



## Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Regular Meeting Minutes August 16, 2023, 2:00 p.m.

Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission\*  
112 MacTanly Place, Staunton, VA 24401

**Present (14 ):**

Voting Members				Others	
City of Staunton		VDOT		Staff (CSPDC)	
✓	Rodney Rhodes	✓	Don Komara		Ann Cundy
✓	Jeff Johnston	✓	Adam Campbell (Alt)	✓	Zach Beard
	Tim Hartless (Alt)	✓	Cody Huffman (Alt)	✓	Devon Thompson
	Lyle Hartt (Alt)	<b>VA DRPT</b>		✓	Paula Melester
<b>Augusta County</b>		✓*	Grace Stankus	✓	Ansley Heller
✓	Doug Wolfe				
	Alidia Vane	<b>Non-Voting Members</b>			
✓	Elizabeth Goodloe (Alt)			<b>Other attendees</b>	
	Vacant (Alt)	<b>VRT</b>		✓*	Alexandra Castrechini
<b>City of Waynesboro</b>		✓*	Steve Wilson	✓*	Shane McCabe
✓	Leslie Tate, Chairperson		Phil Thompson (Alt)		
✓	Alisande Tombarge	<b>Federal Highway Admin.</b>			
✓	Scott Kesecker (Alt)		Kevin Jones		
	Chad Rambo (Alt)	<b>Federal Transit Admin.</b>			
			Michele DeAngelis		
		<b>VA Dept. of Aviation</b>			
			Rusty Harrington		

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## Call to Order

The meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) of the Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (SAWMPO) was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by Ms. Leslie Tate, Chairperson.

## Public Comment

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

## Approval of Minutes

Chairperson Tate presented minutes from the June 21<sup>st</sup> TAC Meeting.

***Mr. Jeff Johnson moved, seconded by Mr. Doug Wolfe, to approve the minutes of June 21, 2023, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.***

## Afton Mountain Transportation Site Assessment Scope of Work

Mr. Beard began with a brief overview of the current site assessment of the Afton Mountain Study Area. Mr. Beard reminded the TAC that in 2021, Augusta County developed a Scope of Work for an EDA CARES grant to conduct a comprehensive site assessment at the Inn at Afton Mountain. While the grant was not funded, Augusta County began survey work earlier this year with Virginia Industrial Revitalization (IRF) grant funds. Mr. Beard explained that the work is being conducted between SAWMPO, Augusta County, the City of Waynesboro, and Timmons Group, a construction engineering company.

Mr. Beard explained that the County, the City, the MPO, VDOT, and Timmons met in July to discuss the scope of work for the Transportation portions of the projects. The draft scope of work has been submitted by Timmons. It highlights eight tasks: roadway geometry, access, traffic volume, operations, bike ped volumes, site constraint, assessment of future bike ped connections along US-250, access management, traffic sites at four sites along US-250 (US-250 at Blue Ridge Parkway, US-250 at Rt. 610, US-250 at Afton Circle, Rt. 610 at Blue Ridge Parkway). The Operational Analysis will look at existing conditions for 2023 and compare to forecasts for a yet to be decided outlook year. The deliverables of the study will include three concept layouts of all improvements in the study area that highlight the proposed bike ped improvements, access and intersection improvements, and property impacts for future planning efforts in the area.

Mr. Beard reminded the TAC that the project has a lot of moving parts, and the Scope of Work was providing flexibility as other parts of the plan are developed. Mr. Beard explained that pending the review the Scope of Work can proceed, with the project likely starting soon. Mr. Beard opened the floor for questions and a short discussion ensued.

Chairperson Tate asked for final questions and moved the meeting on to the next item.

## Presentation and Discussion: Proposed SMART SCALE Policy Changes, Adam Campbell, VDOT

Mr. Adam Campbell began his presentation on the Proposed SMART SCALE Policy Changes by explaining that he had given the same presentation to the SAWMPO Policy Board previously in the month, and that the Policy Board directed SAWMPO staff to write a letter sharing concerns with the CTB related to the process and the changes under consideration for SMART SCALE Round 6. Mr. Campbell quickly explained that after Round 5 SMART SCALE, the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIPI) lead a strong survey campaign to gauge what participants thought was working well or not working with SMART SCALE. Concurrently there are thoughts and concerns in the Secretary of Transportation's office that they would like evaluated. To look at where these concerns can be addressed, OIPI, along with ATCS consultants began doing a deep dive this spring on the process to present options for change to the CTB.

With the history of the policy changes covered, Mr. Campbell began reviewing the potential issues identified from the survey and the potential changes to the process (see **Table 1**). Issues highlighted in yellow in Table 1 will likely have the greatest negative impact on the SAWMPO, as they 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.

Going into greater detail regarding the reduced number of applications, Mr. Campbell explained that for the

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

SAWMPO the number of SMART SCALE applications would be reduced from 4 to 2. Mr. Campbell also paid particular attention to the change in the way Land Use is being weighted and explained that ultimately the goal would be to split the Land Use percentage between safety and congestion for areas A,B, C and moving it all to safety for area D. Mr. Campbell also spent more time highlighting the changes being suggested to High Priority Program Project Funding, explaining that they would greatly restrict the type of projects eligible for funding and disallow transit projects. Mr. Campbell continued and 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.

Chairperson Tate asked if there were any questions, and discussion about the proposed changes and SMART SCALE ensued.

### ***Proposed SMART SCALE Policy Changes Draft Letter***

Mr. Beard explained that a copy of the drafted letter highlighting concerns about the proposed SMART SCALE changes was linked in the meeting mailout packet. He explained that the letter was drafted at the request of the SAWMPO Policy Board saw the same SMART SCALE presentation from Mr. Campbell. He explained that the main concerns highlighted in the letter were the concerns with the number of applications being reduced, the restricted project eligibility for High Priority Program Project Funding, and the adjusted Land Use scoring factor. Mr. Beard explained that the HRMPO has also sent a letter to the CTB, and letters were also forecast from other MPOs as well. Mr. Beard directed the TAC to provide feedback to the letter if they have it, and Chairperson Tate moved the meeting to agency updates.

## **Agency Updates**

### ***VDOT***

Mr. Campbell provided the following update:

- The Transportation Alternatives and Revenue Sharing final application intake period is open until October 2.
- The application cycle for Local HSYP Systemic Applications has opened. The application cycle closed October 31<sup>st</sup>.

Mr. Don Komara provided the following update:

- The 262 widening project has begun with A&J Construction.
- The exit ramp at 235, General Excavation has begun moving dirt. It is expected to finish by the spring.
- The public hearing on July 27th about the improvements at Woodrow Wilson went well with people voicing their thoughts.
- Barter Brooke Road project is being opened on September 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- Kokosan is moving along with the Staunton 81 widening and should begin in the late fall.

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- The Verona Project has begun to move forward.
  - Bridge Deck Replacement on the ramp from 81-S to 64-E

### ***DRPT***

Ms. Grace Stankus provided the following update:

- Transit oriented development planning funding opportunity, to support planning efforts associated with fixed guideway and port capacity improvement projects. Proposals are due October 10<sup>th</sup> and DRPT is available to provide technical assistance and support.

### ***Transit***

Ms. Devon Thompson provided the following BRITE update:

- CSPDC Recently underwent a FTA Triennial Review. These are conducted every three years and examines how organizations are meeting the statutory and administrative requirements through 23 areas of compliance. The draft report is being completed. In the review there were three findings. Corrective Action Plans are being drafted to address the findings now. The final report will be finalized towards the end of the year.
- The Blue Ridge Community College shuttle has had its hours changed. After hearing public feedback about the reduced hours, an hour was added back to the BRCC shuttle schedule. The shuttle now runs until 7pm. In addition, there will no longer be a distinction between the North and South. They will be combined to be one loop.
- The design and engineering phase of the Lewis St. hub moves forward. Staff is pursuing a certificate of appropriateness from the Staunton's Historical Review Commission. Once the certificate of appropriateness is acquired the project can continue to the 90% design phase for the plan.
- BRITE will be promoted to different community groups and schools through public events as the school year begins.

Ms. Paula Melester provided the following Afton Express update:

- Afton Express is preparing to kick off DRPT's Discover Transit Month with multiple in person events to promote transit.
- On September 1<sup>st</sup> Afton will be fare free to celebrate it's 2<sup>nd</sup> year of operation. To celebrate Afton Express and increase ridership there will be a pop-up event at the UVA hospital stop on September 14<sup>th</sup> and another pop up at the Staunton Mall stop on the 28<sup>th</sup> of September.
- Ridership remains steady over the summer, between about 60 to 80 passenger trips per day.

## **Locality Updates**

### ***Staunton***

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Mr. Jeff Johnson noted that the operational changes closing the Lewis lot from 10pm to 5am have made a substantial difference. The city is implementing the first round of HSIP Systemic funding from last year and is beginning to put together next year's application.

### **Augusta County**

Mr. Doug Wolfe noted that the Verona Pedestrian Project had received additional funding and presented the contract to the Board and the Verona Pedestrian Project was approved. Augusta County will be taking their recommendation for their consultant for their Comprehensive Plan Update and the Economic Development Strategic Plan to the Board for approval.

### **Waynesboro**

Chairperson Tate mentioned that the City of Waynesboro's Greenway Phase III Sidewalk project has moved into the right-of-way phase. A contract for the Fourth Street pedestrian project has been awarded with a hopeful Sept. 1<sup>st</sup> notice to proceed date. The Southern Connector should be starting on August 21<sup>st</sup> with a groundbreaking on Sept. 6<sup>th</sup>. Broad Street and Main Street streetscape projects are both in PE and the Rosser and 13<sup>th</sup> St. Roundabout has been started.

### **Other Business**

Chairperson Tate called for any other business; Mr. Campbell confirmed that the cities were aware that they had received their HSIP funding and Mr. Beard reminded the TAC that the joint Albemarle MPO and SAWMPO meeting is scheduled for September 27<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the gymnasium of the Fishburne Military Academy.

### **Upcoming Meetings**

Chairperson Tate stated that the Policy Board is scheduled to meet on September 6<sup>th</sup> and the TAC on September 20<sup>th</sup>.

### **Meeting Adjourned**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Zach Beard, Senior Planner