

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

**January 21, 2026, 10:00 a.m.**

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

## Attendance

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

\*Virtual attendance

## Call to Order

The January 21, 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 December 17, 2025, Policy Board meeting.

*A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Carolyn Bragg; seconded by Mr. Todd Wood. The Board approved the motion by unanimous vote.*

Chair Arrowood welcomed Mr. Joel DeNunzio as the new VDOT District Engineer and VDOT Policy Board voting member representative. Mr. DeNunzio introduced himself to the Board.

## **Public Comment**

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

## **Approval of the 2026 SAWMPO Virtual Meeting Policy (Board Action Form #26-01)**

Mr. Zach Beard presented the 2026 SAWMPO virtual meeting policy for Board approval. Virginia FOIA requires boards like the Policy Board to review and readopt the virtual meeting policy annually. This policy allows members to attend remotely from individual locations and allows the SAWMPO to conduct all-virtual meetings.

### *2024 FOIA Changes*

FOIA allows the Policy Board and TAC to have two all virtual meetings per year. Members with disabilities and caregivers participating remotely now count toward a quorum, and remote participants retain full voting rights and cannot be restricted from voting during all-virtual meetings.

### *Policy Implementation*

The TAC and Policy Board will each have up to two all-virtual meetings per year. These two meetings will be used as-needed. Staff will coordinate with the TAC and Board chairs and provide the public with at least seven days notice of any meeting change from in-person to all virtual. This policy reaffirms the existing virtual meeting approach.

*A motion to approve the 2026 virtual meeting policy was made by Mr. Tim Fitzgerald; seconded by Ms. Bragg. The Board approved the motion by unanimous vote.*

## **Approval of SAWMPO Bylaws Amendment (Board Action Form #26-02)**

Mr. Beard presented the SAWMPO Bylaws amendment for Board approval. Staff conducted a comprehensive update of the bylaws to improve administrative clarity and function. The proposed amendment updates administrative language, clarifies membership structures, streamlines meeting procedures, and align the bylaws with current federal and state requirements. The last comprehensive update of the bylaws occurred in 2012 when the MPO was formed.

### *Review Process*

The Board reviewed the changes at the December 17, 2025, meeting. Per existing bylaws, Board members then had 25 days to review the changes and provide comments. There were 17 distinct changes grouped into four general categories. The first category addressed technical terminology standardization, including clarifying other unclear terminology. The second category updated alternate member provisions. The third category addressed membership and representation. The fourth category streamlined procedural meeting governance.

### *Policy Board Review Period*

During the Policy Board review period, staff received one comment from Mr. Todd Wood with input from Mr. Jim Wood related to Article 5 Section 4. The comment requested clarification on the process for filling a vacancy if an officer leaves in the middle of a term. The bylaws state that an election shall be held to fill the vacant officer role, and that the Board/TAC may elect either the newly appointed representative from the same locality that previously held the role, or may elect an existing board member. While this was implied

in the bylaws, it was not explicitly stated. Staff proposed additional language to further clarify this provision. The Board discussed the change and agreed with the proposed clarification.

*A motion to approve the 2026 SAWMPO Bylaws Amendment was made by Mr. Fitzgerald; seconded by Ms. Bragg. The Board approved the motion by unanimous vote.*

### **Approval to Release the Public Participation Plan (PPP) Update for Public Comment (Board Action Form #26-03)**

Mr. Beard presented the Public Participation Plan (PPP) update for Board approval to release for public comment. The PPP is a federally required document that establishes the SAWMPO's responsibilities, goals, and strategies for public involvement, including how the public is notified of MPO meetings, activities, and updates to documents such as the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). As part of the internal review process to update SAWMPO policies and foundational documents, staff determined that the existing PPP was in need of a comprehensive update to improve readability, streamline timeframes for information requests from SAWMPO staff, accommodations related to disability and language, and public notices for key SAWMPO documents and processes.

#### *Public Comment Periods*

Mr. Beard noted that the most substantial change to the PPP is reducing most public comment periods to align with peer MPOs throughout the state. As part of this process, staff reviewed PPPs from other MPOs of similar size and found that many of the SAWMPO public comment requirements are longer than what other MPOs in the state require. Aligning with peer MPOs streamlines processing and approval times and allows more flexibility within the MPO schedule.

Federal code does not establish requirements for the public release timeline of MPO documents or processes with the exception of the PPP, and it is the responsibility of the SAWMPO to determine the appropriate timelines for other documents and processes. The proposed PPP reduces most public comment periods from 21 days to 14 days. TIP amendments are reduced from 21 days to seven days. The public comment period for PPP approval and amendments remains at 45 days per federal code.

Mr. Beard noted that these are minimum public release periods. The SAWMPO can release documents such as the LRTP for longer periods on a plan-by-plan or project-by-project basis, such as the last LRTP, which was released for 45 days. The reduced timeframes allow more flexibility in planning timelines if needed.

#### *Other Timeline Changes*

The timeline for accessibility service requests related to sign language interpreters, language interpreters, and providing SAWMPO information in other accessible formats was reduced from seven days to three business days. This change is less restrictive for individuals requesting these services, allowing them more time between when the SAWMPO releases and mails materials and the actual meeting to submit requests to staff.

General staff response times for comments or questions received from the public for plans and general information requests about SAWMPO activity were changed. Previously, the PPP identified specific numbers of days in which staff would respond to each request. The proposed PPP does not identify a specific number of days, and specifying exact timeframes places staff in an unnecessarily burdensome position of being non-

compliant with the MPO's own PPP. Staff removed those specific dates and noted that responses would be made in a timely and responsive fashion.

#### *Publication Requirements*

Publication requirements were reduced. The SAWMPO reduced the requirement for hosting notices about approvals or amendments for main documents in newspapers. The proposed PPP notes that all notices will now be only posted online and posted in newspapers if appropriate. Additionally, the previous PPP required the SAWMPO to physically print documents out and distribute them to each of the localities in the region every time a document was released for comment. The updated PPP states that documents will be available online and printed out if requested by the public.

#### *TAC Review and Next Steps*

The TAC reviewed the proposed changes at the January 7, 2026, TAC meeting and recommended that the Board release the document for a 45-day public comment period. Following the public comment period, staff will request Board approval of the document at the March 2026 meeting.

Ms. Paula Melester added that these changes are intended to provide the MPO administrative team with more flexibility and not to discourage participation in planning activities and processes. Ms. Melester reaffirmed that the MPO places a high value on public engagement and is committed to providing opportunities for public participation wherever relevant and possible.

*A motion to approve releasing the updated SAWMPO PPP for a 45-day public comment period was made by Mr. Fitzgerald; seconded by Ms. Bragg. The Board approved the motion by unanimous vote.*

#### **Presentation: Federal Transportation Bill Reauthorization and Virginia Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (VAMPO) Overview – Alec Brebner, VAMPO Chair, Executive Director of the Central Virginia Planning District Commission (CVPDC)**

Mr. Alec Brebner provided a presentation on federal transportation bill reauthorization and an overview of VAMPO. Mr. Brebner explained that the current federal transportation authorization, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), expires on September 30, 2026, and Congress must pass a new authorization to continue federal transportation funding.

#### *IIJA Overview and New Bill*

Mr. Brebner explained that the IIJA authorized \$1.2 trillion over five years, including \$643 billion in traditional formula and competitive grant programs and \$550 billion in new infrastructure investments. The law significantly increased funding for public transportation, bridges, safety programs, electric vehicle infrastructure, and resilience projects. It also created new competitive grant programs including the Bridge Investment Program, RAISE grants, and the National Infrastructure Project Assistance program.

The House and Senate transportation committees will develop proposals for the new bill over the coming months. Key policy debates will include funding levels, new program priorities, formula vs. competitive grant balance, state flexibility vs. federal requirements, climate and resilience provisions, and how to address the Highway Trust Fund shortfall.

The Highway Trust Fund faces a structural deficit as fuel tax revenues haven't kept pace with construction costs and improved vehicle efficiency. Congress has supplemented the fund with general revenue but hasn't resolved the long-term shortfall. Several IJJA programs face uncertain futures. Safe Streets for All may convert from competitive grants to formula funding, which would offset declines in PL (highway planning) and Section 5303 (transit planning) funding while providing more predictable revenue and reducing application burden. Programs likely to be eliminated or reduced include EV charging stations, Reconnecting Communities (which was undersubscribed), and possibly BUILD/RAISE grants.

Virginia receives approximately \$1.2 billion annually in federal transportation funding through formula programs. Additional competitive grant funding varies by year based on application success. The state has been successful in recent years securing competitive grants for major projects including I-81 improvements and passenger rail expansion.

#### *VAMPO Overview*

Mr. Brebner explained that VAMPO is an association of Virginia's 19 MPOs, representing regions across the Commonwealth. VAMPO's mission is to provide a unified voice for metropolitan transportation planning in Virginia, share best practices, coordinate on policy issues, and advocate for MPO interests at the state and federal levels. VAMPO meets quarterly and has a board consisting of MPO chairs or their designees.

VAMPO coordinates on issues including federal transportation reauthorization positions, state transportation funding and policy, such as programs like SMART Scale, performance-based planning implementation, and emerging mobility and technology issues. Recent VAMPO advocacy priorities include maintaining strong federal funding for MPOs, supporting flexibility in transportation investments, advancing safety and Vision Zero goals, and promoting multimodal planning. VAMPO partners with the National Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO), a representative and lobbying organization at the federal level. AMPO has staff dedicated to tracking federal reauthorization, while VAMPO operates with volunteer staff from member MPOs. There are approximately 300 MPOs nationwide.

Mr. Brebner noted that as federal reauthorization moves forward, VAMPO will be tracking proposals and coordinating Virginia MPO input on key policy issues. He encouraged Board members to reach out with questions or concerns about federal transportation policy.

#### *Board Discussion*

Board members asked questions about the reauthorization timeline. Mr. Brebner noted that the September 30, 2026, deadline creates urgency but acknowledged Congress could pass short-term extensions if comprehensive reauthorization proves difficult. Mr. Brebner emphasized that MPOs should communicate priorities to congressional delegations as the process moves forward.

Mr. DeNunzio asked about Smart Scale scoring typologies and whether the SAWMPO has changed scoring typology since inception. Mr. Brad Reed explained that the typology has remained the same; however, the Charlottesville-Albemarle MPO has changed its typology in the past.

## Agency Updates

### *VDOT*

Mr. Reed provided the following update:

- The Waynesboro Rosser Avenue Route 340 study has a public survey currently available for public comment. The survey has received approximately 300 responses, and responses are generally positive toward the recommended improvements in the study. The study work group will meet in January to review public responses and select the preferred alternative, which will be carried forward into Phase 3. Phase 3 will develop cost estimates and conceptual sketches for potential Smart Scale or other grant program applications.
- District Planning has met with locality staff to discuss the upcoming Smart Scale round of applications, and is also beginning to plan for new VDOT-led studies after Smart Scale concludes. Mr. Reed encouraged localities to contact District Planning with study ideas.

Mr. Don Komara provided the following updates:

- The I-81 project through Staunton from Route 222 to Route 225 is approximately 60% complete. Speed cameras have not yet been installed on this segment.
- The Weyers Cave I-81 project is 35% complete. Dirt has been removed from the median and work is progressing on the bridges. A decision on speed cameras for this segment has not been made.
- The Harrisonburg I-81 project from mile post 242 to 248 was awarded to Triton at \$218 million. The six-year project will likely begin surveying work in the spring.
- The Mill Place project continues and is progressing well.
- VDOT is conducting work on Route 254 in Nelson and Augusta Counties, including turn lane improvements. Shoulder widening will extend on Route 254 to Waynesboro and on Route 340, and the project also includes the installation of rumble strips.
- VDOT is preparing for a significant winter weather event expected to begin Saturday and continue through Sunday.

### *DRPT*

Mr. Beard provided the following updates on behalf of Ms. Grace Stankus:

- Ms. Maria Zimmerman assumed the position of DRPT Director effective January 20, 2026. Ms. Zimmerman brings 30 years of experience in policy and planning. Ms. Zimmerman previously worked in the Biden administration as the principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy and served as Co-Director of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law implementation.
- The FY 2027 DRPT grant cycle will close on February 1, 2026. Applicants should reach out to Ms. Stankus with any questions.

### *BRITE Transit and Afton Express*

Ms. Devon Thompson provided the following updates:

- DRPT applications are due February 1, 2026. BRITE is finalizing applications for usual rural and urban operating and capital cost of contracting assistance, a commuter assistance program project grant for BRITE marketing, commuter assistance program operating funding for the rideshare commuter



assistance program, two merit capital grants for transit facility equipment and bus shelter access improvements in Augusta County, and a potential technical assistance grant for transit planning.

- CSPDC continues the solicitation and procurement process for the new turnkey contract for BRITE bus services. The current turnkey services contract expires on June 30, 2026.
- Transit staff hosted the first annual State of Transit event last Wednesday at Augusta Health. CSPDC and Augusta Health staff made remarks reiterating the importance of existing and new partnerships in transportation and the well-being of BRITE bus, highlighting accomplishments and future horizon projects. The Value of Transit video premiered at the event and is now available on the BRITE bus website at the following link: <https://www.britebus.org/brite-unveils-value-of-transit-short-film/>
- For Afton Express, BRITE was successful in securing a marketing grant through DRPT in the last grant cycle. Marketing initiatives include geofencing and digital ads that were distributed in the fall, weather app advertisements currently running, and upcoming television ads on NBC 29 during the local coverage of the Winter Olympics.

### **Locality Updates**

#### *Augusta County*

Mr. Fitzgerald provided the following updates:

- The SAWMPO boundary line adjustment has been officially approved. Greenville is now included in the MPO.

#### *City of Waynesboro*

The City had no updates.

#### *City of Staunton*

Ms. Leslie Beauregard provided the following updates:

- Mobilization will begin in the next few weeks for the Wharf Street portion of the tunnel repairs downtown. The work will not change street access since Wharf Street is already closed, but it will close the eastern portion of the Wharf parking lot that had been reopened. The real challenge will occur when Johnson Street closes to repair that portion of the tunnel, expected in late summer or fall. Downtown Staunton will be difficult to navigate during this time.
- In preparation for the weekend snow event, the City is planning to remove parking on downtown streets along snow routes to help with snow removal operations. The City will communicate this through social media and alert systems.

### **Other Business**

There was no other business.

### **Upcoming Meetings**

Chair Arrowood noted that the next TAC meeting is scheduled for February 4, 2026, at 2:00 p.m., and the next Policy Board meeting is February 18, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. Both meetings will be all-virtual via Teams.

### **Meeting Adjournment**

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



**Staunton Augusta  
Waynesboro**  
Metropolitan Planning  
Organization

112 MacTanly Place, Staunton, VA 24401  
(540) 885-5174  
sawmpo.org

Respectfully submitted,

Paula Melester  
Director of Transportation