

## Chapter 3: Existing Conditions

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The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the existing demographics, infrastructure, and transportation conditions within the Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro (SAWMPO) planning area. The physical transportation network is comprised of roads, public transportation (bus and rail), pedestrian and bicycle facilities, air transportation, and freight/passenger rail service.

This chapter contains the following:

- 3 – 1 Regional Context
- 3 – 2 Socio-Demographic Profile
- 3 – 3 Existing Transportation Network

Unless otherwise noted, all data and maps are based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2013-2017 ACS Five-Year Estimates. Because some census block groups extend beyond the SAWMPO boundary, the data for these block groups does not perfectly reflect the demographic characteristics of the SAWMPO.

### 3 – 1 Regional Context

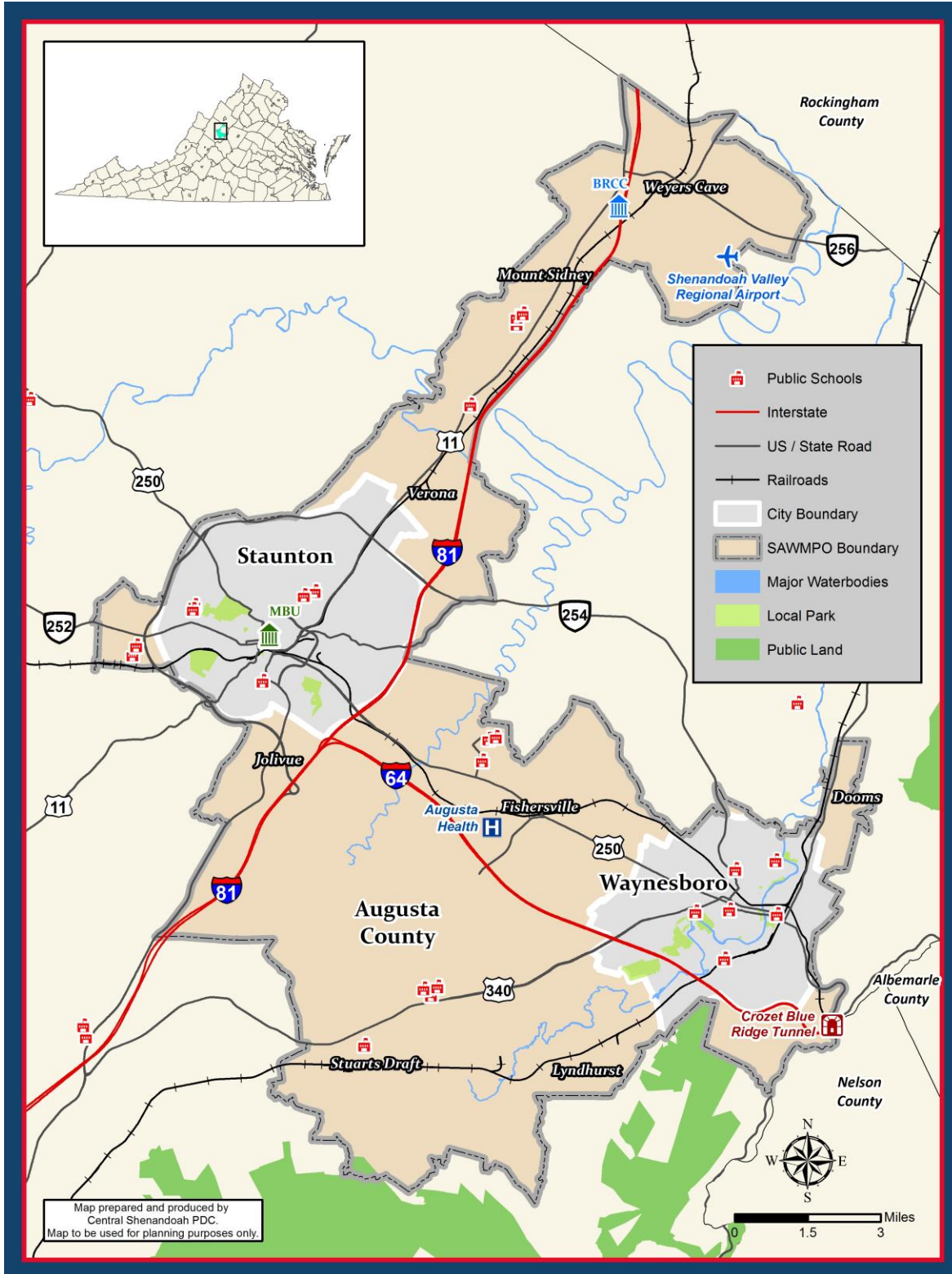
The SAWMPO planning area includes the cities of Staunton and Waynesboro, and the portion of Augusta County that is expected to urbanize in the next 25 years, including Fishersville, Verona, Stuarts Draft, Jolivue, Weyers Cave, and Lyndhurst. Unless otherwise noted, reference to Augusta County refers to the area within the SAWMPO's planning area. The SAWMPO is situated in the scenic Shenandoah Valley, near destinations such as Skyline Drive, Blue Ridge Parkway, and Shenandoah National Park. Augusta County has a strong agricultural history. The County has the most farm acreage by county in the state, and also ranks second in the state for farm income. Agritourism businesses have capitalized on the area's heritage and demonstrated the potential for future economic diversification.

Staunton is the county seat of Augusta County. It is a city with a rich history that is reflected in the city's distinct downtown architecture. Staunton is home to Mary Baldwin University, a private, liberal arts school with an enrollment of 1,761 students. Western State Hospital, founded as a facility for the mentally ill in 1828, and the Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind, which accepts students ages 2 through 22 for specialized academic and social development, are also located in Staunton.

Waynesboro is located on the eastern boundary of the SAWMPO and is similar to Staunton by population size. It has a walkable downtown and is easily accessible via I-64. Located on the South River, Waynesboro has a strong industrial history. DuPont's location of their facility to produce rayon transformed the community into a major manufacturing town.

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Map 1: SAWMPO Region



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## Population<sup>1</sup>

**Table 1** shows the population trends for the SAWMPO planning region. In 2017, the estimated total population for the entire area, including non-MPO planning areas, was 120,283 people, which was a 1.5% increase from 2010. Overall, the highest population growth increase since 2000 was in Augusta County and Waynesboro; however, growth in all three jurisdictions slowed between 2010 and the 2017 estimate year.

2017 Weldon Cooper population estimates show more growth than U.S. Census data.

**Table 1: SAWMPO Region Population**

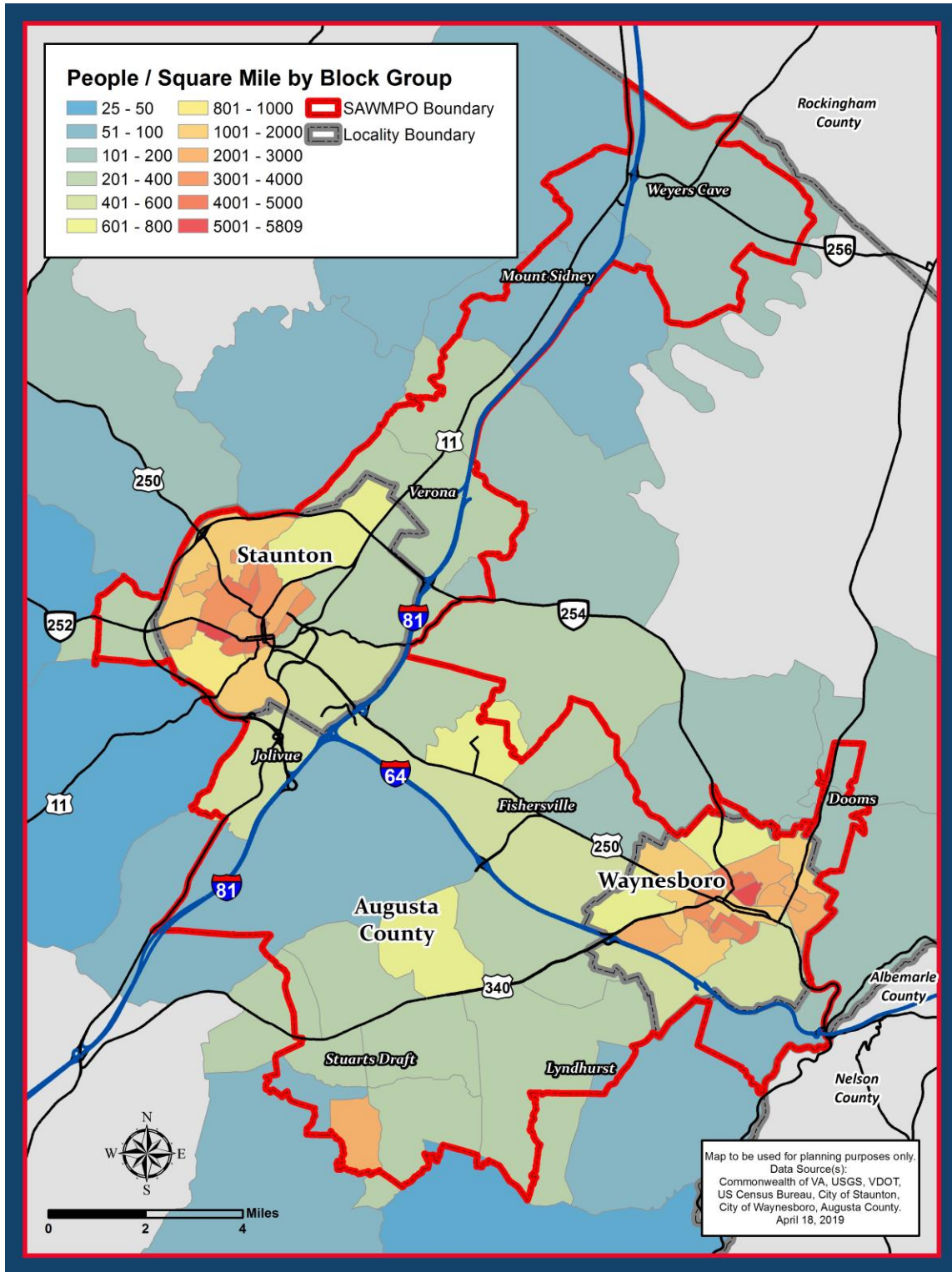
| Area              | 2000<br>(Census) | 2010<br>(Census) | 2017 (ACS<br>Estimates) | Population<br>change<br>(2010 – 2017) | Weldon Cooper<br>Center<br>Estimate (2017) | Population<br>change<br>(2010 – 2017) |
|-------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| Augusta<br>County | 65,615           | 73,750           | 74,390                  | 640                                   | 75,013                                     | 1,263                                 |
| Staunton          | 23,853           | 23,746           | 24,273                  | 527                                   | 24,761                                     | 1,015                                 |
| Waynesboro        | 19,520           | 21,006           | 21,620                  | 614                                   | 22,285                                     | 1,279                                 |
| SAWMPO            | -                | 78,794           | 83,171                  | 4,377                                 | -  | -                                     |

**Map 3** on the following page illustrates the population density by block group for the SAWMPO planning area. Population is concentrated around the downtown areas of Staunton and Waynesboro. Population densities around Fishersville and Stuarts Draft are underrepresented due to the size of the county block groups in these areas.

<sup>1</sup> The U.S. Census is the primary data source. The SAWMPO boundary is not contiguous with census tract limits, requiring that data be extrapolated relative to the size of the census tracts that intersect the boundary.

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Map 2: Population Density



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## Employment

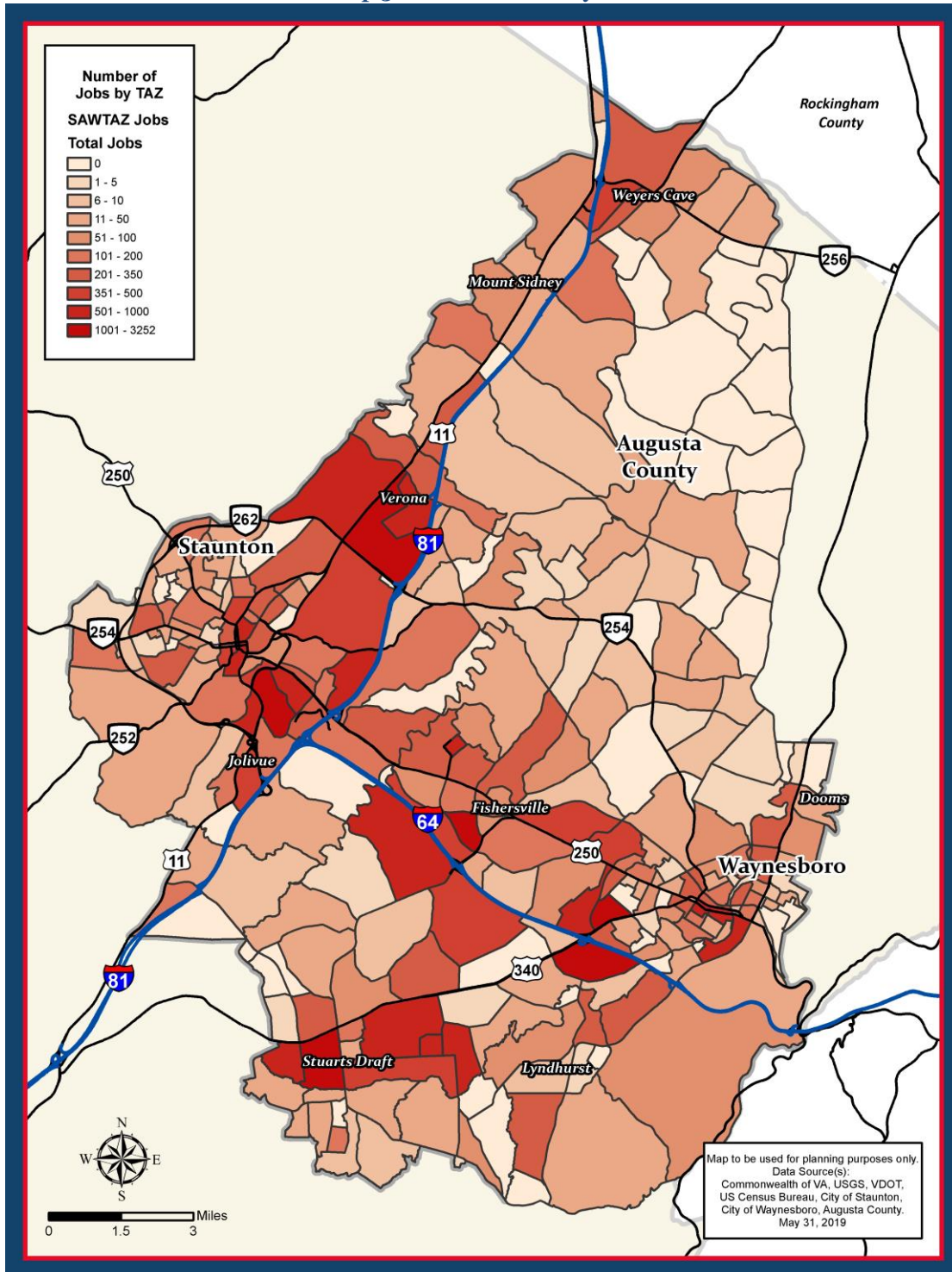
Travel generated by employers and employees contributes significantly to peak-time trips on a transportation network. That may include impacts on traffic volumes and traffic congestion, demands for new or upgraded access or infrastructure, or an opportunity for targeted investments in public transit.

**Map 3** illustrates the estimated number of jobs in the MPO area in 2018 by traffic analysis zone (TAZ). TAZs, which are described in detail in **Chapter 4**, are a common way to measure socioeconomic variables within a region. The TAZs are largely based on U.S. Census tracts, and also a region's population distribution, existing roads, and natural borders.

Employment density is highest in the major urban areas of the MPO, as well areas close to interstate interchanges such as Verona and southwest of Waynesboro, and the activity centers of Augusta Health in Fishersville and Blue Ridge Community College in Weyers Cave.

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Map 3: Number of Job by TAZ



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## 3 – 2 Socio-Demographic Profile

Environmental Justice (EJ) is the overarching policy adopted in the United States for the “fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.” As a result of such policies, there has been an increased need to incorporate EJ principles into transportation planning.

The following three federal acts and two executive orders define the principles of EJ, including the specific populations that are to be considered:

- The *Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VI*, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin;
- The *Age Discrimination Act of 1975*, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age;
- The *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990*, along with the *Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act of 2008*, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of disabilities;
- *Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice (1994)*, which protects minority and low income populations from disproportionately high and adverse impacts;
- *Executive Order 13166 on Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (2000)*, which aims to improve access to services for persons who have limited English proficiency.

*Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964*, established the foundation of EJ by stating as follows: No person in the United States shall on the ground of race, color, or national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

All recipients of federal aid are required to certify and the U.S Department of Transportation (USDOT) must ensure, non-discrimination under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. For the purposes of long-range transportation planning, MPOs must specifically address EJ while developing and advancing transportation programs and projects.

In 1997, the USDOT issued its Order on Environmental Justice which expanded upon the EJ requirements of Executive Order 12898 and provided direction on implementation. Shortly thereafter, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) issued Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, which highlight the three primary EJ objectives:

- To identify, address, minimize, mitigate, and (preferably) avoid disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority and low-income populations;
- To ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process by providing public involvement opportunities and dissemination of

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information, including meaningful access to public information concerning the human health or environmental impacts, when soliciting input from affected minority and low-income populations when considering alternatives during the planning and development of transportation infrastructure investments;

- To ensure that no person – particularly those of minority or low income populations – is excluded from participating in, denied the benefits of, or in any other way subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal assistance.

Additionally, the federal government has defined Minority and Low-Income populations as follows:

- Low-Income means a person whose median household income is at or below the Department of Labor poverty guidelines.
- Low-Income Population means any readily identifiable group of low-income persons who live in geographic proximity and, if circumstances warrant, geographically dispersed/transient persons (such as migrant workers or Native Americans) who will be similarly affected by a proposed DOT program, policy or activity.
- Minority means a person who is:
  - Black: a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa;
  - Hispanic or Latino: a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race;
  - Asian American: a person having origins in any of the original people from the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent;
  - American Indian and Alaskan Native: a person having origins in any of the original people of North America, South America (including Central America), and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition;
  - Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander: people having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.
  - Minority Population means any readily identifiable group of minority persons who live in geographic proximity, and if circumstances warrant, geographically dispersed transient persons (such as migrant workers or Native Americans) who will be similarly affected by a proposed DOT program, policy, or activity.

In consideration of the EJ policies identified above, a geographic analysis was conducted to identify the locations and concentration of minority, low-income, and other traditionally underserved populations in the SAWMPO planning area. For the purposes of this study, traditionally underserved also includes senior, non-English speaking, and zero-car household populations.

Datasets and mapping were assembled as a baseline inventory of demographic attributes for the following:

- Low-Income (below poverty line)



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- Minority
- Senior (Elderly)
- Disabled
- Limited English proficiency
- Zero-car households

The primary and most comprehensive data source for these populations is the U.S Census Bureau's 2017 ACS five-year estimates at the census tract level. However, a census tract with a large land area may report demographic results based on a limited population sample. Refer to the text of each map for the population percentiles for each demographic based on U.S. census data.

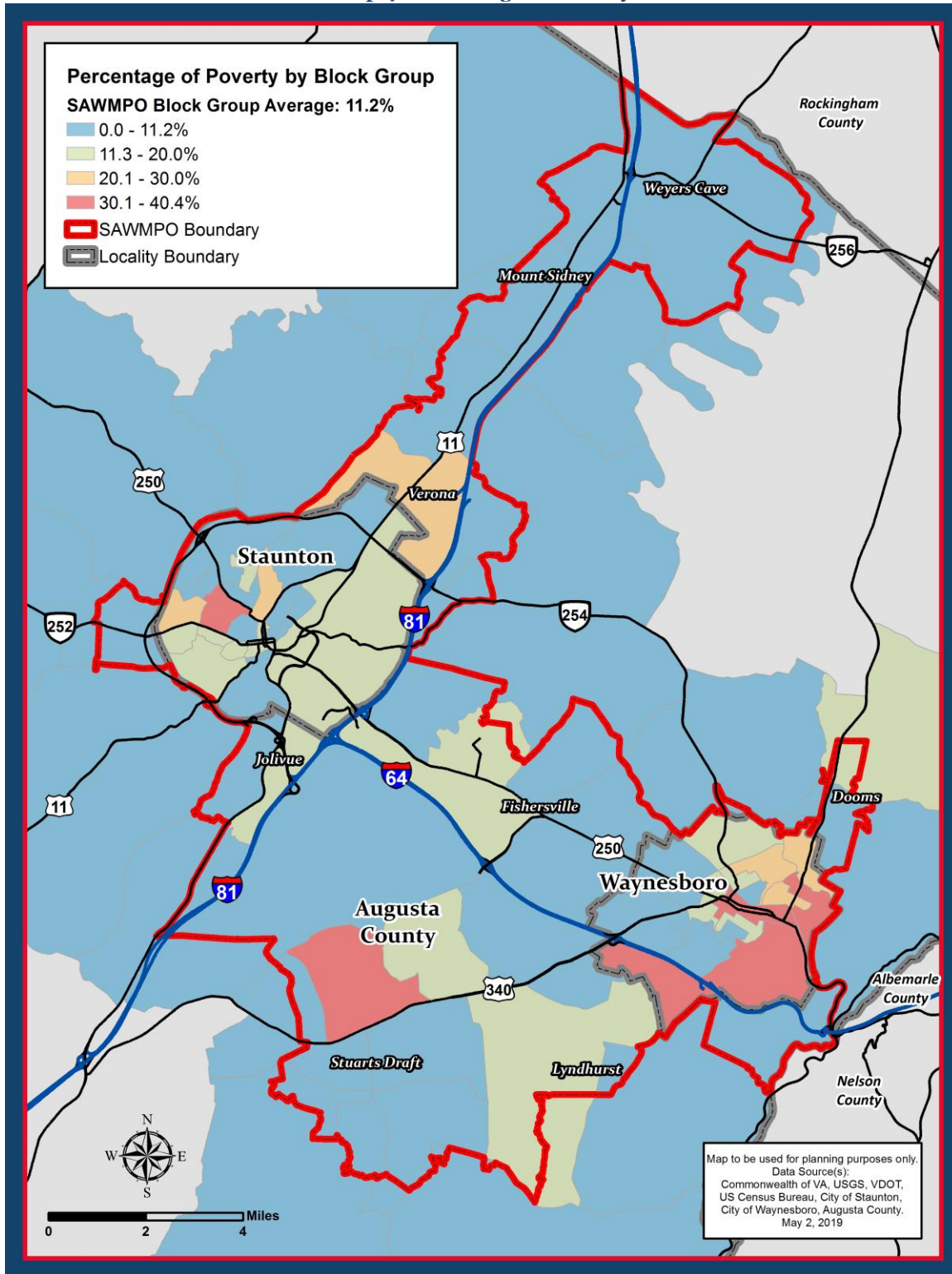
## Poverty

**Map 4** shows the percent of the population living below the poverty level. The percentage of the population below the poverty level was calculated by dividing the number of individuals living below the poverty level by the total population per block group. According to 2017 ACS estimates, the percentage of persons living below the poverty line was 13.3% in Staunton, 17.4% in Waynesboro, and 8.9% in Augusta County. By comparison, the 2017 ACS statewide poverty average estimate was 11.2%.

The areas with the highest percentage of the population below the poverty level had poverty rates above 30%. These areas are concentrated in western Staunton, in the southern, eastern, and northern portions around Waynesboro, and north of Stuarts Draft. Certain areas around Fishersville and Stuarts Draft may be underrepresented due to large census block group size.

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Map 4: Percentage of Poverty



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## Minority Populations

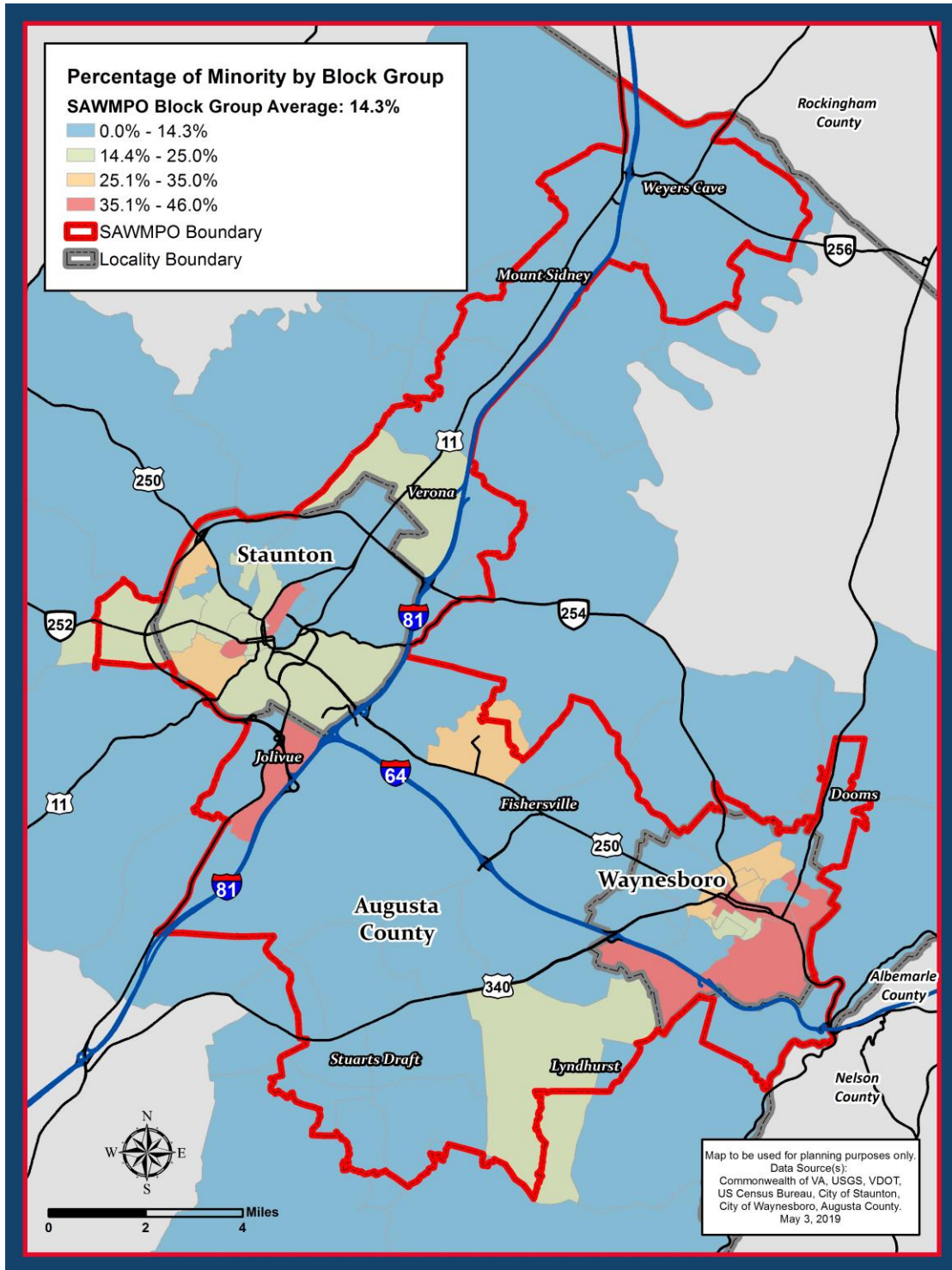
**Map 5** illustrates the concentrations of minority populations within the SAWMPO region by census block by 2017 estimates. The racial/ethnic minority percentage of the population was calculated by subtracting the White Alone (non-Hispanic/Latino) from the total population per block group and then dividing that number by the total population. The average for the combined area of Augusta County and Staunton and Waynesboro is 14.3%.

Waynesboro is the most diverse community in the SAWMPO area and has the highest percentage of both African American (13.6%) and Hispanic or Latino (7.2%) populations. Comparatively, Staunton is 11.2% African American and 2.9% Hispanic or Latino, while Augusta County is 4.4% African American and 2.7 Hispanic or Latino. SAWMPO area numbers are lower than the state average of 19.2% African American and 9% Hispanic or Latino.

Non-white populations are more likely to be found in the older neighborhoods located adjacent to downtown Staunton and Waynesboro, and the Jolivue area.

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### Map 5: Percentage of Minorities



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## Elderly Population

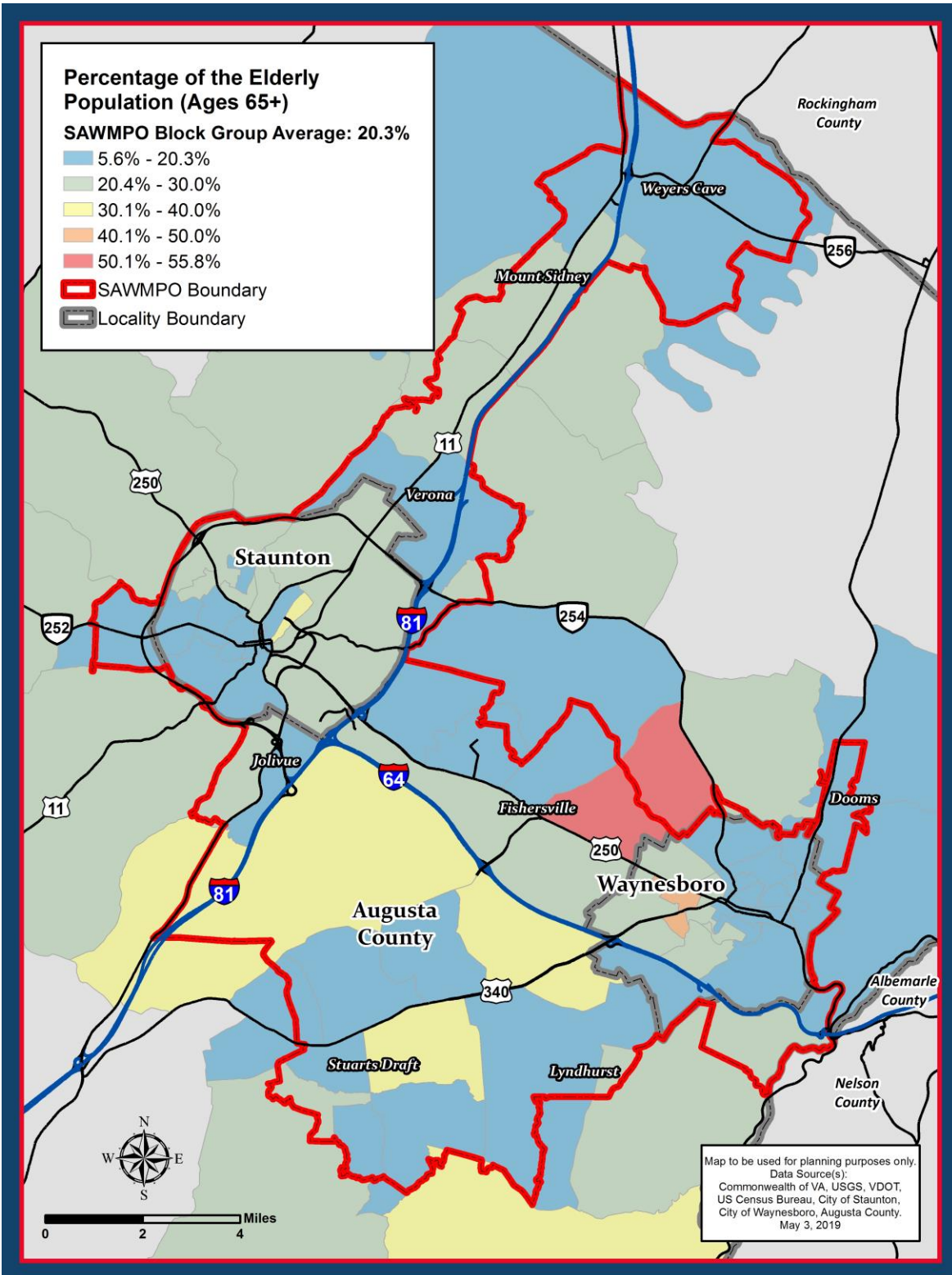
The elderly population percentage was calculated by summing the populations of persons age 65 and older. That sum was divided by the total population. The SAWMPO block group average population of elderly persons (65 of years of age and over) is 20.3%, which is higher than the 2017 state average of 15%. **Map 6** highlights areas with higher concentrations of the population over 65 years. Areas around Waynesboro and northeast of Fishersville have the highest percentages of elderly individuals in the SAWMPO area.

Aging populations have unique transportation needs that include a decreased reliance on vehicles and an increasing need for alternative modes of travel. Many seniors do not drive due to health, economic, or personal preferences. Other seniors do drive, but would prefer not to, if a convenient and frequent transit service were available to them. Age-restricted and assisted living communities are located throughout the region, many of which provide limited private transportation options for their residents.

For communities located outside Staunton and Waynesboro, public transportation options are limited, although the BRITE bus system offers connections between both cities and some county destinations.

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### Map 6: Elderly Population



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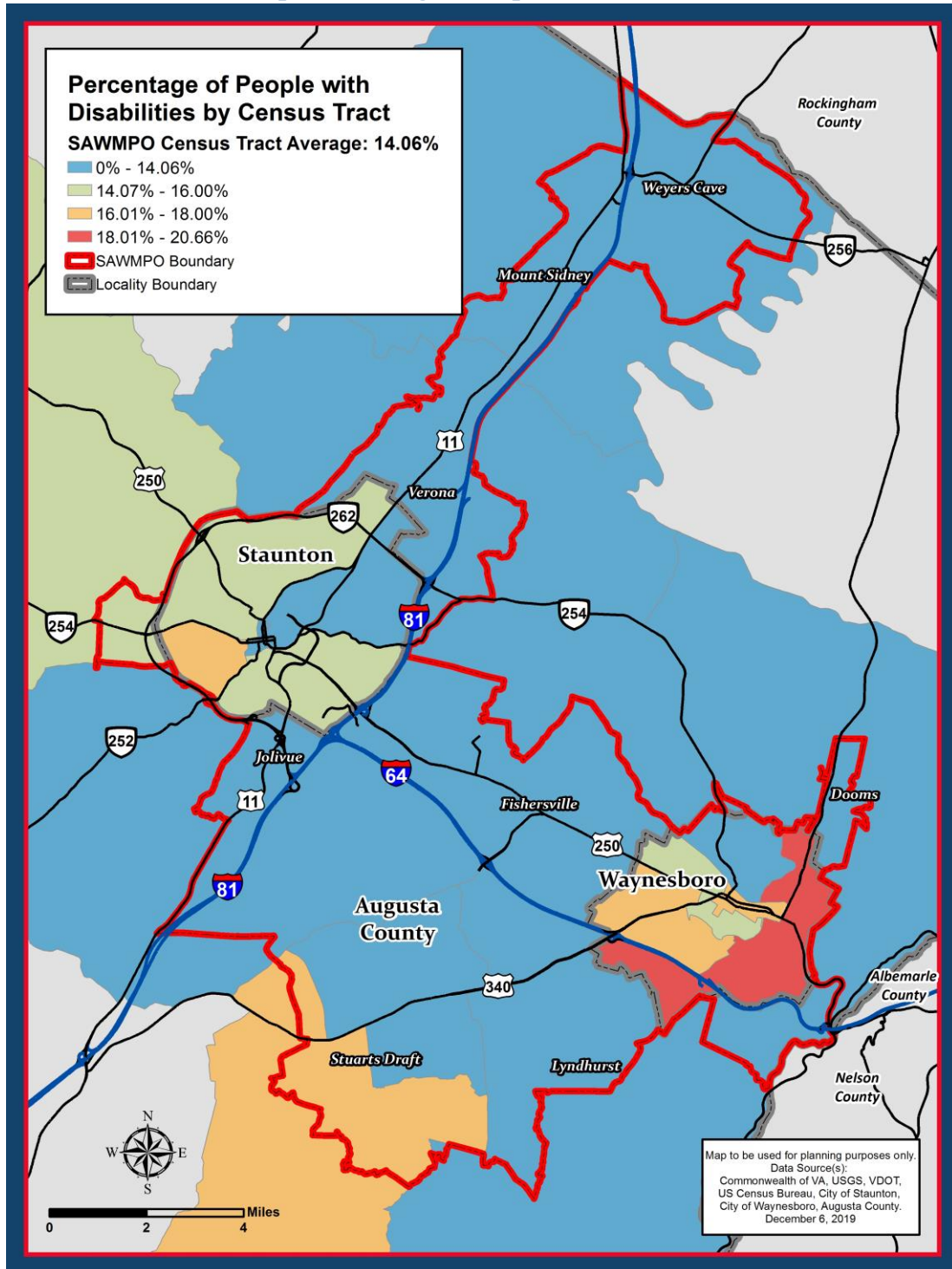
## Disabled Population

The U.S. Census collects information on disabled persons by asking questions on six disability types: hearing difficulty, vision difficulty, cognitive difficulty, ambulatory difficulty, self-care difficulty, and independent living difficulty. Respondents who report anyone of the six disability types are considered to have a disability. According to the 2017 ACS Census data, the SAWMPO census tract average population of disabled persons is 14.6%, which is higher than national (12.6%) and state (11.5%) figures.

**Map 7** highlights areas with higher concentrations of the population with disabilities. Waynesboro has the highest percentage, with over 16% of the population classified disabled, followed by Staunton at 15%, and Augusta County at nearly 13%.

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### Map 7: Percentage of People with Disabilities





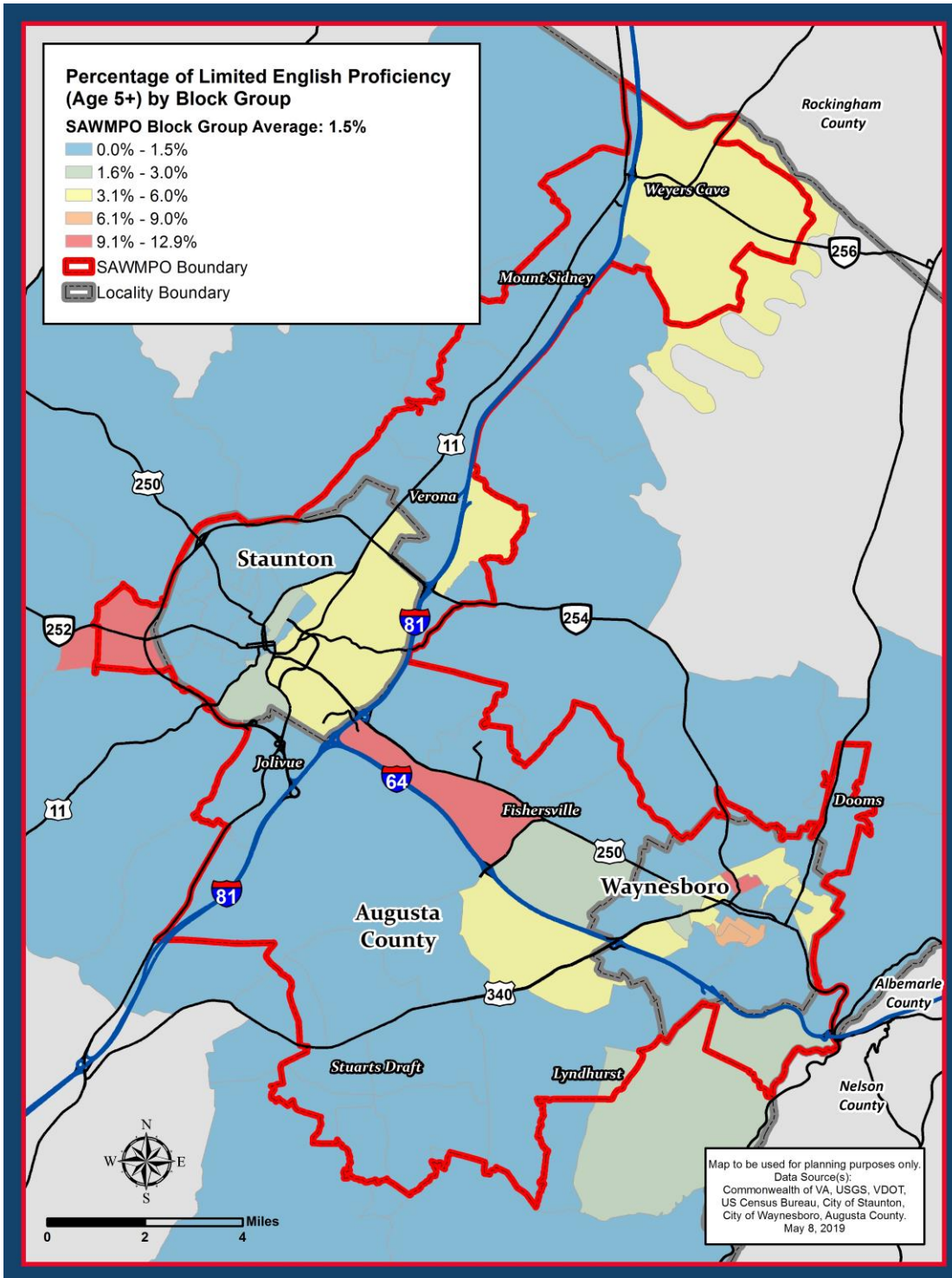
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## Language

**Map 8** displays U.S. Census data on the percentage of the population over the age of 5 that speaks English less than “very well,” and have at least some difficulty speaking the language. Overall, the SAWMPO area’s limited English-speaking population is 1.5% of the population, which is lower than the state average of 2.6%. One census tract west of Staunton exceeds 9%, as well as the area east of I-81 towards Fishersville, and a small area in Waynesboro.

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## Map 8: Percentage of LEP Population



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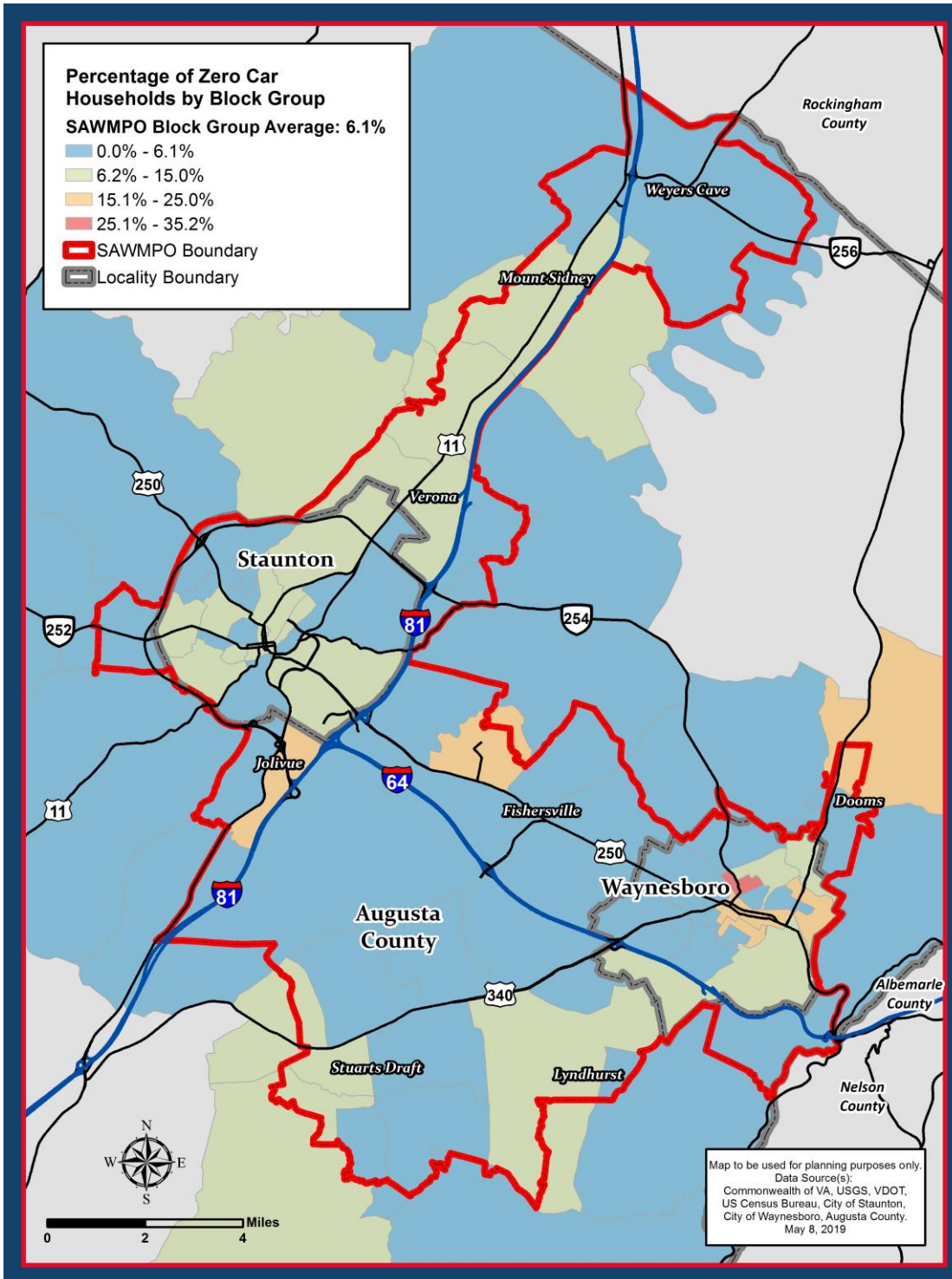
## Zero Car Households

On average, 6.1% of households in the SAWMPO area do not own a vehicle. The highest percentage is in downtown Waynesboro, which has over 25% of the population classified as not owning a vehicle. Additionally, areas northwest of Fishersville, and near Jolivue, have percentages over 15%. These increased percentages are likely due to the presence of Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center, which provides vocational training and medical interventions for people with disabilities.

**Map 9** on the following page illustrates the number of zero car households by census block group within the SAWMPO planning area. The percentage of zero car households was calculated by dividing the sum of zero car households by the total number of households per block group.

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Map 9: Percentage of Zero Car Households



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## 3 – 3 Existing Transportation Network

### Roadway System

The transportation network within the SAWMPO planning area includes a mix of road types, a public transportation system (bus and rail), and bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The efficiency and connectivity of the entire network will be evaluated in the document based on the coverage of roads, transit services, bicycle facilities, and sidewalks. Staunton and Waynesboro maintain their own roadway networks, while VDOT maintains all public roads within Augusta County.

Two major interstates cross through the SAWMPO planning area. Interstate 81 (I-81) runs south-north from east-central Tennessee to the Canadian border in New York. Interstate 64 (I-64) runs east-west from Norfolk, Virginia, to St. Louis, Missouri. Within the SAWMPO, these two interstates run concurrently from the southern boundary to just southeast of Staunton. I-81 and I-64 provide important connections to nearby cities such as Harrisonburg and Charlottesville. Additionally, I-81 is a significant north-south corridor for freight and other travel between states up and down the East Coast.

Within the SAWMPO planning area, there are six distinct functional classifications of roads: Interstate, Principal Arterial, Minor Arterial, Major Collector, Minor Collector, and Local. Each road is assigned a functional classification based on the road's intended purpose, or role it plays in serving the flow of trips through a transportation network. Criteria used to assign a functional class to a road include types of trips being served, expected volumes, network characteristics, population center thresholds, and interval spacing<sup>2</sup>. VDOT uses the functional classification to obtain funding for Highway Performance Monitoring System federal reporting and to establish construction priorities.

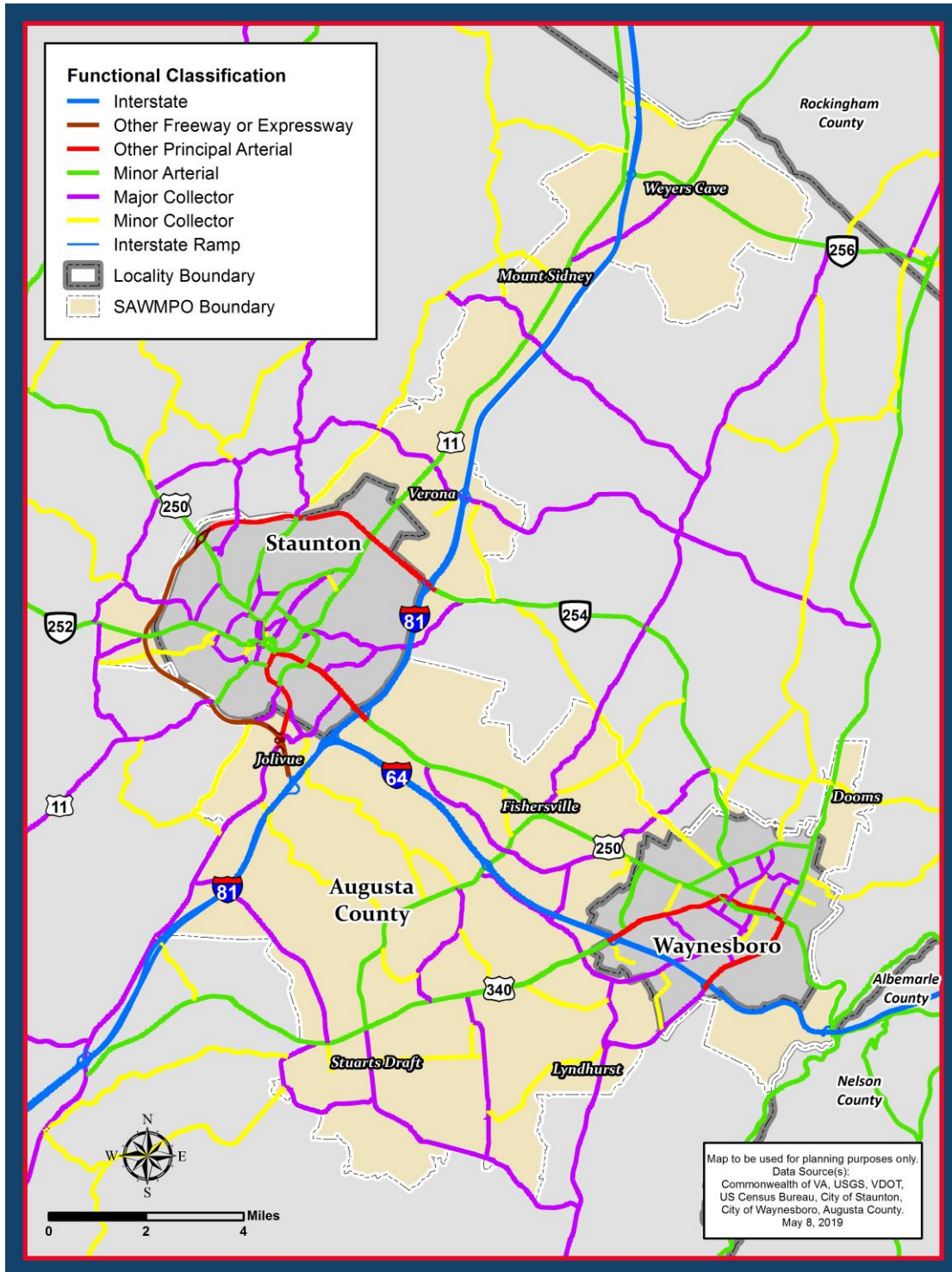
**Map 10** depicts the functional classification of roadways within the MPO area.

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<sup>2</sup> [Virginia Statewide Functional Classification System](#)

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Map 10: Functional Classification



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VDOT defines the functional classes as follows:

## ***Interstate***

- Highest traffic volume corridors
- Roads serving the longest trip desires
- Carry significant amounts of intra-area travel
- Does not provide land access and interconnects primarily with other classification routes

## ***Other Principal Arterials***

- Serve corridor movements of substantial state or interstate travel
- Provides an integrated network without stub connections

## ***Minor Arterial***

- Links cities and large towns (and other generators, such as major resorts)
- Spaces at such intervals so that all developed areas of the State are within a reasonable distance of an arterial highway
- Provide service to corridors with trip lengths and travel density greater than those served by collectors or local systems.
- Design should be expected to provide for relatively high overall speeds, with minimum interference to through movement

## ***Major Collector***

- Provide service to any county seat not on an arterial system, to larger towns not directly served by higher systems
- Link the above to nearby larger towns or routes of higher classification
- Serve the more important intra-county travel corridors

## ***Minor Collector***

- Spaced at intervals, consistent with population density
- To collect traffic from local roads and bring all developed areas within a reasonable distance of a collector road
- Provide service to the remaining smaller communities
- Link local traffic generators with their rural hinterland

## ***Local***

- Serves primarily to provide direct access to adjacent land
- Provide service to travel over relatively short distance as compared to collectors or other higher systems

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## Transit

The CSPDC administers transit for the SAWMPO area through the BRITE public transit system. The CSPDC assumed the administrative role following the creation of the SAWMPO, which made the Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro area eligible to receive Section 5307 urbanized area formula funding through the Federal Transit Administration that are only available to public entities.

The transit service is operated under a contract with Virginia Regional Transit (VRT), which provides service supervision, operators, buses, and all maintenance functions. The agreement between CSPDC and VRT is a five-year contract that was executed in March 2017, with an effective date of July 1, 2017, and allows for two, two-year extensions.

BRITE operates ten deviated fixed routes and two paratransit services (**see Map 11**). The 250 Connector route between Staunton and Waynesboro was the initial fixed route of the transit service. BRITE also provides transportation through ADA Compliant Complementary Paratransit Service and Deviated Fixed Route Service within a  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile radius of any of the BRITE fixed routes.

These transportation services are designed for individuals with disabilities as defined by the ADA who cannot otherwise access BRITE's fixed route bus service for some or all trips. This is an origin-to-destination service whereby passengers are typically picked up at the curb of their pick-up point and delivered to the curb of their destination.

The CSPDC adopted a Transit Development Plan (TDP) in August 2015 to establish broad policy goals and functional service needs. The TDP provides information on service delivery gaps, community needs for expanded service, organizational and financial management, marketing initiatives, and service delivery standards. The TDP provides information on service delivery gaps, community needs for expanded service, organizational and financial management, marketing initiatives, and service delivery standards. The next TDP updated is scheduled for 2020.

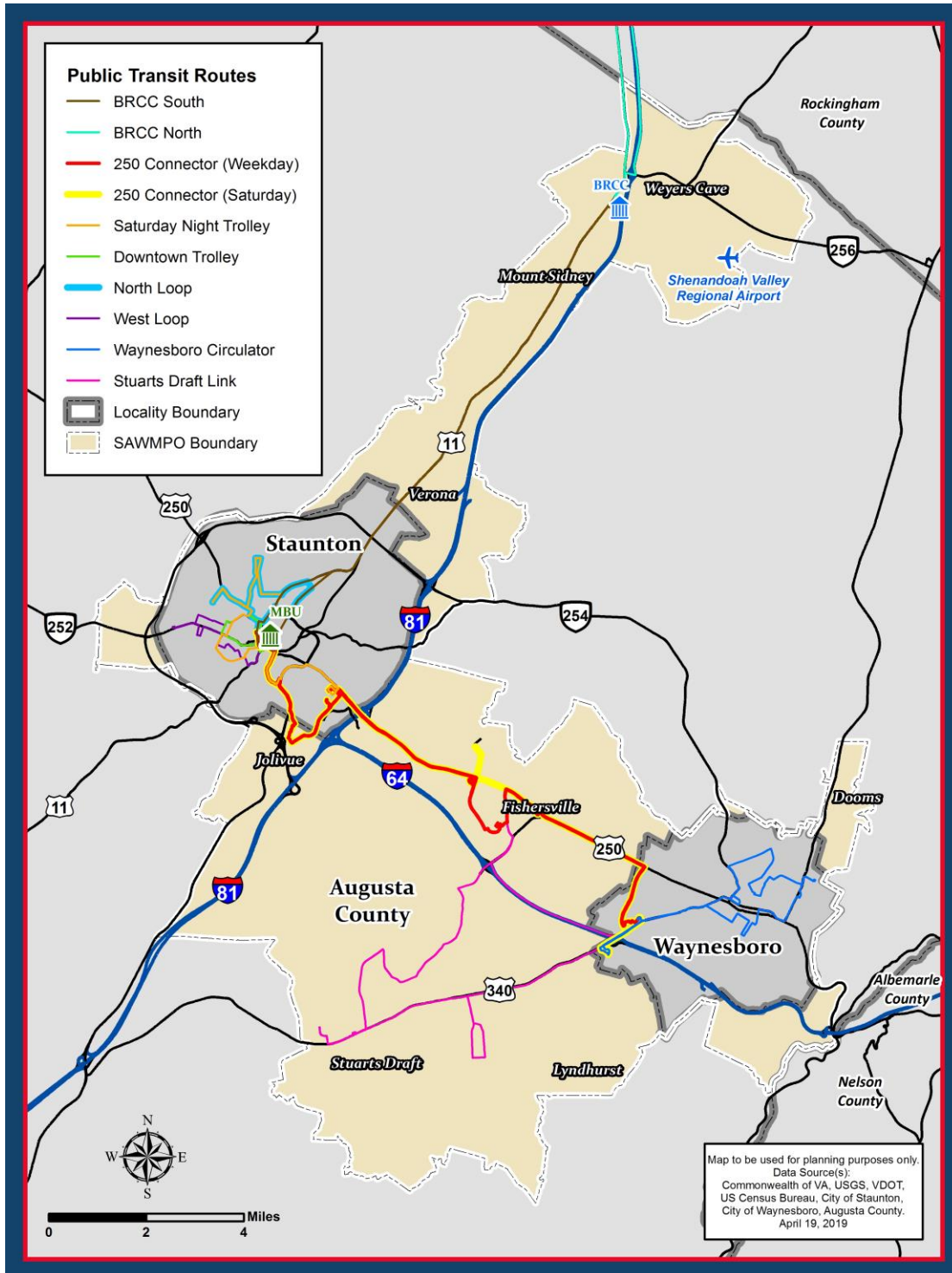
## Intercity Bus Service

The Virginia Breeze, established in 2017 by DRPT through the private bus service Megabus, is an intercity bus service connecting Blacksburg with Union Station in Washington, D.C. The daily route includes several stops between the two locations, including a stop at the Martins store on Richmond Road in Staunton. The service is oriented on college students from Virginia Tech and James Madison University traveling the I-81 corridor. From January to March 2019, the Staunton stop had 129 northbound trips and 22 southbound trips. In spring 2020, the service announced new routes connecting Danville to Washington, D.C., and Martinsville to Richmond.



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Map 11: Transit Routes



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## Rideshare

The CSPDC offers coordination assistance for ride sharing through free carpool and vanpool coordination, and also operates a Guaranteed Ride Home program. There are two rideshare park and ride lots within the SAWMPO planning area. One is located east of Verona on Lodge Lane at Laurel Hill Road, near I-81, and the other is located at Waynesboro Town Center off Route 340 south of the I-64 interchange.

## Bicycle Facilities

The region has a limited system of bicycle facilities and lacks accommodations for bicycles on many major corridors and routes. Nonetheless, Waynesboro's Bicycle Plan and the Staunton Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan focus on increased local connections within the cities, as well as connecting to proposed trail systems in Augusta County to create a true regional trail network. Current facility types include multi-use paths, bike lanes, and sharrows marked for shared lanes. As the network grows, it can increasingly be more than a recreational resource, and can serve cyclists for commuting to work, school, and for other personal trips.

The initiatives of Waynesboro, Staunton, and Augusta County to create new facilities and modify existing ones to better accommodate cyclists is a response to overall growth in the SAWMPO and a changing approach to mobility. Many of the roadways in the SAWMPO lack paved shoulders for bicyclists to use, and as population growth occurs and bicycling becomes more popular, further steps are needed to recognize this mode. Since 2004, VDOT has had a "Policy for Integrating Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations" that states that VDOT "will initiate all highway construction projects with the presumption that the projects shall accommodate bicycling and walking."

In 2019, regional partners held the first annual Walk-Bike Summit to improve the health, safety, and economy of the region by making it more accommodating to pedestrians and bicyclists. These efforts illustrate an increasing regional awareness of the importance of alternative transportation modes.

## Pedestrian Facilities

As the primary pedestrian centers in the SAWMPO, downtown Staunton and Waynesboro have sidewalk networks that cover most of their streets. Sidewalks are largely absent outside downtown areas, fragmented, and associated with specific developments. This pattern is consistent with regional, state, and national trends, with historic urban centers having streets with sidewalks. The lack of pedestrian facilities in many areas creates a greater need for a dependable and consistent public transportation system.

Sidewalk facilities in support of pedestrians are now widely regarded as being a desirable and necessary part of mobility and accessibility. The SAWMPO communities have worked to extend sidewalk and pedestrian facilities through federal grant programs offered through the Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) including traditional enhancement projects, and Safe Routes To Schools projects. In addition to Staunton and Waynesboro, County communities have developed pedestrian networks, including Verona, Fishersville, Stuarts Draft, and Weyers Cave. The pedestrian networks in these communities are limited and do not connect with any outside pedestrian networks, or adjacent land uses.

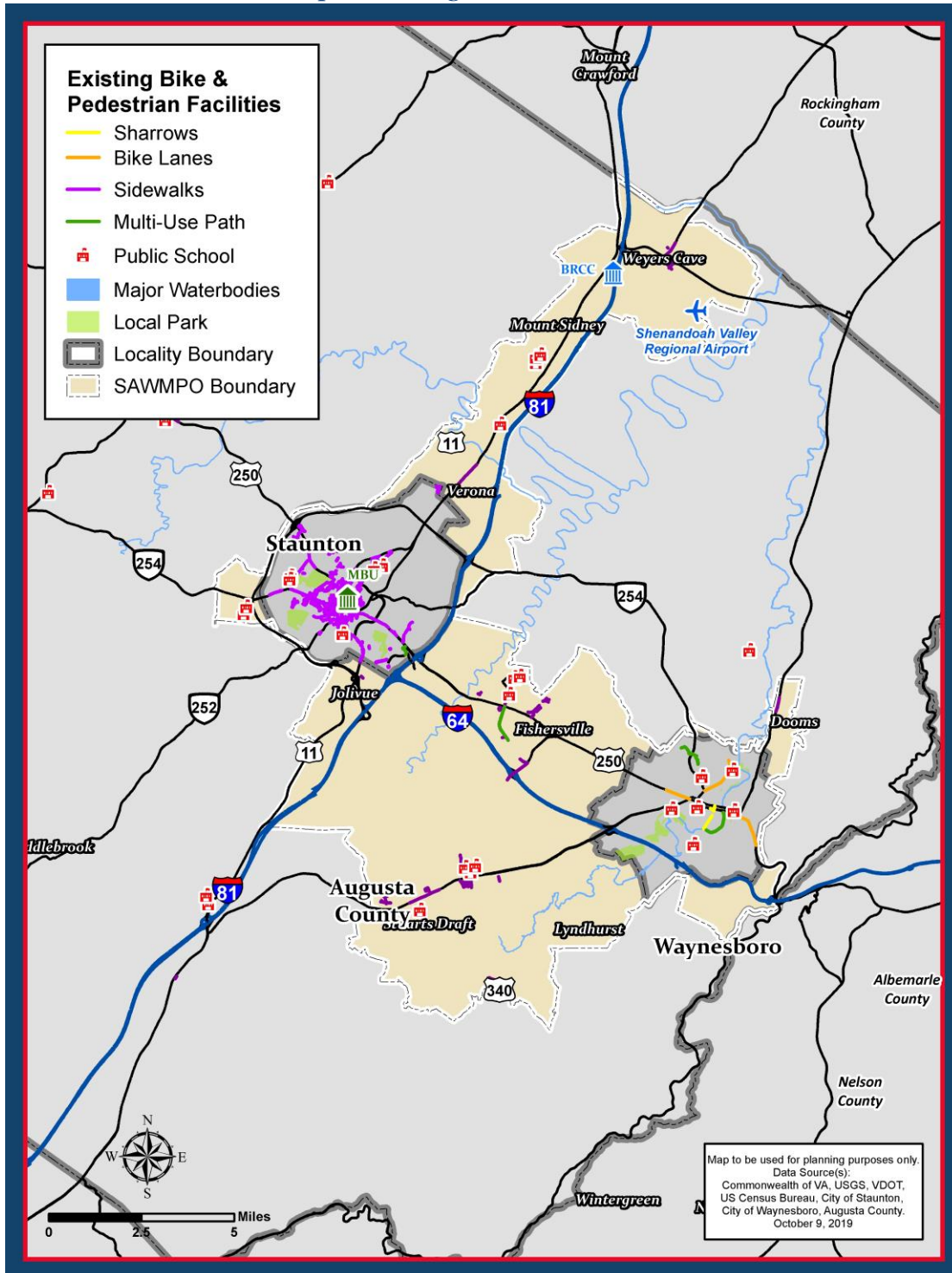
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Reflecting current perspectives, new developments are being added in the SAWMPO that have sidewalks. In certain locations, such as around Augusta Health, the Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center, sidewalk /trail networks are becoming components of the transportation system. However, in other places the new facilities are part of small networks of sidewalks that do not connect to a wider system of sidewalks or paths, forcing pedestrians onto the shoulders of busy roads and limiting opportunities for making short trips on foot. There is a need to establish larger networks of pedestrian facilities, so that users can conveniently and safely reach their destinations via continuous travel on sidewalks and paths.

**Map 12** depicts pedestrian facilities throughout the SAWMPO area. **Maps 13** and **14** reflect pedestrian facilities in the Cities of Staunton and Waynesboro, respectively.

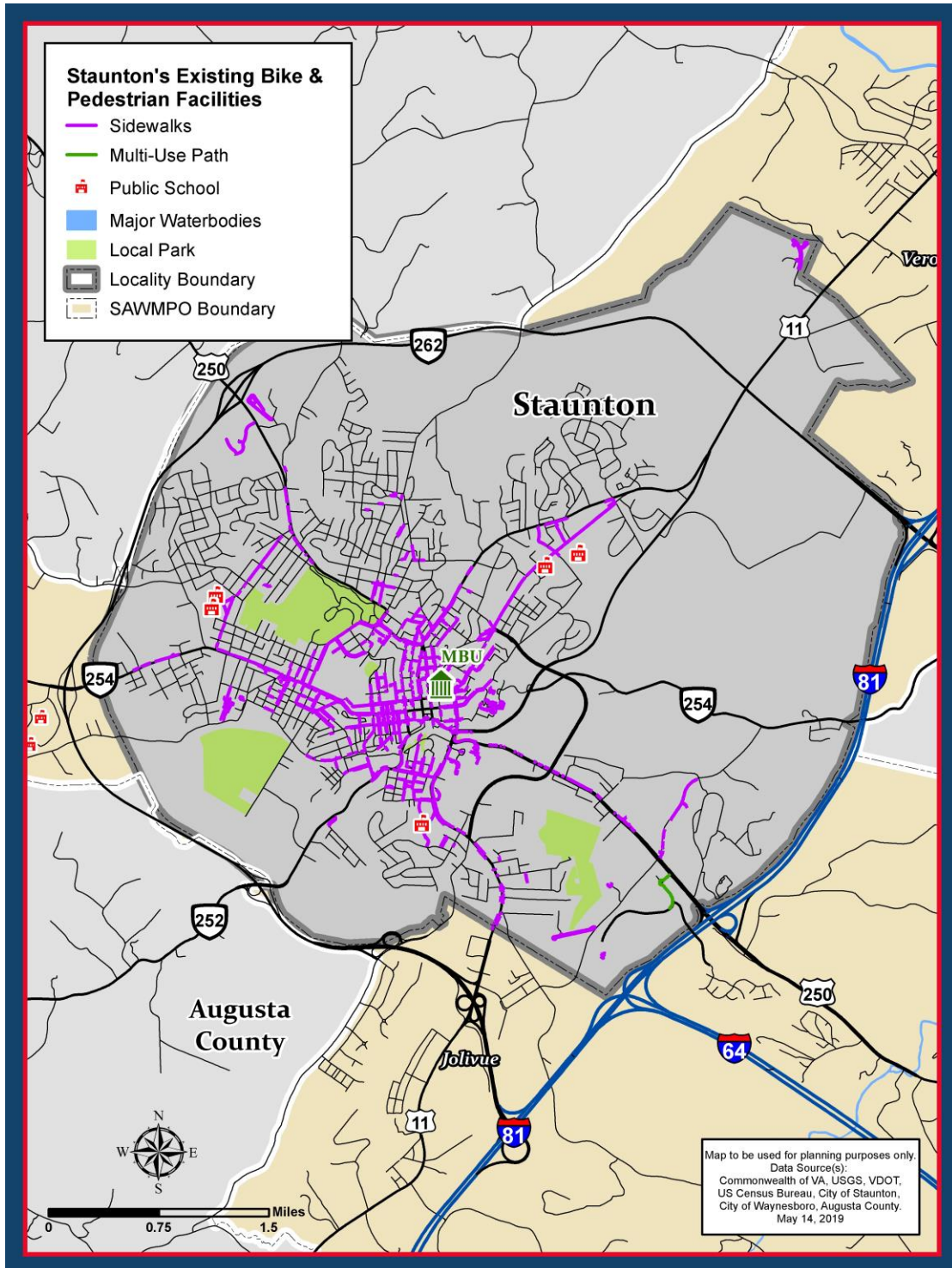
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### Map 12: Existing Bike and Ped Facilities



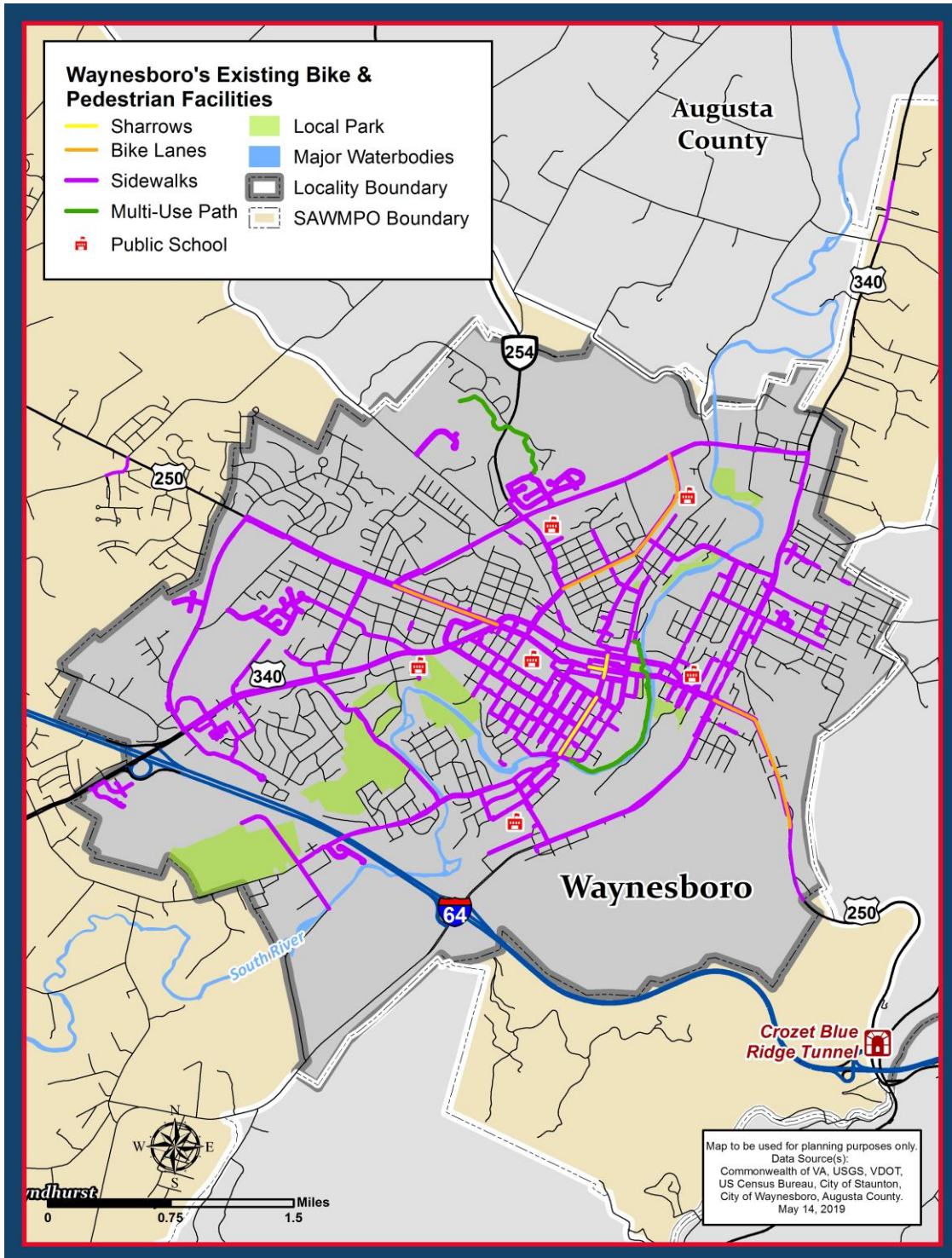
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Map 13: Staunton's Existing Bike and Ped Facilities



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Map 14: Waynesboro's Existing Bike and Ped Facilities



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## Air and Rail Service

### **Airports**

The Shenandoah Valley Regional Airport (SHD), located in Weyers Cave, offers scheduled air service through United Express Airlines, which provides access to two major hubs: Washington-Dulles International Airport (IAD) and Chicago O'Hare International Airport (ORD). Both routes are operated by United's regional partner, SkyWest Airlines, utilizing a 50-seat seat plane.

The Charlottesville Albemarle Airport (CHO) is 35 miles northeast of Waynesboro and offers daily nonstop flights to Washington-Dulles, Charlotte, Atlanta, Philadelphia, New York LaGuardia, and Chicago. The airport has car rentals and hotel shuttles, but no other ground transportation.

Eagles Nest Airport is a small, private general aviation airport offering flight instruction and aircraft maintenance west of Waynesboro.

### **Passenger Rail Service**

Amtrak provides limited passenger rail service in downtown Staunton. The westbound "Cardinal" line connects New York City – via Washington, D.C. and Charlottesville – with Chicago on Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, with a scheduled arrival into Staunton on those days of the week. The eastbound Cardinal departs Chicago on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, with a scheduled stop in Staunton on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays. Daily rail service connecting New York and New Orleans via Washington, D.C. and Atlanta is available in Charlottesville.

Amtrak operates connecting "Thruway" bus service to and from the train station in Charlottesville to Richmond, allowing rail passengers on the "Atlantic Coast Service" (Boston to Miami) through Richmond to connect with Charlottesville. However, for passengers originating in or destined for the SAWMPO, outside of the limited-schedule Cardinal there is no Amtrak or intercity bus service between the SAWMPO and Charlottesville.

### **Freight Rail Service**

Class 1 freight rail service is provided by CSX and Norfolk Southern over their own rails. Buckingham Branch Railroad (BBRR) runs on the CSX line east to west, while the Shenandoah Valley Railroad owns their tracks connecting to the CSX lines, which are operated by BBRR in Staunton, running north to south. The BBRR and Shenandoah Valley are both Class II short-line railroads.

The Norfolk Southern and Buckingham Branch rail lines intersect in Waynesboro, with the former line running north-south along the eastern side of the City, including bisecting the City's industrial park. The Shenandoah Valley Railroad runs north from Staunton, approximately paralleling the I-81 corridor. It interchanges with the BBRR at Staunton. The BBRR extends from Staunton through the central part of the MPO through Waynesboro. Maintaining these short-line railroads is critical for shipper access to the freight rail system.

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The SAWMPO region has many opportunities to access rail facilities with interconnectivity between the CSX and Norfolk Southern lines. There are two transloading facilities in the Fishersville area of Augusta County, and a transloading facility in the City of Staunton. There are a number of sidings located in conjunction with transloading facilities and customers, and generally where industrial activity occurs. Freight is transported via semi-truck rely on local roadway networks to access inter-regional transportation networks – the interstates and railroads. To maintain or expand the opportunities for intermodal freight connections, it is critical to maintain industrial zoning on parcels adjacent to the railroads. These sites provide additional opportunities for developing transloading facilities, or sidings, and the ability to move more freight via rail.

In December 2019, the State and CSX announced a \$3.7 billion agreement for the state to buy 225 miles of track and build new passenger rail improvements. Between Doswell, Charlottesville, Staunton and Clifton Forge, the State will also purchase the 173-mile Buckingham Branch Line, which could be used for future east-west passenger rail service. For now, the tracks will remain in use for freight services. Passenger rail advocates and other groups want to resurrect a defunct east-west rail line that would run from the Blue Ridge Mountains to Virginia Beach.

## Goods and Freight Movement

The SAWMPO region supports large manufacturing and industrial concentrations in the Shenandoah Valley, and truck freight is the region’s most utilized method of goods movement by a significant margin. Within the SAWMPO, Interstate 81 is the primary north-south truck route, transporting goods within Virginia and beyond, with over three-quarters of the truck tonnage being pass-through freight per the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIPI) Multimodal Freight Study.

In 2017, I- 81 carried approximately 55,000 trips per day, with the section south of Staunton having over 25% truck traffic, and north of Staunton between 20 – 25 %. Paralleling Interstate 81, Route 11 serves as a backup to the interstate, particularly when incidents occur. Route 11 supports 3-6% of truck trips throughout the urbanized area, mainly providing connectivity for local goods movement. I-64 carries significantly less truck traffic than I-81, with the section between Staunton and Afton Mountain carrying approximately 3-9% truck traffic.

In December 2018, the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) approved the I-81 Corridor Improvement Plan. The study identified a \$2 billion package of projects for the corridor. In April 2019, the General Assembly passed I-81 Improvement Program legislation amendments related to funding mechanisms for improvements to the corridor. Most of the new revenues will come from increased registration fees for trucks, based on their weight and wear on roadways, as well as higher taxes on diesel fuel.

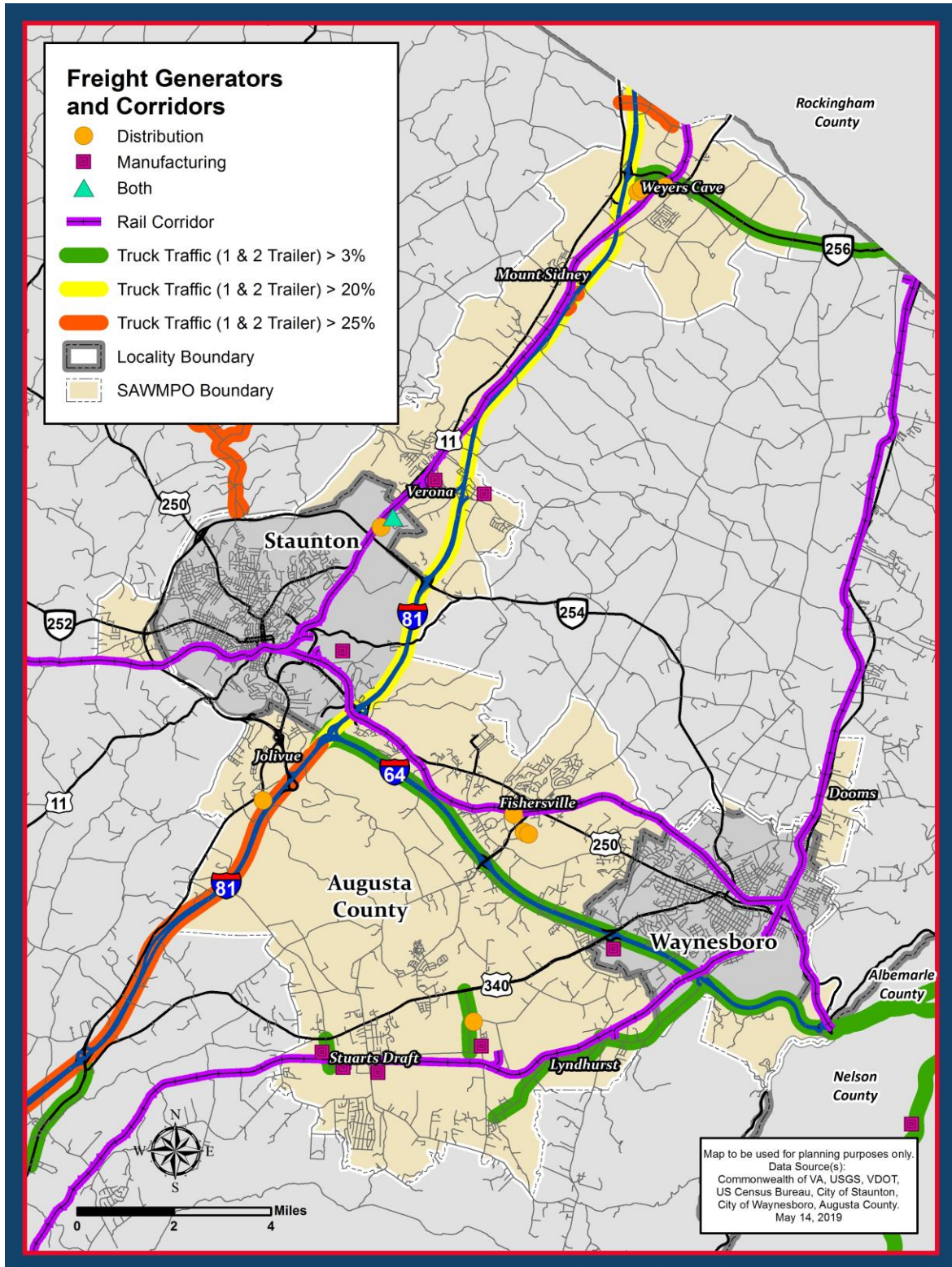
## ***Distribution Centers***

Virginia continues to experience significant growth in large-scale warehousing development which is often associated with high-volume or “big box” importers. These importers rely upon uninterrupted flows of cargo through Virginia’s ports and then onto highway and rail connections. Over 12 distribution and manufacturing centers were identified in the SAWMPO area (**see map 15**).



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### Map 15: Freight Generators and Corridors



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## Safety

The number of crashes involving pedestrians, cyclists, and motor vehicles is an indicator of the safety of the road and intersections in the SAWMPO. Crash data specifying the type, location, and severity of crashes can be used to identify the corridors and intersections in need of further study and improvements.

Crash data from the time period of 2016 to June 2020 shown in **Map 16** indicates a general pattern of property damage and injury from vehicular crashes along the interstate, and major and minor arterials in the MPO area. The minor arterial and collector roads with larger numbers of property damage and injury have been the subject of smaller area studies to identify operational improvements to address crashes; however, a more in-depth analysis of crash rates, crash type, and whether crashes are likely to be reduced based on improvements is required before specific corridors and intersections can be identified for improvements.

**Chapter 5** further details MPO crash data, and specific areas identified as priority areas for safety improvements, starting on page 83.

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Map 16: Crashes, 2016 - June 2020

