

Policy Board Regular Meeting Minutes April 5, 2023, 10:00 a.m.

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

Voting Members		Non-Voting Members		Others	
	City of Staunton		VA DRPT		Others
✓	Brad Arrowood	✓*	Grace Stankus		Josh Dunlap, VDOT
✓	Amanda Kaufman		Wood Hudson	✓*	Brad Reed, VDOT
	John Blair (Alt)		VRT		Staff (CSPDC)
	Augusta County	✓*	Steve Wilson	✓	Bonnie Riedesel
✓	Scott Seaton, Vice Chair		Phil Thompson (Alt)	✓	Ann Cundy
✓	Tim Fitzgerald		FHWA	✓	Zach Beard
	Pam Carter (Alt)		Kevin Jones	✓	Devon Thompson
	City of Waynesboro		FTA	✓	Paula Melester
✓	Jim Wood		Michele DeAngelis	✓	Ansley Heller
✓	Todd Wood		VA DOA		
	Michael Hamp (Alt)		Rusty Harrington		
	VDOT		CTB		
	Todd Stevens		Mark Merrill		
✓	Adam Campbell (Alt)				
✓	Don Komara (Alt)				
	Matt Dana (Alt)				
*Zoom Participants					

Call to Order

The April 5, 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 Dr. Scott Seaton, Chairperson. 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

Chairperson Seaton opened the floor for public comment. There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes

Chairperson Seaton presented the minutes from the February 1, 2023, Policy Board meeting. Mr. Todd Wood moved, seconded by Mr. Tim Fitzgerald, to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was carried by unanimous vote.

FY24 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Overview (Board Memo #23-02)

Chairperson Seaton introduced the FY24 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) agenda item. Ms. Cundy provided an overview of the UPWP, noting that the document is the annual work program and budget for the MPO. She stated that the document details the upcoming fiscal year administrative and planning activities, and the federal, state and local funding that comprises the budget. Ms. Cundy reviewed the allocations of FHWA PL and FTA 5303 funding for the current and upcoming fiscal years. She noted that for FY23, the SAWMPO's work is focused on the Regional Highway Safety Study and Potential for Safety Improvement (PSI) Intersection Study.

In FY24, the MPO's programmatic focus could include a new small area study, beginning the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) update, or other activities requested by local and state partners. Ms. Cundy reviewed the next steps, noting that final approval of the FY24 UPWP will be presented to the Policy Board at their June 7, 2023, meeting.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Updates (Board Memo #23-03)

Chairperson Seaton presented the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) updates. Mr. Zach Beard reviewed the TIP Program, explaining that the TIP is the region's federally-required fiscally-constrained four-year programming document for all transportation and transit projects receiving federal transportation funds, requiring federal action, or deemed "regionally significant." Mr. Beard explained that in addition to federal funds the TIP also included state and local funding that contributes to transportation projects. Mr. Beard stated that staff administratively modified the FY24-27 TIP to include BRITE Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan performance targets, and submitted the modification to DRPT on February 8, 2023, which included updated targets for revenue vehicle performance and service vehicle equipment facilities.

Mr. Beard also explained that staff is developing the draft FY24-27 TIP document, which will be reviewed with the Board in May, and presented for approval in June 2023. In addition to the adoption of the FY24-27 TIP there will be a final amendment to the current FY21-24 reflecting a change in project groupings.



Presentation: SAWMPO Regional Transportation Safety Study Summary-Zach Beard SAWMPO

Mr. Beard presented a PowerPoint summary of the SAWMPO Regional Transportation Safety Study. This study evaluated safety data trends between 2017 and 2021, and focused on crash locations and causes. Mr. Beard noted that the Safety Study was a 100% fully-funded study conducted through VDOT's Highway Safety Improvement Program, and is based on the Commonwealth's five year statewide Strategic Highway Safety Plan. Mr. Beard explained the statewide plan has a goal of reducing fatalities and serious injuries by 50% by 2045 and prioritizes addressing infrastructure and behavioral issues through physical infrastructure improvements, and also policy and educational programs to increase overall awareness and to promote a culture of safety statewide.

Study Background

The SAWMPO Regional Transportation Safety Study began in April 2022 and was concluded in February of 2023. The study was carried out by VDOT and the consultant, VHB, and local partners. It focused on four main sections: regional trends, crash characteristics, locality trends, and outline of potential recommendations. Mr. Beard's summary focused on the main sections of the study, which were how crash data in the SAWMPO compares to other MPOs in the state, the 10 emphasis areas that VDOT uses to categorize fatal and severe injury crashes, and the high injury networks, those segments of roadways where crashes are happening more frequently. Mr. Beard highlighted the crashes per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in 2020, and noted that the SAWMPO has the third lowest crash rates in the commonwealth with approximately 145 crashes. When looking at fatal crashes per 100 million VMT specifically, the SAWMPO has the second lowest rate of crashes at 0.51.

Ten Crash Emphasis Areas

After Mr. Beard presented the SAWMPO crash rates per 100 million VMT discussion began on the impact of interstates on these crash rates. Dr. Seaton wondered about the role of interstate presence within the SAWMPO as being a contributing factor to lower crash rates in the MPO. After a short discussion Mr. Beard continued his presentation by elucidating the ten emphasis areas designated as main factors in crashes. Those ten factors, which area: Impaired Driving (Drinking, Drugged, Distracted, and Drowsy), Speeding, Occupant Protection (unbelted occupants), Bicyclists, Motorcyclists, Pedestrians, Young Drivers (drivers under 21), and Aging Drivers (65 and older), roadway departure (head-on, sideswipe opposite direction, fixed object, overturn crashes) and intersections (within 250 feet of VDOT and 150 feet of locality-maintained intersections).



Mr. Beard presented a table of crash percentages highlighting the percent of serious and fatal crashes related to the ten crash characteristics. Mr. Beard noted that in the five-year period being studied there were 491 total fatal and severe injury crashes in the region with 31 being fatal crashes. Of the 491 crashes, 293 occurred at intersections, 164 involved impaired driving, and 154 involved speeding.

Of the crash characteristics, intersections had the highest overlap with other crash characteristics followed by impaired driving. The roadway departure characteristic was more likely to involve impaired driving, speeding, and unbelted vehicle occupants. Most pedestrian crashes and all bike crashes occurred at intersections. Motorcycle crashes were more likely to involve speeding, while pedestrian crashes were more likely to involve impaired driving. Older drivers were more likely to be involved in a crash than younger drivers, however younger drivers are more likely to be involved in speeding, impaired driving, and occupant protection issues.

Crash Timing and Local Trends

Moving on from the characteristics of crashes Mr. Beard explored when these crashes typically occurred. Mr. Beard noted that the highest number of crashes occurred between 3:00p.m. and 5:00p.m, with 80% of crashes happening between 6:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m.. Diving deeper into the difference between crash characteristics of Staunton and Waynesboro Mr. Beard noted that while crash characteristics between the two localities are similar, Waynesboro has a greater number of fatal, serious, and minor injury crashes than Staunton. Augusta county as a whole followed crash trends seen in Staunton and Waynesboro, with a majority of crashes being involved at intersections.

High Injury Network

Moving on from crash characteristics, Mr. Beard highlighted the high injury networks for fatal and severe crashes in the MPO. The network shows the top ten road segments where a greater number of fatal and severe injury crashes occur. Discussion of the high injury networks ensued. After discussion concluded Mr. Beard presented the high injury network for fatal, severe, and minor injury crashes, noting that the addition of minor injuries brings Augusta County into the high injury network.

Study Summary

Mr. Beard reiterated that the SAWMPO has some of the lowest crash rates in the state compared to other MPOs. High-Injury Networks in the SAWMPO are located along US-11, US-250, and US-340. Most crashes occur at an intersection, or involve impaired driving or speeding. Most pedestrian crashes and 100% of bike crashes occur at intersections. Motorcycle crashes are more likely to involve speeding, while pedestrian crashes are more likely to involve impaired driving, and while older drivers are more likely to be involved in a crash than younger drivers, younger drivers are more likely to be involved in a crash that involves impaired driving, speeding, and occupant protection issues. Despite it having a lower population, the city of Waynesboro

has more fatal, severe, and minor injury crashes than the city of Staunton, and Augusta County has more roadway departure crashes than either Staunton or Waynesboro.

Mr. Beard said that a link to an interactive map highlighting crashes in the SAWMPO can be found on the SAWMPO website.

Safety Targets and Next Steps

In addition to the Safety Study, Mr. Beard highlighted the most recent annual safety trend statistics for fatal and severe injury crashes, and the growing trend of fatal crashes in the MPO and the state. While the MPO's 15-year annual fatal crash average (from 2006 -2020) was 7 fatal crashes per year, the fatal crash average for 2021 and 2022 is more than double the previous 15 year average. In 2021 there were 12 fatal crashes, 3 of which involved pedestrians, in the SAWMPO. In 2022 there were 18 fatal crashes, 4 of which involved pedestrians.

Moving on from the safety data Mr. Beard began to highlight next steps for the MPO. He explained that the MPO will continue using this safety report to develop strategies and actions for specific areas of greater crashes in the MPO. Mr. Beard continued by showing a map highlighting previous safety study areas along the high injury network to show where work is being done. Mr. Beard suggested that as they continue working, the SAWMPO will work with localities and perhaps other MPOs to determine best practices. Mr. Beard wrapped up his presentation and opened the floor for questions, where discussion of the crash table ensued.

Agency Updates

Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)

Mr. Adam Campbell of VDOT Staunton District Planning provided the following update:

- The spring VDOT public meeting is scheduled from May 3, 2023 from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. This meeting will be an opportunity for the public to speak with CTB members about the draft Six Year Improvement Program (SYIP). The CTB is accepting comments online until May 24th.

Mr. Don Komara provided the following VDOT Harrisonburg Residency updates:

- The auxiliary lane between exits 221 and 220 is continuing and going to advertisement this summer with construction starting by summer of 2024.
- Kokosing has been selected as the contractor with RDA as the design firm for the I-81 lane widening to six lanes between exit 221 and 225.
- The Weyers Cave climbing lanes have gone through a public hearing and it is expected to go to advertisement in 2024 with the Harrisonburg climbing lane expected to go to advertisement in 2026.



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- The Staunton Crossing project is underway.
 - Exit 235 Weyers Cave on and off ramp expansion is expected to go to advertisement in the next few months.
 - VDOT continues to work on gaining right of way for a dual turning lane into the industrial park at Millplace.
 - 262 is going to advertisement this spring, showing changes from 613 to 252.
 - The Waynesboro connector is set to go to advertisement this spring.
 - WWRC third lane with roundabout is being planned for advertisement in 2024.

Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)

Ms. Grace Stankus gave the following DRPT updates:

- FY-24 5303 applications are due May 1, 2023
- FTA has released two “Dear Colleague” letters outlining two waivers for the non-federal match for section 5303 funding: 1) the first waiver waives the non-federal match for complete streets planning activities; and 2) the second waiver offers no less than 90% of federal share for planning activities that support transit access in areas with lower population density or low average income relative to surrounding areas. All planning activities seeking the lower non-federal match must be included in the MPO’s UPWP.
- The FHWA Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) discretionary grant program is providing funding for publicly accessible EV charging and alternative fueling infrastructure. The program provides funding in two categories: community charging and fueling grants, and the alternative fuel corridor grant program. Applications are due May 30, 2023.

Transit

Ms. Devon Thompson gave the following BRITE Transit update:

- BRITE Transit will be participating in Discover Transit Month and pushing out DRPT materials for the event on the transit social media.
- The Transit Development Plan (TDP) is complete. The document was released for public comment in December 2022, and received no public comments. The CSPDC Board of Commissioners adopted the TDP at their February 9, 2023 Commission meeting and the final plan has been submitted to DRPT.

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- FTA is conducting a triannual review with BRITE to assess management practices and program implementations. The recipient information request was submitted in February 2023.
 - The request for proposals for the mobile data collection system was released in February 2023. One proposal was received so BRITE is confirming how to move forward with a single bid procurement.
 - Kimley-Horn was selected for design and engineering for the Lewis Street Hub.
 - The BTAC has approved reduced evening hours of the Blue Ridge Community College shuttles. Decreased hours will be implemented in early June 2023, and public engagement has begun.

Ms. Melester gave the following Afton Express update:

- The expanded Afton Express schedule went into effect February 13, 2023 and has seen an increase in ridership across all trips.
- Average ridership increased by 6% in February 2023, which was before and after expansion, and average ridership increased by another 8% in March 2023.
- There have been a few regular riders on the new 5th evening trip; staff is working with UVA to get information out to the employees who would benefit most from this trip.
- Afton Express will be featured in a Virginia Public Radio segment about CARES funds being utilized across the Commonwealth. A RADIO IQ reporter is visiting on April 20, 2023 to ride the Afton Express route, and learn more about the service from riders.
- Beginning in FY 24 funding for Afton Express will transition from a demonstration grant into the regular BRITE transit funding, 5311.

Locality Updates

There were no updates from Staunton, August County, or Waynesboro regarding activities within the MPO.

Other Business

Chairperson Seaton asked if there was any other business. Ms. Ann Cundy let the Policy Board know that a tentative date, September 27th, had been selected for a joint MPO meeting with the SAWMPO and the Charlottesville-Albemarle MPOs for new members.



Upcoming Meetings

Chairman Seaton announced that the next scheduled TAC meeting will be held on April 19, 2023, at 2:00 p.m., and the next Policy Board meeting is scheduled for May 3, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.

Meeting Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Policy Board, Chair Seaton adjourned the meeting at 11:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ann W. Cundy", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Ann W. Cundy
Director of Transportation