

**Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro Metropolitan Planning Organization
Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
Regular Meeting Minutes
February 4, 2026, 2:00 p.m.**
Meeting held virtually via Microsoft Teams

Voting Members				Others	
City of Staunton		VDOT		Staff (CSPDC)	
✓*	Rodney Rhodes (Chair)	✓*	Don Komara	✓*	Zach Beard
	Meggie Taylor (Alt)	✓*	Brad Reed (Alt)	✓*	Garreth Bartholomew
	Lyle Hartt (Alt)	✓*	Shane McCabe (Alt)	✓*	Devon Thompson
✓*	Susan Wilson	✓	Cody Huffman (Alt)	✓*	Paula Melester
		VA DRPT		✓*	Danielle Gannon
	Augusta County	✓*	Grace Stankus		
✓*	Doug Wolfe (Vice Chair)				
✓*	Julia Hensley	Non-Voting Members			
	Garret Shultz (Alt)				Other attendees
		VRT			
	City of Waynesboro	✓*	Steve Wilson		
✓*	Leslie Tate	✓*	Phil Thompson (Alt)		
✓*	Alisande Tombarge	Federal Highway Admin.			
	Scott Kesecker (Alt)		Kevin Jones		
	Jeff Oswald (Alt)	Federal Transit Admin.			
			Lora Grady		
		VA Dept. of Aviation			
			Rusty Harrington		

*Virtual attendance

Call to Order

Chair Rodney Rhodes called the meeting of the Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (SAWMPO) Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to order at 2:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Rhodes presented the minutes from the January 7, 2027, TAC meeting for approval.

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

Public Comment

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

SAWMPO 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) Boundary Expansion Appendix (TAC Memo #26-01)

Mr. Garreth Bartholomew presented an overview of the 2050 LRTP MPA Boundary Expansion Appendix. Mr. Bartholomew explained that the Policy Board approved two MPA boundary adjustments at its February 2025 meeting, based on Augusta County's requested Greenville area expansion and 2020 U.S. Census urban area designation changes. All MPO boundary adjustments require approval from the Governor's Office. The SAWMPO did not receive state-level approval until December 23, 2025, which was after the 2050 LRTP was approved on December 17, 2025 and did not include the expanded MPA.

Staff have since developed an appendix to document the boundary changes and will present the proposed LRTP amendment to the Policy Board for release for a 21-day public comment period at the February 18 Board meeting, with final amendment approval anticipated at the March 18 Board meeting.

Mr. Bartholomew described the two boundary adjustments. The Greenville area expansion extends the southern boundary of the MPO approximately six miles south, with the southwest boundary now paralleling I-81 and US 11 via Old Greenville Road to Stover School Road and including Augusta County's Greenville Urban Service Area. The Greenville-area modification adds approximately 13.1 square miles and 1,905 new residents to the MPO.

The five smaller VDOT-proposed census adjustments add approximately 1.7 square miles and 808 new residents, primarily along the northeast boundary near US 340 extending toward Crimora. In total, the Greenville and VDOT census adjustments add approximately 14.8 square miles and 2,713 residents, representing a 3.2% increase in the MPO's total population. The MPO boundary now includes all I-81 interchanges in Augusta County.

Boundary Adjustment Demographics

Mr. Bartholomew noted that the addition of 2,713 residents does not have a significant impact on the region's current or projected demographic characteristics. For example, non-white population and poverty level rates each decreased by approximately 0.2%, the elderly population rate remained unchanged, and the zero-vehicle households rate decreased due to the predominantly rural and suburban character of the expanded area. Overall, the SAWMPO area is now projected to reach 103,477 residents by 2050, which is about 3,000 more than was originally projected in the 2050 LRTP.

Boundary Adjustment Traffic Conditions

Mr. Bartholomew noted that the I-81 segment between Exit 213 and Exit 217 has the most tractor trailer traffic within the new boundary areas. The segment has approximately 50,000 vehicles per day and nearly 30% truck traffic. US 11 from Exit 213 to Greenville and the US 340 corridor extending toward Crimora also have notable traffic volumes.

Six Potential for Safety Improvement (PSI) segments and intersections were identified in the boundary expansion area. Of note, the intersection of US 340 and US 11 south of Exit 213 has a 44% fatal and severe crash rate, and the I-81 segment between mile markers 214 and 215 represents the highest crash frequency segment in the expanded region. VTrans Priority 2 needs exist on US-11 south of Exit 213 and along US-340 from Walnut Hills Road to Guthrie Road, with Priority 4 needs along the I-81, US-11, and US-340 corridors.

Appendix Summary

Mr. Bartholomew summarized the LRTP appendix content, noting it documents demographics, the transportation network, and baseline safety and congestion needs for the expanded area. Mr. Bartholomew explained that the LRTP Study List includes a potential future MPO study for the Route 11 and I-81 Exit 213 interchange in the Greenville area.

Mr. Doug Wolfe expressed appreciation for the comprehensive overview and noted that the expansion is consistent with Augusta County's recently adopted Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Wolfe observed that Old Greenville Road has been identified in county planning documents as a tertiary alternative route for I-81 traffic for over a decade, and that the expansion has the potential to support multiple transportation improvement projects in that area.

Presentation: 2026 State of Transit

Ms. Devon Thompson and Ms. Danielle Gannon of CSPDC presented the 2026 State of Transit for BRITE, Afton Express, and the Rideshare Commuter Assistance Program.

BRITE

Ms. Thompson reported that in 2025, BRITE provided approximately 214,000 passenger trips across seven fixed routes, one commuter route, and three ADA complementary paratransit buses, operating over 37,000 service hours and approximately 720,000 miles.

Ms. Thompson highlighted the following service improvements implemented in 2025:

- A new stop at Middlebrook Trace Apartments was introduced as a call stop and quickly transitioned to a regular hourly fixed stop, representing successful coordination between the City of Staunton, BRITE, and the developer to extend transit access to a growing area on the west side of the city.
- On the 250 Connector, Valley Community Services Board service increased from three trips daily to hourly service aligned with their office hours.
- The Waynesboro Circulator was rerouted to travel via Lew DeWitt Boulevard to Bookerdale Road and West Main Street rather than through Rosser Avenue, allowing the Amazon facility stop originally served by the 250 Connector to be absorbed into the Circulator and providing new access to businesses along West Main Street.

- BRITE renewed a partnership with Valley Community Services Board to ensure clients and community members have reliable access to their facility and services. Community outreach continued through attendance at human service organization events, senior health fairs, and college and university welcome events throughout the service area.
- BRITE expanded paratransit (BRITE Access) service hours in 2025. A third paratransit bus was introduced and incrementally increased from four to nine daily hours to match the operating hours of the other two paratransit buses, addressing growing weekday demand in preparation for a future expansion to Saturday service.

Looking ahead, Ms. Thompson outlined plans to pursue a BRITE transit marketing grant, increase community partnerships with organizations serving transit-dependent populations, evaluate the Blue Ridge Community College (BRCC) shuttle route along Routes 11 and 42 for efficiencies and improved coverage, and implement Saturday paratransit service. BRITE also reported that transit grant funds secured in the last state grant round will fund bus shelter installations in each of the three localities, with coordination underway on installation sites and additional funding being sought for ADA improvements at the Augusta County shelter site.

Afton Express

Ms. Gannon reported that the Afton Express carried approximately 24,000 passenger trips in 2025, a 24% increase from 2024. The highlight of the year was the implementation of a revised schedule that better aligns with employer start and end times, including coordination with UVA, offers more consistent intervals between trips, and adds a fifth morning trip. The schedule was developed using passenger trip data, stop usage data, rider surveys, and public comment. In 2026, staff will analyze and monitor ridership trends following the schedule change.

Ms. Gannon also reported on the completion of several components of a DRPT-funded transit marketing grant for the Afton Express. A professional photo shoot was conducted in October 2025, with the resulting images being incorporated into marketing materials, presentations, and the BRITE website. A commercial was produced, with multiple versions now airing, including a placement during Jeopardy. A comprehensive digital advertising package is also live.

Rideshare Commuter Assistance Program

Ms. Gannon reported that in 2025, BRITE continued implementing initiatives from the Rideshare strategic plan adopted the prior year, including employer outreach meetings, and also work to optimize the Rideshare website for both employers and individuals. The RideHome rewards program was implemented in 2025, replacing the former emergency RideHome program as part of a statewide initiative. In 2026, staff plans to develop a regional employer database and launch a strategic relationship-building campaign with key employers in the second half of FY27.

Ms. Thompson closed by noting that FY27 grant applications were submitted for rural and urban operating and capital assistance, cost of contracting, BRITE marketing, Commuter Assistance Program (CAP) rideshare operations, capital grants for transit facility equipment and bus shelter access improvements, and a technical assistance grant for route planning. Ms. Thompson reminded members that February 4 is Transit Equity Day in honor of Rosa Parks' birthday, with free rides available on all BRITE routes for the remainder of the day. The solicitation and procurement process

for a new turnkey management, operations, and maintenance contract continues, with the current contract with Virginia Regional Transit expiring June 30, 2026.

Agency Updates

VDOT

Mr. Brad Reed provided the following updates:

- VDOT's Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIPI) will host a virtual Smart Scale Round 7 pre-application training on February 24. Registration is available at smartscale.virginia.gov. The pre-application portal opens March 2 and remains open through the end of March, with full applications opening in June. Members with project questions are encouraged to contact Mr. Reed or Mr. Shane McCabe.
- District Planning is collecting study ideas for the upcoming round of STARS and Project Pipeline studies. Localities with potential study concepts are encouraged to reach out to VDOT staff.

Mr. Komara provided the following updates:

- I-81 Staunton widening project (MM 221–225): The project is approximately 60% complete. Kokosing continues to make progress. Speed enforcement cameras are anticipated for implementation in April or May.
- I-81 Weyers Cave project: Approximately 35% complete. Branch Highways continues to make good progress.
- I-81 Harrisonburg widening project: Triton Construction is anticipated to begin work in spring or early summer. When active, three sections of I-81 widening will be under construction simultaneously, totaling approximately 12 miles.
- Mill Place project: The contractor continues incremental utility work and progress on the project.
- Route 254 intersection widening at New Hope Road: Work is ongoing.
- Snow removal: The region experienced 8–10 inches of snow followed by approximately three inches of sleet, creating significant operational challenges. Heavy, compacted snow caused equipment breakdowns and strain on maintenance crews across VDOT and localities.

DRPT

Ms. Grace Stankus provided the following update:

- The FY27 grant application window closed February 1. Scoring is now underway, with a draft funding scenario expected in mid-April.
- The FY27 Section 5303 (Metropolitan Planning) application is open in DRPT WebGrants through May 1. MPOs are encouraged to use prior-year dollar amounts when drafting UPWPs for DRPT review, as FTA apportionments are not yet available.
- DRPT will release the 2026 Coordinated Human Services Mobility Plan on February 17. This federally required four-year plan identifies needs, gaps, and opportunities for transportation services for seniors and individuals with disabilities funded through FTA's Section 5310 program.

- DRPT welcomed new Director Mariia Zimmerman, who brings over 30 years of transportation experience, and new Chief Deputy Director Allan Fye, who joins from the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC).

BRITE and Afton Express

Ms. Devon Thompson noted that the FY27 grant applications and ongoing procurement update were covered during the State of Transit presentation earlier in the meeting.

Locality Updates

Augusta County

Mr. Doug Wolfe provided the following update:

- The Dick Huff Lane project, which provides a new incoming access lane to the Augusta County Government Center adjacent to the new courthouse, will go to advertisement in March. The new courthouse is scheduled to open on June 15, with construction on the new roadway beginning shortly thereafter. The project timing was coordinated to secure additional VDOT funding.

City of Staunton

Ms. Susan Wilson provided the following updates:

- The downtown tunnel repair project is scheduled to begin February 17, the Tuesday following Presidents' Day. Work will commence on Byers Street, which is expected to have minimal traffic impacts, before proceeding to Johnson Street, which staff anticipates will present greater operational challenges. The project is expected to continue for at least one year.
- The City was awarded a Virginia Walkability Action Institute (VWAI) demonstration project grant for Beverly Street. The process moved quickly – the City was notified of the award on a Monday and attended the program kickoff in Richmond the following Wednesday. The project will implement a demonstration prior to future Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) signal and streetscape improvements along Beverly Street.

Chair Rhodes added that VDOT is scheduled to hold a public hearing on the Commerce Road Greenway project on February 25, 2026, at City Hall Council Chambers.

City of Waynesboro

Ms. Leslie Tate provided the following updates:

- The City submitted a DRPT minor enhancement grant application to improve five BRITE bus stops with shelters, sidewalk connections, ADA ramps, and pedestrian crossings at select locations. The City is hopeful the application will be funded.
- Work continues on the City's comprehensive plan update.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Upcoming Meetings

Chair Rhodes announced the following upcoming meetings:

- February 18, 2026 – SAWMPO Policy Board Meeting, 10:00 a.m., held virtually via Teams
- March 4, 2026 – SAWMPO TAC Meeting, 2:00 p.m., CSPDC

Meeting Adjourned

Chair Rhodes adjourned the meeting at 2:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Zach Beard, Program Manager