

## Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro Metropolitan Planning Organization Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Regular Meeting Minutes February 5, 2025, 2:00 p.m.

Meeting Held Virtually via Zoom

Voting Members				Others	
City of Staunton		VDOT		Staff (CSPDC)	
✓*	Rodney Rhodes (Chair)	✓*	Don Komara	✓*	Zach Beard
✓*	Meggie Roche (Alt)	✓*	Brad Reed (Alt)		Garreth Bartholomew
✓*	Lyle Hartt (Alt)	✓*	Shane McCabe (Alt)	✓*	Devon Thompson
		✓*	Cody Huffman	✓*	Paula Melester
		VA DRPT		✓*	Danielle Gannon
Augusta County		✓*	Grace Stankus		
✓*	Doug Wolfe (Vice Chair)				
✓*	Julia Hensley (Alt)	Non-Voting Members			
				Other attendees	
		VRT			
City of Waynesboro		✓*	Steve Wilson		
✓*	Leslie Tate		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		

\*Virtual attendance

### Call to Order

The meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) of the February 5, 2025 Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (SAWMPO) was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by Chair Rodney Rhodes. While in-person meeting attendance is typically required for voting members for a meeting quorum, State Code allows MPOs to hold up to two all-virtual meetings annually to approve MPO action items.

Chair Rhodes welcomed and introduced Staunton's new planner, Meggie Roche, who will now serve as an alternate on the TAC. Chair Rhodes noted that Ms. Roche previously served the town of Dayton before coming to the City of Staunton.

### **Public Comment**

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

### **Approval of Minutes**

Chair Rhodes presented the minutes from the December 5, 2024 TAC Meeting.

*Ms. Leslie Tate moved to approve the minutes; seconded by Mr. Doug Wolfe. The TAC approved the motion by unanimous vote.*

### **SAWMPO Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary Expansion to Greenville (TAC Action Form #25-01)**

Mr. Zach Beard presented the proposed SAWMPO Metropolitan Planning Area boundary expansion to Greenville. Mr. Beard explained that at the January Policy Board meeting, VDOT's proposed boundary adjustments had been presented based on the 2020 Census urban area designations. During that meeting, Augusta County requested an additional boundary expansion southward to incorporate Greenville in addition to the VDOT adjustments.

Mr. Beard detailed that the original VDOT adjustments would expand the current MPO boundary by approximately 1.7 square miles in five different areas. The additional proposed Greenville expansion would extend the boundary approximately 6 miles south from the current boundary at I-81 Exit 217. Mr. Beard explained that the new boundary would follow parallel to I-81 and US-11 via Old Greenville Road, meet Stover School Road, and include Augusta County's Greenville Urban Service Area. The boundary would then follow Indian Ridge Road to US-11, then US-11 to US-340, meeting the existing boundary one mile west of Stuarts Draft. This modification would add approximately 13.1 square miles to the SAWMPO boundary.

Mr. Doug Wolfe added that similar to the previous expansion to Weyers Cave, the county wants to capture urbanized areas while respecting rural areas expected to remain rural. Mr. Wolfe explained that Old Greenville Road was selected as the southwest boundary because it serves as a tertiary route for I-81 during traffic issues. The boundary around Greenville follows the limits of the county's urban development area.

Mr. Scott Kesecker asked for clarification that the Greenville expansion is in addition to the VDOT-identified areas. Mr. Beard confirmed that the proposal includes both the VDOT adjustments and the Augusta County proposed adjustment.

*Ms. Leslie Tate moved to recommend approval of the boundary expansion to the Policy Board; seconded by Mr. Don Komara. The TAC approved the motion by unanimous vote.*

### **FY26 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Development Overview (TAC Memo #25-01)**

Ms. Paula Melester provided an overview of the FY26 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) development. Ms. Melester noted that staff now has confirmed funding numbers for FY26, which were unavailable for the mailed packet.

Ms. Melester explained that funding allocations for FY26 show minimal changes from the previous year for both FHWA and FTA funds. Ms. Melester noted that Federal Highway Planning carryover funding from FY24 was higher than the previous year, and the projected 5303 transit planning carryover from FY25 is estimated at approximately \$50,000.

Ms. Melester stated that work in FY26 will focus on completing the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) in December 2025, and begin a small area study in Spring 2026. Ms. Melester noted that staff would be reaching out to localities in the coming months to solicit input on planning priorities and possible small area study topics. Ms. Melester mentioned that the MPO has historically rotated small area studies among the localities.

Chair Rhodes asked about determining which jurisdiction would be next in the rotation for a small area study. Ms. Melester responded that the group could decide to reset the rotation or look at which localities have projects ready to move forward.

Mr. Beard added that localities would have several months to provide input on the budget and work activities for the upcoming fiscal year, with the document planned for public comment in April and approval in May.

### **SAWMPO Letter of Support for DRPT Technical Assistance Grant (TAC Memo #25-02)**

Ms. Melester explained that the BRITE is applying for technical assistance funding from DRPT to support the procurement of BRITE Transit's turnkey contract provider. Ms. Melester explained that the current contract with Virginia Regional Transit to operate the BRITE Transit system will expire on June 30, 2026, and a new contract must be in place by July 1, 2026.

Ms. Melester said the procurement must comply with federal and state requirements. Ms. Melester explained that Kimley Horn will assist with the procurement process, which will take about one year to complete. The application for technical assistance funds requires a 50% match, and the planning group is seeking to use \$35,000 of the MPO's 5303 transit planning funds for this purpose.

Ms. Melester noted that DRPT requires a formal letter of support showing that the MPO has authorized funds to be used for this purpose. Ms. Melester stated that while this was not an action item, they needed general TAC consensus to take the request to the Policy Board in February. TAC members indicated support for the technical funding assistance.

### **Presentation: RideShare Strategic Plan, Danielle Gannon, Transit Planner, CSPDC**

Ms. Danielle Gannon presented the recently completed RideShare Strategic Plan. Ms. Gannon explained that the RideShare program is funded by DRPT at 80% with state funds and a 20% local match. The program is operated collaboratively with the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission, which has operated the program since the 1980s.

Ms. Gannon explained that the new RideShare plan emphasizes data-driven strategies and outlines goals, objectives, and performance measures for the program through 2030.

Ms. Gannon presented analysis of the region's employment areas, commuter patterns, and commute modes. She noted that 77% of workers drive alone region-wide, with carpooling rates slightly higher in Augusta County and Waynesboro (9%) than in Staunton (7%), though Staunton has a higher walking rate (5%). The plan also identified commuter concerns including traffic on I-81 and I-64, safety issues related to the region's topography, and transportation challenges in rural areas.

Ms. Gannon outlined four focus areas for the next five years:

1. Focusing on areas where solutions already exist and promoting them (like the Afton Express)
2. Getting more people into the carpool matching database
3. Rebuilding and forging new relationships with employers following COVID disruptions
4. Updating marketing approaches to increase program awareness, noting confusion with the RideShare name since the emergence of Uber and Lyft

Ms. Gannon explained that the plan had been adopted by the CSPDC Board of Commissioners on Monday and is published on the CSPDC website.

## **Agency Updates**

### *VDOT*

Mr. Don Komara reported several items:

- The Barterbrook Road project is 25-30% ahead of schedule and should be completed this spring
- Branch Civil is ready to start work on the Weyers Cave area project (mile markers 232-238), with surveying beginning soon, shoulder strengthening in March/April, and work on deceleration and acceleration lanes in the median expected to begin in June
- A first responders meeting for the Weyers Cave project is scheduled for February 24

Mr. Brad Reed added that the Staunton District received six projects valued at approximately \$70 million under Smart Scale funding, including the Waynesboro Transit Access Project. Mr. Reed noted that the district still has \$8 million in district grant program funding remaining and encouraged localities to advocate to CTB members, particularly Mr. Good, before the June CTB meeting. Mr. Reed also mentioned an upcoming CTB meeting on February 18th when a vote is expected on Project Pipeline study locations, including the Rosser Avenue/Route 340 study.

### *DRPT*

Ms. Grace Stankus reported that DRPT has started reviewing and scoring FY26 applications and is working on Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) development.

## ***BRITE and Afton Express***

Ms. Thompson provided the following updates:



- DRPT grant applications were submitted prior to the February 1st deadline for urban and rural operating funds, capital costs of contracting, and other funding measures for both BRITE and Afton Express operating
- CSPDC staff participated in Virginia Transit Association's Transit and Rail Advocacy Day in Richmond, which included a legislative briefing with VTA, DRPT, and other transit agencies and meetings with delegates and senators serving the BRITE service area
- Microtransit feasibility study progress is continuing, with Kimley Horn working on analysis of potential service models and costs for implementing on-demand microtransit areas with prioritized draft opportunity zones including North and South Waynesboro, North and South Staunton, Fishersville, Greenville, and Stuarts Draft
- Afton Express annual rider survey has closed and data will be analyzed to develop the annual Afton Express report later in the month to help evaluate rider experience and ensure the service meets rider needs
- As part of Transit Equity Day, BRITE and Afton Express offered free rides on all routes including Afton Express on February 4th (the day before the meeting) to honor civil rights activist Rosa Parks and her legacy for equitable public transportation

Additionally, Ms. Paula Melester presented information about the DRPT Technical Assistance Grant application for support with the BRITE Transit turnkey contract procurement process, noting that the current contract with Virginia Regional Transit expires June 30, 2026, and noting a new contract must be in place by July 1, 2026.

#### *Augusta County*

Mr. Doug Wolfe reported that the County received notice from VDOT about TAP and revenue sharing applications. Mr. Wolfe indicated the County is considering applying for at least one TAP project, potentially extending Route 612 to the west to connect to dense neighborhoods.

Ms. Julia Hensley reported continued work on the County's comprehensive plan, with a first draft expected to be available in June. Ms. Hensley noted that VDOT and CSPDC staff would receive drafts for review.

#### *City of Staunton*

Chair Rhodes reported that the City submitted a federal BUILD grant application for infrastructure improvements for the Uniontown community and along Richmond Avenue, including shared use paths. Mr. Rhodes thanked the PDC staff assistance with preparing the grant application.

Chair Rhodes also reported that the City held a public open house two weeks prior for its comprehensive plan update, which drew approximately 125 attendees.

#### *City of Waynesboro*

Ms. Leslie Tate reported that the Greenway Phase 3 project (sidewalk improvements along 14th Street) is under construction and expected to be completed by May. Ms. Tate also noted that the East Main Street streetscape project is in design, with 30% plans received the previous week. Due to

budget constraints, the City will be applying for revenue sharing funds to address the shortfall. Ms. Tate added that the City has contracted with EPR for its comprehensive plan update.

Mr. Scott Kesecker emphasized the importance of keeping stakeholders engaged throughout the project development process, including emergency management, police, rescue, and fire personnel, as well as considering community engagement and ADA accessibility.

### **Other Business**

Ms. Melester announced that LRTP Phase Two public engagement is beginning in mid-February. Ms. Melester noted that the CSPDC using the public engagement platform Social Pinpoint, which is user-friendly. Ms. Melester requested that localities share information about the engagement through their channels and announced that three public meetings would be held in March.

Mr. Beard added that staff would also be presenting at each of the three localities: Waynesboro on February 24, Augusta County on March 12, and Staunton on March 13.

Ms. Melester clarified that the public meetings would be held at the Staunton YMCA, Stuarts Draft High School, and the Waynesboro YMCA.

### **Upcoming Meetings**

Chair Rhodes announced that the next SAWMPO Board meeting will be held virtually on February 19, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. and the next SAWMPO TAC meeting will be held in-person at the CSPDC on March 5 at 2:00 p.m.

### **Meeting Adjourned**

Chair Rhodes adjourned the meeting at 3:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Zach Beard, Program Manager