

May 4, 2026

Re: Recreational Trails Program, Albemarle County Old Mills Trail Extension Phase 1

Dear Ms. Seaton:

For more than 50 years, The Piedmont Environmental Council (PEC) has promoted and protected the natural resources, rural economy, history and beauty of the Virginia Piedmont in our nine-county service area, including Albemarle County and the City of Charlottesville. We believe passionately that connectivity and everyday access to nature, open space and fresh air are essential for healthy lives and thriving communities.

That is why PEC enthusiastically supports Albemarle County's proposed Old Mills Trail extension, beginning with its Phase 1 project at Thomas Jefferson's Lego Farm. PEC supported the riverside trail easement when Monticello proffered it nearly 20 years ago and we have been advocating for the trail's construction ever since.

The Old Mills Trail is a top local priority and the reasons for this become apparent with the first visit. The trail, which begins within sight of the City of Charlottesville, follows the Rivanna River (the first Designated Scenic River in Virginia) as it passes through the Southwest Mountains Historic District. Most of the surrounding lands are forever protected by conservation easements and other development restrictions for they are rich with natural and historic resources.

The trail will follow the still-visible traces of the ancient Three Notched Road. It will also form an extension of the trans-county trail of the same name (Three Notched) that Albemarle is creating with support from a Federal RAISE grant. Other historic treasures along the trail's route include Thomas Jefferson's Monticello, Jefferson's birthplace at Shadwell, historic Woolen Mills, and remnants of the Rivanna's canal and lock system, each with abundant opportunities for education and interpretation.

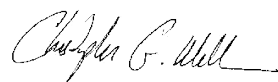
On top of its outstanding recreational value, the Old Mills Trail will connect two of Albemarle County's designated growth areas (Pantops and Rivanna Village) and is located near a hospital, a school, a shopping center and numerous hotels and inns. It will provide a beautiful, restorative route for walking, running and biking between the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle's Rural Area, and generate economic activity in the nearby neighborhoods.

In 2019, PEC organized and continues to facilitate the Piedmont Mobility Alliance, a coalition of more than 50 organizations, clubs, businesses and agencies that share a mission to promote connectivity and active recreation and transportation in Charlottesville and Albemarle County. Local interest is very high and several coalition member groups have already pledged substantial financial and in-kind contributions for this project.

PEC is committing staff time for facilitating community outreach and dialog during project design, implementation and maintenance. In addition, we have approximately \$20,000 in grant funds reserved for Old Mills Trail design and related consultants.

This project has been decades in the making and we are excited to see it come to fruition. We strongly urge you to fund it.

Sincerely,



Chris Miller, President
The Piedmont Environmental Council
45 Horner Street, Warrenton, VA 20186
410 East Water Street, Charlottesville, VA 22902
540-347-2334, ext. 7100 / Mobile: 703.507.5790

