

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

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

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

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		✓*	Kyle Lawrence, SVBC
	Michael Hamp (Alt)		Kevin Jones	✓*	Annie Walsh, SVBC
VDOT			Ivan Rucker	✓*	Maya Alexander, AOSV
	Joel DeNunzio				
✓	Brad Reed (Alt)				
✓	Don Komara (Alt)				

*Virtual attendance

Call to Order

The March 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 February 18, 2026, Policy Board meeting.

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

Public Comment

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

Approval of 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Amendment (Board Action Form #26-05)

Mr. Zach Beard presented the 2050 LRTP amendment for Board approval. The Board originally approved two SAWMPO boundary adjustments in February 2025. The first adjustment responded to a Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) requirement to update MPO boundaries following the 2020 Census and included new urban area designations along the MPO's northern edge. The second adjustment, covering the southern portion of the MPO area, reflected an Augusta County request to expand the boundary to include the Greenville area.

Both adjustments required approval from the Governor's office, which was not received until December 23, 2025, which was after the Board adopted the 2050 LRTP on December 17, 2025. Because the boundary approvals postdated LRTP adoption, the adjustments could not be incorporated into the original document. In response, staff developed an appendix to the LRTP documenting the two boundary changes. Staff previewed the amendments at the February 2026 Board meeting and subsequently released the appendix for a 21-day public comment period. No public comments were received.

Mr. Beard noted that the two new areas are geographically and demographically similar to the existing MPO boundary and do not significantly affect current or future demographic trends, the transportation network, or regional needs. All analysis included in the originally approved 2050 LRTP remains valid. The boundary expansions will primarily allow the MPO to fund studies and apply for grants within the two new areas. Staff requested Board approval of the LRTP appendix amendment and noted that, upon approval, the updated documents will be submitted to state and federal agencies and the SAWMPO website will be updated.

A motion to approve the 2050 LRTP Appendix Amendment was made by Mr. Tim Fitzgerald; seconded by Mr. Jim Wood. The Board approved the motion by unanimous vote.

Approval of the Public Participation Plan (PPP) Update (Board Action Form #26-06)

Ms. Paula Melester presented the updated Public Participation Plan (PPP) for Board approval. At the January 2026 meeting, the Board approved releasing the updated PPP for the federally required 45-day public comment period. No public comments were received on the SAWMPO PPP. The HRMPO received comments on its parallel PPP update and staff incorporated relevant changes into the SAWMPO document to maintain consistency across both plans.

Two substantive changes were made based on HRMPO comments. First, a commenter requested that the requirement to publish public notice for the LRTP in a newspaper be maintained as a minimum requirement. Staff recommended adding this requirement back into the PPP and Ms. Melester noted that the SAWMPO had intended to continue newspaper publication for the LRTP by practice regardless of whether it was explicitly required. Second, a commenter requested that newspaper publication also be required for the annual Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Staff recommended against this change. The UPWP is largely administratively mandated by federal agencies, and the discretionary content it contains such as small area planning studies is typically drawn from studies already vetted through the LRTP and other small area planning processes. Staff concluded that online-only publication is sufficient for the UPWP and preserves the Board's ability to publish in the newspaper on a case-by-case basis in the future if warranted.

Lastly, a commentor requested that public notices be made more accessible and prominent on the SAWMPO website. Staff noted that CSPDC is currently adding a dedicated public comment tab to the website to house public notices as they transition to primarily digital formats. Ms. Melester noted that all changes are consistent with the intent of the original PPP update.

A motion to approve the updated SAWMPO Public Participation Plan was made by Ms. Bragg; seconded by Mr. Jim Wood. The Board approved the motion by unanimous vote.

Title VI Plan Review and Approval to Release for Public Comment (Board Action Form #26-07)

Ms. Melester presented the Title VI Program and Implementation Plan update for Board review and requested approval to release the document for a 14-day public comment period. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. As a federally assisted planning organization, the SAWMPO is required to maintain and periodically update a Title VI plan. VDOT's Civil Rights Office conducts a review of the SAWMPO's Title VI plan every three years on behalf of FHWA.

The current update is required in response to that recent review. While the SAWMPO was found to be in compliance during the review period, two executive orders previously referenced in the plan were rescinded in early 2025 and must be removed to maintain ongoing compliance. Executive Order 12898 addressed environmental justice by requiring that particular attention be paid to ensuring that transportation planning did not produce disparate impacts on the health and well-being of marginalized and minority communities. Executive Order 13166 required special provisions to ensure equal access to documents, information, and participation in the planning process for individuals with limited English proficiency. FHWA has directed the SAWMPO to remove references to both rescinded orders so the plan accurately reflects current federal policy.

Ms. Melester noted that the SAWMPO's commitment to equitable public engagement and non-discriminatory planning practices remains unchanged. Title VI itself independent of the executive orders continues to prohibit discrimination based on national origin, which includes language access. In place of the limited English proficiency terminology, FHWA and VDOT have directed use of the term "individuals with language access barriers." Staff used this as an opportunity to strengthen the plan's language access provisions by explicitly including sign language interpretation and Braille translation, in addition to services for individuals who speak languages other than English. This expansion was considered particularly appropriate given that the region is home to the Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind.

Ms. Melester also noted that this update consolidates three previously separate Title VI plans for the HRMPO, SAWMPO, and the CSPDC rural transportation program into a single document, consistent with direction from VDOT's Civil Rights Office and the approach taken by peer MPOs and planning district commissions across Virginia. The approval process will proceed in sequence: the SAWMPO Policy Board and HRMPO Policy Board will each independently approve the plan, after which the CSPDC Board of Commissioners will take final action.

The timeline for this update is compressed. Feedback from VDOT's Civil Rights Office was received one week prior to the meeting, and the fully approved plan must be returned to VDOT by April 24. The document was not yet finalized for Board review at the time of the meeting. Staff requested that the Board vote to release the plan for a 14-day public comment period. Ms. Melester explained that the Board will be able to

provide comments during the public comment period and that any Board member feedback will be considered for the final draft. Staff will then request that the Policy Board to formally adopt the plan at the April 2026 Policy Board meeting.

A motion to release the Title VI Program and Implementation Plan for a 14-day public comment period was made by Mr. Tim Fitzgerald ; seconded by Mr. Todd Wood. The Board approved the motion by unanimous vote.

Smart Scale Round 7 Pre-Application Update

Mr. Beard provided an update on Smart Scale Round 7 pre-applications. The pre-application window opened March 1 and closes April 1, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. The full application window follows from June through August 1, 2026. Each locality and the MPO may submit up to five pre-applications and four final applications. Pre-applications require only basic project information; detailed analysis and documentation are required for final submissions.

The SAWMPO is currently advancing one pre-application for Round 7: the Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (WWRC) Long-Term Access Improvements in Augusta County. The project includes a new roadway extending from Route 250 to the WWRC complex, a median on Route 250, and a shared-use path. The project has been submitted in prior Smart Scale rounds without success. A change is being incorporated for this cycle: WWRC is conducting renovation work in the area where the project previously tied into the loop road and has requested that the new roadway connect to a different tie-in point. VDOT is updating the concept to reflect the new alignment. This revision does not need to be finalized until the full application submission.

Mr. Tim Fitzgerald noted that access to WWRC is the top public priority in Augusta County but has proven difficult to fund through the Smart Scale scoring process. Augusta County is also pursuing federal earmark funding for both the WWRC project and a study of the Greenville interchange.

Presentation: Central Shenandoah Bike-Walk Summit – Kyle Lawrence, Executive Director, Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition

Mr. Kyle Lawrence, Executive Director of the Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition, presented virtually on the 2025 Central Shenandoah Bike-Walk Summit. CSPDC has partnered with the Summit since its founding in 2013 to bring together stakeholders around safety, biking, walking, trails, and community mobility.

The 2025 Summit was held in downtown Harrisonburg. Professional facilitation was provided by the Institute for Constructive Advocacy and Dialogue (ICAD), which has supported every Summit since the beginning. The keynote speaker was Dr. Melicent Miller, a consultant to the Virginia Department of Health working on the Virginia Walkability Action Institute. Dr. Miller focused on the connection between public health and active transportation infrastructure, presenting case studies demonstrating that connected, accessible infrastructure lowers healthcare costs and makes communities more livable and desirable places to live and work.

The Summit featured local project presentations and a walking tour. Highlights included a presentation on North Mason Street in Harrisonburg, where a Smart Growth America demonstration project temporarily reduced the street from four lanes to two; that project has since informed a potential Smart Scale

application by the City. Mr. Lawrence also highlighted the Shenandoah Rail Trail; the Three Notched Trail and its planned connection to the Blue Ridge Tunnel; and a potential Greenway expansion from Waynesboro to the Blue Ridge Tunnel, including an ongoing grant application for trail connectivity into the National Park.

Mr. Lawrence noted that planning for the 2026 Summit is underway, with a target timeframe of November and Waynesboro and Staunton under consideration as host locations. A keynote speaker has not yet been selected. Mr. Lawrence invited Board members to attend.

Mr. Garreth Bartholomew added that as a direct outcome of the 2025 Summit and Dr. Miller's presentation, City of Staunton staff applied for and received a Virginia Walkability Action Institute grant to fund a demonstration project on Beverly Street this summer. The project will show the public a real-world preview of curb extensions and mid-block travel lane conversion to pedestrian use. The project complements an existing Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)-funded project that will deliver permanent pedestrian safety improvements at downtown Staunton intersections. CSPDC and City of Staunton staff held a site visit on March 17 with Virginia Walkability Action Institute leadership, city stakeholders, and members of the Staunton Bicycle and Pedestrian Advocacy Committee to advance the project.

Agency Updates

VDOT

Mr. Reed provided the following update:

- Smart Scale Round 7 pre-applications are open through April 1, at 5:00 p.m. Localities needing assistance with submissions should contact VDOT or CSPDC staff.
- The Rosser Avenue/Route 340 corridor study in Waynesboro is advancing into Phase 3, which will develop cost estimates and conceptual sketches. Three Smart Scale applications from the City of Waynesboro are anticipated to emerge from the study.

Mr. Don Komara provided the following updates:

- The I-81 project through Staunton from the Route 222 exit to Route 225 is approximately 60 percent complete. Speed camera activation is anticipated on approximately April 1. Required signage will be posted in advance. State police are the administering agency. Revenue from the cameras goes to the state literary fund.
- The Weyers Cave I-81 project is approximately 37% complete, with a targeted completion in fall 2026. Asphalt work planned for March 18 was delayed due to cold temperatures and is expected to resume the following week.
- The Harrisonburg I-81 project from milepost 242 to 248 is a six-year project awarded to Triton. Surveying and startup work will begin this spring.
- The Mill Place project is progressing well.
- Route 250 turn lane improvements at three intersections have a targeted completion of June 2026.
- The Waynesboro Connector Project received the Project of the Year award for the VDOT district, announced at a statewide inspector's conference on March 17.
- VDOT is implementing systemic safety improvements across the district, including: installation of wrong-way signs at median crossings on four-lane divided highways where drivers have been observed making incorrect turns; intersection approach signage on secondary routes with limited



sight distance; and centerline and edge rumble strips. Specific affected routes will be communicated as the program rolls out.

- Gravel roads in the district have sustained significant damage from freeze-thaw cycles this season, compounded by heavy agricultural equipment traffic. VDOT crews will be actively grading roads. Localities with specific problem locations were encouraged to contact VDOT directly.

DRPT

Ms. Grace Stankus reported that she had no new updates beyond those shared at the February 2026 meeting and was available for questions.

BRITE Transit and Afton Express

Ms. Melester provided the following updates on behalf of Ms. Devon Thompson:

- CSPDC has concluded the competitive procurement for the BRITE transit turnkey service contract, which expires June 30. The new contractor is Resource Management Systems (RMS), a company based in Georgia with over 30 years of experience. RMS holds multiple contracts with planning district commissions operating transit in large rural areas similar to the SAWMPO region and is new to Virginia.
- The transition goal is full service continuity, with no disruption to riders between June 30 and July 1. RMS will bring its own bus fleet; the existing fleet will be retired. New vehicles are expected to be delivered 4 to 6 weeks before the contract start date, with vehicle wrapping completed by the manufacturer before delivery. Riders' primary visible change will be a new fleet on the road.
- The transit team is currently working through a DRPT financial compliance review and a triennial federal compliance review.
- March 18 is Transit Operator Appreciation Day. Board members who encounter a BRITE driver were encouraged to thank them.
- The following bus stop requests were reviewed at the BTAC meeting the week of March 11.
 - Mary Baldwin University requested rerouting of the Staunton Northwest Loop through the university's upper campus to improve student access; this request was approved at the March BRITE Technical Advisory Committee (BTAC) meeting.
 - The Housing and Redevelopment Authority submitted two requests: one complex accessible only by a single road with no safe bus turnaround space was approved for BRITE ADA (door-to-door) service only; the Farrier Court request involves similar access constraints but higher pedestrian demand, including residents with strollers and groceries. The BTAC tabled the Farrier Court request pending contractor review of alternative routing options. An update is expected after the May BTAC meeting.
- A new BRITE bus stop was added on West Beverly Street across from the new Staunton-Augusta Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Courthouse. Marketing has been conducted to promote bus access to the recently relocated downtown farmer's market.

Locality Updates

Augusta County

Mr. Fitzgerald provided the following updates:



- The new Augusta County Courthouse in Verona will hold a ribbon-cutting ceremony on June 3, followed by a public open house. June 15 is the first day of court at the new facility, a historically significant milestone marking the first time the county seat has moved from downtown Staunton since 1738.
- A road project providing access into the Augusta County Government Center is currently out to bid, with bids due April 15. The contract requires completion by mid-December 2026. Due to the timeline, the courthouse will open before the road project is finished, creating a brief period of overlap between courthouse operations and active construction.
- The new Verona fire station is expected to open April 15. The public is invited.
- The Augusta County Comprehensive Plan update is in its final stages. A complete draft is under review by the steering committee, with public release expected within weeks and a council presentation targeted for May 2026.

City of Waynesboro

The City provided no updates.

City of Staunton

Chair Arrowood provided the following updates:

- Tunnel repair work at the Wharf Street area is ongoing. Staff is working to minimize business disruption and is pursuing marketing support for downtown businesses affected by the construction, which is expected to continue over several years.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Upcoming Meetings

Chair Arrowood noted that the next TAC meeting is scheduled for April 1, 2026, at 2:00 p.m., and the next Policy Board meeting is April 15, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.

Meeting Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Arrowood adjourned the meeting at 10:58 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula Melester
Director of Transportation

