

CENTRAL SHENANDOAH PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

YEAR IN REVIEW

Fiscal Year 2020



Proudly serving the
21 localities
of the Central Shenandoah
Region for over
50 years!

Counties of Augusta, Bath, Highland, Rockbridge, and Rockingham;
Cities of Buena Vista, Harrisonburg, Lexington, Staunton, and
Waynesboro; Towns of Bridgewater, Broadway, Craigsville, Dayton, Elkton,
Glasgow, Goshen, Grottoes, Monterey, Mount Crawford, and Timberville.

CSPDC Celebrates 50 Year Anniversary

On September 17, 2019, over 75 people gathered to celebrate the CSPDC's 50th anniversary at the Frontier Culture Museum in Staunton. In attendance were local government representatives, CSPDC Commissioners and staff, and stakeholders. The program featured four of the CSPDC's signature programs including BRITE Transit, Fields of Gold Farm Trail, Transportation Planning, and Shenandoah Valley Project Impact.

In 1968, the Virginia State Legislature passed the Virginia Area Development Act which set forth the framework for the establishment of regional planning district commissions throughout the state, and on October 1, 1969, the CSPDC was organized. Since then, the CSPDC has assisted its localities with a variety of economic and community development programs that improve the economic vitality of the region and the quality of life of its citizens.

Another milestone occurred in December 2019, when Executive Director Bonnie Riedesel was recognized for her 25 years of service with the CSPDC. She started her tenure in 1994 as a regional planner and has served as Executive Director since 2008.



CSPDC
Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission

In honor of this momentous anniversary, the Virginia General Assembly passed a resolution in celebration of the Commonwealth's 21 PDCs.

During the CSPDC's annual meeting on August 19, 2019, Delegate Steve Landes presented the resolution to the Commission.





During the COVID-19 pandemic, BRITE Bus has continued to offer our workers and patients essential transit service to Augusta Health on the Route 250 Connector. This service has been a major benefit during this unprecedented time of uncertainty and public health concern.

KAREN CLARK
Vice President of Operations at Augusta Health



BRITE Bus

Now entering its 7th year, BRITE Bus provides fixed-route and ADA-compliant paratransit transportation services in Waynesboro, Staunton, and Augusta County. Routes include the 250 Connector, Stuarts Draft Link, BRCC Shuttle, Waynesboro Circulator, the Staunton North & West Loops, and Staunton Downtown and Saturday Night Trolleys.

FY20 was a busy year for BRITE. The system added service hours on the BRCC Shuttles and the Stuarts Draft Link to meet rider demand. It also implemented service changes on the 250 Connector route based on recommendations from a SAWMPO study of how to improve reliability on the route.

In July 2019, the BRITE system and Transit Manager Nancy Gourley received the Robert M. deVoursney Best Practices Award during the Virginia Association of Planning District Commission's (VAPDC) Annual Conference in Williamsburg. The award recognizes an organization that has initiated innovative and regional activities which have contributed significantly to the effectiveness of a region.

Transit



Afton Express

The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) funded a study and service plan for the proposed Afton Express public transit service connecting Staunton, Augusta County, and Waynesboro to Charlottesville and Albemarle County. The consultant, Kimley-Horn, worked closely with a stakeholder group and the CSPDC to complete the study, which served as the justification for a Demonstration Grant application submitted to DRPT on February 3, 2020. The grant application included three-year pledges of local match funding from the cities of Staunton, Waynesboro, and Charlottesville, Augusta and Albemarle counties, and the University of Virginia.

When implemented, the Afton Express will provide four morning and four afternoon trips from park and ride lots in Staunton, Fishersville, and Waynesboro, and serve multiple stops in Charlottesville at UVA, UVA Medical Center, Downtown, and at 5th Street Station.

CSPDC hired the HIVE Creative Group from Crozet to develop a logo and tagline for branding the buses and for marketing the service. Plans to launch Afton Express are expected in early 2021.

BRITE Bus marketing campaign featuring a miniature stress bus at different locations along the routes.



BRITE has been a blessing to me as I travel back and forth to the hospital for appointments. I can always call and they'll be right there for me.

DENNIS WHITE
Staunton Resident & BRITE Bus Rider



In response to the COVID-19 outbreak in March 2020, employees of the CSPDC began teleworking from home. CSPDC staff were able to transition seamlessly, and continue to offer important services, including maintaining a list of COVID-19 related opportunities and grants available to our region.

RideShare Launches New Rides & Rewards App

Rideshare is a program of the CSPDC, in partnership with Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPC), to increase mobility choice and reduce single-occupant vehicle trips by promoting alternative modes, such as carpooling, walking, biking, using transit, and teleworking.

In 2019, the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), along with TJPC and CSPDC, launched a user-friendly smart phone app “Rideshare – Rides and Rewards” to reward commuters who use alternative transportation modes. Commuters track their trips to earn rewards, and see statistics like gas saved, calories burned, and emissions prevented. To celebrate Rideshare Week in October 2019, commuters who tracked their trips through the app were eligible for daily prizes. In May 2020, nearly 200 people logged their telecommute, for which Rideshare software provider AgileMile donated \$100 to the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank.

Through its Rideshare program, CSPDC also created the Transportation Providers Network (TPN). The TPN convenes transportation providers in the region throughout the year to connect, coordinate, and conserve their resources in order to provide a variety of options to persons seeking transportation to work and other critical services.

 ridesHARE

App

Rewards

CSPDC Marketing Coordinator works from home in Staunton during COVID-19.

Transportation

I-81 Improvements

The Office of the Secretary of Transportation and multiple state agencies are implementing the I-81 Improvement Program. The I-81 Program generates regional revenue to fund the highest priority projects in the I-81 Improvement Plan. The I-81 Advisory Committee to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) meets four times a year, and includes CTB members, state legislators, and the five PDC Board Chairs from the I-81 corridor. Mr. Frank Friedman, Chair of the CSPDC, serves on the I-81 Advisory Committee representing the localities in the CSPDC region. In 2019 and 2020, VDOT advanced projects to widen I-81, add climbing lanes, improve safety, and maintain operations in the CSPDC region.

Joint MPO Meeting

The Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (SAWMPO) held its 5th-annual Joint Policy Board meeting with the Charlottesville-Albemarle MPO (CAMPO) on October 1, 2019, in Crozet. Board members and agency staff heard presentations on inter-regional transit, the restoration of the Crozet Blue Ridge Tunnel, state-wide transit initiatives from the Department of Rail and Public Transportation, and toured the Perrone Robotics facility and lab to learn more about the local company's autonomous vehicle research and development programs.

SAWMPO and CAMPO meet annually and share their planning processes under a Memorandum of Agreement for collaborative and inter-regional planning signed in September 2017.

SMART SCALE Projects

In 2020, four localities, the Harrisonburg-Rockingham and Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro MPOs, the CSPDC, and BRITE Transit, will submit nearly 26 SMART SCALE applications for projects to improve safety, add roadway capacity, coordinate signal operations, and add new bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities.

SMART SCALE is a program that funds transportation projects through a competitive process to determine which projects best meet Virginia's transportation needs. Round 4 of SMART SCALE will add projects to the Six Year Improvement Program in June 2021.



25+ SMART SCALE applications submitted!

Crossing the North River on Frieden's Church Road (VA 257) in Mt. Crawford

Bike-Walk Summits

Nearly 90 people gathered in Harrisonburg on November 1, 2019, for the 8th-annual Harrisonburg-Rockingham Bike Walk Summit. The Summit's theme was "Harnessing New Mobility to Build Better Communities," with keynote speaker Colin Hughes, former Director of Policy and Programming for JUMP Bikes. The Summit focused on how the community can use all types of mobility options - walking, cycling, electric scooters and bikes, transit, ride-hailing, and driving - in order for people to travel safely and easily.

The second Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro (SAW) Walk Bike Summit, scheduled for May 1, 2020, was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Several Steering Committee members advanced the goals of the Summit by forming a team to participate in the Virginia Department of Health's 2020 Walkability Action Institute. The team is developing a Walkability Action Plan for the City of Waynesboro.

Shenandoah Rail Trail Partnership

Elected leaders, local government staff, non-profits, trail advocates, and PDC staff met on November 7, 2019, in the Town of Mt. Jackson to convene the Shenandoah Valley Rail Trail Exploratory Partnership. The proposed 38-mile Rail Trail would connect eight towns and two counties between the Town of Strasburg in northern Shenandoah County, and The Town of Broadway in northwestern Rockingham County.

In 2020, the Partnership concluded an economic impact analysis of the proposed trail, developed a scope of work for a Rail Trail Feasibility Study and Master Plan, and partnered with the National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program to provide technical assistance and project coordination for the Partnership.



The South River Greenway runs for 1.2 miles along the South River in Waynesboro and offers an ideal location to bike, walk, and play.

Walkability Plan

A team from Buena Vista, Lexington, and the CSPDC participated in the Virginia Walkability Action Institute and developed a Walkability Action Plan. The Institute focuses on enhancing walkability in communities, and brings together multi-disciplinary teams to pursue policy, systems, and environmental changes to increase physical activity and reduce chronic disease. The Team's Action Plan focused on using community planning processes already underway, such as the Comprehensive Plan updates and sidewalk condition inventories, to identify the most critical infrastructure projects for improving opportunities to walk, while strengthening existing community partnerships like the Rockbridge Area Outdoor Partnership.

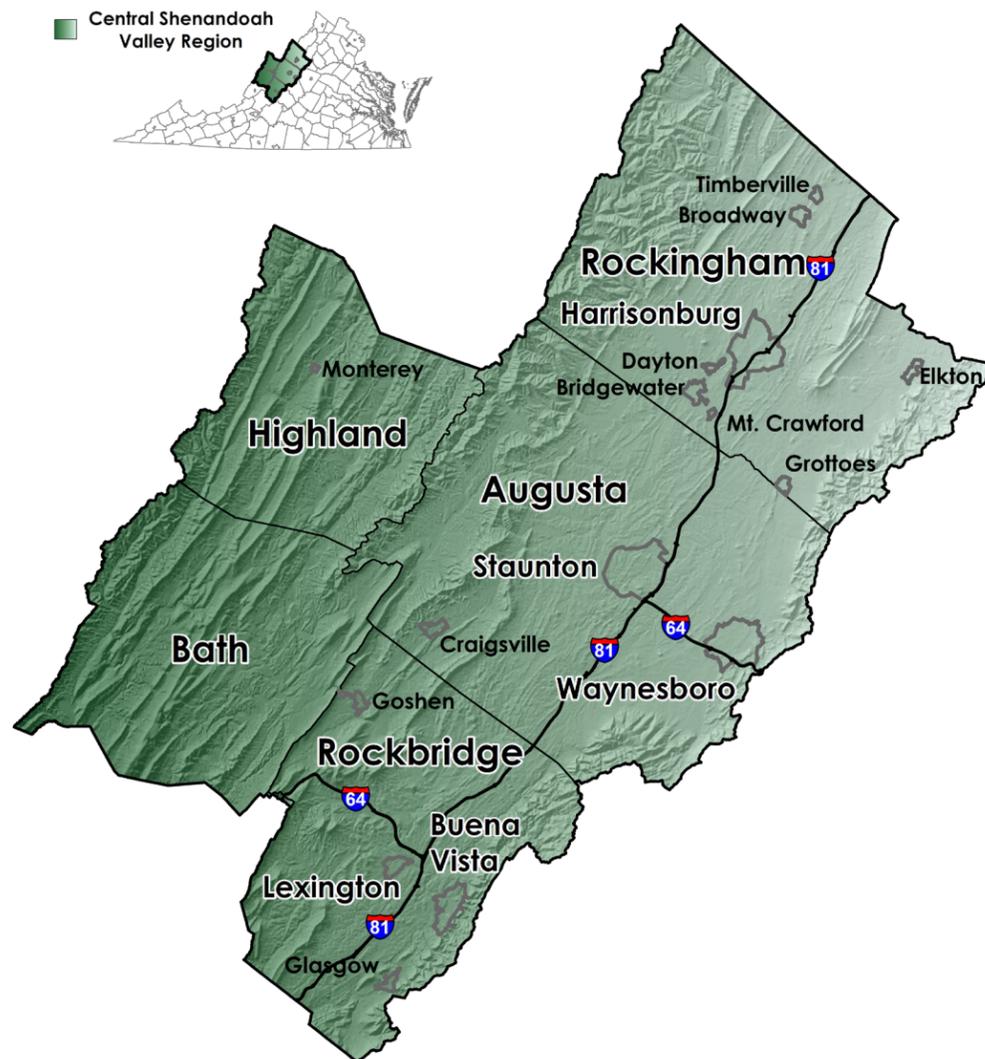
The Virginia Department of Health provided \$15,000 to each team to implement the Action Plans. The Buena Vista/Lexington team developed trail maps for Glen Maury Park and trail signage for the Riverwalk in Buena Vista, and purchased FitBits and gym memberships for those participating in VDH-sponsored wellness programs.

Elkton Pedestrian Master Plan

Through the Rural Transportation Planning Program, the CSPDC worked with the Town of Elkton and VDOT to develop a Pedestrian Master Plan to identify and prioritize the Town's investments in pedestrian infrastructure. The Pedestrian Master Plan prioritizes 20 sidewalk projects and provides planning-level cost estimates for each project. The Town can include the Pedestrian Plan recommendations in its Comprehensive Plan, future Capital Improvement Plans, and use as the basis for future grant funding applications.

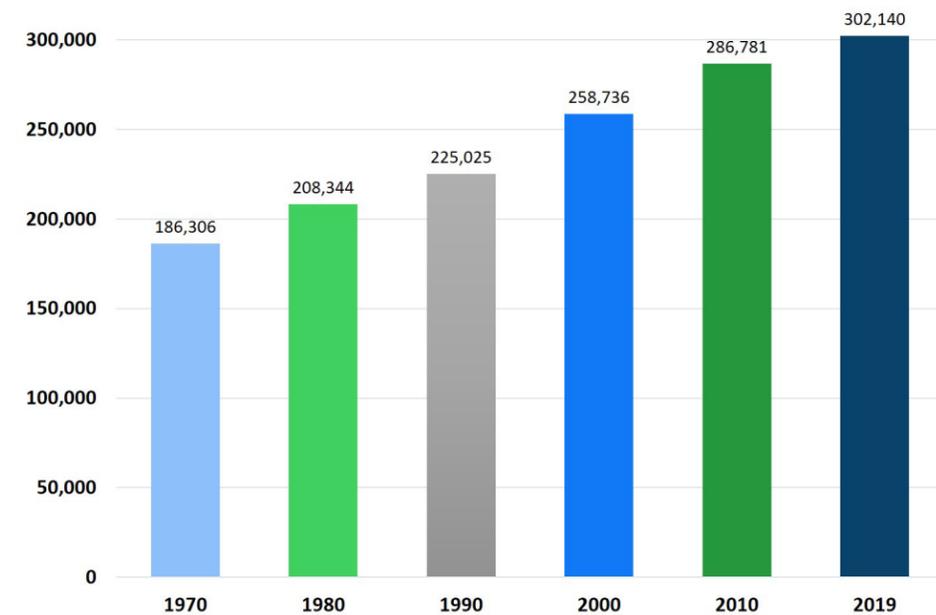
2020 Census

To assist with 2020 Census outreach efforts, Complete Count Committees (CCCs) were formed throughout the region. CCCs are comprised of government and community leaders from education, business, healthcare, faith-based groups, and other community organizations. The CSPDC worked with Staunton, Waynesboro, and Augusta County to form the SAW CCC. Through a variety of awareness efforts, the three localities encouraged residents to take the Census and shared the importance of an accurate count to securing financial resources for the area's essential services and critical programs. Results of the 2020 Census will determine how \$675 billion in federal funding is distributed annually to communities across the United States during the next decade.



Since the 2010 Census, the Region's population has grown by over 15,000 people or 5.4%. Rockingham County and the City of Harrisonburg experienced the greatest growth during 2010-2019. Their populations increased 7.7% and 10.4%, respectively, to add nearly 11,000 people to the CSPDC Region. Virginia's population increased by 6.7% during the same time period. Population in the CSPDC region in 2019 totaled

302,140



Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service.

The CSPDC maintains an independent database of regional and local demographic and economic information through the Regional Data Center, accessible through the CSPDC website. The Regional Data Center includes over 175 annual and historical demographic measures and is provided as a free public service.

Emergency Management



Floodwaters in Augusta County

Shenandoah Valley Project Impact Celebrates 20 Years

Started in 2000, Shenandoah Valley Project Impact (SVPI) is the region's disaster preparedness and mitigation education program. The mission of SVPI is to create resiliency and disaster-resistance in the Shenandoah Valley through a variety of educational programs for the public, the business community, children, and people with access and functional needs. Thousands of people in the region have been reached through activities including: booths at community events, presentations to civic groups, emergency planning workshops, and the popular Shenandoah Valley Project Impact Calendar. Coordinated by the CSPDC, SVPI has been a collaborative effort by the local communities, concerned organizations, and engaged citizens.

Hazard Mitigation Plan Update

The second update of the Central Shenandoah Hazard Mitigation Plan was completed in 2020. The original plan was created in 2005 to identify natural hazards and other vulnerabilities that impact the region. Included in the Plan are mitigation strategies designed to increase the protection of people, homes, property, and businesses to increase the resiliency of the region's communities. Jurisdictions are required to have a current, locally adopted Hazard Mitigation Plan to receive federal mitigation funds. In FY 2021, the Plan will be reviewed and approved by FEMA and then brought to the 21 jurisdictions in the region for adoption by their Boards and Councils.

Community Emergency Response Team

Over the past 17 years, the Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) has been focused on community education, preparedness, and safety. At the foundation of the program is a seven-week training course to prepare volunteers on how to assist with community emergencies and mitigation education. This required course includes topics such as fire safety, emergency first aid, disaster psychology, and terrorism awareness.

26 people
completed the CERT training course in the fall of 2019 and since its establishment, CERT has trained over **600 volunteers** in our region.



Region Responds to COVID-19

Neighbors helping Neighbors



Tourism Group Assists Local Businesses

As Virginia began to reopen, tourism departments in the Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro region joined forces to assist area tourism and hospitality sectors with a three-phased outreach approach that first targeted locals and then visitors. The CSPDC assisted the Greater Augusta Regional Tourism in applying for GO Virginia funds to support the project and the creation of a SAW-focused online landing page listing activities, businesses, and “things to see,” a video series, and a virtual passport program/visitor guide. An emphasis on outdoor recreation, purchasing local, agritourism, and the popular Shenandoah Beerwerks Trail was the theme throughout all messaging.

Business Reopening Guide

To help businesses navigate the new normal, the Shenandoah Valley Partnership, along with the region’s Chambers of Commerce and the Small Business Development Center, have created the Work Hard. Work Smart. Work Safe. guide. Included in the guide are many of the recommendations and guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other federal, state, and local resources, along with tips and best practices for businesses as they open their doors again to the public.

CERT Volunteers Deliver Masks

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteers made multiple trips to Rockbridge County to pick up and deliver over 400 masks to Staunton. The homemade masks were made by Rockbridge Quilters Guild and were used by the Staunton-based Virginia COVID-19 task force in partnership with the Virginia Department of Health.



WiFi Hotspots Available

The need for highspeed internet became even more crucial for employees and students to work and learn from home or from the safety of their parked vehicles. In response to this need, the Commonwealth Connect team and Virginia Tech teamed up to develop an interactive map of free, publicly available WiFi hotspots across Virginia, while local internet provider, BARC Connects opened up wireless hotspots at four different Rockbridge County public school parking lots. These efforts together helped students and parents continue to practice social distancing while accessing vital high-speed internet.

BRITE Bus Offers Fare-Free Service

BRITE responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by implementing social distancing measures, rigorous bus disinfecting regimens, and by installing plexiglass shields for bus drivers to maintain a high level of safety. BRITE made masks available for all passengers, and has remained fare-free throughout the pandemic. With CARES Act funding from the Federal Transit Administration and the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, BRITE supported bus drivers and front-line workers with hero pay, and will operate in FY 2021 without local partner funding contributions, easing the financial burden on transit funding partners during the pandemic.

Fields of Gold Members Assist Region

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many Fields of Gold Farm Trail member restaurants, farms, and producers offered curbside service/pick-up, at-home delivery, and online ordering. The CSPDC was honored to help promote these innovative solutions through the Fields of Gold Farm Trail social media pages and monthly *Adventure Awaits* publications.



12 homes built

Project stakeholders and management team members celebrate the opening of Spencer Court in Greenhouse Village.



Family helps to build their own home with Habitat for Humanity in Rockbridge County.



Greenhouse Village Completes Phase II

Since 2012, Rockbridge County has partnered with Rockbridge Area Habitat for Humanity in the development of affordable housing in the Greenhouse Village neighborhood, a mixed-income community of single-family homes located near Lexington.

The project has been completed in multiple phases. In 2017, Rockbridge County was awarded a \$476,693 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to develop water, sewer, and street infrastructure for Phase II. Infrastructure construction was completed in 2019. The infrastructure will support the construction of 12 homes by Habitat for low- and moderate-income families by 2022, bringing the total of 27 new homes built in the Greenhouse Village neighborhood. There is also an additional 8 homes planned in the future.

Assisting in the construction of the homes is the Rockbridge County High School (RCHS) Building Trades Department. Since 2014, RCHS students have helped to build five modular homes for Greenhouse Village. One home is built each year, and then transported to the site for completion. In September 2019, the students received the Youth Group Effort of the Year Award at the 20th Annual Virginia Statewide Neighborhood Conference. The award recognizes youth groups that have made a significant impact or contribution in their community.

CSPDC provided grant administration services, and the CDBG program is administered by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development.

Bath County Housing Study

The Bath County Housing Needs Assessment & Market Analysis Study was completed in March 2020 by economic development firm, Camoin 310. The study, available on the County's website, includes a demographic and economic analysis, a housing needs analysis, and strategy recommendations. The strategies will be utilized to address the need for workforce and senior housing. The study was commissioned by Bath County with administrative support provided by the CSPDC and funding support provided by the Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA). A Project Team with representatives from Bath County, Bath County Public Schools, Bath Community Hospital, the Omni Homestead Resort, and the CSPDC oversaw the project.

First-Time Homebuyers Program

The HOME Down Payment Assistance Program in the Central Shenandoah Valley region received annual funding to assist approximately eight first-time, low-to-moderate income homebuyers in 2020. HOME is a flexible gap financing program that provides eligible homebuyers with down-payment and/or closing cost assistance in the form of a forgivable loan. Since its creation in 1999, this program has helped over 250 people in the region obtain safe and affordable housing while growing their personal wealth and equity through homeownership. The CSPDC partners with lenders and housing providers in the area to identify eligible homebuyers and works with them through the closing process.

CSPDC Resources Available

GIS Mapping

The GIS mapping department of the CSPDC performs a variety of GIS services including map creation, data collection, and spatial analysis for CSPDC staff and member jurisdictions. This past year, the GIS department supported many projects with GIS services, including the creation of a road map for Bath County, broadband mapping for the counties of Rockbridge and Bath, and converting CAD utility data to GIS data for the Town of Bridgewater.

On-Call Consultant Program

The On-Call Consultant Program was established by the CSPDC in 2012. It helps to facilitate quick delivery of professional services in the areas of transportation, civil engineering, environmental, and general planning services to member jurisdictions. Since the program's inception, 37 projects totaling over \$1.6 million have been implemented through the On-Call Consultant program. Six consultants are on retainer.

Out of the many resources offered by the CSPDC, two were extensively updated and redesigned this year, the Grant Resource Guide and Facts & Figures. Both are available on the CSPDC website.

Grant Resource Guide

The Grant Resource Guide contains regularly updated information on available state and federal grants. Funding opportunities are categorized by project type and the listing links directly to the announcement posted by the grant agency.

Facts & Figures

Facts & Figures, an easy-to-read data snapshot of each sub-region's people, jobs, schools, and other unique attributes, help to support economic development for PDC localities. The four newly designed Facts & Figures were released and distributed throughout the region in the Fall of 2019.



Economic Development

Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro Region
Photo by Warren Faught



Receiving this broadband grant is a game changer for rural Bath County, Virginia. We believe this project will greatly benefit our businesses, schools, first responders, and government agencies and will positively impact the quality of life for Bath County residents.

ASHTON HARRISON
Bath County Administrator

CSPDC Receives Broadband Grant for Bath County

CSPDC was among 12 applicants across the state awarded grant funds through the Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) program. This \$2.2 million grant was submitted by the CSPDC in conjunction with BARC Electric Cooperative, and will help bridge the digital divide and expand broadband infrastructure in the unserved areas of the County. The CSPDC is providing grant assistance and administrative support for the project.

BARC Receives ARC POWER Grant for Town of Goshen

BARC Electric Cooperative was awarded \$1 million in grant funding from the Appalachian Regional Commission's (ARC) 2019 POWER Initiative. The funding is being used to deploy a high-speed fiber optic broadband network in and around the Town of Goshen. The CSPDC is providing grant assistance and administrative support for the project. Fiber construction is expected to be completed by the end of 2020.



Map created by CSPDC GIS Mapping Department.

Buena Vista & Glasgow Awarded Planning Grants

The City of Buena Vista and the Town of Glasgow both were awarded CDBG planning grants by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development.

Buena Vista was awarded two grants totaling \$50,000, which included a Business District Revitalization Planning Grant and an Opportunity Zone Planning Grant. The project will include creating an inventory of properties, addressing specific revitalization needs, identifying priority opportunities, and developing economic restructuring and marketing plans for the City.

The Town of Glasgow received a \$35,000 Community Development Block Grant to help develop an improvement plan for its downtown business district. The Town completed its initial phase of the planning grant by completing an inventory and assessment of its downtown commercial buildings, and will undergo a planning process.

Project Management Teams have been formed to oversee each project. CSPDC staff serves on both teams and provides technical assistance to Buena Vista and Glasgow for these planning grants.

Expanded Facilities Coming to Shenandoah Valley Regional Airport

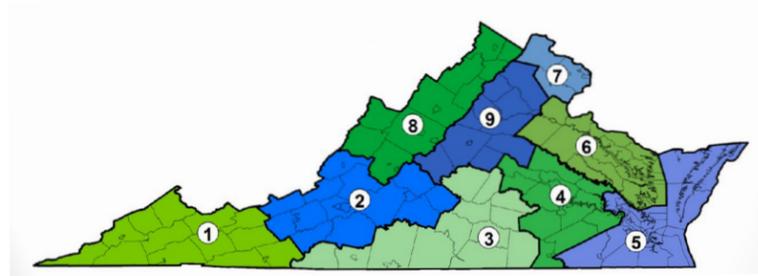
In June 2020, the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) awarded \$2 million to the Shenandoah Valley Regional Airport facility expansion project. The Economic Development Administration funding will match a planned investment of nearly \$3 million by the Airport Commission to construct corporate aircraft hangars and office and aviation flex space in the Shenandoah Valley Aviation Technology Park. Together the EDA and Airport Commission investment will result in approximately 25,000 square feet of new hangar and office space. The project is expected to create 50-75 high paying jobs in the aviation and technology sectors.

The CSPDC, serving as the designated Economic Development District, provided extensive coordination, research, and assistance to the Shenandoah Valley Airport Commission in its application to EDA. The Airport Commission expects construction to start in the fall/winter of 2020 and construction of the hangar facilities to be completed in the first half of 2021. The CSPDC will provide grant administration services for the project.

“ We are extremely pleased with this investment by the Economic Development Administration in our community and the Shenandoah Valley Regional Airport. These funds will allow for an expanded economic impact in the Valley and create additional economic development opportunities at the Airport and the surrounding localities and citizens we serve.

GERALD GARBER
Chairman of the Shenandoah Valley Regional Airport Commission

Photo courtesy of Shenandoah
Valley Regional Airport



GO VIRGINIA

GO Virginia is a business-led, Commonwealth-supported economic development initiative that encourages Virginia's diverse regions to collaborate on economic and workforce development activities. The Virginia Growth and Opportunity Board oversees the program and awards allotted funds to nine Regional Councils that submit project applications to the Board for approval. GO Virginia is supported and administered by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development.

The CSPDC is within GO Virginia Region 8 which includes 10 counties and 6 cities stretching from Lexington to Winchester. CSPDC staff provides support to the Region 8 Council and assists with GO Virginia project development, applications, and project administration. This past year, CSPDC staff also assisted with the update to Region 8's Economic Growth and Diversification Plan.

Since the start of the GO Virginia program in 2017, the GO Virginia Region 8 Council has approved 9 projects, of which 7 included CSPDC localities. Two projects were completed during the past year. These included the Rockbridge Area Advanced Manufacturing Program (RAAMP), a certified welder training program at Byers Technical Institute in Rockbridge County, and the Tech-Lab Feasibility Study led by the Staunton Innovation Hub to determine the need for a student-entrepreneur makerspace. The Cyber Security Workforce and Jobs Program is in its second year. Through this successful program, Blue Ridge Community College students are gaining cybersecurity industry credentials.

**Four new projects received
GO Virginia funding totaling**

\$817,213

during the last year.

Agricultural Enterprise Center Feasibility Study

The CSPDC received funds to conduct a feasibility study to first determine if a certified, commercial, shared-use agricultural facility in the region is practical and viable. If yes, the study will identify the best combination of uses and services and outline a strategy to bring the facility to fruition.

Shenandoah Valley Hemp Initiative

A James Madison University team will study the impacts and opportunities of the industrial hemp industry for the Shenandoah Valley. The project will complete an economic analysis of the hemp market, compile agricultural data, solicit experiences from regional growers and processors, and form a network and share information.

Startup the Shenandoah Valley

Startup Shenandoah Valley is focused on growing and supporting entrepreneurs within the Shenandoah Valley. Led by the Staunton Creative Community Fund, the program aims to provide customized virtual accelerator training to entrepreneurs, build workspaces throughout the region, and provide key personnel to support the network and programming.

Scale-up the Valley

Through GO Virginia funding, the Shenandoah Valley Partnership will launch a region-wide Scale-up the Valley Program. The project will enlist the expertise and resources of the National Center for Economic Gardening to help existing small businesses grow and thrive. Over the next two years, approximately 20 companies are expected to participate in the program.

Watershed Implementation Plan

To help ensure that pollution control measures needed to fully restore the Chesapeake Bay are in place no later than 2025, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) contracted with the CSPDC, and 14 other Bay PDCs across the state, to assist with the Chesapeake Bay Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP III). In 2020, additional funding was granted to the CSPDC by DEQ to continue to provide technical and administrative assistance to local governments and work with a strong stakeholder committee. The CSPDC's WIP III program includes collaboration on best management practices (BMPs) ideas, training opportunities, grant and funding research, GIS data collection, water quality education, and marketing.

In October 2019, nine elected officials from the CSPDC region participated in a Chesapeake Bay tour conducted by the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, in conjunction with the Virginia delegation of the Local Government Advisory Committee. Elected officials from the Shenandoah Valley and Central Virginia met with their counterparts from the Northern Neck/Middle Peninsula region and shared their local priorities as they relate to Virginia's waterways and the Chesapeake Bay. Tour participants explored first-hand how living shorelines aid in combating erosion, stabilizing sediment run-off, and creating safe wildlife habitats; and learned about the economic impact of Virginia's fisheries – particularly regarding oysters.

Environmental

The annual recycling rate report for the Augusta-Staunton-Waynesboro Solid Waste Planning Unit was submitted to DEQ in April 2020. There is a requirement for localities with a density of more than 100 people per square mile to meet a 25% recycle rate annually. The CSPDC collected the recycling tonnages for the area and determined the 2019 recycling rate for the Augusta County area to be 32.4%. The Augusta County area has consistently exceeded the 25% minimum recycle rate with rates, averaging 35.2% over the past five years.



Agricultural Enterprise Center Feasibility Study Begins

The CSPDC received an \$85,000 grant award from the U.S. Department of Agriculture through the Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP). This grant was one of 42 out of 215 LFPP grants awarded in the country and the only one funded in Virginia. Combined with a GO Virginia grant, these funds will be used to determine the viability of a certified, commercial, shared-use Agricultural Enterprise Center located in the central Shenandoah Valley. The study will identify what components will be the most successful and beneficial to local farmers, explore physical locations for a facility, and structure a comprehensive

business plan to be used for future implementation. Potential uses include a commercial kitchen, food lab/testing kitchen, flash freeze facility, training space for ag classes and seminars, packaging and distribution operations, and business planning resources.

An eight-member study team, composed of potential users and representatives from businesses and organizations who support local food production, worked in partnership with the CSPDC to hire a consultant and begin the study that is anticipated to last approximately 12 months.

VA Farmers Market Conference Held

The Virginia Farmers Market Association hosted their 7th annual Farmers Market Conference in Staunton at the Stonewall Jackson Hotel in November 2019. This three-day event featured workshops, presentations, and social networking events including tours of Fields of Gold member farms - Project Grows, Overlook Farm, and Bluestone Winery. This

conference focused on agritourism, a popular path for connecting customers to farmers and farmers markets. CSPDC Agritourism Coordinator, Rachel Salatin, presented on the Fields of Gold Farm Trail and participated as a vendor. In attendance were over 150 market managers, vendors, farmers, and agricultural leaders from across the state.

Photo courtesy of
Fields of Gold Farm
Trail member,
Project GROWS.



Our Mission

To help communities and agencies within the Central Shenandoah Valley work together by providing high quality planning, technical assistance, and facilitation services that address local, regional, and state needs in an innovative, timely, and cooperative manner.

CSPDC Team



Zach Beard
Transportation
Planner



Lee Bell
Finance Director



Grace Blanchard
Regional Planner



Ann Cundy
Director of
Transportation



Nancy Gourley
Transit Manager



Tracy Hibbits
Regional Planner



Jonathan Howard
Transportation
Planner



Rebecca Joyce
Community Program
Manager



Elizabeth McCarty
Deputy Director



Kimberly Miller
Program Support
Specialist



Hunter Moore
Regional Planner &
GIS Coordinator



Aidan Quirke
Transit Program
Manager



Bonnie Riedesel
Executive Director



Ethan Riley
Fiscal Technician



Rachel Salatin
Marketing
Coordinator



Devon Thompson
Transit Planner



Rita Whitfield
Office Manager

Our Commissioners

AS OF JANUARY 1, 2020

AUGUSTA COUNTY
Pam Carter
Vickie Moran
Leslie Tate
Butch Wells*

LEXINGTON
Frank Friedman, Chair*

ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY
Jay Lewis
Chris Slaydon

BATH COUNTY
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Sal Romero
George Hirschmann,
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HIGHLAND COUNTY
David Blanchard

WAYNESBORO
Terry Short, Treasurer*
Rusty Johnson

*Executive Committee



**Central Shenandoah Planning
District Commission**

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