

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

February 18, 2026, 10:00 a.m.

Meeting conducted virtually via MS Teams

Attendance

Voting Members		Non-Voting Members		Other Attendees	
City of Staunton		VDOT		Staff (CSPDC)	
	Leslie Beauregard	✓*	Shane McCabe		Ann Cundy
✓*	Brad Arrowood (Chair)	✓*	Cody Huffman	✓*	Zach Beard
	Rodney Rhodes (Alt)	DRPT		✓*	Devon Thompson
Augusta County		✓*	Grace Stankus	✓*	Paula Melester
	Tim Fitzgerald	Virginia Regional Transit			Garreth Bartholomew
✓*	Carolyn Bragg	✓*	Steve Wilson		
	Pam Carter (Alt)	✓*	Phil Thompson (Alt)		
City of Waynesboro		Department of Aviation			
✓*	Jim Wood (Vice Chair)		Rusty Harrington	Others	
✓*	Todd Wood	FHWA and FTA		✓*	David Blount, TJPDC
	Michael Hamp (Alt)		Kevin Jones		
VDOT			Ivan Rucker		
✓*	Joel DeNunzio				
✓*	Brad Reed (Alt)				
✓*	Don Komara (Alt)				

*Virtual attendance

Call to Order

The February 18, 2026, Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (SAWMPO) Policy Board meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Chair Brad Arrowood.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Arrowood presented the minutes from the January 21, 2026, Policy Board meeting.

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Vice Chair Jim Wood; seconded by Mr. Carolyn Bragg. The Board approved the motion by unanimous vote.

Public Comment

Chair Arrowood opened the meeting for public comment. There was no public comment.

Approval to Release the SAWMPO 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) Boundary Expansion Appendix for Public Comment (Board Action Form #26-04)

Mr. Zach Beard presented the LRTP MPA Boundary Expansion Appendix for Board approval to release for a 21-day public comment period. The TAC recommended release of the appendix for public comment at their February 2026 meeting. The Board originally approved the MPA boundary expansion in February 2025 and adopted the 2050 LRTP on December 17, 2025. However, because Governor's Office approval of the boundary expansion was not received until December 23, 2025, the new boundary was not incorporated into the adopted LRTP. The appendix was created to formally document that expansion. Mr. Beard said that the two adjustments do not have a significant impact on the existing or long-term transportation needs in the MPO.

Boundary Adjustments

The appendix documents two boundary adjustments. The first is a VDOT-proposed urbanized area expansion based on 2020 census data in Augusta County. This area adds approximately 800 residents to the MPO boundary and primarily expands the northeast MPO boundary north of Waynesboro along Route 340. The second adjustment is the Greenville area expansion requested by Augusta County. This area is identified in the County's comprehensive plan as a significant subarea with specific transportation planning needs. The Greenville addition adds approximately 1,900 new residents to the MPO area. Combined, the two adjustments add approximately 2,700 residents, representing a 3.2% increase in the MPO's total population. Long-term population projections now anticipate approximately 103,000 residents by 2050, up from the prior projection of 100,000.

Demographic and Traffic Impacts

Mr. Beard noted that the two expansion areas share similar demographic characteristics to the broader MPO region across all subgroup categories, including minority population, poverty rate, elderly population, persons with language access barriers, persons with disabilities, and zero-car households. As a result, the existing demographic analysis in the 2050 LRTP remains valid and does not require revision.

Safety

VDOT's Potential for Safety Improvement (PSI) analysis identified three PSI segments and intersections in the Greenville area and three additional PSI segments and intersections along the Route 340 corridor north of Waynesboro. These are roads and intersections with documented safety issues based on fatal and severe crash data.

Exit 213 Study

The appendix formally documents Exit 213 as a study area of interest and notes that the MPO now has the authority to conduct this study as a result of the boundary expansion.

A motion to release the LRTP MPA Boundary Expansion Appendix for a 21-day public comment period was made by Ms. Bragg; seconded by Mr. Jim Wood. The Board approved the motion by unanimous vote.

Presentation: 2026 Virginia Legislative Transportation Updates – David Blount, Deputy Director/Legislative Director, Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC)

Ms. Paula Melester introduced Mr. David Blount, Deputy Director and Legislative Director of the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC) and Executive Director of the Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions (VAPDC). Mr. Blount provides regular legislative updates to the region and was invited to present during the 2026 General Assembly crossover week. February 17 was crossover day, the deadline by which House bills must be considered in the House and Senate bills in the Senate. Bills still alive after consideration in each chamber move to the other chamber for consideration.

Budget Process

In addition to legislation, Mr. Blount described the parallel state budget process. Budget amendments to Governor Youngkin's December-introduced budget were due from legislators by February 22. The House and Senate will each produce their own amendments for fiscal years 2027 and 2028, with reconciliation to follow in small budget committee discussions largely conducted outside of public view.

Transit Funding

Much of the session's transportation attention has focused on transit funding, particularly in Northern Virginia. Four bills – two each in the House and Senate – sought to address both Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) funding and provide operating and capital assistance to other transit agencies statewide. All four bills were defeated before crossover.

Bills of Regional Interest

Mr. Blount described several bills of interest to the region and its transit programs:

- HB 200 – Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP): Expands TRIP statewide to include rural agencies and removes minimum/maximum funding share requirements to give DRPT and CTB greater flexibility. Passed the House unanimously; headed to the Senate. Ms. Melester noted BRITE uses TRIP funding to support the Afton Express and would benefit from statewide expansion.
- HB 547 / SB 731 – Contracted Transit Employee Compensation: Would require localities and transportation authorities and commissions contracting with private transit providers to offer compensation and benefits equivalent to comparable public employees. Previously passed and vetoed; now passed both chambers on party-line votes. A second-enactment clause limits new requirements to actions after the effective date, potentially protecting existing contracts. Ms. Melester noted CSPDC is tracking the bill closely, as compliance benchmarking would be unclear given CSPDC's non-municipal structure.
- HB 564 / SB 583 – Bus Obstruction Monitoring Systems: Would authorize localities to allow transit agencies to use cameras to enforce ordinances against vehicles blocking bus stops or lanes. The House bill passed easily; the Senate bill passed narrowly.
- SB 832 – Vulnerable Road User Safety Zones: Would require VDOT to develop criteria for designating safety zones in areas with elevated pedestrian and cyclist crash rates, with a report to the General Assembly by fall 2026. Passed the Senate with roughly a two-thirds majority; no House companion bill.

Work Zone and School Zone Speed Cameras

Mr. Blount summarized approximately four related bills. House bills focus on transparency and guardrail requirements, including directing camera revenue to local traffic safety funds. The Senate bill proposes no expansion of camera authority and addresses reporting only. A provision waiving local sovereign immunity was removed from House versions. Final legislation will likely include some additional reporting requirements. Ms. Melester noted no such camera programs currently operate in the SAWMPO region, though a program for the Staunton I-81 construction zone has been discussed.

Board Discussion

Ms. Melester provided context on the transit funding fiscal cliff facing BRITE and other agencies, noting that federal reauthorization, state budget outcomes, and pending legislation will collectively shape transit funding availability in coming years.

2026 Meeting Content Poll and Discussion

Mr. Beard presented a Mentimeter-based poll to gather Board member input on preferred presentation topics for the remainder of 2026. Staff developed the poll in response to feedback from locality staff and administered it to both the TAC and Policy Board. Eight topic options were presented:

- DRPT transit funding and programming update
- Emergency operations and traffic operations (e.g., I-81 incident management)
- Updating Google Maps and Waze with local road information
- Truck Parking in the Valley
- Economic development and transportation
- MPO on-call consultant program overview
- Innovative intersections and roadway configurations
- Federal and state transportation policy updates

Economic development and transportation ranked first among Policy Board respondents, consistent with rankings from the TAC. Two other suggestions submitted through the open-ended portion of the poll – weather preparedness, adaptation, and sustainability, and holding a joint meeting with the Harrisonburg-Rockingham MPO (HRMPO) – was noted by staff for future consideration.

In response to Ms. Melester’s question to the Board regarding economic development, Mr. Jim Wood expressed support for involving local economic development authorities in future presentations. Chair Arrowood agreed that broad communication with economic development partners supports better regional decision-making.

Agency Updates

VDOT

Mr. Shane McCabe provided the following update:

- Smart Scale pre-applications open March 1, 2026, with a deadline of end of March. VDOT District Planning staff are available to assist localities with project ideas and application submissions.

Mr. Don Komara provided the following updates:



- I-81 Staunton (Route 222 to Route 225): The widening project is approximately 60% complete. A speed camera program is expected to be operational in spring 2026, now anticipated in April rather than March. The program is administered through the Virginia State Police. Mr. Komara indicated he will provide more information as the implementation date approaches.
- Weyers Cave I-81 project: Approximately 35% complete. Significant earthwork is ongoing in the median and work is progressing well. A speed camera program is not planned for this segment.
- I-81 Harrisonburg (Mile Posts 242–248): Surveying work will begin in spring 2026. Shoulder strengthening will be required before traffic can be shifted to accommodate work on the nine bridges included in the project. Speed cameras are planned for this segment; VDOT will provide more information as construction progresses. The \$218 million project is expected to take six years.
- Mill Place: Work is ongoing. The contractor, BNS, is continuing utility work including water lines, sewer lines, and gas lines, which make up the majority of the effort on this project.
- Route 252 (Augusta County to Waynesboro): Intersection improvements converting Y-intersections to T-intersections, shoulder widening, and rumble strip installation are continuing through winter.
- Systemic Safety Improvements: VDOT is preparing to install additional wrong-way signage and rumble strips on primary and secondary four-lane roadways this spring in response to a documented pattern of wrong-way entries. A list of specific locations will be provided at a future meeting.

DRPT

Ms. Grace Stankus provided the following updates:

- The FY2027 DRPT grant application window closed February 1, 2026. Staff are now in application review and scoring. A draft funding scenario for FY27 will be released in April.
- FY27 Section 5303 planning applications are now open through May 1, 2026. Federal Transit Administration (FTA) apportionments have not yet been received; DRPT will provide figures when available.
- DRPT released the 2026 Coordinated Human Services Mobility Plan on February 18, 2026. The plan identifies transportation needs, gaps, and opportunities for seniors and individuals with disabilities, funded through FTA's Section 5310 program.
- Two new senior leaders have joined DRPT: Director Mariia Zimmerman, who has over 30 years of transportation experience, and Chief Deputy Director Allan Fye, who joins from the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission.

BRITE Transit and Afton Express

Ms. Devon Thompson provided the following updates:

- Staff submitted FY27 DRPT grant applications prior to the February 1 deadline. Applications included rural and urban operating and capital cost of contracting assistance, a BRITE marketing grant, operating funding for the Commuter Assistance Program rideshare program, two MERIT capital grants for transit facility equipment and bus shelter access improvements in Augusta County, and a technical assistance grant for route planning.
- BRITE celebrated Transit Equity Day on February 4, 2026, with free rides on all routes, including Afton Express. The day honors Rosa Parks' legacy and highlights the importance of accessible transportation.

- An intent to award the turnkey contract for BRITE bus management, operations, and maintenance to Resource Management Systems (RMS) has been published. The award is subject to a 10-day comment and protest period per CSPDC's procurement policy.
- CSPDC is due for both a DRPT compliance review and an FTA triennial review in 2026. DRPT compliance reviews assess grantee adherence to state and federal funding agreements across financial, operational, and management practices. FTA triennial reviews examine recipient performance across 23 compliance areas and are required every three years. CSPDC submitted all materials to DRPT by February 13 and will submit to FTA by the end of February.

Ms. Melester acknowledged the CSPDC transit team for managing the concurrent demands of the new turnkey contract procurement, FY27 grant applications, and the two upcoming compliance reviews. She also recognized Virginia Regional Transit (VRT) contractor staff for their management of transit operations during the February snowstorm, including service cancellations when safety required and efforts to resume service as quickly as possible.

Locality Updates

Augusta County

Mr. Bragg reported that there are no new items to report. All ongoing work is continuing as previously discussed.

City of Waynesboro

Vice Chair Wood provided the following update:

- Waynesboro Public Works staff worked 24-hour, 12-hour shifts during the February snowstorm and performed effectively in clearing routes city-wide.
- The Waynesboro Southern Connector has seen increased public use and awareness. Mr. Wood noted that several residents mentioned the connector provided a valuable alternate route during the storm when traffic near the Kohl's area was congested.

City of Staunton

Chair Arrowood provided the following updates:

- Staunton Public Works deployed contractors with heavy equipment during the storm to break up ice crust ahead of plows. Mr. Arrowood credited the response but acknowledged conditions remained challenging for several days.
- Virginia Infrastructure began the downtown tunnel repair project began February 17. One street in the Wharf area is already closed, so no additional access disruptions are expected at this phase. The greater challenge will occur when Johnson Street closes for tunnel repairs, which is expected in late summer or fall.

Mr. Rodney Rhodes provided the following additional update:

- VDOT is hosting a public hearing on the Commerce Road Greenway on February 25, 2026, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at Staunton City Hall. The City's social media announcement of the hearing generated significant public comment online.

Other Business



Ms. Thompson explained that BRITE will provide special shuttle service to the UVA-hosted Remote Area Medical (RAM) clinic at Augusta Expo on Saturday, March 21. Two shuttle routes will operate – one from Staunton and one from Waynesboro – with hourly service dropping off and picking up passengers at the front entrance of the Expo. The Staunton route will stop at the Lewis Street Hub and Walmart in Staunton. The Waynesboro route will stop at the Waynesboro Walmart and will also serve Stuarts Draft. Both routes will provide connections to the Route 250 Connector, the Waynesboro Circulator, and Staunton routes. Route maps and schedules will be posted on the BRITE website and Facebook page. Board members were encouraged to contact BRITE if they would like materials distributed to their local audiences.

Upcoming Meetings

Chair Arrowood noted that the next TAC meeting is scheduled for March 4, 2026, at 2:00 p.m., and the next Policy Board meeting is March 18, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. The March Policy Board meeting will be held in person.

Meeting Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Arrowood adjourned the meeting at 11:07 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula Melester
Director of Transportation
