

and towers

From fields...

The Region is...



My Backyard

The newsletter of the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission, including the Town of Ashland, the Counties of Charles City, Chesterfield, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, New Kent, Powhatan and the City of Richmond.

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Planning Commissioner's GIS Work Session 2006

Fall/Winter 2006

The Richmond Regional Planning Commissioner's GIS work session was held on October 27 at the Capital One West Creek Campus Town Center in Goochland County. Approximately 26 planning commissioners and staff from the surrounding localities participated in the session, which consisted of six speakers, five of which were GIS Managers/Coordinators from the localities.

Many topics were presented, including "Easy to Use Interactive GIS Applications," "Using GIS in Rural Communities," "Developing a GIS Enterprise System," "GIS on a Shoestring" and "GIS Services Outsourcing."

Kevin Nelson from Hanover County discussed Internet usage of web-based GIS applications by numerous departments in the county as well as the benefits of providing easy public access to data. Currently, Hanover County has interactive GIS sites that are supported by E-911 wireless revenues and they receive 650,000+ hits/month. The GIS web site can be found at www.hanovercountygis.org/hanover/index.asp.

Qiana Foote of Goochland County gave a presentation on GIS in rural communities. Goochland began developing their GIS system in 1999 by hiring a consultant to develop GIS data (cadastral and planimetric), aerial photography and a maintenance system. By 2003 they were ready to hire a GIS Coordinator to manage, distribute and enhance the county's GIS system. They have now hired a GIS

Technician to help with the increased rural planning workload. GIS is used in Goochland for many different projects such as location of convenience centers, tax maps, crime analysis, fire coverage areas and service districts, to list a few. Information on the GIS department in Goochland County can be found at www.co.goochland.va.us.



Russell E. Holland, Powhatan Board of Supervisor and Chairman of the Richmond Regional PDC, opened the work session.

Al Frauenfelder of Henrico County discussed the development of a GIS enterprise system that allows all departments to work from the same data sets. He stressed that in order to put an enterprise system into place, management must look at several issues, including such things as the organizational model (centralized, distributed or combination of both), the hardware and software that will be needed for the GIS system, the data that is needed and from where it can be obtained, methodology (implementation, deployment, and maintenance) of working with an enterprise system and the people (skills and training) needed to run the system. More information is available at www.co.henrico.va.us.

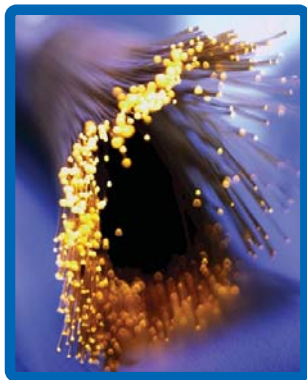
Nancy Parker of Chesterfield County spoke on GIS coordination in a large county with numerous county departments. Chesterfield County has 58 departments, of

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What's Happening in Our Capital Region?

Broadband Initiative (a.k.a. Need Internet?)



The state has created a program to assist rural areas across the state gain broadband technology--the necessary ingredient for Internet access. This initiative, the Virginia Rural Broadband Planning Initiative (VRBPI), was funded with \$400,000 this year from general funds and will be administered by


the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). A portion of the total amount (\$25,000) will be utilized by DHCD to cover administrative costs. The remaining amount (\$375,000) will be distributed on a first-come, first-serve basis.

A workshop, attended by approximately 100 people, was held in Richmond on November 15 and detailed the grant process:

- Applications will be accepted until June 30, 2007 or until all funding is committed.
- The maximum amount awarded per locality will be \$25,000.
- Grant money is to be used toward the planning process (needs assessments and infrastructure plans).

Since DHCD is encouraging a phased approach, an additional grant program is scheduled to be introduced at a later time which can be used on construction for infrastructure. Once the infrastructure is in place for high-speed Internet, it will be owned by the locality but will allow an Internet Service provider (ISP) to provide service.

Several counties have requested assistance from the RRPDC. For additional information or assistance on this initiative, contact Jacqueline Stewart at 367.6001 or e-mail her at jstewart@richmondregional.org.



FY 06 documents and reports authored by the Richmond Regional PDC are now available on CD. Please contact Patricia Villa at pvilla@richmondregional.org or at 367.6001 if you wish to receive a copy.

New! Low Impact Development Web Page



Bioretention area at Ukrop's Supermarket on Forest Avenue, Richmond.

Low Impact Development (LID) is an innovative stormwater management approach with a basic principle that is modeled after nature: manage rainfall at the source using uniformly distributed decentralized micro-scale controls. LID's goal is to mimic a site's predevelopment hydrology by using design techniques that infiltrate, filter, store, evaporate and detain runoff close to its source.

The Richmond Regional PDC has launched a new web page, "Low Impact Development (LID) in the Richmond

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Photos of the InterCity Visit to Nashville appeared in the summer newsletter without proper credit noted as to the photographer. These photos were taken by J.T. "Jack" Ward; we apologize for the oversight.

From fields and towers....The Region is My Backyard

What's Happening in Our Capital Region?

VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE



Legislatively Speaking—2007

As the General Assembly gears up for a session starting January 10, 2007, transportation and land use are sure to be on our radar screen. Many such bills surfaced during the special session, none of which made it to the House or Senate chamber.

Below is a list of important dates:

- January 10:** Legislative session begins
- January 19:** Last day to file bills and resolutions
- February 1:** VACo and VML Legislative Day
- February 6:** Crossover
- February 24:** Adjournment
- April 4:** Reconvened session

For additional information, contact Patricia Villa at the RRPDC at pvilla@richmondregional.org or at 367.6001.

Local Legislators Meet with Citizens Group



Senators Walter A. Stosch and John C. Watkins and Delegate John O'Bannon met with CTAC members.

The MPO's Citizen's Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC) was joined by some of our region's legislators to discuss transportation concerns earlier this year.

Senators Stosch and Watkins, and Delegate O'Bannon each addressed CTAC giving their views from the past General Assembly session on difficulties they are facing in crafting legislation to address the state's transportation needs and also provided their thoughts and opinions on how this may be addressed in the future.

Key points raised by these General Assembly members were:

Needs exist: There is recognition by the General Assembly that unfunded needs exist in the area of transportation.

Proposals differ: Proposed funding methods to address those needs differ between the House and Senate – general fund versus non-general fund sources.

Limited public support: There is a general lack of public awareness of transportation needs/issues. Without broad based public support, significant changes in methods of funding transportation needs will be difficult.

Costs increasing: Increasing costs and needs in the maintenance area will reduce funding available for construction. This is projected to hit a critical level in the 2010-2012 timeframe.

Want to receive the RRPDC newsletter by e-mail? Just let us know at 804.367.6001 or e-mail us at RRPDC@richmondregional.org

From fields and towers....The Region is My Backyard

What's Happening in Our Capital Region?

Contributions for Silver Bells Peaks!



Leigh Medford and Runda Bailey pose with a few of the items purchased for the Silver Bells.

Each year, staff at the RRPDC contributes to a segment of our population most overlooked during the holiday season: our elderly. This year, staff's generosity peaked, surpassing last year's total contributions, making it a bit more merry for 12 "Silver Bells." Silver Bells is a program overseen by the Salvation Army, which provides for the elderly in need to be "adopted" by the community during the holidays. Holiday gifts were purchased with staff contributions, then wrapped and delivered to the Salvation Army to be distributed to our 12 Silver Bells during the holiday season.

Paul E. Fisher Announces Retirement



Paul E. Fisher, Executive Director for the Richmond Regional PDC, has announced his plans to retire as of June 2007.

During Mr. Fisher's tenure, he was involved in pursuing a future vision for the region that balanced the needs of the community with the challenges of the region's diverse localities. A part of his passion included a sound transportation network to include a regional mass transit study, now underway. The Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, staffed by the Richmond Regional PDC, has also improved its method of allocating transportation funds based on more of an emphasis on regionally important projects.

As a graduate of Leadership Metro Richmond in 2004, he has been involved in continuing services to LMR and the communities, and when asked, Mr. Fisher affirmed, "It has been a great privilege to serve the Richmond region. I think it is strategically positioned to benefit from the numerous goals and projects the Richmond Regional PDC has worked so diligently to establish and complete."

Best wishes to Paul in his retirement years!

Regional Mass Transit Study—Update

At the May RRPDC meeting, authority was granted to execute this comprehensive study. Currently, a study advisory committee (SAC) is being formed which will represent all localities, state and local agencies and certain social service agencies, which will oversee the study.

The study will be performed by an on-call consultant under contract with the Virginia Department of Rail and will include public input meetings throughout the study.

For additional information, contact Daniel Lysy at 367.6001 or at dllysy@richmondregional.org.



J. T. "Jack" Ward, Hanover Board of Supervisors, distributed Hanover tomatoes to PDC Commissioners at the July meeting.

Don't forget: The RRPDC's large conference room is available to our member jurisdictions and affiliates for meetings. It's as simple as picking up the phone and calling us!

From fields and towers....The Region is My Backyard

What's Happening in Our Capital Region?

Round and Round and Round We Go...

round'a'bout[*adj.* round-uh-bout, round-uh-bout; *n.* round-uh-bout]

–*adjective*

1. Circuitous or indirect, as a road, journey, method, statement or person.
2. (of clothing) cut circularly at the bottom; having no tails, train, or the like.

–*noun*

3. A short, close-fitting coat or jacket worn by men or boys, esp. in the 19th century.
4. British. a merry-go-round.
5. A circuitous or indirect road, method, etc.
6. Chiefly British. Traffic circle.

Fast Facts on Roundabouts:

- 🔑 Roundabouts allow for a more consistent flow of traffic leading to reduced delays. A reduction in traffic delays means a decrease in fuel consumption and air pollution.
- 🔑 Constructing roundabouts in place of traffic signals can reduce fuel consumption by about 30 percent. At 10 intersections studied in Virginia, this amounted to more than 200,000 gallons of fuel per year
- 🔑 Modern roundabouts are smaller than older traffic circles and rotaries and require vehicles to negotiate a sharper curve making travel speeds in roundabouts slower than speeds in traffic circles and rotaries and making traffic lights found in older circles unnecessary.
- 🔑 Lower speeds in roundabouts allow drivers more



Roundabout at Powhatan County Courthouse.



Roundabout in the City of Richmond.

time to react to potential conflicts, helping to make roundabouts safer.

- 🔑 Pedestrians are safer at crosswalks in roundabouts, since they only have to watch for traffic coming from one direction.
- 🔑 Statistics show that with the installation of roundabouts in March 2000 throughout the United States, total crashes were reduced by 39 percent; crashes with injury were reduced by 76 percent and fatal/incapacitating crashes were reduced by 89 percent.
- 🔑 A nationwide survey of roundabout safety concluded that overall crashes decreased by 9 percent, injuries declined by 76 percent, and fatal/incapacitating injuries declined by 90 percent.

(From the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.)

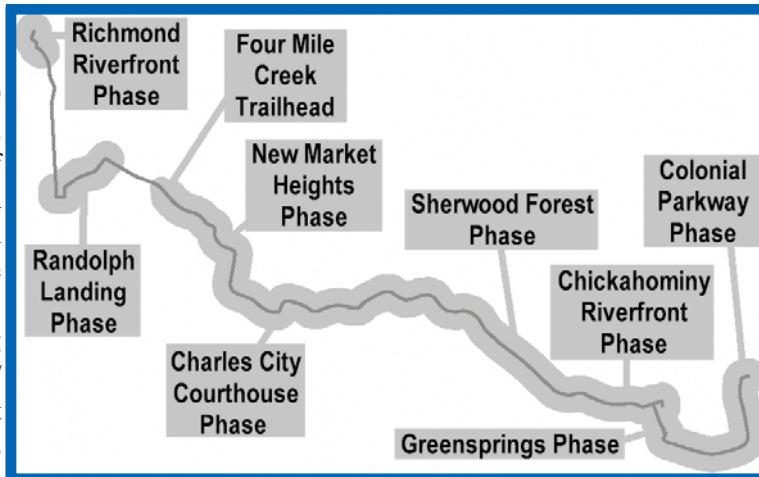
Hours at the Richmond Regional PDC are Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Getting There...

Virginia Capital Trail

At the December MPO meeting, James Carr, Assistant Secretary of Transportation, provided an update on the phased development of the Virginia Capital Trail. Among the exciting news for this bicycle/pedestrian trail is that Phase I (Greensprings Trail) was opened to the public in November, complete with ribbon cutting ceremony.

Plans move closer to the Richmond area when the 5-mile Chickahominy River portion reaches completion this summer, the Charles City County Courthouse Phase begins



construction in 2007 and the Sherwood Forest Phase is completed by 2009 (construction started this month). Plans continue toward downtown Richmond, incorporating the riverfront with the existing Canal Walk to serve as the terminus of the trail.

This project, which encompasses the architecture of the Richmond riverfront, the history of the

Richmond region and the charm of Williamsburg is sure to be a hit with bike enthusiasts, leisure walkers, history buffs and nature-lovers.

RRPDC Staff Volunteers for Habitat for Humanity



Allyson Finchum, Patricia Villa and Ben Berbert break for a photo.

RRPDC staff volunteers annually to assist in Habitat for Humanity's efforts in building homes in the Richmond region. This year, staff participated in September, volunteering in the Church Hill area at 1809 N. 29th Street. Undertakings for the day included final touches such as painting, caulking and minor carpentry work.

Welcome to New Employees...

Archita Rajbhandary, Associate Planner



Archita Rajbhandary was hired by the RRPDC after graduating from the University of Massachusetts with a Master's degree in Regional Planning. She will be responsible for GIS transportation data base development; GIS mapping for MPO plans, studies and reports; travel time runs and Intelligent Transportation Systems program development and support.

Lee Yolton, Principal Planner

Lee Yolton was recently hired as Principal Planner in the Urban Transportation-MPO division. He will be responsible for managing the update of the Long-Range Transportation Plan, assisting local jurisdictions in developing and updating access management policies and administering intermodal (freight) planning efforts for the region.



The Virginia Trail Foundation is a nonprofit organization, working in partnership with the public sector.

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Getting There...

Transportation Priorities for the Region

The Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) submitted the area's priority transportation projects to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) preallocation public hearing in October. Input into the transportation priorities list is derived from the MPO Board members, citizen and elderly groups and from the MPO's technical committee.

The region's top priority transportation projects are as follows:

1. Richmond International Airport (RIC) Expansion and Access Improvements
2. Main Street Station, High-Speed Intercity Rail, GRTC Improvements
3. Route 360 (East of I-295 in Hanover) and Route 10 Widening (Chesterfield)



Amtrak train pulling into Main Street Station.

4. Parham Road/Patterson Avenue Urban Interchange (Henrico)
5. Huguenot Bridge Reconstruction
6. Route 250 Widening from Route 623 to Route 621 (Goochland)

The MPO's other regional priority projects are as follows:

- I-64 Corridor and Rail Improvements from Richmond to Hampton Roads
- Route 360 Widening (Chesterfield)
- Widening of I-64 from Route 288 to 1.6 Kilometers West of Route 623 to Six Lanes (meets federal requirements for interchange approval at I-64 and Route 288)
- Virginia Capital Trail Project (Richmond to Williamsburg)
- I-95/Lewistown Road Interchange Improvements (Hanover)

In Addition...

The region's top two projects have remained improving access to RIC and improving the region's public transportation services. The CTB partial addressed the former with the recent lease of Route 895 to Transurban and including as part of this lease an interchange on 895 with a new airport connector road to Charles City Road. Still needed, however, is widening of South Airport Drive at a cost of \$33.8 million, of which \$5.3 million has been allocated. The MPO has allocated approximately \$2.9 million in RSTP funds to help get this project started.

Phases II and III of Main Street Station are underway, and according to best estimates, approximately \$5 million is needed to complete funding for this project.

The addition of the I-95/Lewistown Road project was included in this year's priority list as a result of the I-95 Corridor Study completed in 2003 which determined

that a full cloverleaf design and widening of I-95 and Lewistown Road are needed to address traffic growth and operational and safety deficiencies in the corridor. The total cost of this project is currently estimated at \$55 million.

Conversely, the Regional Mass Transit Study project which was added to the list last year has been removed from the priority list this year, as it is fully funded and underway.

An MPO priority for several years—the RMA and Powhite Parkway Extension Toll Removal—was removed from the list as well. It is estimated that the cost of removing tolls on the RMA and Powhite Parkway Extension would run approximately \$260 million at a time when transportation funds are limited.

For more information on transportation priorities, contact Daniel Lysy at dllysy@richmondregional.org or at 367.6001.

Phase II of the Main Street Station (MSS) project involves moving trains that currently start at the Staples Mill Station to MSS; Phase III involves expanding the MSS platform to accommodate larger trains.

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What's Happening...

(Continued from Page 2.)

Low Impact Development

Region.” The web page details four recent examples of innovative stormwater management techniques in Richmond, Charles City County and Chesterfield County. Examples range from a bioretention area for a courthouse built in a field in Charles City County to a green roof on an existing building in downtown Richmond. This new addition was designed to inform citizens, elected officials and developers of these stormwater management practices, collectively called low impact development.

In addition to the sites in the region, the web page includes information about other programs throughout the country which seek to improve site development and redevelopment practices. The added page was created as part of the Coastal Zone Management Program under the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality.

For additional information on this initiative, contact Sarah Weisiger at sweisiger@richmondregional.org or at 367.6001.

(Continued from Page 1.)

Planning Commissioner's GIS Work Session

which 30 utilize GIS either directly or indirectly. They have over 100 data layers in addition to the typical cadastral base map layers. More information is available at www.co.chesterfield.va.us.

Parrish Simmons of Prince George County spoke on how a small GIS department can make a difference in a small locality. The county began developing their GIS system in 2002 by hiring a consultant. By 2005, they were ready to hire a GIS Manager. Currently, their web site allows for public access to PDFs of the tax parcels within Prince George County, which can be accessed at <http://gis.princegeorgeva.org/>.

The final speaker, Ian Birnie, a consultant with Worldview Solutions, Inc., spoke of the advantages and disadvantages for those localities with limited GIS resources to outsource GIS services to a contractor.

In a letter commenting on the work session, Mr. T. Wade King, a Hanover County Planning Commissioner, stated, “The RRPDC workshop today was an excellent half-day on the establishment and capabilities of GIS.”

Richmond Regional Planning District Commission

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