

Executive Director's Report

To: Central Virginia Planning District Commissioners

From: Alec Brebner, AICP

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New Planning District Commissioners

The Central Virginia Planning District Commission is set to welcome new representatives from member local governments early in 2025. Two of last year's commissioners, Lynchburg City Councilor Jeff Helgeson and Bedford Town Councilor Bruce Johannessen retired from long runs as local elected officials in 2024. The council of each municipality will appoint a new representative to the CVPDC as part of a broad list of assignments.

The towns of Appomattox and Brookneal have each hired new town managers. Both gentlemen they succeed served on the Central Virginia Planning District Commission as well. The chief administrative officer of each member local government usually occupies the second of its two seats on the Commission alongside one local elected official.

Meeting Schedule

The Planning District Commission must adopt a meeting schedule each year and post it on its website for public notice. In 2023, the Commission changed from ten meetings per year to six. In 2024, at time change was discussed but not enacted. No changes are recommended at this time, yet discussion is welcome.

The bylaws of the Central Virginia Planning District Commission provide that its Executive Committee shall make a recommendation on an annual budget to the full Commission. The chairman and the chief administrative officers constitute the Executive Committee. Last year's budget meeting of the Executive Committee occurred on the second Thursday of April. The full Commission took up the recommendation at its regular May meeting and adopted its FY2025 budget. The time and date of this year's budget meeting of the Executive Committee is 1 PM, Thursday, April 10, 2025.

The Commission hosted holiday social gatherings near CVPDC offices in downtown Lynchburg in 2022 and 2023. For the current fiscal year, the social has been moved both in time and date. The locality of the chairman, Altavista is the Commission's destination on February 20, 2025. First, the Commission will tour the Town's Spark Center at 4:00, then gather for a reception at Avoca at 5:00 for food catered by the Town police chief and refreshments. The destinations stand along Main Street, a short drive from each other.

Operations Report

Region 2000 Services Authority

The Central Virginia Planning District Commission provides financial management and human resources to the Region 2000 Services Authority. The City of Lynchburg and the Counties of Appomattox, Campbell, and Nelson comprise the Authority, which manages solid waste at two landfills on Concord Turnpike in Lynchburg and Livestock Road in Rustburg. The county administrators and the Deputy City Manager sit on its board. Twenty Central Virginia Planning District Commission employees work at the

open landfill in Campbell County. CVPDC finance staff provides support, and the executive director of the CVPDC is also the executive director of the Region 2000 Services Authority.

The Authority bought and closed the City's landfill after using up its capacity in 2012. The Authority bought air rights – unused space permitted by the state – from Campbell County. Landfilling at Livestock Road resumed in 2012, and the Authority bought land on which to expand in 2014. The expansion required land-use approval from the Campbell County Board of Supervisors, which was denied in 2015 and again last month.

The Livestock Road Landfill's capacity is projected to last into early 2029. In all likelihood, the Authority will begin planning for closure in 2025. Closure itself involves construction of a cap, which will take much of 2029. The Authority must then maintain the closed landfill for a 30-year post-closure period that includes environmental monitoring.

An important early step in closure planning is employee retention for the remaining life of the facility. Authority board members expressed openness to an incentive-based strategy to retain employees and help them identify landing spots once their positions are no longer needed. Staff will develop this strategy for the Authority board in 2025.

As CVPDC employees, the landfill operators rely on the CVPDC employee handbook. If successful, the strategy would be funded by the Authority and formalized in the CVPDC employee handbook. Staff will keep the Planning District Commission apprised of the progress of the Authority board and subsequently bring any appropriate employee handbook changes.

[Central Virginia Radio Communications Board](#)

The Counties of Amherst, Bedford, and Campbell, the City of Lynchburg, and the Town of Bedford participate in the Central Virginia Radio Communications Board, which manages towers and equipment across the region to ensure seamless radio communications across municipal boundaries for mutual aid, major event support, and other multi-jurisdictional activities of first responders.

The Radio Board has met four times since the beginning of December to discuss long-term lease security for its equipment. The Radio Board had sought audience with the CVPDC Executive Committee on January 9th to present options; however, a communication breakthrough with a tower owner alleviated the urgency of that need. The Chairman called off the special meeting.

[Regional Housing](#)

CVPDC staff has follow-up initiatives for each of two recent regional housing initiatives. On January 13th, staff convened housing providers to discuss funding options for affordable housing via the PDC Housing Development Program.

The CVPDC received \$2 million from Virginia Housing from 2021 to 2025 to fund housing for households earning less than 80% of area median income. The Planning District Commission has awarded funding to help build 63 units to date in Amherst County, Lynchburg, and Altavista.

The next iteration of the PDC Housing Development program will be competitive on a statewide basis. Staff is communicating with prospective partners for a possible grant application to Virginia Housing. More to come!

Staff is also working to organize a housing information event for developers interested in increasing the supply of housing in Central Virginia. Affordable housing will be an important but not sole focus. Virginia Housing is offering funding and support for this event. The Mount Rogers, Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, and other PDCs have convened similar events. Staff has just begun to coordinate with prospective event partners and looks forward to sharing more information with the Commission at a subsequent meeting.

CEDS

The CVPDC will embark on a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) in 2025 and 2026 with funding from the US Economic Development Administration. According to the US EDA, “economic development planning...serves as a means to engage community leaders, leverage the involvement of the private sector, and establish a strategic blueprint for regional collaboration. The CEDS provides the capacity-building foundation by which the public sector, working in conjunction with other economic actors (individuals, firms, industries), creates the environment for regional economic prosperity.”

Simply put, a CEDS is a strategy-driven plan for regional economic development. A CEDS is the result of a regionally-owned planning process designed to build capacity and guide the economic prosperity and resiliency of an area or region. It is a key component in establishing and maintaining a robust economic ecosystem by helping to build regional capacity (through hard and soft infrastructure) that contributes to individual, firm, and community success. The CEDS provides a vehicle for individuals, organizations, local governments, institutes of learning, and private industry to engage in a meaningful conversation and debate about what capacity-building efforts would best serve economic development in the region. The CEDS should take into account and, where appropriate, integrate or leverage other regional planning efforts, including the use of other available federal funds, private sector resources, and state support which can advance a region’s CEDS goals and objectives. In addition, a CEDS is a prerequisite for designation by EDA as an Economic Development District (EDD).

Staff will begin assembling a CEDS Committee (a required part of the process that includes a broad spectrum of stakeholders) and solicit interest from economic development planners on our bench of on-call consultants. The Commission will learn more as 2025 progresses.