

Charlottesville Awarded \$7.1 Million Federal Grant to Complete Upgrades to the Natural Gas System

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 17, 2023

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA - The City of Charlottesville is excited to announce that it has been awarded a \$7.1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation, and its Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, through the Natural Gas Distribution Infrastructure Safety and Modernization (NGDISM) grant program. The NGDISM program is part of the broader Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, a bipartisan law that will provide nearly \$1 billion in federal funding over the next five years to support public gas systems' efforts to repair, rehabilitate, and replace aging pipes and reduce methane emissions. Funding is solely designated to improve existing infrastructure and cannot be used to expand the area of a natural gas system. The NGDISM program launches with an historic \$196 million in grants for 37 projects spread across 19 states, and helps Charlottesville finish the modernization of its natural gas distribution system.

In the early 2000s, the Charlottesville Department of Utilities performed a nearly system-wide upgrade of its natural gas infrastructure, resulting in an advanced natural gas system that has significantly reduced the community's exposure to safety hazards and the release of methane emissions. The project replaced hundreds of miles of leak-prone and aging cast iron pipes with corrosion-resistant high-density polyethylene (HDPE) plastic pipe.

The NGDISM grant builds on Charlottesville Utilities' continuous efforts to enhance the performance of its utility distribution systems, strengthens the department's exceptional safety record, and advances its commitment to reduce its carbon footprint. The funds facilitate the completion of Charlottesville's gas infrastructure upgrade project by expediting the replacement of the last remaining section of legacy cast iron pipes with HDPE pipes in one of Charlottesville's busiest and most densely populated corridors.

The project will enhance the resiliency of the gas system along West Main Street, a central artery that connects downtown Charlottesville to the University of Virginia. This diverse area includes local businesses, the Amtrak station, low-income neighborhoods, the University of Virginia Children's Hospital and surrounding University of Virginia Grounds, student housing, and several hotels. Without incurring any cost to the community, the NGDISM grant will benefit everyone who lives, works, learns, and visits Charlottesville.

For more information on the NGDISM grant, the project, or Charlottesville's natural gas distribution system, email Utilities Outreach at utilitiesoutreach@charlottesville.gov or call the Department of Utilities at 434-970-3800.