

Policy Board Regular Meeting Minutes January 3, 2024, 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)		Staff (CSPDC)
✓	Brad Arrowood, Vice Chair	✓	Cody Huffman (Alt)	✓	Bonnie Riedesel
✓	Amanda Kaufman		VA DRPT	✓	Ann Cundy
	Augusta County	✓*	Grace Stankus	✓	Zach Beard
✓	Tim Fitzgerald		VRT	✓	Devon Thompson
✓	Carolyn Bragg (Chair)	✓*	Steve Wilson	✓	Paula Melester
	Jennifer Whetzel (Alt)		Phil Thompson (Alt)		Ansley Heller
	Pam Carter (Alt)		Kevin Jones	✓	Allyson Finchum
	City of Waynesboro		FTA		
✓	Jim Wood		Chelsea Beytas		
✓	Todd Wood		VA DOA		
	Michael Hamp (Alt)	✓*	Rusty Harrington		
	VDOT		CTB		
✓	Todd Stevens		Mark Merrill		Others
✓	Brad Reed (Alt)				Josh Knight, Staunton
	Don Komara (Alt)			✓*	Courtney Thompson, GARCC
	Matt Dana (Alt)			✓*	Thomas Ruff, Timmons
✓* Indicates Zoom Participants					

Call to Order

The SAWMPO Policy Board meeting was called to order at 10:03 a.m. by Carolyn Bragg, 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 were indicated by an asterisk; all others attended in-person.



Introductions

Todd Stevens, VDOT, introduced Brad Reed, who will be an alternate voting member for the SAWMPO Policy Board and SAWMPO Technical Advisory Committee. Brad was previously a member of the Harrisonburg-Rockingham MPO committees.

Amanda Kaufman introduced Josh Knight, Stanton's newly hired Engagement and Communications Manager.

Public Comment

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

Approval of Minutes

Chair Bragg presented the minutes from the November 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.

Afton Mountain Small Area Study Update (Board Memo #24-01) -

Mr. Zach Beard presented information on the Afton Mountain Small Area Study. The project is near the I-64 Exit 99 interchange. Augusta County is using multiple grants and funding sources to complete a comprehensive site assessment. The MPO is assisting with the transportation section of the assessment which covers three main areas including evaluating the existing vehicular network along Route 25; evaluating the bike/pedestrian connection to the site and recreational points of interest; and developing a set of scenarios and improvements for future development.

Mr. Thomas Ruff, Senior Project Manager with Timmons Group, is the lead on the project and provided an update. Mr. Ruff stated that the project began in September 2023. Data collection occurred at multiple interchange/intersections around the area in October 2023. A standard baseline was developed, and operational analysis was conducted. Timmons met with the County of Augusta, City of Waynesboro, VDOT, and SAWMPO to discuss potential scenarios of future development. Alternatives were created for transportation improvements from a safety aspect and reviewed traffic volume projections and necessary safety improvements to support redevelopment of the site.

The second portion of work is review of a multi-modal connection along Route 250 towards the Afton Tunnel Area. Mr. Ruff stated they are in the process of looking at opportunities for pedestrian mobility through the I-64 interchange. There are challenges to this with the bridge abutments, grades and other property and concerns with cost impacts.



Timmons will develop a future plan with cost estimate and work with VDOT to review Exit 99 Interstate ramps and impact of the recommendations for improvements for the Afton site. Timmons is currently finalizing recommendations, receiving feedback from stakeholders. An initial draft of recommendations will be finished within weeks.

SAWMPO 2024 Safety Targets (Board Memo #24-01)

Mr. Zach Beard presented information on the 2024 Safety Targets. Mr. Beard noted that in 2016, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) established National Performance Measures for Safety Performance for the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) to assess fatalities and serious injuries on public roads. The FHWA requires that state DOTs and MPOs set statewide annual safety percentage targets for reducing the number and rate of fatalities and serious injuries. He stated that the SAWMPO must concur with VDOT's safety targets or set MPO-specific targets by February 29, 2024, and there is no penalty for not meeting the targets.

Mr. Beard reviewed the statewide targets and goals, noting that in June 2023, the CTB approved OIPI's proposed methodology and statewide targets for calendar year 2024. He stated that OIPI's methodology establishes targets from statistical models that project future safety performance based on expected crash reductions from completed projects and five-year trends of the annual number of fatalities, serious injuries, and nonmotorized facilities and serious injuries.

Mr. Beard reported on the Aspirational Goals and SAWMPO Targets and Crash Trends. Mr. Beard reviewed the next steps, noting that the SAWMPO staff will submit a letter to VDOT concurring with the statewide safety targets for 2024, and will continue to evaluate opportunities for the MPO, state, and local partners to address the upward trend in fatal and serious injury crashes in the region.

The Board discussed how the MPO, as the regional transportation planning entity, can address safety issues not only through planning and projects, but also the behavioral aspects of safety. Board members also asked if there are any grants available for the MPO to address safety. Ms. Ann Cundy asked the Board if staff should research grants and opportunities for the MPO to address safety, and the Board concurred.

SMART SCALE Policy Changes Update (Board Memo #23-06)

Mr. Brad Reed presented an update on SMART SCALE Policy Changes. Mr. Reed noted that in 2023, the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIPI) conducted a full review of the SMART SCALE process in collaboration with VDOT and the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT). Mr. Reed reviewed

the proposed changes recommended by the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) to the SMART SCALE program.

Mr. Reed presented a PowerPoint presentation on the problem areas, staff recommendations, and improvements, and reviewed the High-Priority Projects Program (HPP) Eligibility, modification of Land Use Factor and Factor Weightings. Mr. Reed stated the schedule for Round 6 SMART SCALE, noting that preapplications are open March 1, 2024.

Agency Updates

Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)

Mr. Stevens reported on five active projects in the MPO:

- Staunton Crossings is on schedule and will conclude this spring.
- The Southern Connector is underway with completion date of September 2025.
- Route 2623 project – southern portion will be complete this spring.
- I-81 widening project has begun. In the process of shoulder strengthening in both directions. Tree removal to be completed prior to April 2024.
- Route 635 Barterbrook Road bridge project for bridge replacement is ahead of schedule.
- Weyers Cave turn lane project is complete.

DRPT

Ms. Stankus announced that last month the CTB approved Transit Rider Incentive Program and congratulated the CSPDC for receiving a trip grant for the Lewis Street Hub project. Also, the Fiscal Year 2025 grant applications cycle is now open and projects are due to DRPT by February 1st. She noted that if any jurisdiction has any questions regarding grant applications to contact DRPT.

BRITE Transit

Ms. Devon Thompson gave the following BRITE Transit updates:

Grant applications for DRPT have opened and staff will be working on these prior to the February 1, 2024, deadline. Applications will be made for Urban and Rural Operating and Capital Cost of Contracting, CAP Operating, and Technical Assistance grant for a micro transit feasibility study.

The design and engineering phase of the Lewis Street Hub rehabilitation project continues to move forward. CSPDC submitted final plans to the City of Staunton for site plan approval, and the plans were approved at the end of December. CSPDC is in the process of finalizing the Invitation for Bid for the construction.



Implementation for BRITE's mobile data collection system (MDCS) is progressing. CSPDC, VRY, and consultant Kimley-Horn are working with Passio Technologies to install and implement MDCS on Brite buses. System information has been shared with Passio and the account has been built out; and all equipment has been installed on the buses. On-site training has been scheduled with Passio later this month.

Afton Express

Ms. Paula Melester gave the following Afton Express update:

Ridership continues to remain strong. Ridership in the 2023 holiday season did not substantially decrease so based on demand trips will not change throughout the remainder of the holiday season. The year end survey to collect qualitative information from riders has been again launched. The annual report will be distributed within two weeks.

Localities

City of Waynesboro

There were no updates noted from the City of Waynesboro.

City of Staunton

There were no updates noted from the City of Staunton.

Augusta County

Mr. Tim Fitzgerald gave the following update:

- The Comprehensive Plan update is ongoing. The Board appointed a Steering Committee and will work with Focus Groups.
- The Verona Bike/Pedestrian project is ongoing and will extend to the City.

Other Business

Ms. Bonnie Riedesel announced that Zach Beard and his wife are the new parents of a baby daughter, Hazel June. The Policy Board congratulated Mr. Beard.

Ms. Bonnie Riedesel announced her retirement effective March 1, 2024. Ms. Riedesel started working for the CSPDC in 1994 and became the Executive Director in 2008. The SAWMPO was established under her tenure. The Policy Board thanked Ms. Riedesel for her many years of service and congratulated her on retirement.

Upcoming Meetings

Ms. Bragg announced that the next scheduled TAC meeting will be held January 17th, 2023, at 2:00 p.m., and the next Policy Board meeting is scheduled for February 7th, 2023, via ZOOM at 10:00 a.m.



Meeting Adjournment

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

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ann W. Cundy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ann W. Cundy
Director of Transportation