

Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Board Meeting Minutes

October 2, 2024, 10:00 a.m.

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

| Voting Members | | Non-Voting Members | | Other Attendees | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| City of Staunton | | VDOT | | Staff (CSPDC) | |
| ✓ | Amanda Kaufman | | Shane McCabe (Alt) | ✓ | Ann Cundy |
| ✓ | Brad Arrowood (Chair) | | Cody Huffman (Alt) | ✓ | Zach Beard |
| | John Blair (Alt) | DRPT | | ✓ | Devon Thompson |
| Augusta County | | ✓* | Grace Stankus | ✓ | Paula Melester |
| ✓ | Tim Fitzgerald | Virginia Regional Transit | | ✓ | Danielle Gannon |
| ✓ | Carolyn Bragg | ✓* | Steve Wilson | ✓ | Hardi Kamali |
| | Pam Carter (Alt) | | Phil Thompson (Alt) | ✓ | Elizabeth Goodloe |
| City of Waynesboro | | Department of Aviation | | ✓* | Garreth Bartholomew |
| ✓ | Jim Wood (Vice Chair) | | Rusty Harrington | Others | |
| ✓ | Todd Wood | FHWA and FTA | | ✓ | Colin Birch, VPRA |
| | Michael Hamp (Alt) | | Chelsea Beytas | | |
| VDOT | | | Kevin Jones | | |
| ✓ | Todd Stevens | | | | |
| ✓ | Brad Reed (Alt) | | | | |
| ✓ | Don Komara (Alt) | | | | |
| | Cody Huffman | | | | |

* Virtual Participants

Call to Order

The SAWMPO Policy Board meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Mr. Brad Arrowood, 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 are indicated by an asterisk; all others attended in-person.

Ms. Paula Melester introduced several new CSPDC team members: Danielle Gannon as the new transit planner who will oversee the RideShare program and work on BRITE and Afton Express projects; Elizabeth Goodloe, joining the CSPDC community planning team; and Hardi Kamali, a JMU Master's of Public Administration graduate assistant.

Public Comment

Chair Arrowood opened the meeting for public comment. There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Arrowood presented the minutes from the September 4, 2024 Policy Board meeting.

Ms. Carolyn Bragg moved to approve the minutes; seconded by Mr. Jim Wood. The Board approved the motion by unanimous vote.

LRTP Public Engagement Summary and Next Steps (Board Memo #24-08)

Mr. Beard provided the draft results for the first phase of public engagement for the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The online survey was open from August 12 through September 30 and received 284 total responses and 683 individual map entries. Survey demographics showed 51% women and 42% men respondents, with 45% of respondents over age 56. The mapping exercise allowed users to identify transportation concerns in six categories, with the top three being walking/crossing issues, safety concerns, and biking-related issues.

Key draft findings from the survey included:

- 45-50% of mapped concerns were in Staunton
- 25-30% were in Waynesboro
- 20% were in Augusta County
- US 250 received the most comments outside of interstates
- Greenville Avenue and Johnson Street intersection in Staunton received the most location-specific comments

The needs and concerns ranking exercise revealed missing sidewalks/crosswalks and safety/distracted driving as top priorities, while congestion ranked lower. Age-based analysis showed younger respondents (18-35) prioritized bike lanes, while those 46 and above emphasized safety and sidewalks. Those 56 and above more frequently noted bus service concerns. Mr. Beard noted that the results were preliminary, and that MPO staff would be developing a full Phase I public engagement survey report to summarize the results in subsequent months.

Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA) Update

Mr. Colin Birch, Senior Planning Manager with VPRA, presented an overview of the organization and local projects. He detailed the Stanton Station project, which includes platform improvements, ADA compliance upgrades, and infrastructure repairs. The project is currently in the preliminary engineering phase, with completion expected in spring 2025. VPRA is pursuing additional federal funding through various grant opportunities.

Mr. Birch also discussed potential Cardinal route improvements, noting that the Federal Rail Administration's Long Distance Service study identified the route as a candidate for increased service from three days to daily operations. Implementation timeline is estimated at approximately 10 years.

Agency Updates

VDOT

Mr. Brad Reed noted that VDOT HSIP applications are open until October 31, 2024. Mr. Don Komara provided the following updates:

- Barterbrook Road project is ahead of schedule
- Waynesboro Southern Corridor project progressing well
- I-81 improvements through Stanton showing progress
- New project in Weyers Cave area to begin bidding
- Detailed updates on flood response and road closures due to recent severe weather

DRPT

Ms. Grace Stankus gave the following update:

- Transit Service Delivery Advisory Committee (TSDAC) meeting scheduled for October 8 at 10 a.m.
- Annual Grant Application Workshop scheduled for November 13 at 11:00 a.m.

BRITE Transit

Ms. Devon Thompson gave the following updates:

- CSPDC was awarded a technical assistance grant to conduct a micro-transit feasibility study, and staff is reviewing proposals.
- Construction at the Lewis Street Hub is complete, a ribbon cutting was held on Thursday, August 29 at 10:00 a.m., and the Hub is operational.

Afton Express

Ms. Thompson gave the following updates:

- The Afton Express celebrated the third year of service in September.
- CSPDC is implementing fare-free ridership for UVA-affiliated riders.

Locality Updates

Augusta County

- Mr. Tim Fitzgerald noted that the County Comprehensive Plan update is progressing. Mr. Fitzgerald also provided an overview of the Hurricane Helene-related flooding in the County, and the County is coordinating relief efforts for flood victims in southwest Virginia and western North Carolina.

City of Waynesboro

- Mr. Jim Wood noted that the City's Comprehensive Plan update will be starting soon, and Hurricane Helene flooding impacted the downtown area, with Main Street Bridge closed during the flooding.



City of Staunton

- Ms. Amanda Kaufman noted that the City held a Comprehensive Plan Kick-off meeting, and the City was relatively unaffected by the Hurricane Helene flooding. The City had implemented flood sensors with notification systems for residents, which are proving to be helpful.

Other Business

Ms. Melester mentioned that the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC) community development team is working on the region's hazard mitigation plan and encouraged participation in their survey about severe weather events and community preparedness.

Upcoming Meetings

Chair Arrowood noted that the next TAC meeting is scheduled for August 21 and the next Board meeting is scheduled for September 4.

Meeting Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Arrowood requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Chair Arrowood adjourned the meeting at 11:10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula Melester
Director of Transportation

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