

Policy Board Regular Meeting Minutes August 2, 2023, 10:00 a.m.

Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission*
112 MacTanly Place, Staunton, Virginia

Voting Members		Non-Voting Members		Others	
	City of Staunton	✓	Shane McCabe (Alt)		Others
✓	Brad Arrowood, Vice Chair	✓	Cody Huffman (Alt)		Brad Reed, VDOT
✓	Amanda Kaufman		VA DRPT		Staff (CSPDC)
	Augusta County	✓*	Grace Stankus	✓	Bonnie Riedesel
✓	Tim Fitzgerald		VRT	✓	Ann Cundy
	Vacant	✓*	Steve Wilson	✓	Zach Beard
	Jennifer Whetzel (Alt)		Phil Thompson (Alt)		Devon Thompson
	Pam Carter (Alt)		Kevin Jones		Paula Melester
	City of Waynesboro		FTA	✓	Ansley Heller
✓	Jim Wood		Chelsea Beytas		
✓	Todd Wood		VA DOA		
	Michael Hamp (Alt)		Rusty Harrington		
	VDOT		CTB		
✓	Todd Stevens		Mark Merrill		
✓	Adam Campbell (Alt)				
	Don Komara (Alt)				
	Matt Dana (Alt)				
	✓* Indicates Zoom Participants				

Call to Order

The August 2, 2023, meeting of the Policy Board of the Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (SAWMPO) was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Brad Arrowood, Vice Chair. Pursuant to §2.2-3708.2 of the Code of Virginia, SAWMPO Policy Board members may participate in meetings of the SAWMPO or its committees through electronic communication means. Those who attended virtually are indicated by an asterisk; all others attended in-person.



Public Comment

Vice Chair Arrowood opened the floor for public comment. There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes

Vice Chair Arrowood presented the minutes from the June 7, 2023, Policy Board meeting. Mr. Jim Wood moved, seconded by Mr. Todd Wood, to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was carried by unanimous vote.

FY24 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Amendment Release for Public Comment (Board Action Form #23-08)

Ms. Ann Cundy provided a brief reminder that the UPWP is the annual budget and work program for the MPO. Ms. Cundy explained that the UPWP amendment moves \$11,314 into the “Admin” line item so that the SAWMPO can transition to a better operating website platform. Ms. Cundy explained that the server for the existing Drupal site will no longer be supported by the SAWMPO IT contractor, and will become inoperable.

Ms. Cundy said that this was not something we were aware of at the start of the fiscal year when the FY 24 UPWP was approved, thus the need to amend the UPWP. Ms. Cundy explained that the next steps would be to release the amended FY 24 UPWP for 21 days of public comment. Vice Chairperson Arrowood called for a motion to release the Amended FY 24 UPWP for 21 days of public comment. The motion was made by Mr. Tim Fitzgerald and seconded by Mr. Todd Wood. The motion was carried by unanimous vote.

FY 21-24 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment Release for Public Comment (Board Action Form #23-09)

Mr. Zach Beard reminded the Board that the TIP is federally required document that all MPOs are required to update every four years. Mr. Beard explained that the TIP documents transportation projects that receive federal funding, require federal action, or are projects deemed regionally significant. Mr. Beard explained that in the time between approving the last TIP amendment in June 2023 and the August 2nd MPO meeting, VDOT requested further changes including three administrative modifications and one amendment.

Mr. Beard noted that projects and funding under VDOT are typically grouped in three categories: Traffic and Safety Operations, Maintenance and Bridges, and System Maintenance and Preservation. The categories allow VDOT to shift funds between categories as projects change. Mr. Beard informed the Policy Board that the administrative modifications do not require any board action or public comment, because they do not meet the dollar threshold which would require such actions. However, the amendment made to the FY 21-24 TIP does meet the dollar threshold and therefore it must be released for public comment and approved by Policy Board action. Mr. Beard further explained that the amendment shifts funding in the amount of \$6.5 million



to the System Maintenance and Preservation category. Mr. Beard explained that with Board action the amended FY 21- 24 TIP would be released for 21 days of public comment, and then taken back to the Policy Board for adoption at their September meeting. The FY 21- 24 TIP will remain in effect through September with the FY 24-27 TIP taking over in October 2023.

Mr. Beard turned the floor over to Mr. Adam Campbell of VDOT to give additional details. Mr. Campbell reminded the Policy Board that the three mentioned groupings are considered “high-level groupings” and explained further that they are categories holding money for projects that fit within the categories. Continuing, Mr. Campbell said that there is a three-year window between State and Federal agencies where VDOT can request federal reimbursement for projects that fall into these three categories. These changes are part of a larger VDOT strategy to maximize the federal funding the state can receive for these types of projects. Ms. Cundy said that the three groupings are for the entire Staunton construction district, not just the SAWMPO. Vice Chair Arrowood asked for a motion to release the Amended FY 21-24 TIP for 21 days of public comment. A motion was made by Mr. Fitzgerald and seconded by Mr. Todd Wood.

Presentation: Overview of Proposed SMART SCALE Policy Changes – Adam Campbell, VDOT

Mr. Campbell gave a presentation of the proposed SMART SCALE policy changes. Mr. Campbell noted that the changes being proposed to SMART SCALE were being led by the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIPI) and the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB). Mr. Campbell informed the Board that over the past year OIPI released a survey to gain feedback from SMART SCALE users. Results from the survey were gathered and taken to the CTB to inform the CTB’s review of SMART SCALE Policy.

Mr. Campbell reviewed the potential issues identified from the survey and the potential changes to the process, which are summarized in **Table 1**. Mr. Campbell noted that some issues will limit the ability of the MPO/PDC to go after High Priority funding and reduce the Land Use benefit that has allowed the MPO to be successful in project funding.

Mr. Campbell clarified that the SAWMPO boundary and Augusta County are both considered “Rural,” with SAWMPO under category ‘C’ and the rest of Augusta County under ‘D.’ Going into greater detail regarding the reduced number of applications, Mr. Campbell explained that for the SAWMPO the number of SMART SCALE applications would be reduced from 4 to 2.

Mr. Campbell reviewed the SMART SCALE prioritization process, and potential process changes before outlining the next steps and schedule. Mr. Campbell noted that the policy adoption by the CTB is scheduled for December 2023.

Discussion ensued regarding the proposed SMART SCALE changes. Board members expressed concern about the proposed changes, and potential impacts on the MPO’s ability to competitively apply for projects. Policy Board members agreed to submitting a letter to the CTB highlighting MPO concerns regarding the proposed SMART SCALE changes.

Agency Updates

Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)

Mr. Todd Stevens began the VDOT update by introducing Mr. Cody Huffman, the new Assistant Resident Administrator for the Harrisonburg Residency working directly for Mr. Don Komara.

Table 1: SMART SCALE Changes Affecting the SAWMPO
(Note: Issues highlighted in yellow were identified as having potentially the most significant impact on the MPO.)

Potential Issue Identified	Findings	OIPI Staff Recommendations
Urban Projects are funded more regularly than rural projects	No bias towards urban projects was found.	No changes are recommended at this time.
Leveraged projects are more successful than non-leveraged projects	There is not a perception of non-leveraged projects being less successful	No changes are recommended at this time.
Smaller projects are disproportionately recommended for funding.	A greater number of small projects (\$10 million or less) are being funded.	Redefining eligibility for the statewide High Priority Program to only include interstate and interstate interchange projects, and bridge replacements projects.
Too many applications are being submitted	Staff resources stretched to dedicate to applicant support and application quality	Reduce the number of applications for all entities.
Forward-Looking Congestion Factor	Projects aren't receiving the full projected benefits as they're analyzed in existing year conditions.	Calculate congestion benefits for 10 years in the future.
Forward-Looking Economic Development Factor	There is a disconnect between square footage and economic benefit.	Engaged VEDP to develop a more forward-looking methodology, which will be brought to the CTB in September.
One-Factor Majority - Land Use Factor	Land Use accounted for greater than 40% of total benefit score and increased for smaller projects	Modify the factor weighting for the Land Use factor

Mr. Campbell provided the following update:

- The final Revenue Sharing and TA application window opens on August 15th and the deadline for submittal is October 2nd.
- The HSIP application timeline is between August 1st and October 31st. The program is available for localities that maintain their own roads for systemic improvements.

Mr. Stevens provided the following VDOT project updates:

- Staunton Crossing is progressing on schedule.
- Staunton I-81 project is on track to get started with shoulder work in the Fall, with more cumbersome work scheduled from the Spring.

Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)

Ms. Grace Stankus informed the Policy Board that the CTB approved DRPT's Six Year Improvement Program (SYIP) for FY 24. The new SYIP and approved projects are available on DRPT's Open Data Portal.

Transit

Ms. Ann Cundy gave the following BRITE Transit updates:

- BRITE Transit conducted a Triennial Review with the FTA for the BRITE Transit System. FTA looks at all recipients of urbanized federal funding and reviews the entire program to ensure that funds are being spent correctly.
- An hour of service was added back to the BRCC shuttle schedule in response to feedback from commuters that the last trip was necessary to get them back to Staunton at the end of their commute.
- The rehabilitation of the Lewis Street Hub is approaching the submission of 90% plans. The goal is to break ground by the end of the calendar year.
- BRITE and Afton Express attended Waynesboro's Back to School Bash at Kate Collins Middle School

Mr. Zach Beard gave the following Afton Express updates:

- Ridership of the Afton Express continues to grow, and June had the single highest day record with 93 passenger trips.
- On June 21st, Afton Mountain was featured on a Virginia Public Radio segment about CARES funding and how it was being used across the state.



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- Afton Mountain will be featured in a short, 30-second commercial that will be posted on social media in partnership with the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission RideShare program.

Locality Updates

City of Waynesboro

Mr. Todd Wood gave the following updates:

- The southern connector is beginning on August 21st and is expected to be complete in September 2025.

Augusta County

Mr. Tim Fitzgerald gave the following update:

- The County hopes to award the Verona Bike Pedestrian project next week.

There were no updates from the City of Staunton, and Vice Chair Arrowood opened the meeting for Other Business.

Other Business

Ms. Bonnie Riedesel reminded the Policy Board of the joint MPO meeting with the SAWMPO and the Charlottesville Albemarle MPO at Fishburn Military School on September 27th.

Upcoming Meetings

Vice Chair Arrowood announced that the next scheduled TAC meeting will be held on August 16th, 2023, at 2:00 p.m., and the next Policy Board meeting is scheduled for September 6th, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.

Meeting Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Policy Board, Vice Chair Arrowood asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was made by Mr. Jim Wood and seconded by Mr. Todd Wood. The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ann W. Cundy".

Ann W. Cundy
Director of Transportation