

**TJCOG** 

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

## **2019-2020**

**COLLABORATION WITHOUT BOUNDARIES**



# YEAR IN REVIEW

To say 2019-2020 has been a unique year would be an understatement. Between compounding impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, civic unrest, and an increased demand for public services and supports, local governments are entering the 2020-2021 year with an overwhelming list of financial and operational challenges. Further, a growing emphasis on equity in government continues to shift expectations of elected officials and staff as they design processes, solicit feedback, and implement policies for their community.

Amidst these challenges, the power of regional cooperation is evident. Our reach at Triangle J Council of Governments has never been larger or more critical, with our staff diligently assisting member governments address growing challenges in key areas:

- Aging and Human Services
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Resilience
- Strategy and Innovation
- Technical Assistance
- Transportation
- Water Resources

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These newly defined focuses have allowed us to align our strategy with our work and dedicate resources that will ensure our local governments recover from this challenging time stronger, more efficient, and more resilient than before.

I couldn't be prouder of the work our staff at Triangle J have done over the last year and I am appreciative of the continued support from our elected officials and our 44 local government members.

Sincerely,

*Lee Worsley*

TJCOG Executive Director

# THE FIGURES

**\$9,462,923**  
GRANT FUNDING WON  
FOR THE REGION

**\$16,233,824**  
REVENUES

**\$15,729,944**  
EXPENDITURES

**\$24** FOR EVERY **\$1**  
OF MEMBER DUES

**743**  
NEW SUBSCRIBERS

**35,000** EMAIL READS

**86** WORKSHOPS, TRAININGS,  
AND CONFERENCES

**2,267**  
PARTICIPANTS

# OUR MEMBERS

## **Chatham County**

Goldston  
Pittsboro  
Siler City

## **Durham County**

Durham

## **Johnston County**

Archer Lodge  
Benson  
Clayton  
Kenly  
Micro  
Pine Level  
Princeton  
Selma  
Smithfield  
Wilson's Mills

## **Lee County**

Broadway  
Sanford

Aberdeen  
Cameron  
Carthage  
Pinehurst  
Robbins

Southern Pines

## **Orange County**

Carrboro  
Chapel Hill  
Hillsborough

## **Wake County**

Angier  
Apex  
Cary  
Fuquay Varina  
Garner

## Holly Springs

Knightdale  
Morrisville  
Raleigh  
Rolesville  
Wake Forest  
Wendell  
Zebulon

## Member Benefits

Collaborative learning networks

Grant writing and administration

Member liaison

Free assistance hours

Connection to state and federal agencies

Training and workshops

Seat on TJCOG Board

Cost-sharing & shared purchasing

Member updates and news

Resources to evaluate emerging issues

Annual visit

# OUR FOCUS AREAS

Aging &  
Human  
Services

Economic  
Development

Housing

Resilience

Strategy &  
Innovation

Technical  
Assistance

Transportation

Water  
Resources

# AGING & HUMAN SERVICES

**Finalized** the 2020-2024 Area Agency on Aging Plan, *Aging with a Plan and a Purpose*, focused on strengthening Older Americans Act core programs, targeting the greatest need, designing age-friendly communities, and more.

**Promoted** the Money Follows the Person program (MFP) to assist adults move from skilled nursing care back to the community.

**Advocated** for long-term care residents rights through the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, including support during COVID to residents and their families.

**Facilitated** the Durham City/County Master Aging Plan development.

**Administered** the Veterans-Directed Services program, the first consumer-directed program in North Carolina.

**Supported** COVID recovery through expanded support and nutrition services, needed supplies and equipment, continued outreach and assistance to mitigate social isolation, resource gathering, and support for family caregivers.

"In the face of a rapidly increasing need and overburdened systems, coordination and service expansion at the regional level is key. The opportunity to learn so much more about the very important work of TJAAA has been great encouragement to me as a newly elected Mayor. The need for all elected officials to better understand the challenges of our elderly population will only increase in the coming years."

**Ken Marshburn,**  
*Mayor of Garner*

**Administered** the Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG) to assist older and vulnerable residents through County senior centers, adult day health, options counseling, health promotion, and more.

- **51%** individuals below poverty line.
- **83,803** information and assistance contacts
- **285,769** home-delivered meals
- **802** legal services clients
- **8,775** caregiver support contacts

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Administered** the TJCOG Brownfields Consortium - Fuquay-Varina, Wake Forest, and Wendell - to conduct brownfields grant writing, data collection, and training.

**Engaged** all 44 member governments and 250+ stakeholders for input on the region's economic development strategy, Strength in Numbers, to launch in late 2020.

**Maintained** a strong connection with the U.S Economic Development Administration (EDA) as the region's Economic Development District.

**Provided** economic resilience technical assistance, including support for 5 local and regional applications and 6 consistency letters for EDA grant applications that built upon the Strength in Numbers strategy.

**Received** a \$400,000 CARES Act EDA Supplemental Award to assist local communities prepare for, and respond to coronavirus through out 2021-2022.

**Hired** dedicated staff to focus on regional economic development and resilience.

TJCOG is the gold standard when it comes to actively practicing, not just preaching, genuine collaboration. The engagement that has flourished, from Durham to Southern Pines, Robbins to Kenly, is palpable and demonstrates a region uniting its individual leaders across government, nonprofit, business and academia to identify and pursue shared economic goals and objectives in a spirit of common cause, even in the midst of a pandemic--actually especially so in such challenging times.

**Tom White**

*NC State University*

**Assisted** businesses reduce tariff costs through the Research Triangle Area Foreign Trade Zone including seven active sites, two, MAS US Holdings and AWNC, activating during the year, and Transpacific Suppliers Alliance receiving site designation.

**Hosted** three small-scale development workshops with the Incremental Development Alliance for the region.

# HOUSING

**Administered** \$670,000 for NC Housing Finance Agency single family rehab and urgent repair programs for Durham, Harnett, and Lee counties.

**Provided** assistance and expertise on Durham's Expanding Housing Choices and Accessible Dwelling Units projects, and Orange County's Master Aging Plan Housing Group and Affordable Housing Coalition.

**Conducted** a housing study for Lee County, Broadway, and Sanford to identify county-wide and local strategies to incentivize and facilitate affordable housing.

**Supported** the Chatham County Affordable Housing Project through data, research, policy writing, and implementation of the County Housing Plan.

**Led** a collaborative home repair effort for Orange and Chatham counties to increase efficiency, leverage home repair funds, and decrease weatherization service deferrals.

**Launched** planning efforts for a regional housing strategy to match local need.

Our region's quality of life is directly connected to the quality and accessibility of affordable and workforce housing. TJCOG's comprehensive understanding of housing needs across the region ensures that local solutions and strategies are cohesive with larger efforts underway.

**Stephanie Watkins-Cruz**  
*Chatham County*

**Tracked** inventories of naturally-occurring affordable housing and subsidized housing in Orange County.

**Convened** the regional housing practitioners group regularly to share best practices, discuss financing tools, and engage municipalities.

**Conducted** impact assessments for Wake and Orange Habitats for Humanity to understand the program impacts on homeowners and the community.

**Provided** ongoing education and housing data for elected officials, local staff, and partner organizations.



# RESILIENCE

**Led** Center of the Region (CORE) work group meetings focused on resiliency and its intersection with planning-related issues. Meetings examined resilience and the Triangle Bikeway, stream monitoring, the tree canopy, and extreme heat.

**Continued** to leverage the Triangle Regional Resilience Assessment as a framework for local and regional resilience projects, collaborative efforts, and region-wide assessments.

**Compiled** and distributed economic resilience resources to mitigate economic hardships caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Awarded** an AmeriCorps position through the NC Resiliency Program for the 2020-2021 year to assist with incorporating economic resilience into the Strength in Numbers strategy, and assist local communities with incorporating resilience into community planning reform.

**Coordinated** Clayton's successful \$6 million Economic Development Administration grant application to make flood control infrastructure improvements and protect local businesses.

Community resilience requires preparation, but it also requires building upon the relationships, existing resources, and comprehensive strategies that include neighboring governments. TJCOG is critical to advocate for these partnerships and bridge the gap between local, state, and federal resilience efforts. Ensuring that communities of all size can be resilient in the face of setbacks is key to the success of our entire region.

**Nancy Medlin,**  
*Town of Clayton*

**Held** a Funder-Palooza with EDA, GoldenLEAF Foundation, Department of Agriculture, NC Office of Resiliency and Recovery, and UNC School of Government to discuss potential projects and available funding sources.

**Created** and compiled guidance for COVID-19 related funding sources, including FEMA disaster recovery.

# STRATEGY & INNOVATION

**Expanded** the wide range of projections, data, and regional analysis available to members through TJCOG's Regional Data Center.

**Offered** TJCOG Sandbox Institute training opportunities and events including code enforcement workshops, census trainings, zoning laws, and lean government.

**Held** the 2019 Regional Summit in Pittsboro on *Rethinking Our Thinking* with 300+ local government stakeholders and conducted a region-wide systems thinking training.

**Hosted** TJCOG Strategy and Innovation Network quarterly meetings with local strategy, innovation, and budget staff, with focuses on employee development, strategy and budget alignment, and using data.

**Launched** the Regional Innovation Academy Task Force to design a program designed, taught, and attended by local governments.

Launched the Regional Recruitment Partnership to build out a law enforcement recruitment ecosystem in the region and recruit stronger, high-qualified candidates.

The year's focus on practical application of strategy and innovation concepts enabled local government staff to learn real-world tools for building capacity, implementing pilot projects, and using existing data. Equally valuable were the opportunities to work collaboratively with peers in the region, build cross-organizational relationships, and discuss emerging trends together that have laid the framework for exciting efforts in the new year such as the Regional Innovation Academy.

**Monica Croskey-Chapparo**  
*City of Durham*

**Launched** strategy and continuous improvement consulting for smaller governments.

**Facilitation** board retreats, strategic plans, and emerging issue discussions.

**Completed** a Strategic Planning outline for the Town of Cameron, in partnership with innovation staff from Durham County and Chapel Hill.

# TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

**Hosted** regular peer learning and collaborative workshops for managers, planning staff, human resource managers, and water resources staff.

**Administered** the Drug and Alcohol Testing Program to meet federal and state guidelines on behalf of 16 local governments and agencies.

**Hosted** nine regional roundtables for 300 local staff on urgent COVID-19 response topics.

**Completed** a RFQ process for regional digital orthophotography and base mapping with NC Next Generation Networks (NCNGN)

**Facilitated** the Moore County Managers Group to ensure ongoing communication and collaboration.

**Completed** land use or small area plans for Carthage, Princeton, Selma, and Southern Pines.

**Conducted** cemetery mapping and created an interactive headstone database for Broadway.

**Developed** growth and scenario planning for the City of Durham's Comprehensive and Water Resources Plan.

General assistance to local governments is a key role for TJCOG. Communities face a growing list of responsibilities, often with limited staff capacity and resources. Cost-efficient support and staffing from TJCOG ensures we can meet demands from our residents, while remaining fiscally responsible.

## **Don Rains**

*Mayor of Princeton, TJCOG Chair*

**Facilitated** the Tri-Cities Working Group - comprised of Aberdeen, Southern Pines and Pinehurst - to initiate projects and agreements that addressed issues of mutual interest and required coordination.

**Established** an ongoing contract to provide assistance and expertise to Durham County on Phase I of the Greater Triangle Commuter Rail's project management committee, Durham Transit Tax Revenues annual work plan, and Staff Working Group.

# TRANSPORTATION

**Administered** the Triangle Transportation Demand Management program, reduced growth in vehicle miles traveled by over 25%, and strengthened a regional toolkit for teleworking.

**Administered** the Triangle Clean Cities program to provide grant assistance, education, and guidance on alternative fuels.

**Through** the Triangle Area Rural Planning Organization:

- Developed project list for NCDOT Strategic Transportation Investments Prioritization 6.0
- Created new approach for travel demand model's socioeconomic/ land use forecasting.
- Provided technical assistance on three Comprehensive Transportation Plans
- Provided assistance on the S-line rail project in coordination with NCDOT Rail Division.
- Coordinated Census PSAP changes.
- Provided assistance for local projects and studies, and steering committees.

**Worked** with Centralina and Piedmont-Triad regional councils on the Inter-City Rail project to strengthen first mile/last-mile solutions and encourage Amtrak usage across the Piedmont.

Mobility and transportation ignore boundaries. TJCOG provides a birds-eye view to governments and transit agencies to ensure a comprehensive approach that considers investment impacts on housing, land use, and growth. The coordination of commute trip reduction efforts also helps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect the environment.

**Ellen Reckhow,**  
*Durham County Commissioner*

**Launched** analysis of travel markets, affordable housing, and land use along the region's main rail corridor through Orange, Durham, Wake, and Johnston counties.

**Supported** the region's Metropolitan Planning Organizations on activities best done collaboratively, including growth forecasting, addressing air quality concerns, preparing joint transportation plans, convening chairs and staff, tracking affordable housing along investment corridors, and developing joint policy priorities.

# WATER RESOURCES

**Began** development of an Integrated Water Management recommended framework for the Jordan Lake watershed.

**Administered** the Triangle Water Supply Partnership for 13 communities in six counties to strengthen existing water supply allocation and interconnection models.

**Created** the Upper Middle Creek Watershed Action Plan to identify key action steps to protect water quality and minimize pollution.

**Digitized** Broadway's sewer infrastructure documentation and created a sustainable GIS database of assets.

**Administered** the Triangle Area Water Supply Monitoring Project, a 30-year long drinking water supply effort.

**Repaired** or replaced 21 failing private septic systems to reduce pollution impacts on the Rocky River watershed, through a partnership with Rebuilding Together of the Triangle.

**Facilitated** the Nutrient Scientific Advisory Board and criteria development process.

As the region grows, so do the challenges to ensure adequate and safe drinking water for all communities now and in the future. Working collaboratively across our region helps communities meet these challenges in a cost-effective manner. TJCOG facilitates key initiatives related to water quality and water supply to ensure that our water resources can continue to support a vibrant region.

## **Ruth Rouse**

*Orange Water & Sewer Authority*

**Conducted** stormwater asset mapping to mitigate flooding, identify system needs, and improve water quality for Siler City.

**Strengthened** Clean Water Education Partnership's outreach efforts through partnerships with PTRC and DEQ and increased direct community outreach

**Partnered** with Piedmont Triad Regional Council to administer the Upper Cape Fear River Basin Association, a public-private partnership to monitor water quality.

