeff is going to add his perspective on the same items. In your packet for the revenue sharing report for FY24, this is the required report that meets the terms of the 1982 agreement.

[00:07:03] The city fell a little behind in 2021 on getting that report in timely. But we have since caught up and made sure that we are now getting that information to the county on a regular schedule. I asked the budget director to ensure that that document gets released in August of each year.

[00:07:21] You received that packet from us last month. I just want to also point out that we recognize that this is an interesting part of our relationship. I'll be honest and acknowledge that. And I'll just say that we are committed to making sure that the funds are used wisely.

[00:07:37] That is what our intent is. And we focus that on general operating and capital projects. this FY24 report represented \$15 million, focused on parks and recreation, transportation, services, and regional public safety, housing, employment, and workforce programs, along with landfill and recycling services. We project that the city exceeds mutual benefit investments by another roughly \$5 million. And in that sense, I think we feel that we are being good stewards of the resources, all resources that are entrusted to us. Also in your packet is the partnership support it was a very substantial substantive report i think both jeff and i expressed how

[00:08:15] excited we were when we actually took a moment to look at all the different things that we were doing together the partnerships report solidly frames a quality list of projects that we're working on together these projects support our shared priorities and they are foundational to our high quality of life for both residents in the city and the county i'm most appreciative of three specific areas that i wanted to highlight in this this comment to you in regards to community safety, emergency management, and transportation. Our work in the community safety space is frightened by each of our having co-responder models that we were able to launch. It's a great example of prioritizing the needs of our residents. It's a chance for us to demonstrate our care and

[00:08:53] concern for interventions where law enforcement is not the necessary first or primary response. It gives us the ability to bring whatever resources individuals may need at whatever time that

they face a crisis. Our director of human services, Misty Graves, asked me this morning to extend our A heartfelt thanks to the Harts team for your assistance in helping us launch Anchor.

[00:09:13] It was a great opportunity for us to leverage your expenses. So, you know, you kind of learn how to do some things, and we pick up after that. It was a great opportunity for us to then help to define our path. So we do appreciate that. The emergency management is an area that I acknowledge that the city had fallen a little behind, and it was important for me to prioritize that.

[00:09:34] I spent a great deal of time in the Gulf Coast, and the emergency season is a season. It's something that we always focus on. So when I got here, it became a high priority for me to make sure that we were preparing ourselves for things that could happen beyond our control. We have, in my mind, caught up in a way that we wanted to prioritize some key things.

[00:09:54] We established an office of emergency management and hired a dedicated emergency management coordinator for the first time. That gave us the ability to ensure that the three-legged stool of the city, county, and university were really ready to come together and do the things that we need to do to ensure the safety for all of our residents. This is definitely important for us because we want to continue to collaborate regionally.

[00:10:14] I think it's important for me to express that, that we are interested in doing this together. We can all do it individually, but we are definitely stronger together because, as we know, our geographic boundaries are very hard for people to understand where they start and where they stop. So I think it's important for us to not forget that.

[00:10:30] The last area is transportation planning, which shortly you will hear a great deal about. It's important for our council, so therefore it's important for me and our team. We think that planning is a critical element where we have not necessarily had the great focus that we needed. We have fixed that. We've hired a transportation planning manager.

[00:10:48] We're adding additional resources in that space. And we're not just talking about transit anymore. We're really talking about multimodal priorities. And we want to make sure that we're ready to collaborate wherever that needs to be, especially as we activate climate action. So it's important for us to be nimble. So I want to thank our respective teams for their continued collaboration and professionalism.

[00:11:07] I would like to personally thank both the City Council, the Board of Supervisors, and the University of Virginia team specifically for the pleasure of working with you. You all have welcomed me in my first year in this seat. I do appreciate the spirit of collaboration, and I can't miss the moment to do a shout-out to my buddy Trevor in the back and Jeff for being great friends in this process.

[00:11:28] And we'll do our best to stay on good terms, but we know where we might disagree, our friendship will get us to it. So thank you. Sam, thank you for your remarks this evening.

[00:11:45] My name is Jeff Richardson, and I'm the county executive for Albemarle County Government. And I'm going to take a few moments to share thoughts about this meeting this evening with a little bit of a look back over the seven years that I've been, I've had the pleasure of serving Albemarle County Government.

[00:12:02] I am in my seventh year. I'm wrapping it up with Albemarle County, and I can say unequivocally right now it's the best it's been. What exactly do you mean it's the best it's been? Well, if you

look at our agenda tonight, our agenda is really a lot about partnerships. And it's focused with our city council, the leadership from the council and from the board of supervisors, and emphasizing the need for us to get back together and examine what are we doing and what are we doing well together, and how are we working for the betterment of our community.

[00:12:32] It's really an investment for me. It's an investment of time to build relationships. And building those relationships helps to build the trust. city manager and i we meet every 30 days and that's been the case since mr sanders took over as city manager we check in in that time that we have every 30 days at a personal level that's where we start how are you doing he asked me how i'm doing we ask about our families then we move on to general follow-up which has to do with commitments commitments that we've made to each other commitments that the organizations have made to each other and then finally we'll talk about the opportunity for partnerships and what are our problems and how can we help each other.

[00:13:13] And it's been that way since the day he walked in as city manager. And the emphasis for our work together has made it one of the most important meetings that I now work on on a monthly basis. I would talk to the board today and just emphasize, look at our partnership report. I'm not going to go into any details, but our staff is here to answer questions. Our partnerships oftentimes maximize the value of our shared service delivery at the lowest possible cost. I want to say it again. It's about shared service delivery at the lowest possible cost. When I got here seven years ago, I realized quickly that there are a lot of partnerships in our community. We have partnerships

[00:13:53] on emergency management services, emergency dispatch management, recycling, libraries, jails, courts, and the list goes on. And for those partnerships that exist between the city and the county i think that there is a shared level of understanding that there is shared service delivery at the lowest possible cost and that creates capacity for both the city and the county we need that capacity because we've got opportunities moving forward and we've got problems moving forward college towns are often they often carry the reputation as an idyllic place to live and when i say college town i mean the city and the county when i talk about our

[00:14:32] community it's the greater charlottesville community which really ties us together with the city the county and the university those reputations talk about cultural vibrancy healthy economies well-educated populations we certainly have all of that here but i will say also we learned in the pandemic that we also face problems and in the future this community will face problems Our ability to work together by maximizing our relationships, our skills to work together,

[00:15:06] it sets us up for future success, both with obligations, opportunities, all of that can be shared. It also, when I look through the partnerships, the ones that involve the university, I think that is probably where we do some of our best work.

[00:15:23] Two-thirds of the workforce at the university, that's two-thirds of 30,000 employees. live inside of Charlottesville and Albemarle County. They choose to live inside of Charlottesville and Albemarle County. I think there's something to be said for the quality of life in this community.

[00:15:40] But it's a burden on the city manager and the county executive to keep an eye on that quality of life that is in this college town community and continue to work with our boards on the problems that come forward. So our partnerships, it allows us to provide the services at the lowest possible cost.

[00:16:00] It allows us to identify capacity, and I believe that's some of the best work that we can do in this community. I'm excited about the conversations this evening. I'm excited about learning for potential new opportunities for us to move forward and look for additional partnerships, and the staff of the county is excited to host this meeting tonight.

[00:16:23] Thank you very much for being here. We have some time for questions and comments, and I think what we discussed is alternating back and forth between. So any questions or comments by counselors and supervisors?

[00:16:47] We're asking supervisors, too. Oh, go ahead, Ann, did you have your hand? We're not going to do the Board of Supervisors has a speaking order at regular meetings, we're not going to do that, but we will alternate. So if we start with...

[00:17:02] Well, thank you. I don't have a question, but I do have a comment, And I just wanted to pile on to something that Juan said earlier, this is our second meeting today. And just two things I wanted to use as examples of how great this partnership has been with the past. The workforce, more than 50% of all the participants have moved to 9 and 10, that's 10 counties.

[00:17:26] Both the city and the county have on-site, as well as the region, which is what makes opportunities for job training for our residents so great. The second thing that was mentioned, which really set my hair on fire, was that with seven days of preparation, Brooks and staff at the workforce center put together a job fair for the child care center at Vermont Station.

[00:17:52] All hands on deck. Everybody there from the station there, start to finish, they hired 12 people on the spot. So it was just a wonderful success. And I know from Colonel Messina last year that having staff for the child care center was incredible.

[00:18:11] So, Ann, I just want to tag on to something you just said in that meeting today. I think our colleague from, I think it was from Falkyrie County, he, you know, we talked about the successes that we have in this region. And he said, basically, like, what are you doing? How are you doing it? And Ann and I chimed in and we talked about that we're working together.

[00:18:29] Not necessarily Ann and I, but staff at the city and the county level working together to get our residents jobs, not only jobs, but training and then jobs. So these are things that go on, again, every day. So it's a good point to bring up.

[00:18:47] Excuse me. I wanted to thank both of you. I've enjoyed watching y'all work together. I think it's made a palpable difference for the whole, both organizations and therefore for the whole community. I think of when I tell people what it's like to be on city council, they're like the meetings where people come and fuss at you sometime and those kinds of things.

[00:19:09] It's one part of being on city council. But one of the main things I've enjoyed about being on city council is all the boards and commissions that you get assigned to. And I think that's where so much of the real work happens. And I've just enjoyed getting to know my colleagues. I think about being on the jail board, my jail friends over there, and Ms. Malik on the water board and all the various boards that you end up in.

[00:19:38] It is very, I mean, I know it's a truism, but it's a true truism that we are really integrated and we have to be integrated in how we think about things.

[00:19:49] As I consider what some other, for example, we just take the example of water and some of our neighboring counties and the struggles that they're having with that topic, for example, I just am grateful for, you know, I look back on, we stand really on the shoulders of people 30, 40, 50 years ago who said, you know, we're going to be partners, we're going to try to figure out how to do this as a region, and I'm grateful for that past legacy and want to build on it.

[00:20:19] Just a couple of comments. I want to thank Sam and his staff and city council for the transparency on our revenue sharing report. I understand that for county residents, this raises to a higher level than it does for city, for the city folks.

[00:20:43] But we really do appreciate it. I read this report, and this is the first time that I've really seen a good deal of transparency in the report for our citizens. And I really, in our residence, I really do appreciate that. And the other thing I just wanted to comment on, it's a little bit of a follow-up to some of the other comments, is that in my 27 years of being an elected official in this community, we are at a place where I see the highest level of trust and working cooperation between our two communities, between the city and the county.

[00:21:20] And I think in my head, that's a big deal. so i appreciate everybody's hard work to make that a reality and thank you very much at the risk of sounding like it's all just a great big love fest and i'm not going to rain on that parade let me say that there i think in the last i've been on council now four and a half years and i would echo the the sentiments that things our relationships with the county have gotten a lot better during that time i would add that i

[00:21:59] hope that our relationship with the third leg of the stool, that being in the university, also would be thought to be on the upswing. I think it's increasingly clear that on matters like transit planning, land use planning, affordable housing, that we have three entities that need to be involved in everything. I will also say personally, just because of the line of work I'm in that I am so glad that we finally have the quartz project with shovels in the ground and steel rising out of the ground and progress being made. There was a time a couple

[00:22:37] of years ago when it was not clear that that was going to happen. I really appreciate everybody pushing through some difficult times to get that underway. I want to echo what some of my colleagues and some of the counselors in Charlottesville have said in my much more a limited time of service on the board. I've seen nothing but really extraordinary partnership. And I think that's easily demonstrated by some of the items contained within your report. It touched very briefly on the therapeutic recreation program. Just two days ago, one of my friends and

[00:23:14] constituents who lives all the way down in the town of Scottsville has a grown son who uses that more than twice a week, trucks all the way up to the city to experience those services and talks about is a really life-changing thing. That partnership allows that and does not have to.

[00:23:33] A more fractious relationship would not have that person getting the kind of therapeutic recreation that they need in order to really thrive. And so I want to just say how appreciative I am of the working relationship we've been able to build that enables that. I also do want to make sure we've talked about all the things that we're doing to make our community thrive. I think we're pretty clear-eyed on what side of the problems we're facing are also. We see a lot of them on our agenda tonight. Also, Mr. Richardson, what was the exact number you gave of a number of UVA employees that work in our combined jurisdictions or that live in our

[00:24:10] combined jurisdictions? Two-thirds. The university has 30,000 employees at the hospital, medical facilities, and then at the university. Two-thirds live in Charlottesville and Albemarle County. I think that's great, but I can't help but hear that and say that means despite everything that we've got going on, all the amenities and all the quality of life that we offer in Charlottesville and Albemarle, there's one third of people that are commuting more than half an hour away. And I'm guessing it's not because they really just love living in Flubana or Louisa. Although there's nice things out there. Some of them do. But I think we do have to grapple with the fact that we need to

[00:24:49] make sure that everyone can access that. Everyone who's working facilities maintenance staff at the hospital, everyone who's a bus driver for the university is also able. Briefly, I want to actually, when you mentioned that, the note I took was only two-thirds of UVA staff live within a Charles Miller album model, so I had the same thought, where we do need to make it more affordable, accessible.

[00:25:21] If 10,000 people are driving into the city every day, that's 10,000 cars on the road that we theoretically could help remove for climate reasons, for safety reasons, for traffic reasons for economic reasons. So those are the things that I'm, that sort of thing is what I'm looking forward to improving. I would just say that one of the things that really made me happy with working with the city, and a lot of it has to do with people are changing, you've gotten in new

[00:25:56] people, we've gotten in new people, and that really does make a difference in the attitude and what we do. What's really made an impression on me for health and safety is how our police departments are working together, buyers working together. And that's with UVA also. So all three entities are working together to make things better for our community. And that's something that, I don't know if that was happening before, but I know they're communicating now. And that's something that is important, I think, for the community. When I mention that to the people I

[00:26:32] speak with, they are very appreciative of that because that's what they're also concerned about health and safety so kudos I did hear though is there a rumor there was a rumor that you were going to cross out the word perpetuity in other comments if not we will go on to the next item on the agenda and that is a the land use

[00:27:10] Environmental Planning Committee report everyone I'm Alice Rauscher I'm architect of the University of Virginia and I'm current chair of the land use and environmental planning committee the position of chair rotates among the

[00:27:46] three entities of the city the county and the university so I'm joined this evening by first the past chair, Jody Folardo, the Community Development Director for Albemarle County, and next year's chair, I'm counting the months, Lauren, Lauren Hildebrand, Director of Utilities for the city of Charlottesville.

[00:28:05] And we're pleased to give you this brief update on the good work of you. So many of you know this already, but as a bit of background, in 1986, with the adoption of the three-party agreement, the Planning and Coordination Council, known as PAC, was established to promote collaborative planning among these three entities. In 2019, by joint agreement, PAC was reconstituted as the Land Use and Environmental Planning Committee, or LUPEC. We haven't yet found a better acronym for that. The charge to LUPEC was broadened to not only include cooperative land use planning efforts, but to consider the environmental and infrastructure

[00:28:44] issues facing our community. So this slide shows the membership of LUPEC with the positions represented by the city, the county, UVA, and the University of Virginia Foundation. When PAC was reconstituted as LUPAC, the committee's membership was expanded to include RWSA, the Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority, because so much of our collective planning work depends on the services RWSA provides, and it's really been a great addition.

[00:29:15] In 2023, the committee voted to invite VDOT representatives on a quarterly basis because because of the important transportation intersections, that's a little pun intended, in our collective work. So during COVID, the committee convened our monthly meetings over Zoom, which admittedly had its scheduling benefits, but we really greatly missed seeing each other in person. So I think there's much better conversation and much better outcomes when we meet in person. So the committee went back to meeting in person on a quarterly basis, and it's to those meetings that our

[00:29:49] VDOT colleagues are invited. The committee also determined that the inclusion of regular guests with regional perspectives enhances our work. So our colleagues from the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission or TJPDC regularly attend these meetings as well. The meetings have shifted from the usual practice during the pack years of each entity giving rather high-level, somewhat generic updates about what was happening in our respective spheres to theme-based conversations that usually impact everyone around the table. As you can imagine, themes such as the

[00:30:27] impacts of new construction or transportation planning generate robust conversations that have, more times than not, identified issues that otherwise would not have been fully appreciated by all and have led to positive outcomes. Most of all, we have all fostered an effective, collaborative, working relationship with each other, allowing for open communication. So per our charter, the agenda and meeting minutes are available online to the public within a few days after our monthly meetings. I'd like to give a shout out to the TJPDC, thank you, Christine,

[00:31:05] who graciously and generously posts the LUPEC documents on their website. We also submit a biannual report to the City Council, the Board of Supervisors, and the leadership of UVA. So some examples of the theme-based topics are shown on this slide, but I'd like to highlight one example in particular on the theme of infrastructure. We had all been aware that each entity had some work in the vicinity of Fontaine Avenue, but we didn't know the extent of each other's plans or the timelines for each. On the docket for the university was the Fontaine Research

[00:31:40] Park Entry Road, Fontaine Parking Garage, the Institute for Biotechnology, the Central Energy Plant, and the Encompass Rehab Hospital renovation, all planned to happen roughly at the same time the university of virginia foundation was stewarding the affordable housing initiative at the piedmont housing site on limosa drive across from the research park rwsa was planning a new 36-inch raw water line across fontaine avenue and up observatory hill to increase water supply the city was planning the fontaine avenue smart scale streetscape improvements

[00:32:15] and vdot and the county were planning the fontaine avenue us 29 interchange improvements all very important infrastructure projects and all with the potential to impact the successful outcome of each other. So far, as you can see on the slide, we've had five meetings where we have all shared information, discussed our goals, and worked out potential conflicts with each other, enabling these important projects to move forward to serve our community. I think I speak for everyone on the committee in saying that LUPEC has been a great forum for these technical discussions to take

[00:32:51] So with that, I'd just like to thank you very much and open the floor for questions and invite Lauren and Jody to help assist me in answering those. So thank you. Thank you. So again, questions or comments?

[00:33:10] Ms. Rauscher, hi. Could you maybe speak to one of the more interesting sort of discoveries that you made in one of these conversations with your partners or interesting like – I don't know, a connection that was made that maybe would not have happened.

[00:33:38] You hinted on some of that a minute ago. Yeah. You know, just obviously when you're sitting around the table with a set of drawings or plans in front of you, it's interesting the kinds of connections that will come up. Is there anything that you could share?

[00:33:54] I think I alluded to some of these things, but when you broaden the community engagement, once RWSA joined the team and TJPDC and VDOT, You know, it just broadened the ability to have discussions that really went to solving some conflicts.

[00:34:12] And that made a huge difference. I think we have some robust conversations that, you know, really get at some sticky issues. And we all know we have to compromise and collaborate in order to, you know, successfully move forward with some of these projects. And I think that Fontaine is really one of those great examples.

[00:34:30] Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you. The next item we have, Ben and Ms. Wall will present the Regional Transit Authority update.

[00:34:57] I think this has generated a lot of interest. Give us a moment and we're all pulled up. Well, great. Well, Ben and I certainly appreciate the opportunity to come and talk to the boards this evening to talk about regional transit authorities and opportunities that exist in the city of Charlottesville and Albemarle County.

[00:35:22] Ben and I will tag team on this presentation. It is important to recognize that we partnered with the TJPDC. I want to certainly call out Christine Jacobs and Lucinda Shannon and the assistance that they gave us as we walked through and talked about regional transit authorities. What we're going to do tonight is, the agenda's on the screen, we want to spend a little time talking about the history of regional transit and governance structures.

[00:35:47] We want to review the role and intents, the purposes for creating a regional transit authority, report out on work to date, and share information from some outreach conversations that we've had. We want to talk a bit about the structure of a regional transit authority, and then provide a little bit of information about draft work plans.

[00:36:08] Before we sort of dive into the specific details about a regional transit authority, We felt like it was important to talk a bit about the history, how we got here. It's important to point out that in this community, the discussion of a regional transit authority has been going on for at least 15 years.

[00:36:27] Dating back to 2008, there was a study done that explored the formation of a regional transit authority, and the authority was really intended to promote the development of regional transit services. Transit was seen as an attractive alternative to address increasingly congested roads in the area, an issue and concern that we still see today.

[00:36:50] In 2009, the General Assembly passed legislation that enabled the formation of a regional transit authority, and the intent of that authority was to plan for regional transit services. The legislation talked about membership of the authority, how the authority was supposed to be governed and structured. What the legislation did not include was any mechanism for state-approved revenue generation. The legislation referred to this entity as the Charlottesville-Albemarle Regional Transit Authority, or as we refer to it, as CARTA. And you'll hear that going through

[00:37:29] the presentation. Fast forward to 2016. In 2016, there was a study done called a regional coordination study. The intent of that study was to examine opportunities for improved communication, collaboration, and coordination between transit partners, and really to talk about matters related to transit. What resulted from that study was the development of the regional transit Partnership in 2017 with the intent that that RTP, Regional Transit Partnership, would really be the

[00:38:04] interim body before the formation of a transit authority. So we fast forward again to 2022. At that point, local leaders came together. Local leaders, transit agencies came together, stakeholders came together to talk collaboratively about what a vision would be for transit, for providing high-quality transit to this area.

[00:38:27] The study really focused on efficient, equitable, and effective transit service in the region and identified short-term, long-term, and extended long-term actions to support this community transit vision.

[00:38:43] The very first action called out in that 2022 report was to do a transit governance study to talk about, to think about, to investigate what governance looked like for transit services. 2024 comes, and through the work of the TJPDC, the Transit Governance Study was developed.

[00:39:08] The goals of that study were to review existing transit governance and identify a structure for regional governance to identify potential revenue streams for dedicated transit funding that would augment current jurisdictional cost of transit. That study identified several steps, but the first step that was identified was to enact that CARTA legislation, and that was intended for that entity to serve as a governance structure and decision-making body for regional transit issues.

[00:39:44] Other steps to take place were to set up a committee, to develop bylaws, and to engage partners. Additional steps included doing a transit needs assessment, particularly for rural transit needs, as well as engaging with our rural partners and engaging with UVA leadership, specifically about UTS and possible partnerships with the university.

[00:40:11] So that's where we are. We have numerous studies, numerous discussions about why regional transit is important, and we've arrived at a place 15 years later where we've done some work. We were asked by the Regional Transit Partnership to develop bylaws for a regional transit authority.

[00:40:32] So now I'd like to take just a moment and talk about the role of a regional transit authority. The first bullet up here is probably the most important. The idea of an RTA, or Regional Transit Authority, is to be that collaborative, multi-jurisdictional entity for identifying and solving transit issues.

[00:40:51] It's supposed to be a forum to carry out planning work and to really work through difficult shared concerns. It's intended to help recommend regional transit priorities, provide some general oversight over programs such as transit or congested management.

[00:41:11] The other bucket of activity is related to planning. The idea of this transit authority would really focus hard, go hard in on planning. regional transit plans for all or a portion of the area, long-range transit planning in the area, consideration of service expansions, and alternatives. The other bucket includes funding.

[00:41:33] Funding, the Transit Authority could serve as a vehicle for administering and collecting dedicated regional transit funding when available, and could consider funding formulas for services and capital. The final bucket is around federal and state government. The Transit Authority could serve as an advocate for transit needs to the federal and state government, primary funders of transit across the country, could recommend transit priorities to these federal and state partners, and finally, the transit authority could be the vehicles to apply for and receive grants to provide services.

[00:42:10] So I'm going to pass it on to Ben. So I'll pick up on what we've been working on to date. Once we started working together at the staff level after the adoption of the transit governance study, we basically followed what the recommendations were from that study.

[00:42:28] The first thing that we did was start engaging with other localities' staff and with UVA leadership to gain an understanding of what their transit needs were, what they thought a regional transit authority could actually do for them. We engaged with the transit services as well to hear more about how their existing plans might align with coordinating with other jurisdictions and how we might be able to coordinate across jurisdictions to execute those plans. We also looked at developing bylaws for CARTA that are in conformance with the legislation. And while we were working through that, we were trying to figure out, well, once we set up CARTA, what does it do next? What's the work plan for

[00:43:06] CARTA going into this first year of its existence? So first, we did some engagement with the surrounding counties. The first thing that we heard from all of them was we want to know more our transit needs ourselves. We want to know how our transit needs interact with the rest of the region. For some of our partners in the more rural areas, they had some question marks about what that looked like. There is an understanding both within our jurisdictions and outside of our jurisdictions that there's more planning work that needs to be done as a region before we can get to dedicated funding. That's what we're hearing from the state and that's also what we're hearing from our partners is we need to come up with more answers to where is this funding coming from

[00:43:45] and what's it going to be used on. We've also heard there are opportunities for using this transit authority to go after some short-term improvements to services. There are some grants out there that basically look for you to use the magic word of this is a regionally significant investment.

[00:44:02] And by having a regional transit authority, that lends a lot of credit to us pointing to our investments and saying these are regionally significant. That lets us go after demonstration grants for DRPT for new kinds of services as well as trip grants for things like regionally expansive services or fare free services.

[00:44:20] The thing that we heard the most was, you guys should definitely go do that. Unanimous interest for us setting up CART together. The surrounding counties all want to see how it goes. They want to see us be successful before they dip their toe in the water.

[00:44:37] And between us and between all of the transit agencies, we've all acknowledged that there is this need for collaboration between all parties. We've been doing that so far through the Regional Transit

Partnership, but we're understanding that it's time to take the next step and move on to CARTA together.

[00:44:54] So then we started looking at, so what does the bylaws for this need to look like? What is the makeup of CARTA? And luckily, we have legislation that's pretty clear on what needs to happen with CARTA. It describes the powers of the Regional Transit Authority, specifically pointing out that it will be doing planning for the region.

[00:45:15] It also points out that it does not have dedicated funding available to it at that time. It identifies the initial members as being the city of Charlottesville and Albemarle County, but it allows for the surrounding counties, Luvanna, Green, Nelson, and Louisa to join as partners as well, and describes other duties and responsibilities related to fiscal and legal concerns.

[00:45:38] So the bylaws also will include that initial membership of the city of Charlottesville and Albemarle County to conform with the legislation. We also are allowing Savannah Louisa Green to join, as well as other entities that could join as non-voting members.

[00:45:56] Our board of directors, as allowed by the legislation, gives two votes to the county, two votes to the city, and then a vote to each additional county that might want to join. Non-political jurisdictions, such as UVA or transit agencies or TJPDC, could serve on this board, but they would have to be non-voting members according to that legislation.

[00:46:21] The bylaws lay out things like who are the officers, what are the terms of service, who are the chair or the vice chair, lays out very basic things like how are meetings supposed to work, what do you need for public hearings, quorums, voting, when do agendas need to be available.

[00:46:39] It specifically points out two committees that will need to be standing up. First is a finance committee that would consist of five members appointed by the Carta board itself and that would look at the annual budget and adjustments for the carter board but also for the transit agencies and transit funding that is going into transit services throughout the region there would also be a technical committee which is a staff member from each member locality so basically we're talking about an extension of the existing working group that is uh working on

[00:47:11] setting up these bylaws so at this point uh it also says that we could have an executive director and staff for the time being. We're considering just moving forward with existing county and city staff and moving forward with Carta with that until we decide exactly what we need the executive director or staff for. And it also lays out exactly how you adopt the bylaws and what the amendment process is for those bylaws. So we've been setting up a work plan, figuring out what comes next after we set up Carta, and generally it conforms with the buckets of the roles of the

[00:47:50] agency that Anne laid out a few slides ago. First, it would be setting up CARTA. That's sort of the first part of the general bucket is set up the board, approve the bylaws, elect a chair and vice chair, set up the committees, get sort of the framework set up, continue doing the outreach to the partners who have not joined yet, and to our transit service agencies. We want to sort of get the work started for the planning and start having those conversations early on. That leads us into the planning work that needs to be happening, which is establishing some regional goals that

[00:48:28] we share together. Some of those will come out of existing planning work that we've done together, including the transit vision plan, sort of looking at those and saying, okay, now that we have this regional transit authority, does that change anything about what we said in this plan two years ago? We can

also start looking at short-term transit improvements. What are the things that just right off the bat when we sit down in a room together we understand our shared needs there are some things that we understand like the trolley does great microcats doing great these are things that we can start digging into because we know they're successful and we can look for

[00:49:04] opportunities to continue them going forward part of that is going to be looking for what do we do with funding for this we're going to need to immediately hit the ground running figuring out what we need for the next fiscal year because as we're standing up Carta that's happening around the same time everyone's talking about budgets. So we need to start thinking about what's the budget for Carta going into the next year? What kind of work are they going to be doing in the next year? Do we need staff for that? Or is existing county and city staff going to be sufficient for the level of work that we hope that Carta is going to pull off in FY26?

[00:49:38] While we're looking through that, we'll be working with DRPT at the state level and also FTA at the federal level to look for possible revenue that we could add to those strategies. As a part of looking for revenue, we're also going to be advocating for these are our needs.

[00:49:56] We want you guys to know about it because we're going to keep showing back as a regional transit authority with these shared needs and hoping that the state and federal agencies will help us fulfill those needs. Lastly, I'll point to we need to start getting ourselves on the track to getting to that dedicated funding source.

[00:50:15] Right now, we are not enabled by Carta legislation to raise our own dedicated funding for transit through this structure. But we need to talk with our legislative folks to set up the package of what that needs to look like, start talking to our legislators, and this would be the vehicle to do that.

[00:50:36] Our key takeaways from all of this are we have a variety of transit needs in this region. We have multiple providers. We have a lot of investment that's needed. We all recognize that those are all shared needs that we have across our borders. And we've been talking about this for a very long time, so we all are pretty aware of that.

[00:50:57] The existing legislation that we have gives us a vehicle to be able to address those things. It lets us take the next step from the RTP, the Regional Transit Partnership, and move on to a legislatively enabled thing that will help us work with the state a little bit better.

[00:51:14] In the past, we've had some troubles getting to this. We've had that 15 years of conversation. That shouldn't be dissuading anyone from this is a good idea. That's proof that we need to have more discussions about what we need to do with transit. This gives us a vehicle to do that.

[00:51:31] The last thing I'll leave you with is we did take this to the Regional Transit Partnership in August at their August meeting. And we're able to get a unanimous endorsement for us to move forward with CARTA and setting that up sometime this fall. When y'all are ready, we will be happy to come talk to you as individual boards about what that looks like.

[00:51:53] With that, I think we're open to questions. Thank you. Question. Michael? Yeah. Well, first of all, as you mentioned, you know, this has been talked about for over a decade. So even though it's still just a first step in a new process, moving to create a regional transit for you really is a huge moment.

[00:52:16] I have two thoughts. One is how Charlottesville and Albemarle could have a unified message and voice and advocating in the General Assembly to get legislation allowing a funding mechanism to get approved. Because I know all our local legislators are already fully on board, but I could see it taking more than one session to figure out how to get it out of committee in the House and Senate and finally get it approved and signed by the governor.

[00:52:40] And then the second thought is, I think also for this to really have a transformative impact, we need to have both Jant and UVA participate in a regional transit authority. And not to jump ahead to the next topic, but on the Champaign-Urbana trip, it was interesting just by accident, I was talking to their transit director, and he relayed how the University of Illinois used to run its completely own separate transit system, and some number of years ago, it decided to merge with their transit authority.

[00:53:12] And he said that was the transformative moment for their transit system, because in one year it about doubled their ridership, and because federal funding is based on ridership, that formed the basis of actually being able to really expand the service. So I think, I don't know how successful it can be without UVA's participation, and obviously that would be a big change that requires a lot of discussion and difficult details.

[00:53:38] So I'm curious what kind of body or structure of conversations would allow us to at least seriously explore what UVA joining it may look like and entail. So the legislation is pretty specific that UVA can't be a voting member, but they can be a non-voting member on the board and they can join in the discussions about transit.

[00:54:00] We have engaged with them directly and sort of taken the temperature of, are you guys interested in participating? And the answer was a resounding yes, very much we would like to be at the table. I don't want to speak too much for UVA's plans, but I know that they do have some thoughts about, you know, changing what their transit system looks like to serve their community a little better.

[00:54:21] And that might take working with us more directly than they have. And could I ask a question? You say the legislation, I take it you're referring to the legislation that currently exists. Yes, which could be changed. Do you know whether other localities have enabling legislation that specifically embraces the possibility of non-governmental entities being?

[00:54:47] I believe that they do, that there are other jurisdictions. There are a number of authorities that exist, a Northern Virginia authority. There's one around the Hampton Roads area. There is a Richmond one as well.

[00:55:04] We'd have to go back and take a look at that. If we're going back to the General Assembly to get the authority to get money, it seems we ought to also be able to include something that solves another organization. My sense is that the first step is for City Council, Albemarle County, to approve establishing it.

[00:55:34] That means that it's going to go back to those two bodies for approval. That's the first step. And once we get that, and I'm just, please correct me if I'm wrong, but once we get the authority to set up and actually meeting, then we can figure out the legislative changes we need.

[00:55:56] We can figure out what funding mechanism we're going to take to the General Assembly because we can't go to the General Assembly and just say, we need money for transit. We have to tell them where we're going to get that money from, what our funding mechanism is. At least that's mine.

[00:56:11] And that's not going to happen in two weeks or two months. It's going to take some work, right? But we can't do any of that work until we have the authority established. And that's what that transit governance study said. It said that legislation exists.

[00:56:28] The authority can be created within the existing legislation. Go and enact that legislation. the entity, at least with the city and the county, do the outreach to the surrounding counties and the partners, which we have done to determine their interest in transit.

[00:56:45] And we know that there is interest. We know there's a bit of a wait and see. Let's see what happens. The other item that the transit governance study talked about was go find some projects, Go find some activities to prove that everybody can work together, that we're all in, and use that to be the moment that you can prove to the General Assembly that we're ready to really seriously talk about revenue.

[00:57:14] And often our boards, when we're starting something new, we talk about small wins, and that's what we're talking about. Yes, ma'am. And that's some of that work that Ben identified in the work plan is what would be, are there some demonstration projects that we could explore?

[00:57:32] What are, is there some, we heard very clearly from the rural communities, an interest in understanding what their rural transit needs are. Is there some planning work that we can do together? And some of that is sort of groundwork necessary to prove, again, that this entity can work and that we're ready to take funding when we can.

[00:57:55] Thinking both about what our next steps need to be and also kind of what role the university should play, Councillor Payne mentioned the Champaign-Urbana transit system. I want to maybe draw on a best practice that's a little bit closer to home that I know is also highlighted in our packet.

[00:58:15] Blacksburg, I think, highlights that maybe a voting membership is not what the university wants. So they're very much a best practice at incredibly successful, Named in 2019 as the best transit system in America by the American Transit Association something something.

[00:58:35] And the city and the county, a very little for what is basically a city, what is not basically, what is a city department is funded primarily by Virginia Tech and half their ridership is Tech students. I just point this out because we should not maybe, I don't want us to assume that we know what Virginia wants out of this relationship.

[00:58:59] The idea of being a voting member actually might be not ideal. That invites controversy. That invites an individual who represents the university that could potentially be a lightning rod because they're voting on a board. They might want to be a silent worker. We won't be able to get these kind of answers to these kinds of questions and understand what kind of partnership makes best sense for our situation, that we can best leverage all these things.

[00:59:22] We actually have the organization actually having these conversations. I do like the idea of Virginia Tech, or the University of Virginia, is just paying for our transit system. That does sound nice. One of the interesting, I've been on the RTP, and I joke that if you could solve transit by studying, this would be something that would be...

[00:59:53] We've already figured it out. Yeah. It's remarkable the amount of effort and studies and things that have happened over the last years, and so many of them are driven by federal requirements. You've got to prove this before, you know, and I've been trying to educate myself on that. I will say that the

governance study, I don't know if everyone's had a chance to look at it, but it's a very incredibly robust discussion of different models, the way people, as you mentioned, Virginia Tech was brought up in there, and places all over the country, Ithaca, New York.

[01:00:29] So there's a lot of groundwork that has been done, which we will certainly be able to make use of. I guess maybe this isn't the right venue to ask this. This is something that's still part of the to-do list but you know when I think of an authority in actually going from what's talking about it's one thing to vote on the card to sort of enable that I get that but then the next step would be some sort of service agreement like when I go look at the founding documents of RWSA or RWSA or the jail board they're very specific documents where

[01:01:09] city managers and lawyers lots of them I guess sat down and hashed out the brass tacks of how we move forward so I'm assuming that'll be part of the next piece of this the bylaws are certainly important but I think bylaws that sort of um fleshing out of how that organization would work and then you know is and I'm not I'm not suggesting but for all these various cameras that are above us um I'm not at all suggesting this is what happens but questions

[01:01:46] are things like this can become part of this or there's John you know these are the sort of questions that I know that people concerns have been raised or concerns is the right word those are those are questions that come to mind at least in my mind um and we have we have some time before we have to address that but there's a lot to be done still but I I guess I would hope that you know, we could, you know, I do want to thank the RTP and the folks who've led the RTP over the last

[01:02:20] years of sort of keeping the flame alive. I hope that we can really sort of, let's, I've seen more progress in this in the last six months and mostly because of y'all down there and the work that you've done. So thank you. I am looking forward, I guess, to going to Champaign-Urbana, Illinois in a couple of weeks to see what my colleagues have seen and learn a little more about hydrogen possible. I do think you bring up a very good point about partnership agreements, service

[01:02:55] agreements. As we've talked about CARTA, the formation of CARTA, the approach we took, the approach that was really advocated in this transit governance study was, let's get the organization sort of set. Let's sort of create the bylaws, start meeting, and then let's do some projects. Are there some low-hanging fruit? Are there some planning efforts that we can explore before and to build some credibility, some partnership between the group before we go

[01:03:26] out and tackle the big items like services, like oversight over organizations. And so we purposefully identified that and sort of set that aside with the intent to form the organization, to start talking about planning, to start talking about what's the appropriate structure, knowing that those steps might come in the future and probably will come in the future.

[01:03:55] And I would just add that that's what we're hearing from DRPT. And it's critical that we have DRPT at the table working with us because they are going to be very important to our work as we're going to the General Assembly. And their support is going to be critical.

[01:04:13] And our outreach has included the four surrounding counties. Our outreach has included conversations with Kat and with John and the university, as well as a trip that several of us took to Richmond to meet with DRPT and to talk about what this authority might look like and their interest in that authority moving forward.

[01:04:34] And the only thing I would add is just to remind people that the regional transit partnership, we have the city and the county, we have the surrounding counties at the table, we have the university at the table, we have John at the table. We have the two public school transportation departments.

[01:04:51] So we have... And they'll be traveling, is my understanding, as well, to Champaign and Urbana. And I just want to chime in as well. As part of this discussion, I've been conversating with the fine mayor of Blacksburg.

[01:05:06] And it's been a really good conversation because some of the things you talk about, Ann, they're doing a lot of things together as well. And I want to get this right. It's what she said, just like the impact of Virginia Tech on Blacksburg has more impact on Blacksburg than any other place because Blacksburg is so small.

[01:05:26] Virginia Tech is so near the college in the United States. So it's really impacting them, the growth of Virginia Tech and the impact on the housing, the schools, everything. So they're looking at this through the same lens as we are, but it's probably a lot more difficult there.

[01:05:47] I would imagine. But they're dealing, they're watching us and we're watching them. They're going through some strategic planning and doing some things together, but they're still kind of figuring that out down there. But as we talk about this, about, you know, because I think that one issue that we will have is that no matter how much planning we do, once we have a plan, we go to the state, they, you know, I'm just thinking about what the one-cent tax we tried

[01:06:22] to do for the schools we had all of our ducks in a row we have it's like it's like we're asking people to do it for the schools and they still turned it down so um i think that we need to start that and not i'm not saying we're not saying it's that lobbying that you know conversation with our legislatures and enrichment now because we could do all this and we have this great plan with everything but really with not any teeth you know not any power we really need that you know taxing

[01:06:53] authority or to be able to do some of the projects and things. Other comments or questions on this? Transit director. I just want to bring a point that I think you're spot on, sir.

[01:07:09] I came from GRTC and I knew GRTC was originally. It took them three years to get the legislation through the general center. The first time they introduced it, it didn't even get it to the audit committee. The second year, it made it almost to the finish line, and then the third year, it got passed.

[01:07:27] So it is very unusual for anything to go to the General Assembly the first year and get passed. So the efforts that we start now will pay fruits, bare fruits, two or three years. And I will say, and I'm sorry, let me just add this because the Regional Transit Partnership did have three of our representatives in the General Assembly at a meeting about a year ago to explain that we were setting this up, we were talking about it, and this was the way we were trying to move forward.

[01:07:58] And in concept, they were supportive. Ms. B, you haven't spoken. I was just going to say, I second and agree.

[01:08:14] I think the earlier we can start the conversations, the better. I guess what I worry about is not so much even our local legislators, but the other committee members and the governor. And maybe the governor changes, but if we do the legwork now, we'll be prepared as soon as there's a new governor.

[01:08:34] And it's also maybe getting a little too ahead of it, because I know this isn't a decision we would immediately make, but I've also been curious if there's even in our heads a rough timeline for when the localities that participate, let's say at first it's just Charlottesville and Albemarle, when will we make a decision that the gas tax is what we want to pursue as the revenue source from the state versus some other mechanism?

[01:09:02] Because I just anticipate that as a big decision point we'll just at some point have to figure out and make I don't know if we have a timeline for that, but See what those are in other places as well. I think yeah, I know the governor's study listed out Yes I think it's important that I agree that we get everything going as soon as we can get it formed frankly and

[01:09:36] Hopefully that will happen soon and the sooner that happens and the sooner other entities join us That will give us more powerful voice when we go before the legislature But I was going to ask to our lobbyists work with your lobbyists That's something they already do work. Could they do? Well, I know the David I think the key would just be to make sure that it appears on both lists so that he knows that too and can track that for him.

[01:10:13] Exactly, exactly. That would be helpful. And I'm just going to throw something out that hasn't been spoken about, and that's, I know we're talking about buses and everything, but is there anyone thinking in the long term of perhaps any kind of light rail in the area?

[01:10:33] That's something I've always... They were talking about that when I was in grad school, you know. I know we have to get everything else straightened out.

[01:10:51] Okay, good. Maybe when our new zoning ordinance gets really robust, we have that nice density to really make it work. I have to say that I just left our sister city of business in France, and they have a light rail. It was, you know, they get a lot of state money.

[01:11:10] It was a \$250 million project for this town, about the size of Charlottesville and Albemarle. And they based their entire transit system off of that light rail system there. So, very well run.

[01:11:26] That's the future. For that population size. I like it. It's a different culture. Yeah, yes. Very different culture. So, where's it going? I'd like to challenge the notion of allowing the surrounding counties to just be, wait, and see. When the TJPD Commission meets, and we've had updates on the Regional Transit Authority, it seems like the eyebrows raise and the eyes go sideways when taxing comes up and them having to fund something.

[01:11:54] But if we just go the two of us versus six of us going to the General Assembly, not to mention Afton Express reaches over to Augusta and Stanton, and we have other jurisdictions locally that could fit into this transit piece, that it would be a hell of a lot more powerful than just us two going.

[01:12:10] What I often like to remind our neighbors, our four rural neighbors, is a lot of times Albemarle County gets lumped together with Charlottesville as if we're two urban jurisdictions. We're not. Charlottesville is certainly an urban jurisdiction.

[01:12:26] But Albemarle County is rural, and our solutions to our rural transit needs will be the same solutions that work for Nelson, Flavena, Louisa, and Green. And transit goes both ways. So it's not just their folks coming in to work, but if there's a transit stop at the Walmart in Rockersville, I would think that

their businesses would love to know that people are getting off of a bus, and before going into their car, they might go and shop, and then that has revenue implications for those places.

[01:12:57] Same could be said of Fluvanna, Nelson, and Louisa. So I get why they want to do wait and see. If I were sitting on their board, I'd be saying, yeah, let's wait and see what happens. But if they want this to come to fruition five or ten years down the road, we should already be making the case that, hey, a coalition with you included that goes to the General Assembly, we'll front end the work, we'll front end the funding to get this to start to happen.

[01:13:24] But we need your help to be able to get the code, the law, whatever the words are in place now. If we wait to do that for four or five or ten years, we've probably already missed the boat and we're spinning wheels. So whether that's electeds that have to take that on, whether that's staff that has to take that on, I don't know.

[01:13:44] But there's a lot of success that they have seen, especially when the two PDCs met and they talked about how, I am saying it right, the Afton Express, right? They time and have changed their bus schedules to meet with employees scheduled with the shift changeover at UVA at the health system.

[01:14:02] And they're thinking of adding another line on if they haven't already because of the demand and how well and successful that's working. That's a powerful story for Louisa and Green and Louvanna. So that's something that I would challenge, whether you say, yeah, okay, get to work, Ned, or all of us figured that out, that we don't wait and see for the wait and seeers.

[01:14:23] Let's get the wait and seeers a little bit more engaged at a different level. If the reticence is truly funding, and that's put off so they can wait and see on the funding piece, we need advocacy help now. I think that's something that should be out of the gate, what we're going to. I truly think the General Assembly reacts when they see, you know, if a Charlottesville and an Albemarle goes and lobbies this General Assembly, oh, shocker, because of the political dynamic.

[01:14:49] But when you see a Flavanna, Nelson, Green, and Louisa, together with a Charlottesville and an Albemarle, throwing an Augusta and a Stanton, lobbying together, then I think different animals start to play, and you might be able to get a little bit more movement at it.

[01:15:07] Thank you. Thank you. Oh, and I would love to see this happen before daisies start to play. Yes. Diane has worked so hard on this that we have to do this before the daisies start. Other comments or questions on this?

[01:15:27] I think the next presentation kind of ties into this. Garland, did you want to... Thank you for my... Somebody's going to work daisy into an actor.

[01:15:49] I'll get to what I can do in a little while. While we're loading the presentation, I can give you a kind of So, Kat engaged a consultant to help us work through our transition plan.

[01:16:18] We have been able to complete that. It may be my old ears, but I'm having trouble back here hearing you. Okay. Can you project a little bit better? Thank you. Yes, ma'am. A little louder? That's better. All right. So, I want to give you a little bit of background.

[01:16:35] So, for about 16, 17 months, Kat had a consultant working with us to pull together what we would call a transition plan for our food. With that effort, we came back to City Council on February 27th

of this year, and they adopted the alternative transition plan for us, which got us to our carbon neutral goals for the city by 2050.

[01:17:03] we have in our plan that we will pretend to be getting there by 2040 with that said we are going to look at two potential pilots which has battery electric and hydrogen because there are no hydrogen providers or users on the East Coast we found one that was as close and that was the Midwest and I was Champaign-Urbana that's why I was chosen the primary objective of the trip to

[01:17:38] transportation or urban was to visit the MTD, which is the Mass Transit District, to observe their groundbreaking hydrogen fuel cell technology up close. We've been talking a lot about it in practical, I mean, for the practical purposes, would it work for us? So we were able to go and see firsthand whether anybody was making that new technology work firsthand. So we took a pretty big group with us. It was about 15 people. 14 of them were government officials. There

[01:18:12] was one reporter because we had three elected officials, Mayor Wade, Counselor Payne, Counselor Snook, Supervisor, and RTP Chair, Diane McKeel, was also in attendance. And I think what we learned there is that uh it's not just um us that are looking at how to make transitions there are trans there are larger transitions there are larger transit systems um but they that are making

[01:18:49] these transitions all over the world all over the world um and the comparison that i want to bring to everyone's attention is they're both very similar to what we chose champagne urbana and and charlottesville they both have universities they're very vibrant and there are a number of challenges, and they're both looking at trying to make these transitions with cutting edge technology. The services that were provided by MTD versus Charlottesville, many of them are very similar. We do, both of us do fixed route service. Both of us have kind of a branded line. They do

[01:19:26] kind of a night line fixed route service, and we have a downtown trolley service. They also do paratransit service. We do paratransit service through JAWS. They have a surf ride program, which is very similar to our micro-CAT program that we do in Rideshare.

[01:19:42] They have a C-CAT, a C-Chart van service. And then we have, they have the university routes, they have football routes, they have services they do for the high schools and the middle schools, which is a very important point here.

[01:19:59] We do services for our schools also, but it's just primarily for the elementary schools, and high schools, but we're trying to transition a portion of them on the middle schools and high schools to our fixed route system. So when we looked at the service comparisons between us, both systems were put together or founded in the 1970s. One was actually 1970, which is MTD, and we were founded in 1975. Service population is 135,000 versus basically 88,000. They have

[01:20:35] 114 buses versus our 48. They have 26 routes and we have 12 routes. They do 9.4, 9.5 million unlinked passenger trips a year and we do 1.3. We're going to talk a little bit about that because we want to go a little bit deeper. And when we looked at the real comparison and peel back the onion a little bit here, they're 9.5, 7.7 of it is actually associated with the university.

[01:21:04] So if you take that away, their number is very close to what we're doing on our side of the house. It's like 1.3 to our 1.3. So we had a luncheon with them. We got an opportunity to have really robust conversations.

[01:21:22] I think this is the time where the group had an opportunity to ask all the questions they want. And I would say Council Payne did a wonderful job in questioning up and down. The chair, the executive director of MTD, his name is Carl Gannett.

[01:21:41] He's actually pictured there with the glasses on and the ball head. Him and his team came in and laid everything out for us. And when we go back, we will actually structure that conversation so it is a little bit more focused on not just the transit side, but also the school side because there's a major component there.

[01:22:03] But if you look at the transition of hydrogen, kind of was the major theme points, the benefits of the new technology, funding and partnerships and challenges and solutions. That conversation, which was scheduled to be about an hour, lasted two and a half hours and probably could have gone longer.

[01:22:21] We actually had a break because we wouldn't have made the tour, which was scheduled for two o'clock. So there was a lot of information they provided to us. Everyone in the room walked away, I believe, with a better understanding of how they got to where they were. And then we were able to see firsthand what their technology really looked like.

[01:22:41] So in getting to them, we were taken to their transit center. That was by mistake. But it worked out to be one of the better things for us. We got to see how their operations happened. So there was one of their transfer hubs. We were picked up at the transfer hub by MTV and taken to their facility.

[01:23:01] We were able to see their hydrogen production, which is their electrolyzer components, their fueling stations, and then we actually got to walk through their facilities. They have covered facilities. In Champaign and Urbana, they said temperatures can get to 20 below, so it made perfect sense for them to have their buses inside.

[01:23:22] And they're generating 420 kilograms of hydrogen daily. They have a fleet right now of 12 hydrogen fuel buses, and based on the conversation that we had, they're going to increase their capacity for storage, and they're going to be up to between 65 and 90 over the next couple of years.

[01:23:43] So, hydrogen startup cost was a major component that we talked about a lot. It was about \$20 million at that time. And their fleet comparison, their current fleet is like 1 to 10.

[01:23:58] They're planning for battery electric and hydrogen. They put the hydrogen model up front because they thought the conversation where battery electric are not a one-for-one replacement for diesel. They wanted to give more time for the technology to mature before they get their toe into the battery electric center.

[01:24:18] They are going to put battery electric into their model. Now, most of the transit agencies that I talk to, the directors, they're not doing a one model fleet. So they're not going all 100% battery electric or all 100% hydrogen. There is a mix for reliability and redundancy purposes.

[01:24:38] So actual items that we took away from that is we thought that it's possible for us to potentially adopt hydrogen in real time over the next three to five years, put hydrogen into our model. We would be potentially the first transit agency in the Commonwealth to have hydrogen.

[01:24:57] The second part of that is Maryland is just a little bit ahead of us. They announced that they are going towards hydrogen about six and a half months ago. And so if we are going to get in that queue, we would potentially still be the first.

[01:25:13] Being the first potentially provides a different level of funding opportunities for us. We'd love to take advantage of that. But everything that we're contemplating is really potentially expensive. Talked through that model. We actually had a meeting just yesterday about the infrastructure needs to make any of these models happen.

[01:25:32] It's a phased approach to potentially look at. There are short-term and long-term goals and actual items that we're trying to get done. But all in all, to make zero emissions a reality here, there's a tremendous amount of infrastructure. So I wanted to give you a little bit more information about there's a number of write-ups that were done, whether it was shock tubs, and there are websites that we can look at.

[01:26:01] But I want to also bring you there. We have in our strategic plan that we are going to use battery electric and hydrogen that that continues to allow us to have an opportunity for funding opportunities, discretionary grants, whether it's the federal or state.

[01:26:17] So we didn't want to shut off anything. But I think when we go back, we'll have an opportunity to talk more about how their model and their structure and how they have dedicated funding plays into how they continue to expand their service model. So conclusions, the trip highlighted that basically hydrogen technology is real.

[01:26:40] They are the first transit agency in the country to have articulated hydrogen electric buses. They got a special grant through the Department of Transportation with the feds, FTA.

[01:26:58] And they are looking at potentially adding more articulated buses to their model. And that articulated bend means that they're basically taking double their capacity for ridership. And we're hopeful that at some point in time, we'll be able to introduce hydrogen buses here.

[01:27:18] The goals for the city council to us are we're not buying any more fossil fuel buses after December 31st of 2027. So January 1st of 2028, we will only be able to buy battery electric or hydrogen there.

[01:27:34] With that, any questions? We have a number of other people who went on the trip that can ask some questions. And I think, talking about regional cooperation, I think this was a great example of the region coming together to take a look at another transit agency that's making things work.

[01:27:57] And we can potentially bring that here. Yeah, it was a great, great trip. It was a whirlwind, like, you know, one full day at the end, but we were, like, still. But it was worth it. It was worth it. I think one of the things I really got from it, in addition to that, even though they were committed to hydrogen, they were only, you know, they didn't want to put all their eggs in one basket.

[01:28:24] I think that they mentioned, was it Elcock, Indiana, that had all of their buses battery, I believe, and went down, the company went out of business or something, and they were just stuck. So I don't know if any transit system wants to be all one thing.

[01:28:43] So questions or comments? And just to piggyback on what you said, and I can't remember exactly, Garland, but they were talking about somewhere a 30-70 or a 60-40 model, and I don't remember which. I will just say for everybody here, though, that the group that's going in October consists of Charlottesville, Albemarle, school systems, and the university.

[01:29:07] So I think 22 people are going. I think you said at one point. 22. So it's going to be great. At some point, though, it would be wonderful if we could have a representative from Shandane Urbana to come here and talk, because I think it would be very helpful for our community to hear that discussion as well.

[01:29:26] Carter can make that happen. Just saying. I hope we're sending them some really, really great gift baskets at Christmas time for all of them. Collegial support. Did you have some?

[01:29:45] We'll take them to vineyards. I know, is this something of the past now, CNG and LNG? So according to the city council, we've taken LNG and CNG off as fuel types.

[01:30:08] And we're already doing the potentially the battery electric or hydrogen pockets. And that's because of the improvement of the battery electric and also hydrogen. And also the impact on the environment. So, we wanted to make sure that the end result is zero emissions, whether it's from the source itself, so when the source that we're using is zero emissions for us eventually, so whether that's battery electric, it's the cleaner the grid is, it's the cleaner the emission is going to be on the battery electric, and the cleaner the hydrogen we can get, it's going to emit water vapor, so we want to be as clean as possible.

[01:30:46] And I'm really happy to hear what Supervisor McKeel said regarding the school district. I think you mentioned that school district going in October also. Maybe a big combination there. Is it for both city and county?

[01:31:05] They're both represented. They're both represented. Okay, good. I'll just say, I'm guessing I probably entered that trip as the biggest hydrogen skeptic. But it was very informative, and I definitely left feeling way more confident than when I went in that hydrogen is something that transit agencies should be seriously exploring.

[01:31:33] It was very interesting to see Champaign-Urbana actually made it work, and I think the big questions will be storage long-term at scale, along with transportation, when and where hydrogen hubs get built out. but it is clear there are transit agencies that it will work for and it should be explored.

[01:31:51] So I'll just say that. And I hope, you know, I won't be on the second trip, but I hope maybe there's an opportunity for them to talk in more detail about that experience of University of Illinois joining, because those ridership numbers to me are just, like, transformative in terms of the success of the agency.

[01:32:11] And I wonder if it could just be a learning experience if maybe, you know, if that is or isn't the way for us to go to, achieve what the county executive mentioned at the beginning of reducing redundancies and having the most efficient regional infrastructure. Yes, I wanted to know, had you learned in your previous correspondence with Urbana, is every locality basically on their own to produce, or is it something where if there were regional demand due to numerous transit agencies wanting to use, I think that there would be a common producer?

[01:32:46] So they're the only game in town. Right, out there. Out there. So they're a little bit different than we are here in the sense that they're trucking a lot of their hydrogen in. They're producing hydrogen, but they're also trucking it in. And they're going to truck more in because they're turning up the volume on getting hydrogen vehicles in the house.

[01:33:06] So they put in an order, I believe you said, of 25 or 30. They're putting it this year. So that will arrive within 18, 24 months. So they're going to go from 12 to 34 to 50 or 60 over the next two to three years.

[01:33:24] So they're going aggressive on the hydrogen side. But they have goals to be neutral by 2050 also, and they've got 114 vehicles, so they're a little much larger than that. I just wondered as a Pollyanna economic development issue, is the demand side going to grow if other agencies besides ours look at this?

[01:33:49] Yeah, so thank you. I couldn't go on the previous trip. And so this question might have come up. This also might be too specific for just, you might, it might have come up, it might not. And I don't know if this is too much of a tech spec. But when you say they truck it in, what is the scale? Like how many bus routes does each truck of hydrogen?

[01:34:22] I do know that answer. We'll be able to answer. I can answer that. I ask that when we go back. Or I can actually send that question to Carl on his team. They've been wonderful. So we've been communicating with them even since we've been back.

[01:34:40] So I can ask that question. Okay, thanks. Because I just know you can tell me any number, and I'd be like, okay, that's reasonable. I don't know what the scale is for it. I would imagine that they're computing. They seem to be very good at it.

[01:34:57] So I would imagine that they're computing what is the loss to their climate gain by trucking it in, but pushing themselves farther, maybe even faster, is compensating for that. But that absolutely was one of the types of questions that I had, because my assumption was that if we were to go this route, we're going to be trucking it in as well.

[01:35:16] And I know that there will be some who will be opposed to the idea of trucking it in. But if trucking it in means that we get further along with being able to implement our carbon neutrality, then it's a trade-off. I mean, it's not perfection, but it's a trade-off, and you can try to balance that if you understand that.

[01:35:33] Yeah, I just want to quickly chime in, and I think this question, not specifically it came up, because I was kind of hooked up on from the presentations on whether the colors of hydrogen, whether it's green, blue, whatever, pink, yeah.

[01:35:53] and so um and so as i recall carl said you know like they don't they don't get they don't after they don't care about the color they're not hung up on the color because right now michael as i understand they might be building something in chesterfield that's public i mean that's a private but right now it's i think the hub is going to be in delaware or pennsylvania yeah i think we're we just don't know and i will say i think my memory is correct champagne urbana was Their hydrogen was used with renewable energy, and they have the advantage of their on-site with solar.

[01:36:29] But Chicago also has a hydrogen production facility that's able to use a nearby nuclear power plant. So that's what has allowed them to truck it in in a cost-effective way while still being... And Ben was on the trip, and he just noted for me that the trucks are using hydrogen to transport.

[01:36:51] To transport. And I did a quick analysis to be in front of me, and it says that fuel cell electric buses typically carry up to 40 kilograms of hydrogen and consume about 25 per day. So a capacity of 125 kilograms can pull five buses, but I don't know how big a kilogram of hydrogen is.

[01:37:14] And they're producing 420. So interesting note, the day that we were there, their electrolyzers had to work for three days. And they actually had the Trillium, the agency that actually helped design and build their electrolyzer, was there.

[01:37:34] And he did a wonderful job of explaining all the nuances and features of the equipment. We were just lucky that he was there. I'm going to ask Carl to bring him back for this group. But he was wonderful. He was very patient. Like I said, we were only supposed to be there about 35, 40 minutes.

[01:37:54] We were there an hour and a half. So this day, which was supposed to be about two hours, turned into about a five and a half, almost six hour day. I'm just talking transit. I love this stuff. But I'm not sure the group that was with me was going to love this stuff.

[01:38:09] And they had seen they were more into it than I was, which was wonderful. But I found their mix. Their goal is very similar to ours. They're going to be zero admission by 2040. They're going to have 50 battery electric buses and 68 hydrogen buses in their first charge.

[01:38:30] They are looking to expand their services, and that mix has not been decided on what they're going to do after that. So you mentioned battery electric and hydrogen. So is their goal to eventually go solely to electric or not?

[01:38:50] I mean, I know I understand them wanting both, but I'm talking about... No, most transit agencies now are trying to do a dual for the purposes. If the grid goes down, they're going to be able to run some stimulus of transit, similar to what I've been asking our city council to kind of let CAT do that model where we're going to dual track.

[01:39:15] We're going to have battery electric. We're going to have hydrogen. So if one fuel source doesn't work, we'll still be able to run some systems. But always be zero emissions. Right. I believe the idea is that both of them could be zero emissions. It's just a question of how do you get the electricity, how do you get the hydrogen, either one without fossil fuels.

[01:39:37] Other questions or comments on this? If y'all go on next week, y'all have a few weeks. It's a couple weeks. It's going to be fine. The only other thing I will mention is, just because I was on the trip and all, but it is really interesting for folks to recognize that the university that we're talking Champaign-Urbana is one of the internationally well-known and the gold standard for engineering schools so we're talking about a community that gets it yeah just to say right 57,000 students

[01:40:16] faculty that use the system engineering thank you so much Garland thank you and the next item is just to just continue the discussion if there are yeah items on this or any other kind of just wanted to have opportunity for actually a question still about the bus situation right now I know we have certain

[01:40:53] like federal grants when we buy a bus we're only covering like 4% of it or 6% of it what money is available for hydrogenizing it's the same grant so it's discretionary 307 money right now. The interesting fact is that grant pot has not, I mean, it got bigger, but not 50% bigger. It got like 30, 20% bigger over time. So for scale purposes, a diesel bus

[01:41:29] costs us about \$524,000. A hydrogen bus, no, a battery electric bus, costs us \$1.2 million. That was last, we looked at the numbers now, it's probably \$1.3 million. A hydrogen bus is about another \$100,000 above that for hydrogen.

[01:41:51] The infrastructure, though, is what really we'll save the money. We put a pretty big cost up front for the infrastructure of the hydrogen. But every single hydrogen bus we add, we don't have to continue to go back and add. And the speed of the hydrogen is we're fueling in 10 minutes versus four or five hours for that relationship.

[01:42:16] And for those bus prices that you just quoted, that's what the bus costs without the grants we apply to it? that's that's correct um continuing just a general discussion i know that one of the things in our packet is a discussion just an item about the work being done at virginia tech that's already been mentioned collaborating with county cities university virginia tech and i know that's

[01:42:49] part of the study and hopefully we can consider some sort of study at some point and uh i hope I was just going to say, I hope everybody had a chance to read the article that was in the packet about the model that Blacksburg and Virginia Tech in Roanoke County are participating in, right?

[01:43:13] We had it in our packet. It's a very interesting model. It certainly is a model of cooperation and strategic planning, and the Champaign-Urbana transit model also encourages us to think strategically for our community and even our greater, you know, our larger community, but certainly our community and the University of Virginia.

[01:43:43] I would love to have a little bit of a discussion about interest in looking at not that exact model, but if the people at this table are interested in a further discussion around what a strategic model of cooperation between Charlottesville, Elmore, and the University of Virginia, to include them, might look like and how we might get there.

[01:44:11] Because I think that's where we're going to get some really big bang for our buck, so to speak. So I just sort of throw that out there. Looking for sort of a show of support on the supervisors. I'd certainly be interested in the study to find out the impact that the students have.

[01:44:30] That was a big takeaway in that article as one mayor spoke to earlier about the impact the students have on services there. But it is a very different dynamic. So understanding what that might be in conjunction with, as we've heard Mr. Richardson and work with the airport board discuss are the flights that come in on Friday and leave on Monday and what impacts that have here as well and where are they going?

[01:44:58] So I think that in and of itself before any sort of structures there, certainly to understand the impacts, I don't know. For those of you that have been around a lot longer, you'd have to tell me if a study like that's been done in the past. But even if it had been, it's time for an update.

[01:45:15] I'm not aware of that question. I mean, I agree with what you're saying there. One sort of zooming out just a little bit with Mr. Richardson and Mr. Sanders.

[01:45:32] What was it that prompted you to, I mean, is this just something that you heard about or it was a very interesting article and it was being driven by, I guess, by the university in that context. How did you hear about it? What's sort of the why or the how?

[01:45:52] The article that you referred to, it appeared in The Daily Progress in May. I've heard of that. And it came at a time where we had been in discussions with the university on our emergency management planning to involve public safety, our election security planning, where we're working together for the fall.

[01:46:21] within the last year, the university and the city and the county, and it was mentioned in your partnership agreement report, we've talked about a community safety initiative that involves both boards as well as the university. And so, I mean, I found it to be fascinating.

[01:46:39] It may, again, I think one of the board members said, this may not be a framework that we're interested in, but, you know, when we think about college towns and the economic vibrancy, We've seen reports on just the regional economic engine that the University of Virginia is, not just for Charlottesville and Abelman County, but for our region.

[01:47:02] And there's amazing work that's going on at our university right next door. And the opportunity to maximize and capitalize partnerships and relationships, I think it's a good time for us to take a look at that to make sure that we're collaborating at a level that maximizes our relationships and it maximizes our opportunities.

[01:47:25] Because I just think that there's amazing things that are going on at the university as we speak. And they used, I guess, a consultant out of D.C. was the driver. I did a little bit of research on their website. I would add that for me, I saw the article in the Daily Progress as well, and I put that on our list even for us to talk about, too.

[01:47:47] It's like, okay, Jeff, what is this? Maybe we should look at something like this. Mainly because my time, my tenure in this seat, I've just been asking a bunch of questions. I feel like I'm good at that. I ask a lot of questions. My team probably wishes I would stop asking so many questions. But I ask a lot of questions, and a lot of what I've been asking in the three years that I've been in the city has been really trying to find out what have we done in the past.

[01:48:13] So to your point, I've asked questions like, when have we done community planning together? because we've done a bunch of plans since he's been here, James has been here, and I've been here. But when have we gone beyond just the boundaries of the city to do that?

[01:48:29] Because the city, county, and university, we're linked, whether we like it or not. I think we like it. But I think it's important for us to look for those moments of where we overlap. And we've been doing more and more of the overlapping, but I don't know that we have slowed down to really just kind of take stock of what does that look like, What does that feel like?

[01:48:49] Where are we going? Let's try to plan out a little bit more of that. So as I've been asking the questions, I've been trying to figure out how can I feel better about making sure that I'm just not so singularly focused on the city of Charlottesville. I don't want anybody to send me an email tomorrow saying they hate the idea that I'm not just thinking about the city of Charlottesville.

[01:49:12] I think it's important for me to always take stock in the region. It's important for me to not lose sight of what's happening around me influences what happens to me. So I think that's what I would offer as kind of what my interest was. And we have so many agreements.

[01:49:30] We have a lot of agreements. We still don't have all the agreements that we need in some places. And some of them date back a long, long time ago. And just because they've been around for a very long time doesn't necessarily mean that they're perfect for today. And I think this even opens the door to taking a look at some of those and questioning what's different today.

[01:49:49] The county has grown up, I think is a fair way to say, and getting bigger and more things are happening. Are there things that are of interest today that weren't even thought of at that moment or weren't even a part of the agreement back then? I think that's part of the question.

[01:50:05] That's what I saw. I really appreciate that. I would say one of the takeaways from this meeting is to encourage you to continue this work and to look for ways that we can further the work together with the university and others as much as possible for the benefit of the region as a whole.

[01:50:33] Yeah, I agree with that. I had a quick reflection, if that's okay. I have worked at the university for 20 years, and it's a great place to work. I graduated there, graduate, and my work experience, career, such as it's been, the first years were in industry, worked for Procter & Gamble for a number of years, and then I worked at the university for about 20 years.

[01:51:02] When I first came to work for the city, to help the city as a city counselor, I guess the thing that I was really struck with was just how lean the city runs, and I'm assuming it's the same in the county.

[01:51:20] At the university, a million-dollar project is really kind of a modest-sized project, whereas at least I don't know about in the county, in the city, that's like one penny of real estate tax. And so the scales are just very, very different in terms of the amount of money and in terms of the amount of resources.

[01:51:41] And so I've really had to sort of adjust my thinking in terms of how do we – because when I think about a community like Charlottesville and Albemarle County, And as I think over the last three years of people coming, either emailing me or talking to me or more sort of poignantly when they come to our meetings, and sometimes they're happy, but many times they're not, the needs that are reflected back to us in our community, you mentioned the fact that this is a well-educated community.

[01:52:11] I mean, it's a community with really great values, I think. The things that people want us to do, at least in the city, when we talk about housing, we talk about punching above our weight and all of these things, people want a lot of us.

[01:52:26] They want us to do a lot of things. And, you know, I'm not an economist and I've not, you know, gauged all this. This is just Brian Pinkston's gut sense of things. But I just feel like we're like 10, perpetually 10 to 15 percent underfunded, at least in the city.

[01:52:46] Maybe that's the legacy of, you know, years and years of low tax mantra in the early 2000s. I don't know. I know that no one really appreciates paying taxes, but that's how we build the community that we need.

[01:53:01] So I don't know what future partnerships might look like with the university or with the county, but I really applaud this regional approach. As you mentioned at the beginning, Mr. Richardson, You know, how do we solve these problems with the least amount of money required so we can invest in other things?

[01:53:23] And so I, again, it's a nut that every year at budget season, I'm just, again, reminded of the challenge it is to meet the needs that our community has with the fund sources that are at our disposal.

[01:53:42] And I hope that we can figure out ways to meet the gaps that are there. I think whatever we can do, to use the tired metaphor of raising all boats.

[01:54:04] Thinking back to the Transportation Working Group, which was some year prior to 2020, there was a lot of research done at the time about all the various funding sources and the beginnings of the work

to set up.

[01:54:20] So I'm really glad that we are now to the adoption phase to get what we've already considered to be stood up. I don't think any of those options are different. Obviously, many studies need to be modernized, updated, or whatever, But I have a lot of thinking over many years, and certainly going back to way before 2020, talking about how other college towns have unified transportation.

[01:54:47] I heard many people have always talked about that we have not run three or four or five systems anymore. Because we cannot bring down the federal number that we deserve to have, because of the thousands of students who are not able to be counted right now.

[01:55:03] However many tens of thousands there are in College Station, Pennsylvania, they've been doing that since the 70s or 80s, maybe even longer. I'm thrilled with Blacksburg. Good for them. So I think others have shown the way. And I really hope that the right players will be in the room in all the various partnerships around to be able to get us to, because it really makes a difference who the leaders are, places to bring.

[01:55:30] I hope the mayor and chair's organization will be able to help bring in some of those regional partners that are more suspicious right now, even if it is designed here at any case of other time, because it will help to give us some more credibility.

[01:55:51] I'm glad you've been here. So I'm going to respect everyone's time. We've got about five minutes left, and I just want to kind of, I think that what I'm hearing from both board of supervisors and city council is that definitely kind of direction to continue the discussion.

[01:56:09] Michael, did you want to have one quick one? I'll be brief, but I want to be a little bit more explicit in that when I read through the framework that was used in Blacksburg between Virginia Tech and their city government, You know, I would definitely be interested in pursuing, as soon as we can, a similar kind of body where we can actually have iterative conversations across UVA, Charlottesville, and Albemarle.

[01:56:36] I think we heard just tonight, I would want to study as well, but I worry if we'd wait for a study. There are immediate needs, we've heard just tonight, with transportation where we need a body where people can convene and talk like that. And my view as an elected official, I think LUPEC and the framework for how we meet and discuss the three-party agreement, there's some value add there, but it is not sufficient to meet the current needs we're seeing in terms of transit discussed tonight, Biotechnology Institute Data Science Center.

[01:57:10] Those are going to transform our infrastructure needs. That'll come with huge benefits for us, but we all need to work together to ensure we're doing that. So not just for us, even in Charlottesville and Elmore, but UVA students as well, they're not seeing strained infrastructure. Their public safety is as good as possible. So that's my perspective.

[01:57:31] I think it's clear we need to pursue that kind of framework if UVA was willing to engage in it, I think, as soon as possible. I really appreciate you saying that. So I think, me, what I'm hearing is to ask staff to take some deeper dives and conversations with Albemarle Charlottesville and the University of Virginia at the table and then come back to us with how that might play out and what model might work best for our community, I guess is what I'm – is that right?

[01:58:05] I mean, Jeff and Sam. Sounds like what I'm hearing. Right. We're in a process. Because we certainly plan to start doing this again on a more regular basis, getting the two bodies together. One in 2018, there were three in 2019.

[01:58:23] One in 2020. Now we've got 2024. Let's not wait past 2024. But I would say three bodies because the University of Virginia is here too. Yes. Okay, any other comments? Everyone, you guys rock.

[01:58:40] Thank you so much. So there'll be no other action. City Council meeting stands adjourned. As does the Board of Supervisors adjourn until tomorrow. One o'clock?

[01:58:56] All the teams.



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