

# Transportation Visioning Survey Report



**Staunton Augusta  
Waynesboro**

Metropolitan Planning  
Organization



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# Executive Summary

The [Long-Range Transportation Plan \(LRTP\)](#) is updated every five years and guides transportation investments over the next 25-years. The LRTP documents the region’s existing conditions and the community’s vision for the future. Public engagement is an important part of the update process. The [Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro Metropolitan Planning Organization \(SAWMPO\)](#) uses public input to set the goals and priorities for improvements, and to create a list of projects that address regional transportation needs.

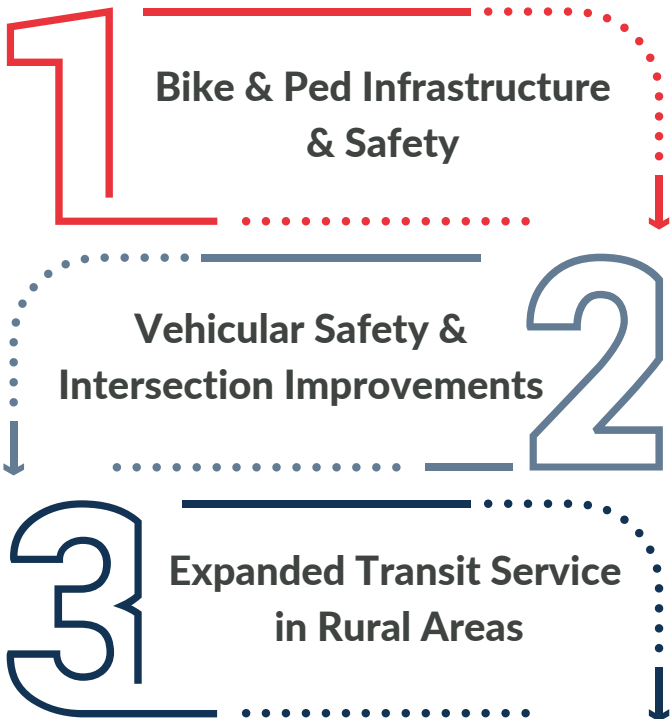
During the first phase of public engagement, an online survey asked community members about their current transportation needs and what they’d like to see in the future. The survey included multiple choice questions, a priority ranking activity, and a map to mark locations of concern. SAWMPO and its community partners promoted the survey through social media, email distribution lists, flyers with QR codes, pop-up events and word of mouth. An overview of responses from the survey are presented in this report, with key takeaways summarized below.

Of the 284 individuals who responded, most are white men and women between the ages of 55 and 75. They predominately drive alone in their own vehicles and do not have difficulty getting where they need to go. Among those who do have difficulty, accessing medical appointments and running errands were most challenging in the existing transportation network. Better pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and expanded public transit options may help remove barriers and increase accessibility. Many respondents expressed a desire to walk or bike more than they currently do, but cited lack of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and concerns about safety as deterrents.

### Next Steps:

Over the next few months the LRTP working group will develop a list of projects that meet identified transportation needs. Those projects will be scored based on several criteria resulting in a draft list of projects to be included in the plan. The LRTP is a fiscally-constrained plan, meaning only projects that could reasonably be funded during the 25-year period will be included. The public input gathered through this visioning survey will help determine which projects best align with the community’s vision for the future of transportation in the region.

*Top ranked priorities from survey responses --->*



# Introduction

The LRTP Visioning Survey used an online platform for public engagement called MetroQuest. To ensure accessibility, the survey was available in English and Spanish, though the SAWMPO did not receive any responses to the Spanish survey. MetroQuest allows users to take the survey on their computer, tablet, or mobile device, and staff made paper copies of the survey available upon request.

MetroQuest is designed to collect various types of information related to transportation issues in a user-friendly format. Across five simple screens, the survey collected both qualitative and geographic data. Through multiple choice and “select all that apply” type questions, respondents shared which modes of transportation they most often use for recreation and to get around the region. These questions also asked about barriers to travel, and what improvements are needed to make navigating the region more accessible.

A priority-ranking activity allowed participants to drag and drop transportation-related concerns within a list - ordering them from highest to lowest priority. Options included safety, congestion, transit services, bike and/or pedestrian infrastructure, and accessibility. Feedback collected through this activity will help the SAWMPO understand which type of projects are most Important to the community.

Finally, respondents could share location-specific concerns and areas of deficiency within the existing transportation network. Using the mapping tool, participants placed 682 map markers sharing concerns about speeding, safety, access to bicycle lanes and sidewalks, and areas where new transit service is needed or existing service could be improved. In addition to placing a marker on a location, participants provided over 500 comments providing further insight into transportation issues in the Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro (SAW) region. These responses are geo-coded and maps depicting areas of deficiency are included in this summary report.

The SAWMPO has placed an emphasis on equitable participation in the public engagement process for the 2050 LRTP update. Historically, responses to MPO surveys have not been representative of all in our region. SAWMPO staff engaged community stakeholders in discussions about the barriers faced by members of their communities. These **Community Consultation** sessions generated ideas for how to better reach members of diverse groups & established partnerships between the MPO and trusted community leaders.

## Equity 2050



# Demographics

The SAWMPO collects demographic data in all surveys for several reasons, but the top priorities are to ensure the responses are representative of the whole community, and to identify trends across different groups (like age, or gender). Demographic questions are optional and not all respondents feel comfortable providing a response. Of the 284 survey participants, approximately 154 provided answers to demographic questions. Figures 1 through 3 depict the demographic data shared from participants.

SAWMPO received input from individuals in all age groups with approximately 47% of respondents 55 or younger, and 53% over age 55. Within 10-year age groupings, the most responses came from those between age 55 and 75 which aligns with what we know about the population in Staunton, Waynesboro, and Augusta County.

Figure 2. Age

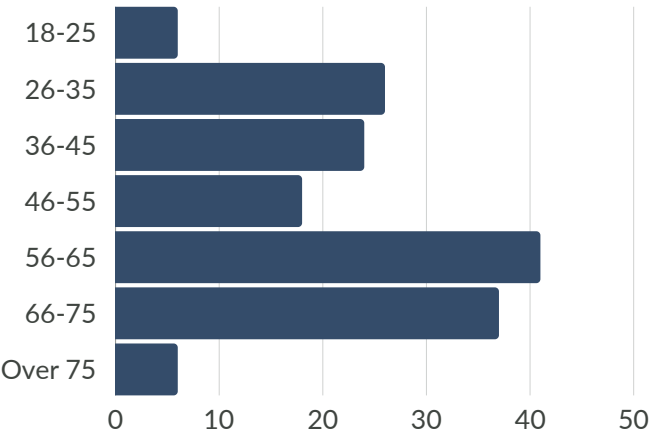


Figure 3. Gender Identity

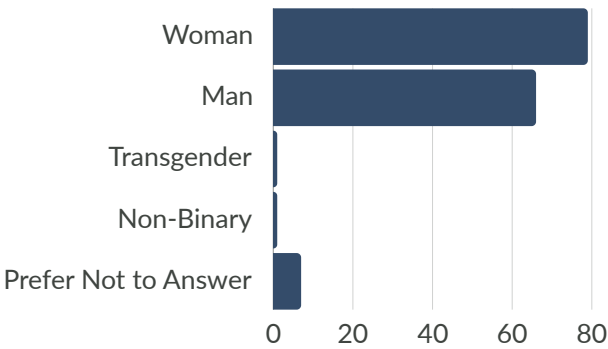
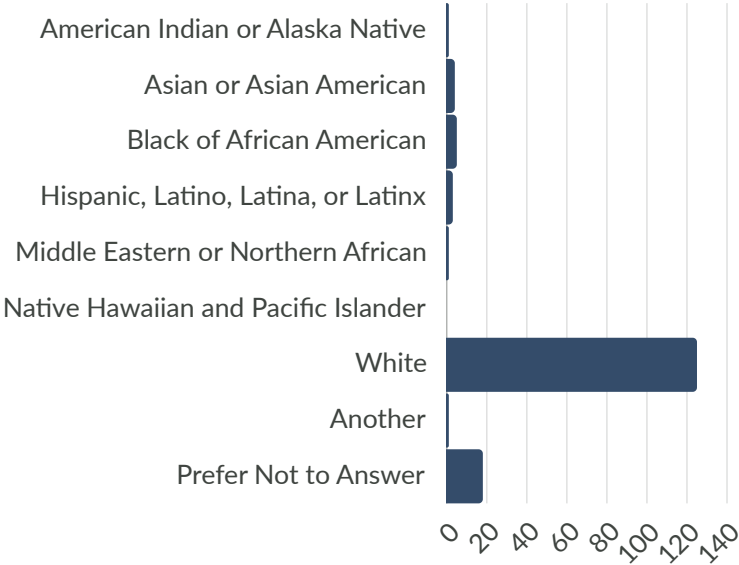


Figure 1. Race



Women represented about half of the survey responses (51%). Men were close behind, participating at a rate of 43%. Individuals who identify as Transgender or Non-Binary/Non-Conforming represent a little more than 1% of responses and about 5% opted not to provide information about their gender.

Responses were less diverse across racial groups than age or gender. Of those who provided racial data, 79% are white, 3% are African American or Black, and 3% are Asian American. All other racial groups combined represent 4% of responses and 11% completed the question but preferred not to disclose their race.

# Transportation Use and Needs

## Travel Habits

The survey asked respondents how they typically get around the region. About 90% said their primary mode of transportation was driving their own personal vehicle. The second most common mode was walking, with or without a mobility assistance device (3.5%), followed by using public transit (3.1%).

Many individuals use more than one type of transportation on a regular basis, so the survey also asked about their secondary modes of travel. This question allowed participants to “select all that apply”.

Walking with or without a mobility device was the most popular response (46%), followed by biking (27%), and riding the bus (12%). Carpooling and ride-hailing were not commonly used as either primary or secondary transportation options.

Figure 4 - Primary Mode of Transportation

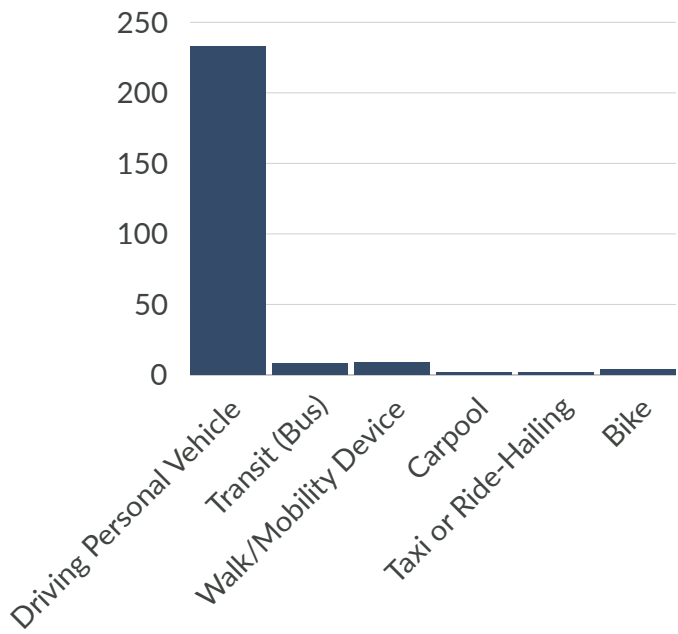
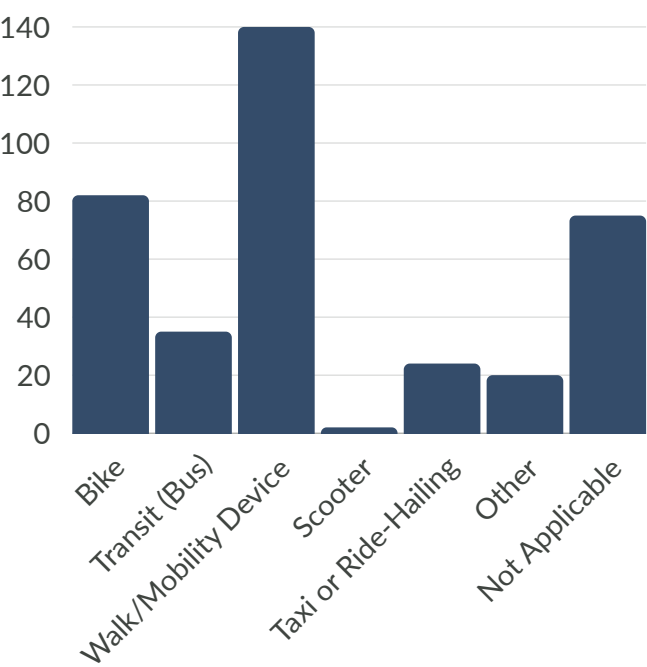


Figure 5 - Secondary Mode of Transportation



The chart in **Figure 5** represents how many times that particular mode was selected, not how many people responded to the question.



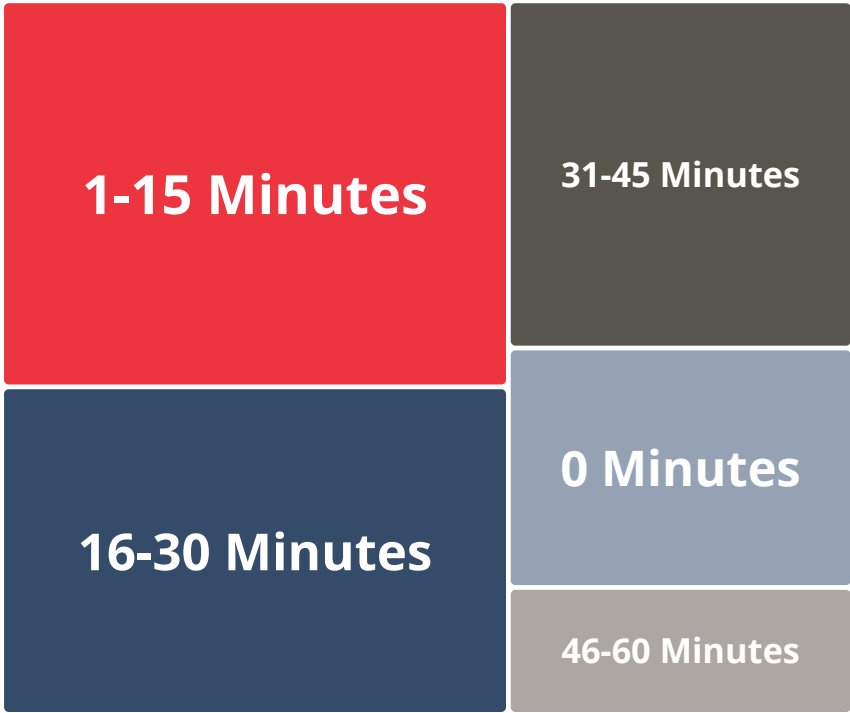
# Transportation Use and Needs

Transportation impacts how people live, work, and play. The LRTP visioning survey sheds light on how people living in Staunton, Waynesboro, and Augusta County use the transportation network to get to and from work and school. Biking and walking trails are also part of the transportation network. Understanding the community’s priorities for outdoor recreation helps the SAWMPO develop a plan that addresses all types of transportation needs.

The graphic here shows how far individuals must travel for work or school. Out of 256 responses, most respondents said they commute fewer than 30 minutes indicating that most likely both live and work in the Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro region. The second largest response rate was those who said they telework or do not commute at all.

In terms of recreation, walking was the most common response followed by those who say they bike and walk. Only 8% said they bike only. A few respondents said they use a mobility device, like a wheelchair or other adaptive equipment, to aid in outdoor recreation. About 20% of those who responded said they do not bike or walk.

Figure 6 - Commute Distance



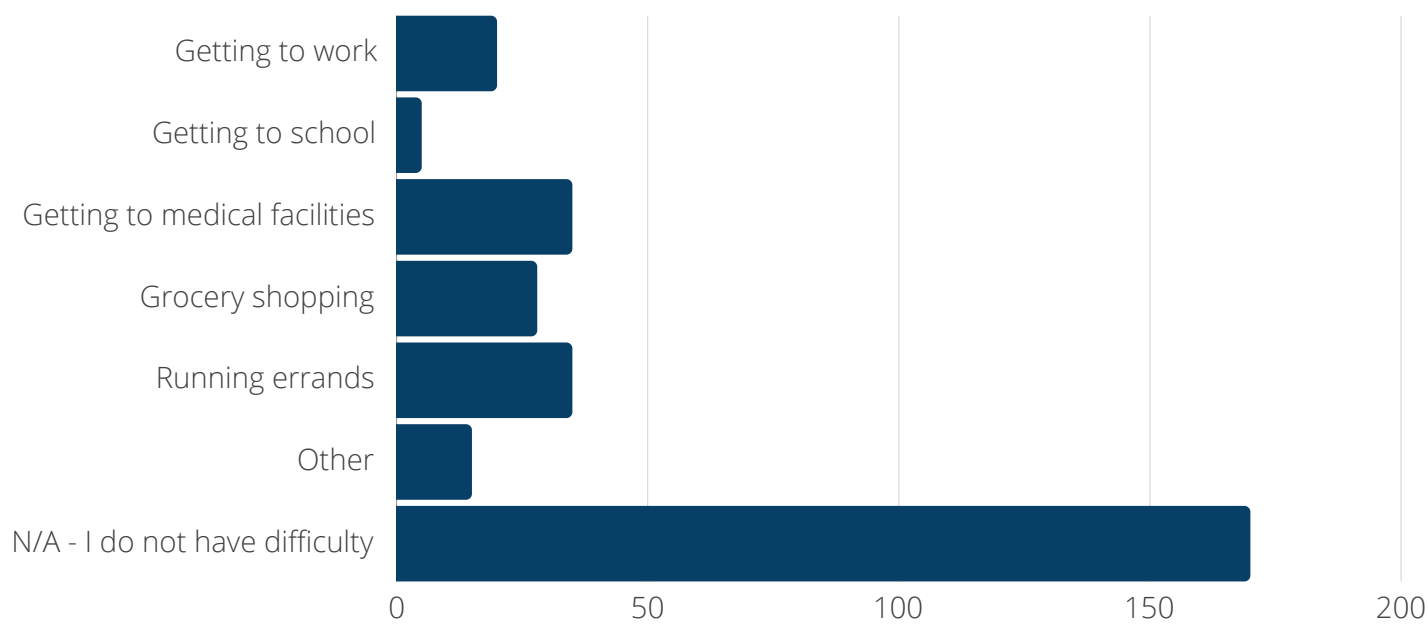
# Transportation Use and Needs

## Barriers to Travel

To understand barriers to travel in the SAWMPO community, we asked the following questions:

- 1. Have you had, or do you continue to have difficulty getting where you need to go in the Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro region for any of the following purposes?
- 2. What transportation mode or service would help you get where you need to go and is not currently accessible?

**Figure 7. Destination Accessibility Concerns**



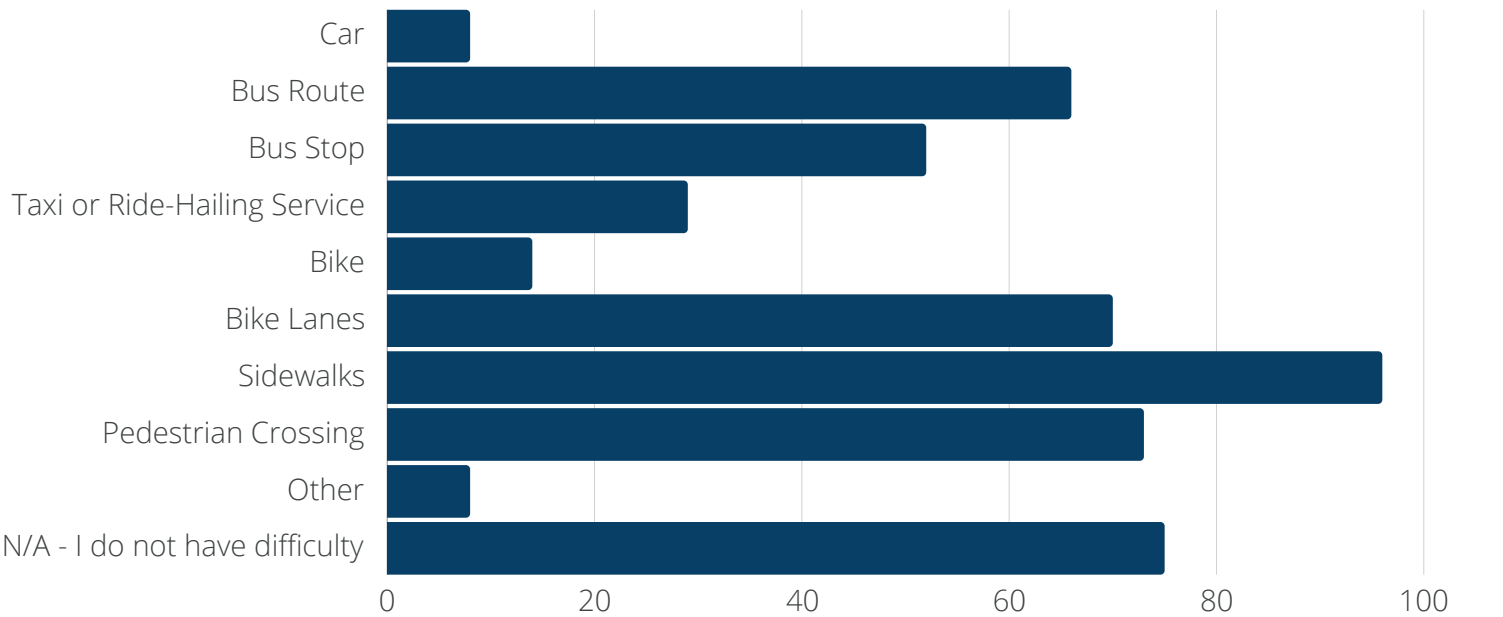
**Figure 7** shows which trips respondents had the most difficulty making due to an inability to access transportation. A majority of respondents stated they did not have accessibility concerns. For those who did report accessibility challenges running errands and getting to medical/health facilities tied for the highest concerns (25.4% each). Grocery shopping (20.3%) and getting to work (14.5%) were also noted as difficult while getting to school presented the lowest level of difficulty (3.6%). It is important to note that respondents could select multiple choices for this question, so the figure above includes multiple responses from the same individuals. This tells us that a lack of access to transportation options has an impact on many aspects of one’s life.



# Transportation Use and Needs

Aside from simply knowing what barriers individuals face in navigating the SAWMPO region, it is also helpful to know what mode of transport would improve accessibility. Responses to the question of what transportation solutions would make these locations more accessible are in **Figure 8**. Among those who do have difficulty getting where they need to go, most said that more or better sidewalks would be most helpful, along with designated pedestrian crossings, and bike lanes. Beyond these top needs, individuals also cited more/expanded bus routes and additional bus stops, and access to taxi or ride hailing services (like Uber or Lyft) would increase their ability to get to their destinations. Very few said that having a bike or a car would help meet their accessibility needs.

**Figure 8. Mode Needed to Improve Accessibility**

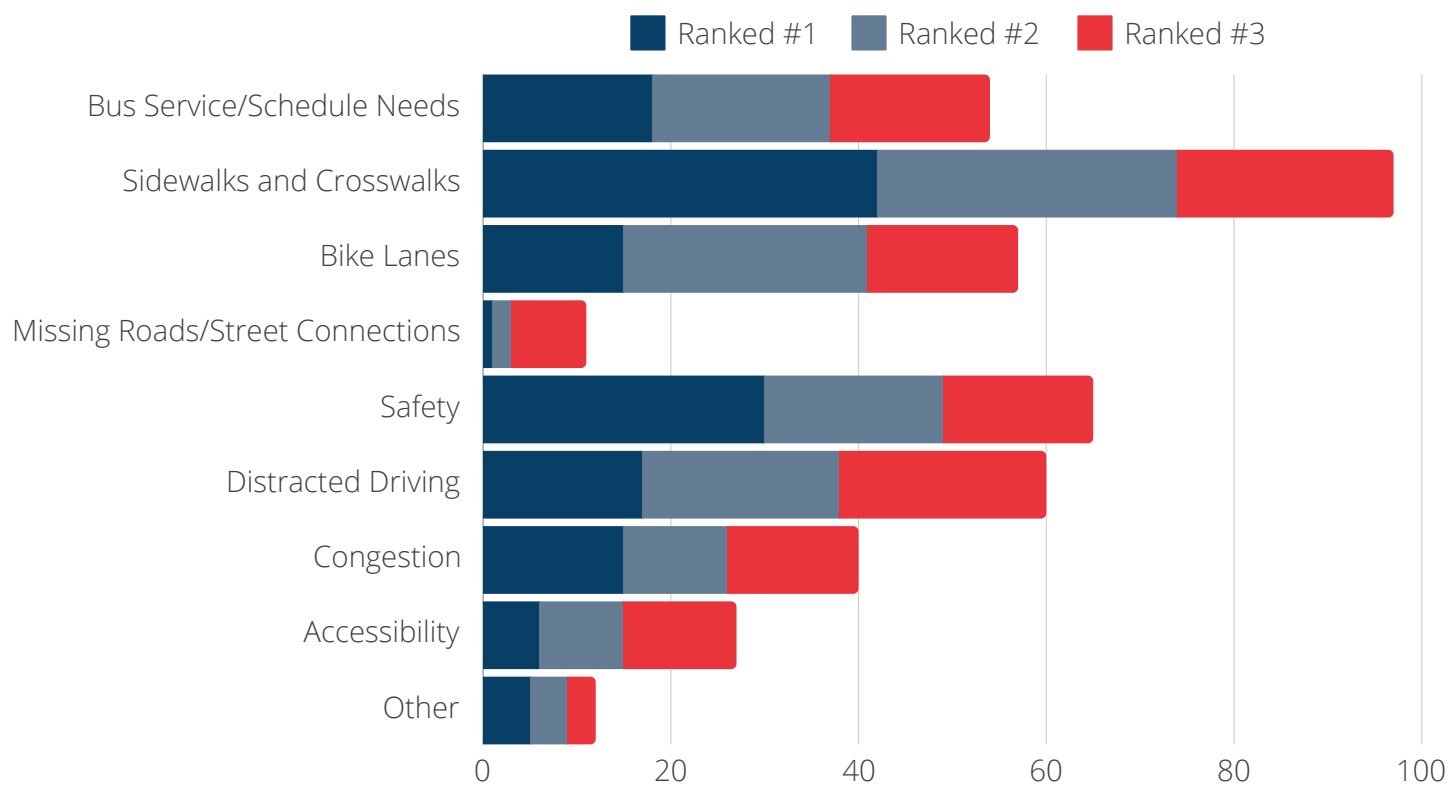


# Transportation Concerns

## Priority Ranking

Respondents ranked a list of nine transportation issues with "1" being the highest area of concern and "8" being the lowest. The areas of concern or need include missing sidewalks and crosswalks, lack of bike lanes, safety (speeding, crashes), accessibility, distracted driving, bus service and schedule needs, congestion, other concerns, and missing road/street connections.

Figure 9. Ranked Transportation Concerns



The chart in **Figure 9** illustrates how often each respondent selected each issue as their first, second, or third priority. To create a consolidated list, SAWMPO staff used averages to determine overall priority from the responses. Missing sidewalks and crosswalks was as the leading concern with the highest average ranking and 42 respondents listed the issue their top concern. Safety issues ranked second in importance with 30 respondents rating the issue their next highest concern. The third overall priority is distracted driving with 17 people ranking it as their highest concern.



# Transportation Concerns

## Comments

Respondents provided written feedback on transportation concerns and their priority choices. Among these comments, common themes emerged. The comments below are a sampling by area of concern.

## Bike Lanes

- Increase safety in biking along roadways through options like protected bike lanes, greenways, or trails

## Sidewalks and Crosswalks

- Better walking infrastructure through options such as wider sidewalks, better crosswalk signals, and smoother curbs

## Public Transportation

- More bus routes that connect neighborhoods to jobs, shopping, and healthcare, especially in rural areas
- Make bus stops safer and easier to use with shelters and better locations

## Safety

- Make it easier and safer to get on and off highways
- Add better lighting and warning signs at dangerous curves and intersections

## Congestion

- Fix traffic backups on Rt. 11 and Rt. 250 due to I-81 congestion and near new shopping centers
- Improve traffic flow with better timed lights and turn lanes at busy intersections

## Speed

- Enforce speed limits more strictly and add speed control features like bumps and signs in neighborhoods



# Mapping Exercise

## Map Marker Exercise

Participants were asked to share site-specific concerns by dragging and dropping pins to a location on the map. Each pin represents a specific concern related to safety, congestion, walking, crossing, biking, speeding, or transit at that particular location. **Figure 10** shows the types of pins available to place on the map.

Individuals could place at least three pins on the map - they could be three of the same, or any combination of pins. Individuals could also leave a comment describing the concern they had for each geographic location. When dropping a pin, the survey prompted respondents with a question box that asked "What do you want to tell us about this area?" so that we could collect both geographic and qualitative data about problem areas within the SAWMPO region.

SAWMPO staff sorted the comments from this exercise into five categories corresponding with the map marker pins, and created maps for each category to display the areas of concern. The following pages include maps showing all of the specific locations for each of the transportation issues identified.

The traffic and safety category represents any comment or marking pin that related to traffic patterns, traffic flow, speed, and general traffic safety.

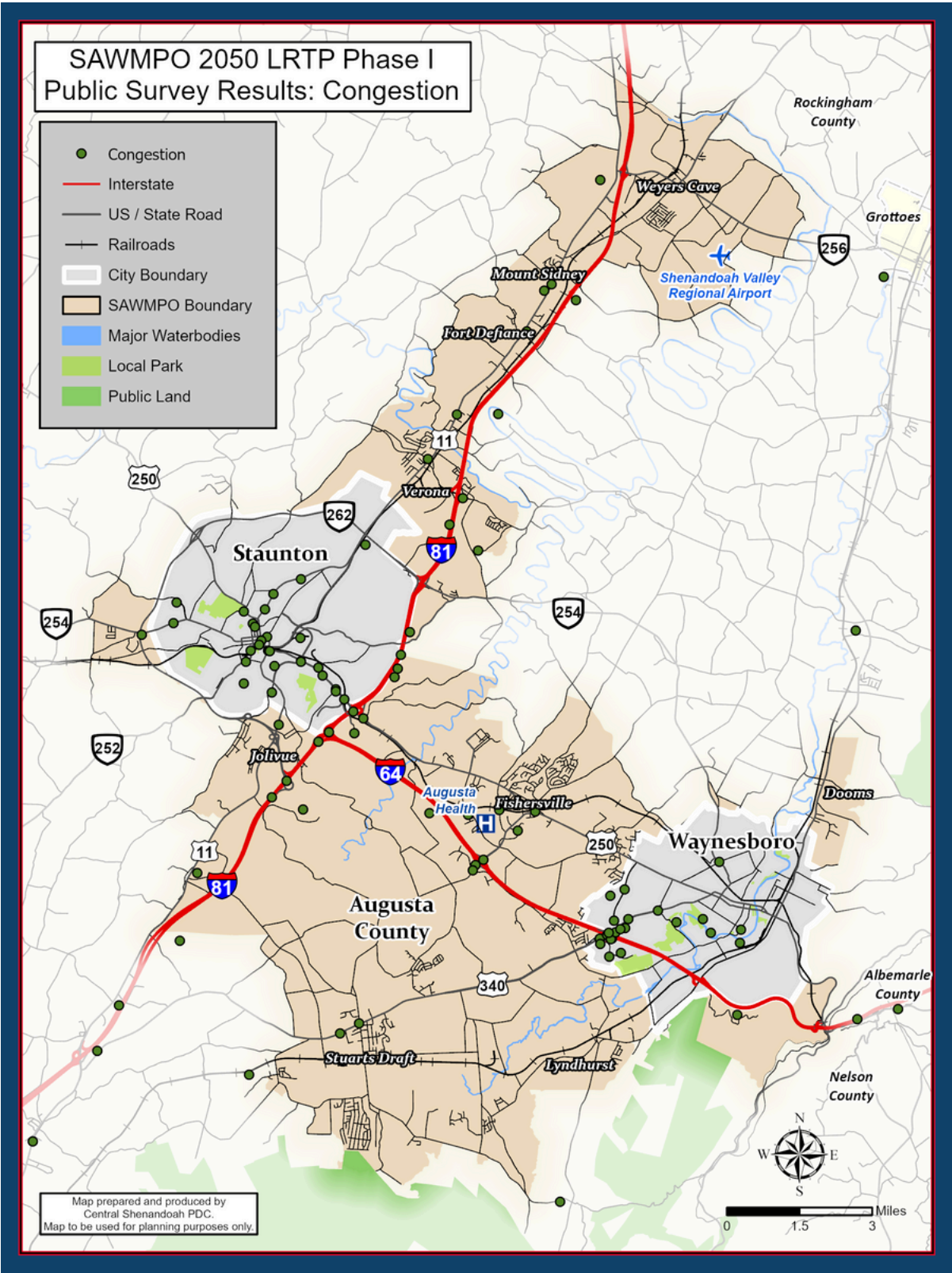
**Figure 10. Map Marker Pins**





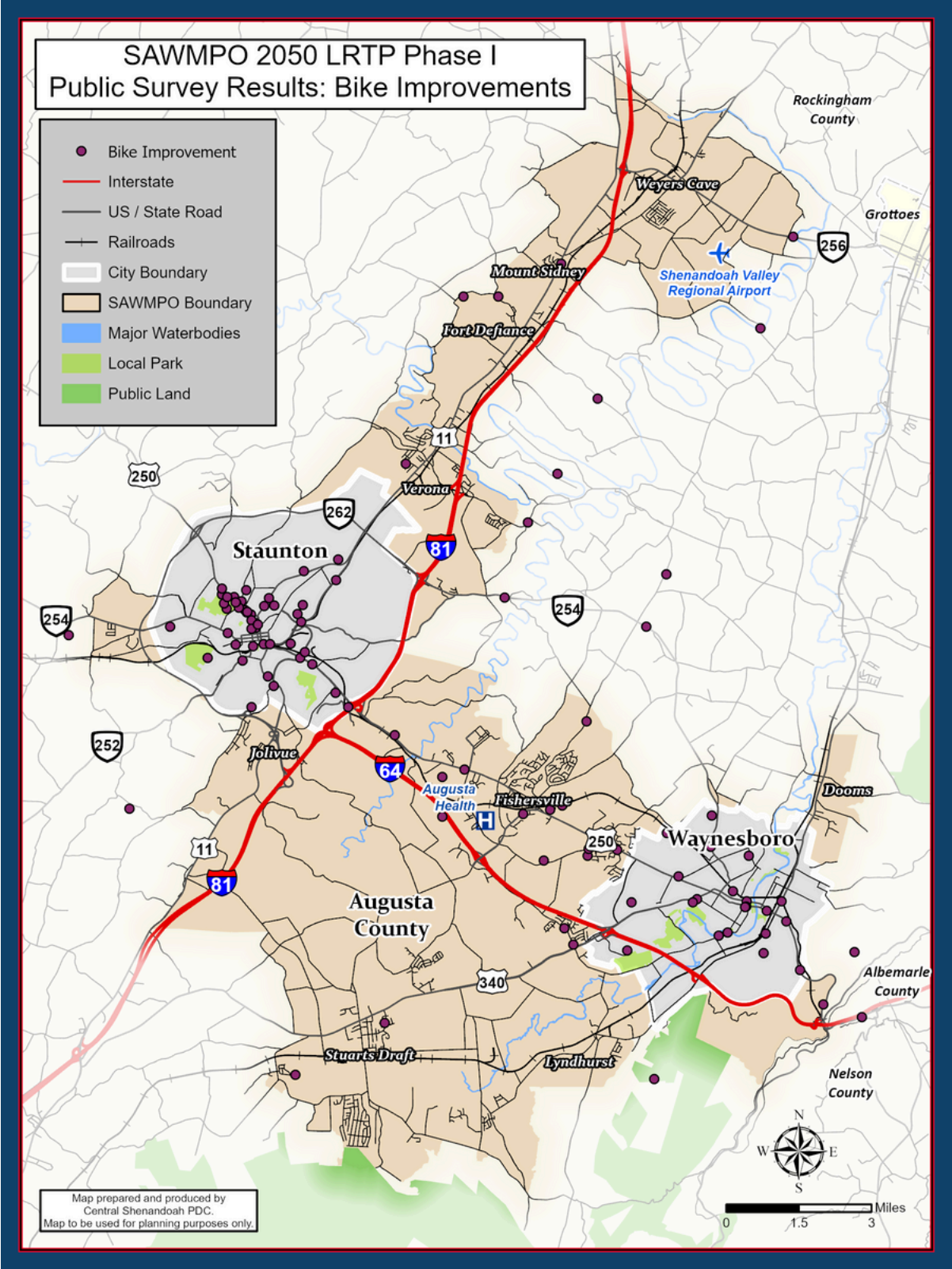
# Mapping Exercise

Figure 11. Areas of Congestion



# Mapping Exercise

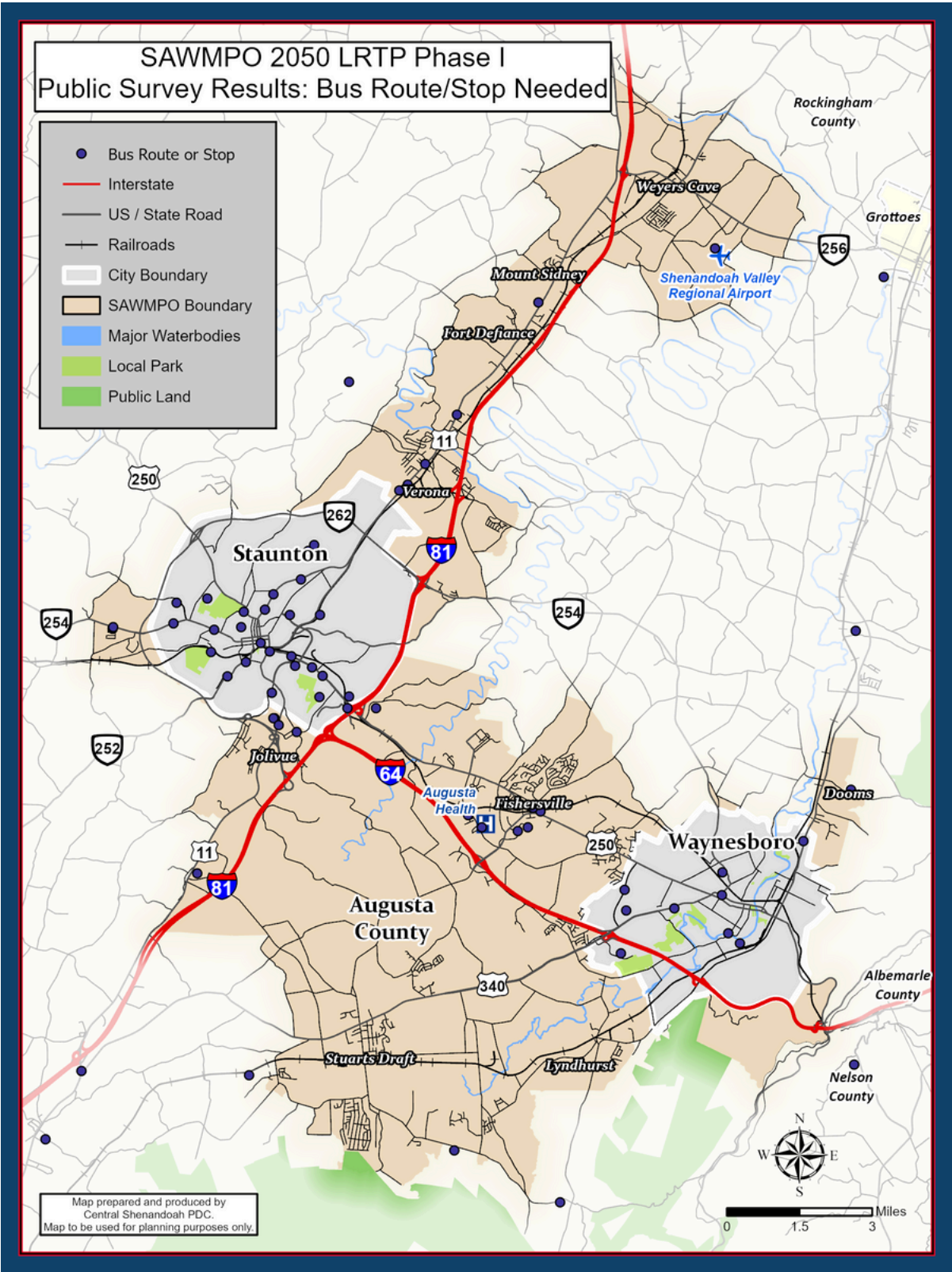
Figure 12. Bicycle Infrastructure Improvement Needs





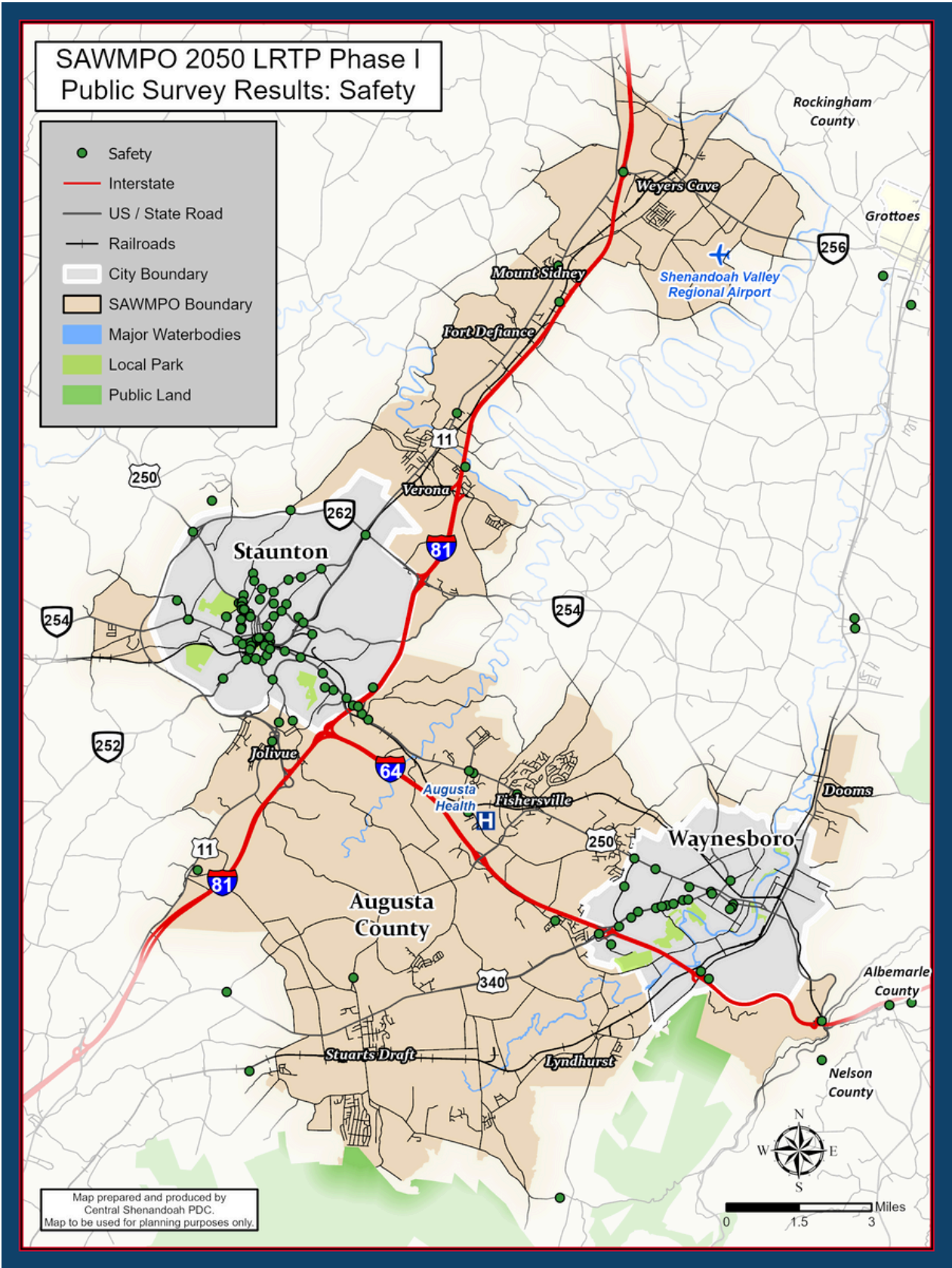
# Mapping Exercise

Figure 13. Bus Route or Stop Needs



# Mapping Exercise

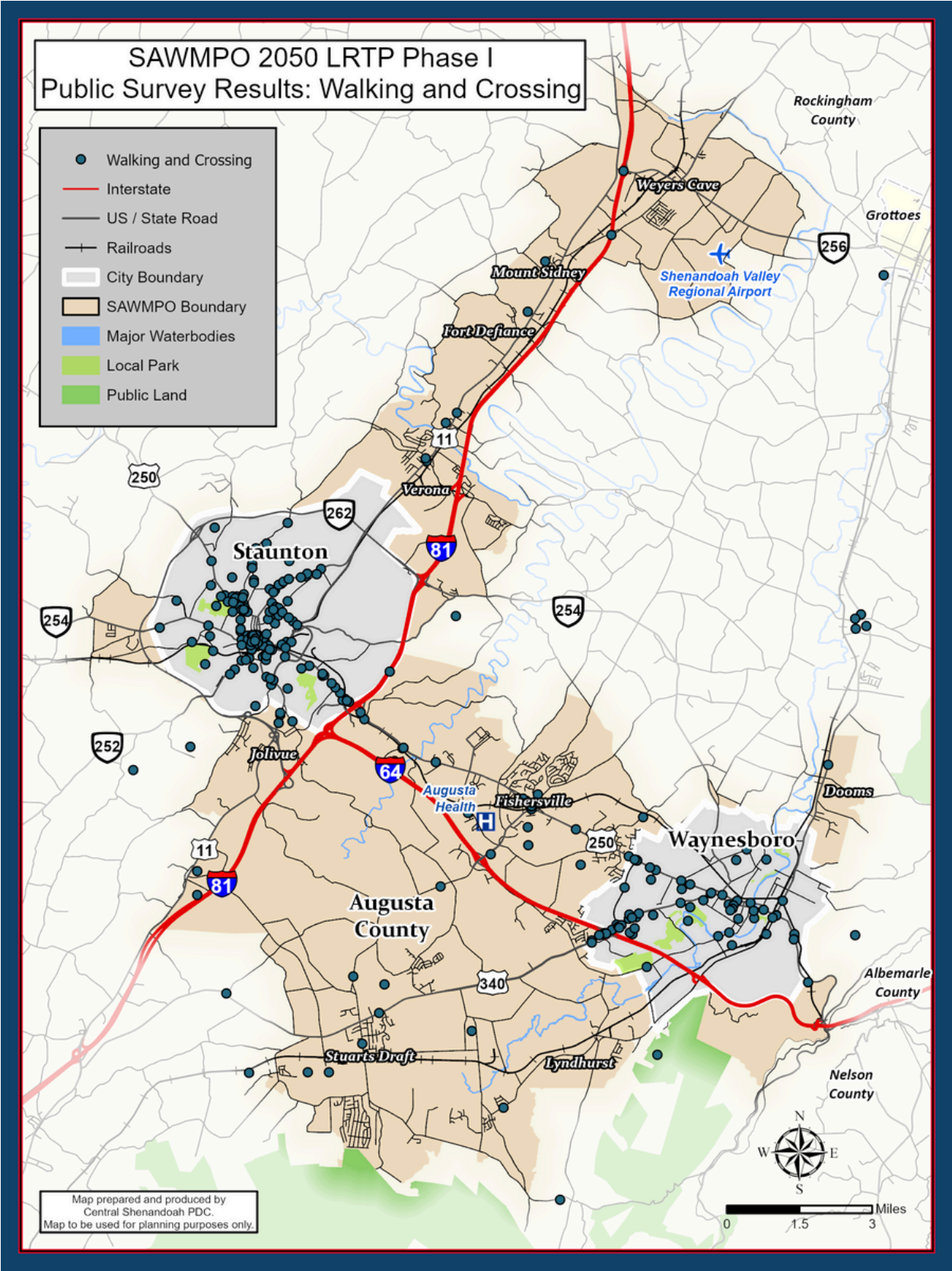
Figure 14. Traffic Safety Areas of Concern





# Mapping Exercise

Figure 15. Pedestrian Infrastructure Needs



# Community Consultation Takeaways

## Community Consultations

During the 2050 LRTP update, the SAWMPO has placed an emphasis on equity in the participation process. In order to ensure the plans produced by the SAWMPO reflect the needs of everyone in the region, everyone in the Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro region must have equal opportunities to participate in the engagement activities. Historically, the voices captured in these processes have not been reflective of the whole community, so SAWMPO staff set out to identify barriers to participation faced by the underrepresented groups.

SAWMPO staff conducted a series of five community consultation sessions in August 2024. These sessions brought together representatives from 20 diverse organizations serving Staunton, Waynesboro, and Augusta County, including business associations, elderly services, healthcare providers, housing authorities, educational institutions, and social service agencies.

The focus-group style sessions revealed that SAWMPO's traditional online-focused survey approach had limitations in reaching disadvantaged populations. Organizations highlighted various barriers their constituents face, including limited digital access, time constraints, language barriers, and trust issues with government agencies. Through these discussions, partners offered valuable suggestions for improving engagement, such as meeting people where they are (medical waiting rooms, community cafes, laundromats), offering incentives, and working through trusted community ambassadors.

These sessions proved instrumental in building relationships that enabled SAWMPO to conduct pop-up events during Phase I survey collection. Partners like Project GROWS and the Staunton Downtown Development Association and various community festivals provided venues to reach traditionally underrepresented populations. The connections established through these consultations will continue to facilitate public engagement during Phases II and III of the LRTP update.

The feedback gathered through these consultations, combined with the survey results, will inform the engagement plan for Phase II as the MPO moves toward the development and prioritization of transportation projects that more comprehensively serve the whole face of the SAW region.

While not all recommendations can be incorporated into this particular planning process, the insights gained about transportation barriers and engagement strategies will be revisited during future planning processes. The relationships fostered and lessons learned about underrepresented populations will help ensure future engagement strategies better reach all members of the community and the plans that result from them better represent the needs of all in the Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro region.

# Next Steps

## What will we do with the Summary Data?

The feedback gathered from the survey will inform Phase Two which is anticipated to begin in February 2025, and will provide our community with an opportunity to weigh in on a list of proposed projects.

SAWMPO staff will use the comments from the Visioning Survey to clarify the needs for the region, and prioritize the projects. Projects will be scored based on how well they meet the LRTP goals with public input from the survey contributing to overall project rankings. For example, the survey respondents indicated expanding pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure as a high priority for transportation investments in the region. Projects that address bike/pedestrian infrastructure would then receive additional points contributing to their overall score.

To learn more about the Plan, upcoming events, and ways to engage, visit the SAWMO website: [sawmpo.org/long-range-planning](http://sawmpo.org/long-range-planning)

Thank you for your interest in the SAWMPO Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).



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