Celebrating 55 Years

CSPDC

Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission



FY 2026

CSPDC Annual Report



Mission

To unite the communities and agencies of the Central Shenandoah Valley by providing proactive leadership, pioneering data-driven solutions, and facilitating inclusive collaboration. We empower our members to navigate complex challenges and seize shared opportunities, building a prosperous and sustainable future for all.

CSPDC Commission Membership

AUGUSTA COUNTY
Carolyn Bragg
Julia Hensley

BATH COUNTY
Lynn Ellen Black

BUENA VISTA
Jesse Lineberry

HARRISONBURG
Nasser Alsaadun
Laura Dent
Adam Fletcher

HIGHLAND COUNTY
Henry Budzinski

LEXINGTON
John Driscoll

ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY
Leslie Ayers
Chris Slaydon

ROCKINGHAM COUNTY
Sallie Wolfe-Garrison
Joel Hensley
Rachel Salatin
Kim Sandum

STAUNTON
Sharon Angle
Brad Arrowood

WAYNESBORO
Terry Short
Leslie Tate

Harrisonburg Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization

Staunton Augusta Waynesboro Metropolitan Planning Organization

Afton EXPRESS

brite

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Chair's Message

Greetings to all. Stepping into the role of chairman of the CSPDC is a humbling position after experiencing the strong and steadfast leadership of Frank Friedman. I bring to the position many years of leadership experience in various positions, but Frank was a giant among leaders and a role model for us all.

I became Chair in August of this year, after joining the Commission in January 2026. I have represented the South River District on the Augusta County Board of Supervisors (off and on) since 2014. During a short break from the Board, I served Augusta County on the Planning Commission. Additionally, I have represented the County on a number of other boards and outside organizations.

Though I have been aware of the work done by the CSPDC through other experiences, I became even more familiar with the importance of its many programs through the Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (SAWMPO), where I served on the Policy Board since 2023. I appreciated the opportunities that SAWMPO offered to expand sidewalk networks and transit service in my district, around Stuarts Draft in southern Augusta County, and recognized that these types of projects are not only important for neighborhoods & individual communities, but also part of a larger strategy of regional connectivity and improving everyone's health & quality of life.

The projects that have been supported in my district, and throughout our region, are welcome additions to the communities that they serve. They provide citizens the opportunity to move about more freely and in a safe manner. Students can walk to school and local folks have a means to connect to Waynesboro, the Hospital and medical care, as well as to Staunton or Charlottesville.

The year covered in this report was Frank Friedman's final year as Chair, and it delivered results for localities across our five-county, five-city region. New Hazard Mitigation and Floodplain Resiliency Plans keep our localities eligible for federal funding. Our Housing program expanded to include home rehabilitation in our most rural areas. The Commission also procured a new operator for BRITE and Afton Express to continue delivering service that gets our residents to work, school and medical appointments. Inside the agency, joining the Virginia Retirement System put CSPDC on par with state agencies, local governments and other planning district commissions in recruiting and retaining staff.

All of the initiatives and successes that have been realized this year are a direct reflection of the amazing work of the staff at the CSPDC, and the leadership of the organization. During the year a number of members have been recognized for their dedication and hard work. We should all be proud of the accomplishments of each and every one of them, and thank them for the roles that they play in making a difference in our communities.

Strong leadership and vision is necessary to make the CSPDC a strong resource for all of our localities. I would like to mention two of those leaders: First, I would like to congratulate Ann Cundy on winning the VAPDC Gordon N. Dixon Award, which recognized outstanding leadership & contributions to promote regionalism within the Commonwealth of Virginia! This is such a well-deserved honor!

Also, I must mention Frank... this year's work carries Frank's imprint. His death this summer was a loss for the Commission and for everyone who served alongside him, and we share this remembrance of him here.



Carolyn Bragg
CSPDC Board Chairman

In Memoriam Frank Friedman



Frank Friedman, Mayor of the City of Lexington and Chair of the CSPDC, passed away on July 2, 2026. Frank served as Chair for nearly ten years. He championed the succession plan that guided a smooth transition between Executive Directors in 2024, and he represented our region on the GO Virginia Region 8 Council and the Improve I-81 Advisory Committee.

At its August 2026 meeting, the commission honored Frank with a Resolution of Appreciation recognizing how he led "with collegiality, welcome, and genuine respect for everyone in the room, from commissioners to catering staff, modeling the kind of public servant who believes that how we do work matters as much as what we accomplish."

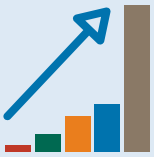
We will continue to lead by his example.

CSPDC by the Numbers

CSPDC leverages local contributions to bring significant federal and state investment to the region. This funding represents revitalized downtowns, new sidewalks, safer intersections, protected floodplains, and affordable homes.

In FY2026, CSPDC secured $16.4 million in state and federal funds, a 68% increase over FY2025. FY24 remains the record year at $35.4 million, driven by significant infrastructure projects, including major roadway upgrades in Harrisonburg and Rockingham County.

$16.4M
SECURED
For the region in FY2026



+68%
INCREASE
Over FY2025



+$67 RETURNED

For every $1 of local funding, the CSPDC delivered $67 to the region in state and federal funds.

The CSPDC's Investments in the Region Report is a story of the power of regional collaboration to bring significant resources to our communities. Between FY2023 and FY2026, member localities contributed $1.02 million in dues to the CSPDC. Over the same period, the CSPDC secured $68.47 million in state and federal investment for the region, more than $67 for every local dollar. Our Investments in the Region report shows how pooling local resources spreads the cost across the region, so no single locality has to carry the burden of funding major projects on its own.

INVESTMENTS BY PROGRAM AREA

FY2023-FY2026

TRANSPORTATION	58%
TRANSIT	19%
COMMUNITY DEV.	14%
ENVIRONMENTAL	7%
HOUSING	2%

Year to year, transportation and transit comprise the largest share of our investment, supporting six-day-a-week transit service and road construction projects. Community development, environmental, and housing initiatives round out a portfolio built to strengthen every corner of the region.

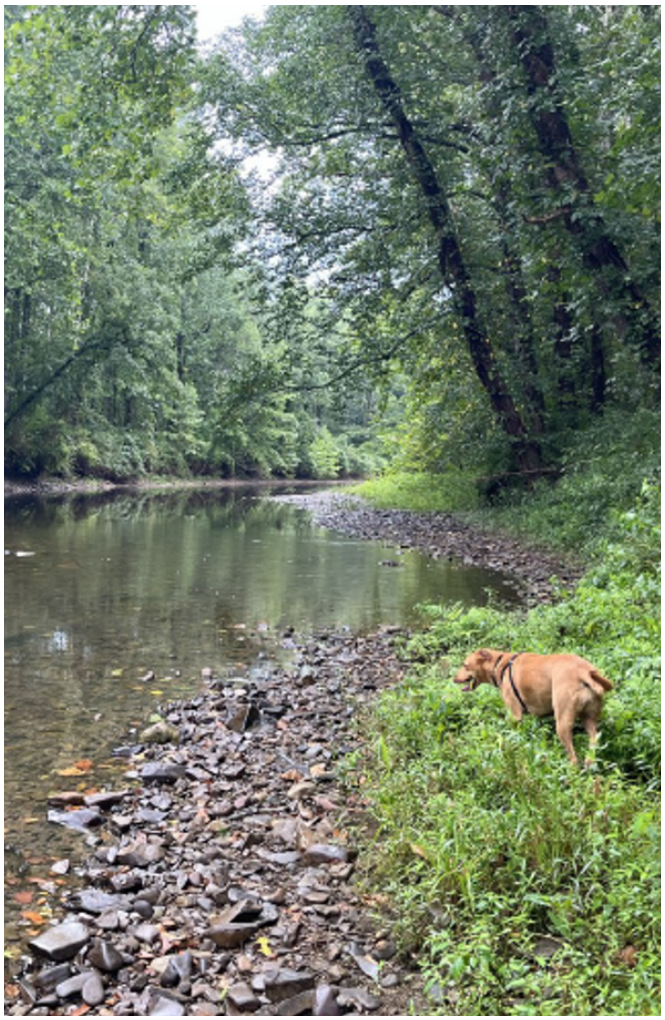
COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

CSPDC SECURES $560,698 FOR GOSHEN'S FIRST TOWN PARK

Recognizing the untapped potential of a 40-acre riverfront property that had gone unused for decades, the Town of Goshen partnered with CSPDC to establish the Town's first park. The Goshen Community Park will answer a long-standing need in a town with no recreational facilities or dedicated outdoor gathering space, providing an amenity for the Town's approximately 271 residents and the surrounding rural communities.

The CSPDC connected Goshen with the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program to create a phased Park Development Plan. We helped turn the Town's vision and the Park Development Plan into reality by securing $350,000 from the Virginia Outdoors Foundation Preservation Trust Fund and leveraged that award to win a $210,698 Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant. The two grants will fund Phase 1 of the park's development, constructing a one mile-long ADA-accessible trail looping the front section of the park, with access to an overlook of the Calfpasture River.

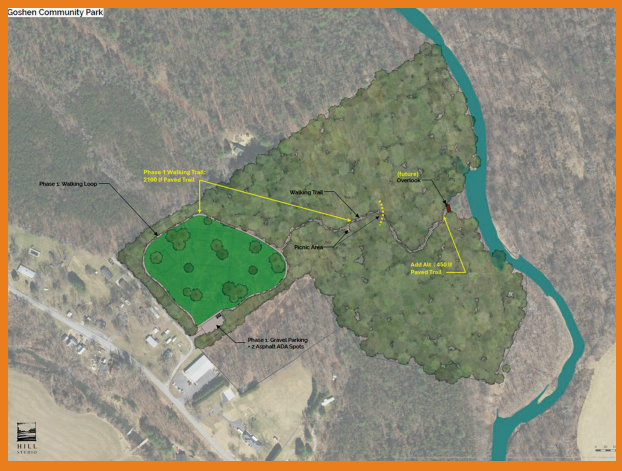
As the first step of the RTP grant, Hill Studio is currently developing final designs for the park. Once completed, the CSPDC will help the Town apply to DCR's Land and Water Conservation Fund in early FY27 to fund Phase 2. The long-term vision for the park includes ball fields, restrooms, and a network of walking trails, with room to add an amphitheater, dog park, and playground.



The Calfpasture River at the Town Park site. Photo credit: Nathan Hilbert.

GOSHEN INVESTMENT

The park is one piece of a broader revitalization effort that has brought more than $3.3 million in grant funding to Goshen over the past three years. Alongside the park, that funding will establish a new Town Hall, construct a multi-use community service facility expanding access to food pantry services and health and wellness programming, renovate the former Stillwater textile mill into a multi-purpose commercial center, replace aging waterlines, and purchase two mobile solar-powered generators for critical public facilities, paving the way for the Town's first emergency shelter.



Goshen Community Park plan. Photo Credit: Nathan Hilbert



The Virginia Innovation Accelerator. Photo Credit: Annette Patterson

FORMER BUENA VISTA FACTORY REBORN AS INNOVATION ACCELERATOR

In 2022, the CSPDC secured a $700,000 Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) grant and a $1 million Industrial Revitalization Fund (IRF) grant on behalf of The Advancement Foundation (TAF), a nonprofit focused on strengthening local economies through entrepreneur support.

The two grants combined regional economic development support with targeted redevelopment financing, converting the former Mundet-Hermetite cigarette paper printing factory in the City of Buena Vista into the Virginia Innovation Accelerator (VIA).

The ARC grant expanded TAF's capacity to deliver business accelerator services, supporting value-added agricultural product development and small-scale manufacturing. It also funded the renovation of the 7,600-square-foot building, including ADA-compliant classrooms and restrooms, an industrial kitchen, lighting, HVAC, and electrical systems. The Industrial Revitalization grant supported construction of a café and tasting room, a Buena Vista visitor information center, public restrooms to support outdoor recreation, and a new façade.

Partners cut the ribbon on the VIA in December 2025. At the close of FY26, the Advancement Foundation has supported 40 businesses through the VIA and created 10 jobs. Tenants include an agriculture technology company and a mushroom grower. Phase 3 will add 16 loft apartments, integrating downtown residential into the VIA.

PROJECT GOALS

- Regional Prosperity
- Economic Growth
- Community Improvement
- Workforce Development

AFTON EXPRESS SETS RIDERSHIP RECORD

Afton Express, BRITE's commuter bus service connecting the Shenandoah Valley to Charlottesville and Albemarle County, set a new ridership record in FY26 with 26,364 passenger trips, a 20% increase over FY25.

Ridership growth followed two major initiatives completed in FY26: a redesigned schedule and a marketing grant. Working with a consultant, UVA Parking and Transportation, bus drivers and transit managers, CSPDC incorporated data analysis, scenario planning, and public input to develop a new schedule that aligns with UVA shift times, provides more consistent timing between trips, and adds an additional morning run from the Valley to Charlottesville.

The marketing grant, funded by the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), created new digital and print materials with professional photography and graphic design, developed local television commercials, and ran a social media ad campaign. Ridership momentum continued into 2026, with ridership in February 2026 38% higher than February 2025.

Afton Express begins FY27 with a new fleet of larger buses to meet continued ridership demand. The Afton Express enters its fifth year positioned to meet commuter needs in our region.



Passenger boarding the Afton Express bus

PROJECT GOALS

- Mobility/ Accessibility
- Quality of Life
- Reliable Transportation



Afton Express driving through the mountains



BRITE bus stop

AFTON EXPRESS COMMUTER BUS SERVICE

Ridership continues to climb, reaching a record 26,364 passenger trips in FY26, a 20 percent increase over FY25.

RIDERSHIP RECORD
26,364
Passenger trips
in FY26

+20%
INCREASE
From 2025

VALUE OF TRANSIT CAMPAIGN

CSPDC's transportation program supports BRITE Transit, the regional bus system connecting residents of Staunton, Waynesboro, and Augusta County to jobs, health care, education, and other essential services.

In FY26, BRITE Transit completed the Value of Transit campaign, a story-centered outreach effort to increase support for public transit in the region. BRITE oriented the campaign to the public and the community partners and local governments that fund the service.

The Value of Transit campaign included three elements: Education that reframed transit stereotypes through "More Than a Bus" messaging and a Value of Transit toolkit; Partner mapping that connected BRITE services to the specific goals of funding partners and recorded interviews with riders, employers, and local officials. The interviews and public service messages were shared on BRITE social media accounts weekly on "Value of Transit Tuesdays." The strategically programmed content drew over 7,700 views with an average reach of 450 people per post. The campaign culminated with a Value of Transit short film, which CSPDC premiered in January 2026 at its inaugural State of Transit event.

In May 2026, CSPDC Director of Transportation, Paula Melester, and JMU Graduate Assistant Kayla Dixon presented the campaign at the Virginia Transit Association (VTA) Annual Conference. They made their presentation, titled "Stories That Move People: Building Transit's Case in the Community," to a full room, confirming that transit systems statewide are looking for fresh ways to demonstrate their value.

The campaign reflects a renewed emphasis on how BRITE delivers transit service to a large region and diverse set of funding partners. It framed transit's benefits in terms of our partners' own missions and needs. Following the State of Transit event, CSPDC staff have met with several community organizations, Staunton City Schools, local libraries, the Central Shenandoah Health District, and the Virginia Department for the Blind and Visually Impaired to identify ways to reduce barriers to access to public transportation.

CSPDC is building upon the Value of Transit campaign with a $60,000 grant from the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) for a comprehensive multimedia marketing campaign including partner marketing toolkits, television and radio advertising, and digital content aimed at growing ridership. Now in a full-time outreach and engagement position with CSPDC, Kayla Dixon will also develop a new travel training program to teach seniors, people with disabilities, and children how to use BRITE service.



Kayla Dixon presenting at VTA

RESILIENCY: ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS

HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN COMPLETED

In May 2026, the CSPDC completed a comprehensive update to the Central Shenandoah Hazard Mitigation Plan, capping a two-year effort involving the region's 21 localities, three water and sewer authorities, one public university, and more than 30 regional public health and safety partners.

Developed in accordance with the federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, the All Hazard Mitigation Plan identifies the region's most significant natural hazards and human-caused threats, and lays out strategies to reduce future risks to people, property, infrastructure, and community services.

The updated Plan evaluates eight natural hazards and four human-caused threats. Flooding, wildfires, severe winter weather, and hazardous materials incidents rank among the region's highest risks, reflecting its mountainous terrain, historical development along rivers, and the presence of major interstates and manufacturing sites.

To address these risks, the Plan outlines regional and local mitigation actions organized around six goals: strengthening economic resilience, protecting housing and neighborhoods, safeguarding environmental systems, improving public infrastructure, promoting public health and safety, and fostering collaboration across jurisdictions.

After the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) approved the Plan on May 20th, localities began adopting it, ensuring that they remain eligible for FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance funding and other disaster-related grant opportunities.

This update also satisfies an optional planning requirement that expands eligibility for FEMA's National Dam Safety Program. We can now apply for FEMA's Rehabilitation of High Hazard Potential Dam (HHPD) Grants which fund technical, planning, design, and construction assistance for any of the 35 High Hazard Potential dams in our region.

PROJECT GOALS

- Economic Resilience
- Protecting Housing And Neighborhoods
- Safeguarding Environmental Systems

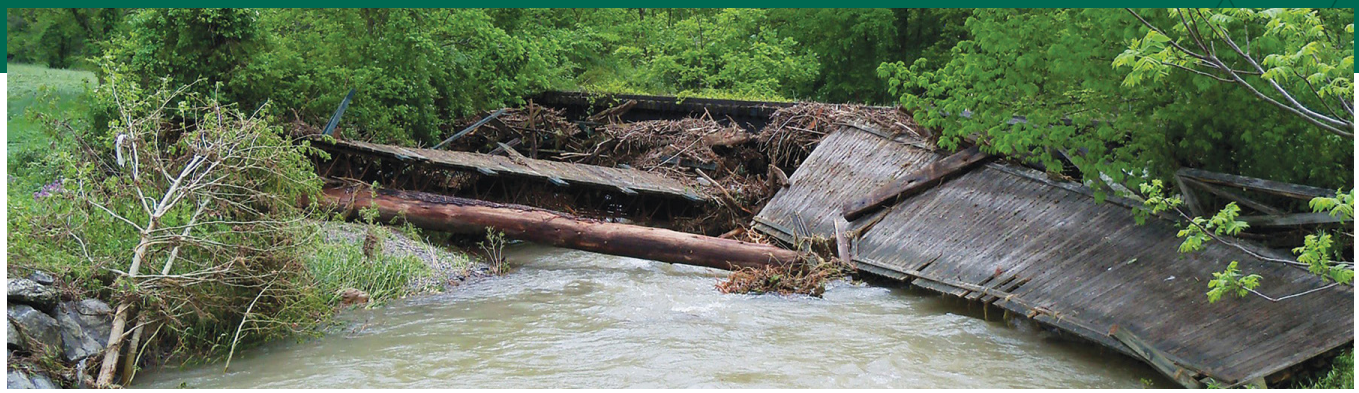


South Fork of the Shenandoah River in the Town of Elkton

FLOOD RESILIENCE PLANNING

Acting on the All Hazard Mitigation Plan's identification of flooding as the region's top natural hazard, CSPDC began development of a Regional Flood and Stormwater Resilience Plan with $270,000 from the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's Community Flood Preparedness Fund. In FY2026, CSPDC completed outreach to all localities and identified their flooding and stormwater needs in partnership with the Berkley Group and Wetland Studies and Solutions, Inc.

Based on this assessment, CSPDC is developing a prioritized list of conventional and green infrastructure implementation projects with cost estimates for each locality. The complete Plan is expected to conclude by the end of 2026. Once adopted by DCR and individual localities, the preliminary engineering designs for priority projects will position communities to apply for construction funding through the Community Flood Preparedness Fund, translating planning into on-the-ground resilience work across the region.



Flooding on the Cascades golf course in Bath County. Photo Credit: The Recorder

WATERSHED WELLNESS STORMWATER PROJECTS COMPLETE IN LEXINGTON, STAUNTON, AND ELKTON

The CSPDC Watershed Wellness Program provides $100,000 of no-match funding each year for nature-based stormwater projects that address water quality and flooding, supported by the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Three grantees completed projects in FY26:

Boxerwood Education Foundation in Lexington installed a rainwater catchment system on its barn, harvesting approximately 28,000 gallons annually to address erosion and irrigate garden plantings. Shenandoah Green, based in Staunton, assisted the Staunton Augusta YMCA in improving a 0.35-mile segment of Lewis Creek with 180 native riparian plantings, improving ecological function while making the stream publicly accessible. The Town of Elkton planted 40 trees along its western entrance corridor and at Elkton Landing Park, addressing stormwater retention and heat island impacts.

Since the program's launch in 2024, the Watershed Wellness program has funded nine projects totaling nearly $90,000 in nature-based stormwater improvements.

REGIONAL KARST STORMWATER WORKSHOP DRAWS MS4 LOCALITIES TO WAYNESBORO

On October 28, 2025, CSPDC staff coordinated a half-day Urban Karst and Stormwater Management Workshop in Waynesboro. Guest speakers included professionals from the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), three consultants, and James Madison University, while locality stormwater and public works staff was the target audience.

The workshop addressed challenges of implementing stormwater best management practices (BMPs) on karst sites in urban environments, where dissolving carbonate bedrock creates sinkholes, caves, and underground drainage that complicate stormwater design. Sessions covered interpreting Appendix E of the Virginia Stormwater Management Handbook, which directly addresses karst areas.

The event concluded with a field visit to Mulberry Run, an award-winning BMP installed on karst terrain in Waynesboro. The workshop generated several action items, which CSPDC staff have pursued through additional meetings with local stormwater staff, including surveying members of the Virginia Municipal Stormwater Management Association on karst local ordinance provisions to evaluate a regional need for ordinance updates.

REGIONAL WATER SUPPLY PLANS ADVANCE THROUGH DATA COLLECTION PHASE

The CSPDC is leading a multi-year effort to develop Water Supply Plans for the Shenandoah River and James River watersheds in coordination with the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and all of our member jurisdictions. The plans are mandated by the Commonwealth and required to assess water supply capacity, identify vulnerabilities, develop strategies to prepare communities for droughts and future shortages, and be complete by 2029.

Over the past fiscal year, CSPDC staff completed existing geographic conditions and mapping for the plans, and began coordinating with localities and public service authorities to inventory water use and water source data. The CSPDC organized a technical assistance session in February 2026 to assist localities with compiling the data, which centers on public water sources, system demand, large and small self-supplied users, and water purchases between systems.

This data forms the foundation for regional water supply plans that help localities evaluate existing water resources, anticipate future water demand, protect drinking water sources, coordinate system improvements with neighboring localities, and make more informed decisions about long-term infrastructure investments.

HARRISONBURG-ROCKINGHAM METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION STUDY SHAPES NORTH MASON STREET REDESIGN

The Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization's (HRMPO) transportation planning work advances safer, multimodal corridors in our region. This year, HRMPO completed a corridor study along North Mason Street between East Market and East Gay streets. HRMPO staff worked with the City to build on a 2025 North Mason Street demonstration project which temporarily converted underutilized travel lanes to community space, and installed temporary roundabouts and new crossings along the corridor. The study defined a set of improvements that the MPO submitted to SMART SCALE, Virginia's competitive transportation funding program.



Tom Hartman, City of Harrisonburg Director of Public Works, during a public meeting. Photo Credit: City of Harrisonburg

The HRMPO study documented existing conditions at six intersections, modeled future traffic, and evaluated cross-section and intersection alternatives at five locations, with City of Harrisonburg and VDOT representatives reviewing deliverables throughout. A public meeting at the Lucy F. Simms Continuing Education Center in February 2026 generated 244 written comments. This community input directly informed the selection of the preferred alternative, ensuring that the design reflects residents' priorities.

The $15.9 million preferred alternative reduces the North Mason corridor from four to three vehicular lanes, adds a ten-foot shared use path and new community space, includes signal improvements at East Elizabeth and East Wolfe Streets, left turn lanes at East Rock Street, a single-lane roundabout at East Gay Street, and completes a shared use path connection between the future Northend Greenway and Federal Street.

HRMPO staff submitted the preferred alternative for funding in SMART SCALE Round 7. If funded, this project will deliver the community-informed corridor redesign.



Aerial view of the North Mason Street Demonstration Project. Photo Credit: City of Harrisonburg

TOWN OF GROTTOES BICYCLE, PEDESTRIAN, AND TRAILS PLAN

CSPDC partnered with the Town of Grottoes to complete the Grottoes Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails Master Plan. The town-wide plan includes a prioritized list of 36 sidewalk, street crossing and trail projects with planning-level cost estimates, as well as a vision list of longer-term trail and corridor concepts for further study.

This work builds on the CSPDC-led Grottoes Comprehensive Plan, in which 64.7% of residents named additional sidewalks their top transportation priority, particularly between neighborhoods and key destinations including South River Elementary School, Town Hall, and Grand Caverns. The most popular request from the public was a sidewalk along Augusta Avenue, connecting Third Street to the Town's main grocery store, Food Lion.

To translate those priorities into a technical plan, the team analyzed travel speeds, traffic volumes, and pedestrian activity along US Route 340, Third Street, and other primary corridors, pinpointing specific safety concerns for people walking and biking in Grottoes. We then scored each of the Plan's projects by cost and impact: how well it closes an identified gap, improves safety, and advances the priorities residents set out in the Comprehensive Plan.

The Plan also identifies potential funding sources for each project to document their feasibility and ensure implementation. This approach is already paying off. Following the study, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) awarded Grottoes a Ready, Set, Go! grant for the Augusta Avenue project, providing 100% funding to develop design concepts needed for a grant to fund construction. We look forward to continuing to support Grottoes as it creates a more accessible town for all its residents.



Third Street in Grottoes.



Charlottesville Bicycle Club members in Grottoes. Photo Credit: Charlottesville Bicycle Club

THE TEAM ANALYZED THE FOLLOWING
pinpointing specific safety concerns for people walking and biking in Grottoes.

- Travel Speeds
- Traffic Volumes
- Pedestrian Activity

NEW HOMES FOR THE REGION

CSPDC administers the PDC Housing Development and the Regional Housing Development Programs with funds from Virginia Housing. These two programs have enabled the CSPDC to invest $3.2 million in the development of 128 affordable homes throughout the region since 2021.

In Fiscal Year 2026, Central Valley Habitat for Humanity and a private developer completed the 21-home Suter Street project in Harrisonburg with CSPDC providing $325,000 through the PDC Housing Development Program. The private developer constructed 10 homes offering a mix of affordable rental and homeownership opportunities, while Habitat for Humanity developed 11 homes reserved for affordable homeownership.

Rockbridge Area Habitat for Humanity advanced construction on eight affordable homes in Greenhouse Village with $270,000 to support the project through the PDC Housing Development Program. Greenhouse Village will provide a mixed-income community of single-family homes near Lexington. Five of the eight homes were completed in Fiscal Year 2026, with the remaining three expected to be completed by the end of October 2026.



Block Street Apartment Project in Harrisonburg. Photo Credit: Our Community Place



Greenhouse Village, a project by the Rockbridge Area Habitat for Humanity

Through the Regional Housing Development Program, the Beverly J. Searles Foundation received $560,000 for predevelopment costs for 80 affordable multifamily rental homes on a parcel in Harrisonburg that the City designated a Revitalization Area. Eligible residents of the new development will have incomes ranging from 40% of the Area Median Income (AMI) to 80% of AMI. Following purchase of the property on January 30, 2026, groundbreaking is expected in FY27.

The CSPDC also provided $560,000 to Enterprise Community Development Partners to support the development of 48 affordable homes at 1030 Alston Court in Waynesboro. Alston Court will include four three-story garden style apartments and a stand-alone clubhouse building. Through an MOU with Valley Community Services Board, Enterprise will receive referrals for households who are considered chronically homeless, have serious mental illness, and/or have an intellectual or developmental disability. This MOU ensures that up to eight households receive permanent supportive housing services and rental assistance.



Greenhouse Village in Rockbridge County

HOUSING REHABILITATION

In Fiscal Year 2026, the CSPDC supported Bath County in securing a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to assess housing conditions in the County and prepare for a future housing rehabilitation program. Administered by the CSPDC, the assessment is underway and will identify eligible properties, engage homeowners interested in participating, and coordinate detailed inspections by a housing rehabilitation specialist. The findings will position Bath County to pursue a future CDBG Implementation Grant to rehabilitate eligible homes.

The CSPDC also assisted Augusta County in submitting a CDBG Planning Grant application for a similar housing assessment in the Town of Craigsville area. If awarded, the grant will help the County identify housing rehabilitation needs and prepare for a future implementation grant.

PROJECT GOALS

- Housing Quality
- Housing Affordability
- Housing Supply

FIRST-TIME HOMEBUYER ASSISTANCE

In Fiscal Year 2026, the CSPDC helped 22 residents become homeowners through two programs: the HOMEownership Down Payment Assistance (DPA) Program, funded by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, and the Sponsoring Partnerships and Revitalizing Communities (SPARC) Program, offered through Virginia Housing. Through SPARC, the CSPDC administered more than $4.5 million in special financing to reduce interest rates for first-time homebuyers, its largest allocation to date. The CSPDC also increased the maximum assistance available through the DPA Program from $11,000 to $25,000, expanding support for eligible homebuyers across the region.

Through SPARC, the CSPDC administered its largest allocation to date. More than

$4.5M

CSPDC IN THE SPOTLIGHT

It's been a year of well-earned recognition for CSPDC staff and programs, from statewide leadership appointments to engineering excellence awards. These honors reflect not just individual talent, but the strength of the partnerships and collaborative work that define how CSPDC serves the region.

LEWIS STREET TRANSIT HUB HONORED AT VIRGINIA ENGINEERING EXCELLENCE AWARDS

The American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) of Virginia recognized CSPDC with a Merit Award for the Lewis Street Transit Hub Project at the 2026 Engineering Excellence Awards Gala, held February 5th at the Dewey Gottwald Center at the Science Museum of Virginia in Richmond. Executive Director Ann Cundy and Director of Transportation Paula Melester joined project team members from Kimley-Horn, MBP, and DRPT for the evening's celebration, with Paula and Kimley-Horn's Jeff LaHood accepting the award on behalf of the team.



ACEC Awards Ceremony

Completed in August 2024, the Lewis Street Transit Hub represents a major investment in BRITE Transit's regional infrastructure and passenger experience. The Merit Award recognizes the project's innovation, complexity, and value, a reflection of the strong collaboration among CSPDC, Kimley-Horn, MBP, and DRPT throughout planning, design, and construction.


Philippe Bone

PHILIPPE BONE SELECTED FOR VIRGINIA RURAL LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Philippe Bone was selected as a 2026 participant in the Virginia Rural Leadership Institute (VRLI), a competitive statewide program administered by the Center for Rural Virginia that develops emerging leaders committed to strengthening rural communities across the Commonwealth. VRLI brings fellows together for four immersive sessions held in different regions of the state, offering firsthand exposure to rural challenges and opportunities alongside peers, mentors, and local stakeholders.

A hallmark of the VRLI experience is the Community Impact Project, a capstone each participant develops to create tangible benefit for their community and organization. Philippe's project will explore the feasibility of an innovative revolving loan fund to support affordable housing development through tax increment financing, a potentially powerful new resource for expanding housing access across our region. Congratulations to Philippe on this well-deserved recognition.


Paula Melester

PAULA MELESTER APPOINTED TO STATEWIDE TRANSIT BOARD

Director of Transportation Paula Melester was appointed to the Virginia Transit Service Delivery Advisory Committee (TSDAC) by the Director of the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation. TSDAC members represent transit agencies of all sizes from across the Commonwealth, along with a liaison to the Commonwealth Transportation Board, and the committee advises DRPT on the distribution process for transit capital and operating funds.



Jeremy Crute with Tom McCraw and Steve Bickley

CSPDC PLANNING DIRECTOR JEREMY CRUTE HONORED BY GOSHEN WITH KEYS TO THE TOWN

This year, the Town of Goshen recognized Director of Planning Jeremy Crute for his role in advancing several of the town's key initiatives. Mayor Tom McCraw and Vice Mayor Steve Bickley presented Crute with the keys to Goshen and a Certificate of Appreciation for his sustained support of the town's growth and resilience.

Crute's work with Goshen included securing multiple rounds of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding, supporting a new Community Services Center that will expand food pantry access and health and wellness programming for residents of the town and Rockbridge County. He also secured a Community-Oriented Resilient Energy (CORE) grant from the Virginia Department of Energy, providing Goshen its first backup power system for critical public facilities.

The recognition reflects the value of CSPDC's direct, sustained partnership with member localities, particularly for small towns with limited staff capacity to pursue competitive funding on their own.

AFTON EXPRESS AND UVA RECOGNIZED FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSIT PARTNERSHIP



UVA and Afton Express staff

This spring, the Afton Express and its partner, the University of Virginia, received two awards recognizing the route's environmental impact and the strength of the regional partnership behind it. On May 1, UVA honored the Afton Express at its annual Sustainability Leadership Awards luncheon. The award recognized the Afton Express and Wahoo Commute partnership for supporting 23,725 passenger trips in 2025, eliminating an estimated 733,103 vehicle miles traveled and 260 metric tons of tailpipe emissions.

On May 20, the Virginia Transit Association presented UVA's Department of Parking and Transportation with its Outstanding Contribution by a Partner Award at the 2026 Annual Conference, citing UVA's sustained financial investment and its Wahoo Commute incentive program, which lets UVA faculty, staff, and students ride free. In 2025, the Afton Express recorded nearly 24,000 total passenger boardings, with roughly 80 percent of riders affiliated with UVA, generating an estimated $872,751 in avoided commuting costs for UVA riders.

PAULA MELESTER PRESENTS AT GOVERNOR'S TRANSPORTATION CONFERENCE



Governor's Transportation Conference

Paula Melester represented CSPDC at the 2025 Virginia Governor's Transportation Conference in Richmond, held October 16-17 under the theme "Looking Back Looking Forward." During the "Local Perspectives on Transportation" panel, she joined panelists to share insights on transportation planning, funding, and project prioritization from diverse jurisdictional perspectives.

The discussion highlighted the importance of collaboration in project planning and delivery. Panelists shared strategies for prioritizing projects with limited resources and examples of successful regional initiatives, underscoring the value of bringing rural, regional, and metropolitan viewpoints together to address Virginia's transportation challenges.

Executive Director's Message

As I write this message, American flags are flying at half-mast in honor of our national treasure, Dolly Parton. I've been a Dolly fan for years – I made a pilgrimage to Dollywood in college, we named the family dog after her, and I drink from this mug every morning in the office.

I think what most people will remember about Dolly was her generosity and love for everybody, no exceptions. Her big-hearted, big tent approach is a lot like regionalism. We are more successful as a region when we find our commonalities and work together than when we focus on our differences. Our late Chair Frank Friedman shared that mindset and fostered a culture of collaboration with the Commission.

Our new Strategic Plan, approved this spring, reflects that same philosophy with a mission to "unite the communities and agencies of the Central Shenandoah Valley by providing proactive leadership, pioneering data-driven solutions, and facilitating inclusive collaboration."

We are focused on five pillars: regional convening and shared intelligence, jobs-enabling foundations (housing and transportation), rural resilience and equitable infrastructure, operational excellence, and financial sustainability.

In the simplest terms, our work is about ensuring access to what matters most to people: health care, a job, a safe and affordable place to live.

A few days before Dolly died, we held our annual staff retreat at the new Hayfields State Park in Highland County. Amidst stunning scenery, we honed our collaboration and meeting facilitation skills, showed each other respect and kindness, and everyone reminded me of how they make a great team. It's a privilege to work with them. Thank you for your continued partnership with CSPDC – we look forward to another year of serving you.



Ann Cundy
Executive Director

In the coming year, we will advance the Strategic Plan in several ways, including:

- Beginning a partnership with the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services and the Rural Health Transformation Initiative to implement their Connected Care Closer to Home program in our rural areas.
- Launching a regional Floodplain Resiliency Initiative to help localities access Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation Community Flood Preparedness Fund.
- Pursuing federal and state funding for housing rehabilitation work across the region.
- Supporting the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation and the Virginia Economic Development Partnership's work to expand access to quality childcare to support our workforce.
- Delivering quality BRITE Transit and Afton Express service in the region through a new service contract.

Strategic Mission

To unite the communities and agencies of the Central Shenandoah Valley by providing proactive leadership, pioneering data-driven solutions, and facilitating inclusive collaboration.



Hayfields State Park. Photo Credit: Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation

CSPDC Organizational Chart



Ann Cundy

Executive Director

Responsible for the overall administration and direction of the Commission which serves a regional area of five counties, five cities, and 11 towns.



Paula Melester

Director of Transportation

Responsible for regional transportation programs, including metropolitan and rural planning, public transit, transportation demand management, bike and pedestrian planning, and the interface of land use and transportation.



Kimberly Miller

Office Manager

Responsible for Human Resources administration, and oversees building and office management functions.



Donnie Kern

Director of Finance

Responsible for the development of the budget, accounting, financial management and reporting systems for the organization.



Jeremy Crute

Director of Planning

Responsible for all planning projects and coordination of services in the areas of community development, economic development, housing, emergency management, and environmental.



Devon Thompson

Senior Transit Planner

Responsible for management and oversight of the region's public transit system (BRITE) and coordinating public transportation planning.



Kayla Dixon

Outreach & Engagement Planner

Provides outreach and public engagement initiatives across the CSPDC region and supports the marketing of BRITE Transit.



Danielle Gannon

Transit Planner

Responsible for public relations, support and coordination of Afton Express, Rideshare programs, and Transit initiatives.



Carrie Sensabaugh

Administrative Assistant

Provides routine and non-routine administrative support to the organization, ensuring operations of the Commission are carried out in an efficient and timely manner.



Rich Sagui

Accountant

Assists the Finance Director in all areas of the Commission's accounting system, and is responsible for Accounts Payable and Receivables.



Philippe Bone

Regional Planner

Provides planning services for local governments in the areas of community and economic development, housing, and recreation.



Rachel Kinzer

Regional Planner

Provides planning services for local governments in the areas of environmental and emergency management.



Zach Beard

Transportation Manager

Responsible for all transportation programs: SAWMPO, HRMPO, Rural Transportation, and Environmental programs.



Garreth Bartholomew

Transportation Planner

Provides transportation planning services; supports the Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro and Harrisonburg-Rockingham MPOs.



Elizabeth Goodloe

Regional Planner

Provides planning services for local governments in the areas of community and economic development.



Fall view of House Mountain in Rockbridge County. Photo Credit: Brent McGuirt, Lexington & the Rockbridge Area Tourism





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Annual Report