

**2045 LRTP Public Engagement Input Summary:
Stakeholder Meeting and Policy Board Work Session
September 2019**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This memo summarizes the input received from the SAWMPO 2045 LRTP Stakeholder meeting on August 23, 2019 and the SAWMPO Policy Board 2045 LRTP Work Session at the board meeting on September 4, 2019. Both meetings focused on four needs areas: safety, congestion, access and mobility, and economic development.

Overall, there were five reoccurring and overlapping themes from both meetings:

- *Improve bike/ped connections.* The region has a fragmented and incomplete pedestrian and bicycle network, which creates safety concerns in downtown areas, along transit lines, and for disadvantaged populations;
- *Improve transit reliability and connections.* Improving transit stops and connections to underserved areas, disadvantaged populations, and transit/rail destinations outside the region could address not only access and mobility, but help augment economic development;
- *Prioritize travel considerations for the aging population.* As the region's demographic continue to shift, it is important to address the transportation needs of seniors, and the connectivity to senior residential areas to serves;
- *Address future growth on I-81 and I-64 and congestion and safety at and near interstate interchanges.* Anticipating and addressing future congestion and safety concerns associated with I-81 and I-64 along interstate interchanges.
- *Promote higher quality multi-modal transportation options to contribute to economic development.* Continuing to address interstate growth, improving bike/ped, transit, and passenger rail could improve quality of life, and as a result attract new employers.

BACKGROUND

This report summarizes the input received from both the August 23, 2019 2045 LRTP Stakeholder Meeting and the September 4, 2019 Policy Board Work Session. The purpose of both meetings was to collect input on current and future transportation challenges in the region by reviewing four needs areas: safety, congestion, access and mobility, and economic development. These meetings are part of a larger public engagement effort that is collecting input from stakeholders, local government, and the general public about their traffic needs and concerns. The input will inform policies and procedures in the 2045 LRTP, which will be complete in late 2020.

MEETING FORMAT

Both meetings were held in a presentation and facilitated group discussion format. SAWMPO Staff conducted a presentation that that provided a general description of the SAWMPO, its relationship to transportation planning, the goals and objectives of the LRTP plan and process. The second part of the presentation reviewed a regional profile of existing socio-demographic, employment, and transportation conditions; predicted conditions in 2045; and the framework of the facilitated group breakout session.

After the presentation for the Stakeholder session, participants formed four groups to discuss present and future transportation needs within each of the four needs areas of safety, congestion, access and mobility, and economic development. Each group had a facilitator, a flip chart to record input, a large regional map to indicate specific areas of interest or concern, and a comment sheet to write additional comments. Each group then shared their input and summarize their discussion.

Conversely for the Policy Board Work Session, the entire board held a facilitated discussion in all four needs areas, with input recorded both through a flip chart and audio recording.

SUMMARY OF INPUT BY NEEDS AREA

Below is a summary of input from both meetings for each needs area. The full comments for each meeting are in Appendices A and B.

Safety – What areas feel unsafe or are a risk to travel, either by driving, walking, biking or taking transit, and why?

- Sidewalk and shared-use path connectivity and circulation for pedestrians and bicyclists is disconnected, with a particular need for improvement in the urban areas of Staunton and Waynesboro, schools, and senior living homes.
- Transit stop shelter facilities need improved connectivity and circulation.
- Poor access management fragments pedestrian facilities and creates stop-and-go driving
- Diverted traffic from incidents on I-81 leads to safety concerns along parallel routes.
- Distracted driving, such as cell phone use, continues to be a problem.

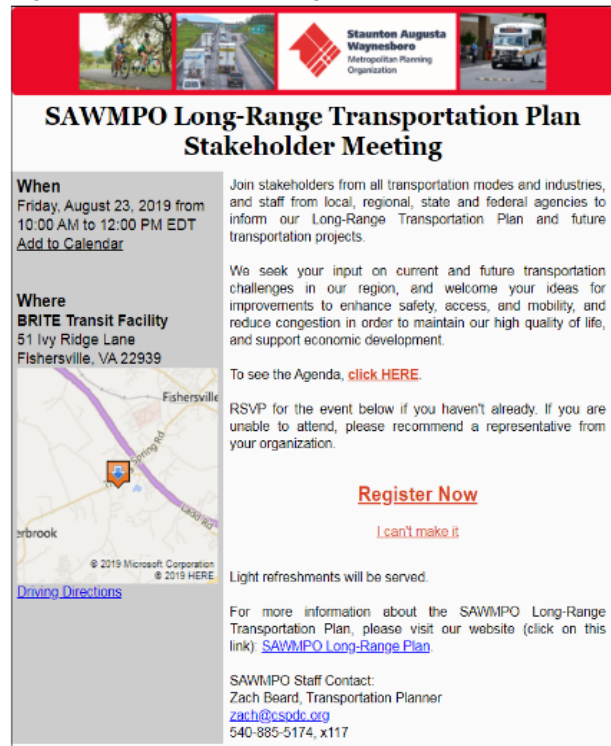
Congestion – What areas have consistent travel delay, and at what time during the day do delays occur?

- Overall, the region has limited congestion issues; however, the main concern in the future is the continued growth of traffic volume on I-81 and I-64 and the subsequent congestion along exists and interchanges
- Interstate interchanges may need to be redesigned, restricted in use, or have potentially new interchanges to accommodate future interstate growth.
- Congestion is typically confined to morning and evening commutes, but specific sites of concern mentioned multiple times include exit 235 at BRCC and exit 94 in Waynesboro.
- Future new development outside of Staunton and Waynesboro and within Fishersville should be focus areas for future planning efforts.

Access and Mobility – What areas or population segments lack transportation options, alternatives, and proximity to basic services such as food and medical care?

- Transit stop shelter facilities need improved connectivity and circulation.
- Bus service from the SAW area to Charlottesville and Harrisonburg should be a priority.

Figure 1: Stakeholder Meeting Invitation



SAWMPO Long-Range Transportation Plan Stakeholder Meeting

When
Friday, August 23, 2019 from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM EDT
[Add to Calendar](#)

Where
BRITE Transit Facility
51 Ivy Ridge Lane
Fishersville, VA 22939

[Driving Directions](#)

Join stakeholders from all transportation modes and industries, and staff from local, regional, state and federal agencies to inform our Long-Range Transportation Plan and future transportation projects.

We seek your input on current and future transportation challenges in our region, and welcome your ideas for improvements to enhance safety, access, and mobility, and reduce congestion in order to maintain our high quality of life, and support economic development.

To see the Agenda, [click HERE](#).

RSVP for the event below if you haven't already. If you are unable to attend, please recommend a representative from your organization.

[Register Now](#)

[I can't make it](#)

Light refreshments will be served.

For more information about the SAWMPO Long-Range Transportation Plan, please visit our website (click on this link) [SAWMPO Long-Range Plan](#).

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- Passenger rail improvements from the SAW area to DC.
- Shifting demographics, especially towards a more elderly population, should be prioritize, with a focus in and around senior living facilities.
- An intercity greenway and multi-use trail connecting Staunton, Augusta County, and Waynesboro.
- Sidewalk and shared-use path connectivity and circulation for pedestrians and bicyclists is disconnected, with a particular need for improvement in the urban areas of Staunton and Waynesboro, schools, and senior living homes.

Economic Development – What areas need improved access or efficiency for the movement of goods, people, and services?

- Improved multi-modal infrastructure, in particular bicycle and pedestrian facilities, could augment the area’s already high quality of life and increase the area’s competitiveness in attracting and retaining businesses and individuals.
- Similarly, transit and passenger rail service connectivity to Charlottesville and DC may also make the region more attractive to employers.
- Anticipate growth in areas such as Staunton Crossing, the airport, and Fishersville to improve access and circulation.
- Ensure access for trucking and rail in the future.
- Future plans and projects need to continue to ensure efficient throughput and access for freight and rail, and also anticipate future development and traffic conditions along interstate interchanges.

APPENDIX A: COMMENTS FROM STAKEHOLDER MEETING BREAKOUT SESSIONS AND COMMENT FORMS

Comments During Presentation

Several comments from were received during and after the presentation which cited further concern about needs along I-81, specifically concerning congestion and safety. There was concern that the current I-81 Improvement Plan is not comprehensive and will not likely address the long-term issues of the corridor. One example of a potential improvement to be considered that is not in the Improvement Plan is to restrict truck traffic to the right lane only in certain areas.

Breakout Session Comments

Group 1

Safety

- 250 Waynesboro
- Urban centers in general
- Water can in Staunton
- West Beverly Street, 262, Grubert
- Shelburne Middle School safety and circulation concerns
- Frontier and 250, Statler and 250 exclusive right turn
- Demand at 250 and 81 will go up and safety will go down
- Staunton access management and bike-ped improvements need to increase
- At grade rail crossing safety near Haile and Bolling Street in Staunton; Buckingham Branch recommends closure and the city is open to the idea; trucks get struck on crossing (2 fatalities on B&B railroads could perhaps warrant more ped restrictions?)

Congestion

- 250 and 64 exit, restrict trucks?
- No Afton Mountain downhill passing lane, problems at intersection of 250 and Route 6
- Need signals at Greenville Avenue or Gypsy Hill Park
- Would a new interchange between 254 and 81 make sense?

Access and Mobility

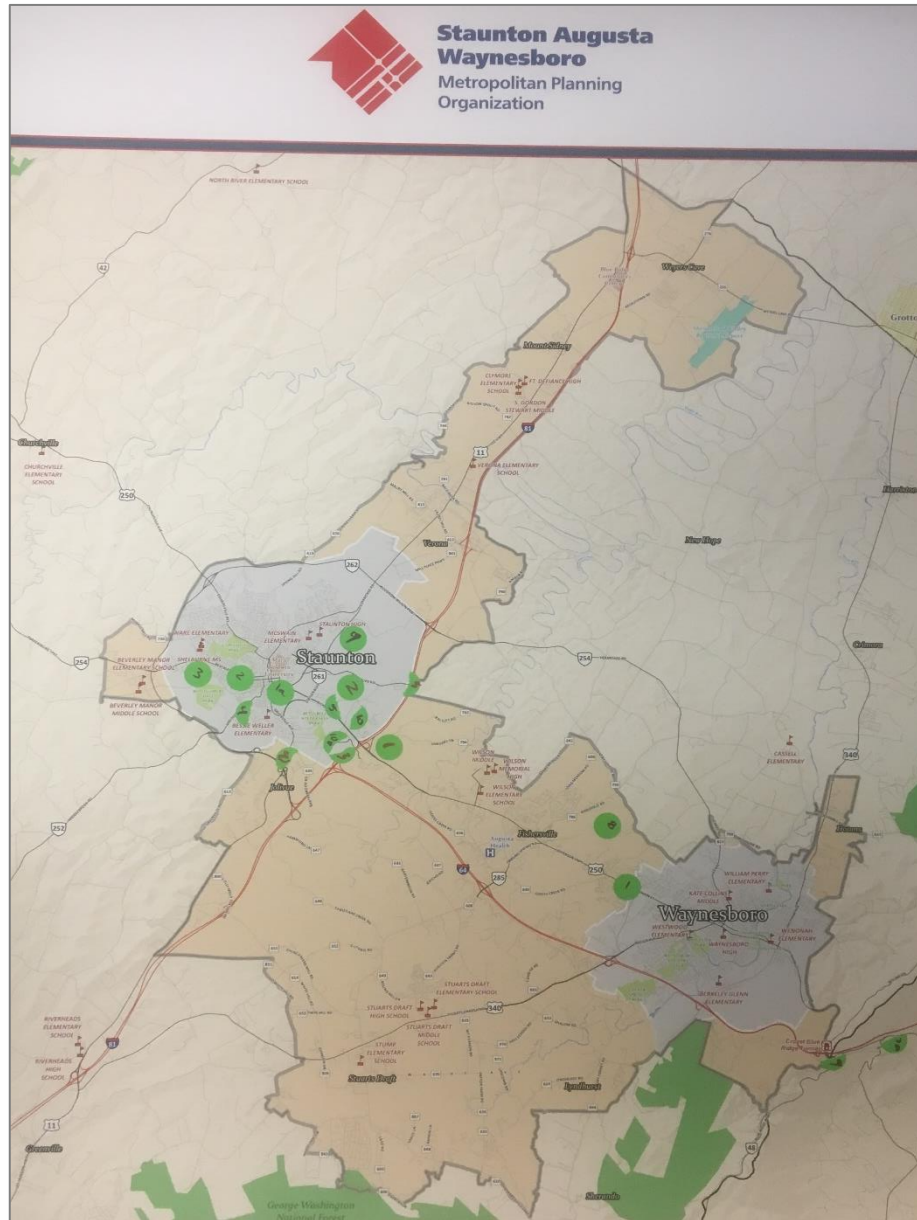
- Ride hailing in rural areas as alternative to paratransit
- General need for bike-ped in Staunton, witness increased demand

Economic Development

- Crossing Way Extension to National Road
- Look at peds crossing railroad
- Development at Staunton Crossing is key to area growth – this is in B&B master plan
- Staunton Crossing jobs are increasing and will need better access and circulation, the only B&B railroad opportunity for industrial growth or RR spur

Group 2

Figure 2: Map from Group 2 at the August 23 Stakeholder Meeting



Safety

- PED connections at BRCC
- Lack of multimodal facilities on most major roads
- Substandard shoulders for bike/traffic mix (Spring Hill)
- Improved pavement marking and signage (see Harrisonburg)
- Lane drops
- Wayfinding and lighting
- Look at SRTS coordinators for Augusta and Staunton (see Waynesboro)

- Overbuilt infrastructure opportunities for repurpose on US 11, 250, 340 for Bike/ped and for gateways
- Incomplete sidewalk network in urban areas (Mary Baldwin) and to public schools (ped crossings/gaps in network)

Congestion

- Local pinch points and bottlenecks are:
- Entering Staunton (11 and 250/railroad tunnel; exit 222 as development occurs)
- Kate Collins Middle (school rush and trucks)
- Exit 235 BRCC
- Exit 94 Waynesboro (backs up on mainline and there are inadequate bridges)
- 81/64 operations following 81 improvement plan

Access/mobility

- School access set up for auto access only
- Transit improvement/routing/schedule/ getting to BRCC and looking for efficiency improvements
- There's a similar safety need for bike/ped
- Airport connection to BRITE
- BRITE stop improvements (pullouts, amenities) and connections to sidewalks
- Connection local bike/walk with greenway network with Crozet tunnel (access and tourism)
- Intercity service from C'ville to Harrisonburg (SRTS Coordinators)
- Explore rail passenger improvements from the Valley to DC (tourism, teleworking)
- Improved outer access around Waynesboro and 262

Economic Development

- PnR Fishersville
- Impacts on autonomous vehicles and trucking
- More rail and trucking opportunities
- Impacts on airport growth and economic access boost for region, but minimize risk of sprawl
- Using bike/ped infrastructure to increase economic development (health and lifestyle; expand routes into rural areas)
- Address bottlenecks: exit 235/access to airport; exit 94/access to Stuarts Draft (secondary route from Exit 96)
- Better access and mode choice west Staunton and East Waynesboro (elderly, regional activity centers)

Group 3

Safety

- Head on collisions
- Distracted driving
- Passing lanes
- US 250 and W Main in Waynesboro closing TWLTLs
- I-81 incidents and constructions traffic diversion

- Bus stops out of travel lanes on higher-speed roadways
- Bike/ped accessibility
- Peds on Frontier Avenue

Congestion

- Lew Dewitt/Rosser
- WWRC/250 exit 94
- US 340 built out to Waynesboro and Stuarts Draft
- Exit 99/US250 East with commuters and tourists
- Exist 235 if mega site develops

Accessibility and Mobility

- Fill SW gaps in Waynesboro and Staunton
- Connect Fishersville to Stuarts Draft with SUP
- Bring 250 Connector to downtown Waynesboro
- Crozet Tunnel Trail
- Ped connectivity to expand those who can access transit
- Staunton to Fishersville to Waynesboro Greenway Path (connect all activity nodes in the MPO for bike/ped)

Economic Development

- Crozet Tunnel trail
- Capacity at 235 to save new large-scale industrial

Group 4

Safety

- Pedestrian connectivity and safety (Beverly street and to Augusta County Library)
- Safety for transit stops
- Public awareness and education
- Gypsy Hill Park no light or bike/ped
- Having enforcement areas
- 340/250 in Waynesboro and Staunton
- Wilson Complex 1 road in and out need secondary access road
- Emergency vehicles in rural areas and woodlands
- No connection between community plans such as comp plans, emergency, and transit plans

Congestion

- Intersection of 358 and 250
- RR at 250, extends from 2:30 to later
- Goose Creek Rod between 608 and 250, development occurring
- Development around hospital
- Elderly population around Fishersville

Access and Mobility

- Too many people in wheelchairs along the side of the road on 250
- Briarwood (low-income)
- Elderly places and walking (plaza apts)
- Need intracity bus connections in both cities
- 250 connector to downtown Waynesboro
- Focus on bike/ped connectivity in Fishersville/greenway or bike/ped path
- Valley to Cville bus connection
- Streamlined bus connection between regional hospitals in RMH, Augusta, and UVA

Economic Development

- Bike/ped
- Study of 340 from Stuarts Draft to I-64 to anticipate future growth pressure

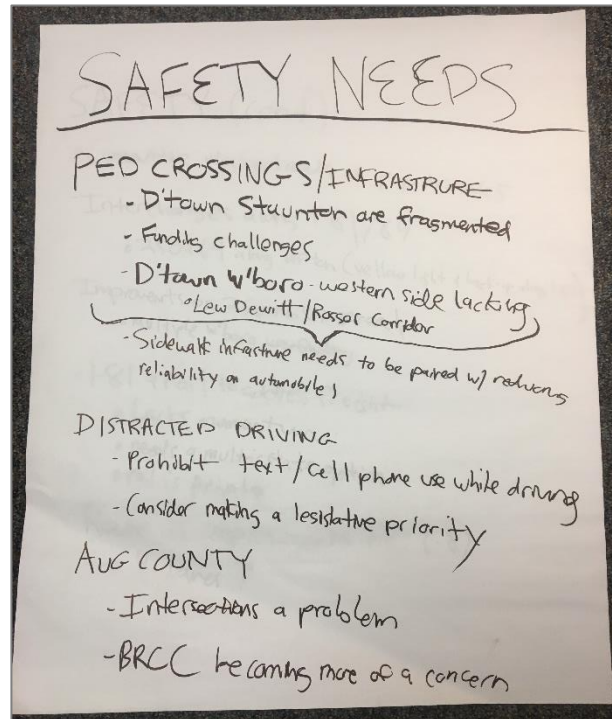
APPENDIX B: COMMENTS FROM SAWMPO POLICY BOARD WORKSHOP

Safety and Congestion

Bike/Ped Crossings and bike/ped infrastructure

- Downtown Staunton sidewalk network is fragmented
- Downtown Waynesboro, especially the western side of the city, and along Lew Dewitt/Rosser Avenue corridor are areas where bike/ped infrastructure is lacking
- There are funding challenges to address this issue everywhere in the region
- Overall, the region needs a strategy to not only improve bike/ped infrastructure, but also at the same time reduce reliability on automobiles

Figure 3: Notes from the September 4, 2019 Work



Distracted driving

- Prohibit text and cell phone use while driving
- Consider making this a legislative priority

Augusta County

- Intersections a problem for safety
- BRCC and the exit are a growing concern
- Commuting on backroads is becoming more of a safety concern as the population increases

I-81

- Interchanges along both interstates will likely need to be addressed in the future for safety and congestion concerns
- Specific example: I-64: 250 and I-64 along Afton
- Waynesboro needs improved wayfinding coming off of I-64 exits
- Lack momentum in creating a rail network parallel to 81 to increase freight movement and take pressure off the interstate
- Need a multi-state option as rail is private and across state lines
- Route 11 will likely need to be improved as traffic on I-81 continues to increase in volume, although it is unlikely the road could be expanded to four lanes

Access and Mobility

- Road diets may be a viable solution to improve bike/ped connections
- As the population continues to age, a key emphasis should be placed on enhanced transit for the elderly
- Transit infrastructure improvements are needed for stops and sidewalk connections

- Must consider the implications of autonomous vehicles on transit
- The Fishersville/life core area is experience a growth in senior housing and should be a focus for future transit options that tie into the hospital

Economic Development

- Better connectivity to the airport via transit and other modes should be a priority
- Interchanges along the interstates, specifically 235, need to be improved as both corridors grow
- Passenger rail connections to east-west, specifically to Charlottesville and points east, and connections north-south, specifically to DC and points north, could help attract employers and employees to settle in the area
- There is a need to increase reliability of passenger connections, with the Lynchburg/Roanoke connection cited as an example