

**Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
Regular Meeting Minutes
May 15, 2024, 2:00 p.m.**

Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission
112 MacTanly Place, Staunton, VA 24401
or
Virtually via Zoom

Present (14)

Voting Members				Others	
City of Staunton		VDOT		Staff (CSPDC)	
✓	Rodney Rhodes	✓	Don Komara	✓	Zach Beard
	Tim Hartless (Alt)	✓	Brad Reed (Alt)	✓	Devon Thompson
	Lyle Hartt (Alt)	✓	Shane McCabe (Alt)	✓	Paula Melester
		VA DRPT		✓	Ann Cundy
	Augusta County	✓*	Grace Stankus		
✓	Doug Wolfe				
	Elizabeth Goodloe (Alt)	Non-Voting Members			
✓	Julia Hensley (Alt)			Other attendees	
		VRT			
	City of Waynesboro	✓*	Steve Wilson		
✓	Leslie Tate, Chairperson		Phil Thompson (Alt)		
✓	Alisande Tombarge	Federal Highway Admin.			
	Scott Kesecker (Alt)		Kevin Jones		
	Chad Rambo (Alt)	Federal Transit Admin.			
			Michele DeAngelis		
		VA Dept. of Aviation			
			Rusty Harrington		

*A virtual attendance option by Zoom is offered to non-voting members and other attendees. Virtual attendance is indicated by an asterisk; all others attended in-person.

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, Chair.

Public Comment

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

Approval of Minutes

Chair Tate presented minutes from the February 21, 2024, TAC Meeting. Ms. Julia Hensley moved, seconded by Mr. Doug Wolfe, to approve the minutes of February 21, 2024 as presented. Chair Tate abstained from the vote due to absence from the February meeting. Motion carried.

FY24-27 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment Release for Public Comment (TAC AF #24-02)

Zach Beard provided an overview of the TIP Amendment Action Item. Mr. Beard said that SAWMPO staff are amending the Highway Maintenance section of the FY24 – 27 TIP to reflect an additional \$4,809,000 in federal funding for Federal FY 24 through the National Highway Performance Program (NHPP) for Preventive Maintenance for Bridges throughout the Staunton Construction District. Ms. Tate requested action on the document. Mr. Rodney Rhodes moved, seconded by Ms. Hensley, to recommend that the Policy Board approve the amendment of the FY24 – 27 TIP. Motion carried unanimously.

2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Kick-off

Introduction and Overview

Zach Beard welcomed attendees to the first 2050 LRTP working group meeting, providing a refresher on the LRTP process and discussing changes from the 2045 LRTP update. For the 2050 LRTP, there will be less emphasis on future projections and modeling due to minimal population growth expected in the region. While maintaining a data-driven process, the 2050 LRTP will focus more on engagement and understanding how transportation relates to other regional issues like housing and workforce development. Consultants will be brought in to assist with project scoring and public engagement.

Scope of Work Review

Mr. Beard reviewed the priorities, goals, and projects from the 2045 LRTP to remind attendees of the main document takeaways, and then summarized the 2050 LRTP Scope of Work and timeline for each task. Mr. Beard also discussed the other transportation-related planning documented that have been complete since the 2045 LRTP was approved in December 2020, and how those may inform the public engagement phases of the update.

Next Steps and Focus Areas

The next six months will focus on three main areas:

1. Developing the existing conditions chapter

2. Starting growth assumptions
3. Implementing the first phase of public engagement

To support these efforts, a public engagement working group will be formed with one representative from each locality and VDOT. The team will review existing plans and develop a list of transportation stakeholders to prioritize efforts. Several recent studies and plans will be used as a starting point for gathering transportation-related data and needs. The group discussed the benefits of working with Avid Core, a communications firm, for public engagement strategies. This approach aims to increase participation and raise awareness about the MPO's role in the community.

The next working group meeting is scheduled for August, and the public engagement working group will likely meet next month. The team will continue to focus on public engagement efforts over the next six months.

Agency Updates

VDOT

Mr. Reed provided the following update:

- SMART SCALE Round 6 full applications are due on August 1. The SMART SCALE portal will begin allowing editing to the full applications in June, and major readiness documents supporting projects, such as signal justification reports, must be uploaded into the portal by July 15.
- A resolution of support must be passed by each local governing body.

Mr. Don Komara provided the following update:

- Mr. Komara emphasized the importance of considering long-term road improvement projects, even if initially unpopular, to account for potential future population and employment growth.
- Interstate 81 improvements (barriers installation in progress)
- Bridge replacement project (progressing ahead of schedule)
- Southern Connector project (moving along well)
- Richmond Avenue crossing project was holding a public hearing on May 15 at the Frontier Culture Museum.

DRPT

Ms. Grace Stankus provided the following update:

- Former DRPT Director Jennifer DeBruhl is retiring from the agency on June 10.

- The DRPT’s first-ever transit SYIP meetings are scheduled for May 16 at 4:00 p.m., with in-person meetings and also a virtual option.

Transit

Ms. Devon Thompson gave the following BRITE Transit updates:

- BRITE Bus and Valley Community Services Board (VCSB) have partnered to extend bus services to the VCSB offices on Singers Lane. Starting May 1, the 250 Connector will make three daily stops (8:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m., and 5: 00 p.m.) in both directions at the VCSB location. As part of this partnership, VCSB has become a funding partner for BRITE Bus and a voting member on the BTAC. Plans are in place to increase the frequency of stops in the future.
- BRITE Bus implemented summer hours for the Staunton Trolley and Saturday Night Trolley, extending service by approximately 3 hours on weekdays and 1 hour on Saturday nights beginning on May 6.
- Improvements at the Lewis Street hub continue, with back excavation and grading work completed. Curb installation is scheduled for the following week weather permitting. Temporary hub operations are going well due to coordination with the City of Staunton.

Afton Express

Ms. Paula Melester gave the following Afton Express update:

- A new stop will be added at Fontaine Research Park in Charlottesville, starting May 28. This addition addresses longstanding requests and coincides with a major construction project at the location. The University of Virginia is supporting this expansion by funding the extra costs associated with the new stop. The stop will be temporary during the construction period, with potential for permanence based on utilization.

Locality Updates

Augusta

- Mr. Wolfe stated the Verona Pedestrian Project almost complete.
- Ms. Julia Hensley noted that the County’s Comprehensive Plan process continues, and there will be transportation-specific focus groups in Spring 2024.

Staunton

- Mr. Rhodes said the City is going to begin their Comprehensive Plan update process in the next few months.

- The West Beverly Project, which extends from West Frederick to the city line, continues. The project primarily involves paving but also includes: 600 feet of sidewalk installation, pipe improvements and pipe lanes, and ADA ramp improvements. The project was initially put out for bid in January but received no bids. The project has been released for a second bid process ending in May.

Waynesboro

- Chair Tate noted that Greenway Phase 3, the sidewalk project along Fourteenth Street from Magnolia to Wayne, is utilizing open container funds. They are currently waiting for authorization to post the bid, which is expected to happen by Friday. The project aims for completion by the end of 2024, though it might extend into 2025.
- The City will also begin updating their Comprehensive Plan later in the year.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Upcoming Meetings

Chair Tate stated that the Policy Board is scheduled to meet on June 5 and the TAC on June 19.

Meeting Adjourned

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Zach Beard, Senior Planner