

Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro Metropolitan Planning Organization

Policy Board Meeting Minutes

August 19, 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	✓	Cody Huffman	✓	Zach Beard
	Rodney Rhodes (Alt)	DRPT		✓	Devon Thompson
Augusta County		✓*	Grace Stankus	✓	Paula Melester
✓	Tim Fitzgerald	Department of Aviation		✓	Garreth Bartholomew
✓	Carolyn Bragg (Vice Chair)		Stephen Smiley	✓	Kayla Dixon
	Pam Carter (Alt)	FHWA and FTA			
City of Waynesboro			Kevin Jones		
✓	Jim Wood (Chair)		Ivan Rucker	Others	
	Todd Wood			✓*	Taylor Holden, DRPT
✓	Michael Hamp (Alt)			✓	Joe Moore, Shen Alliance
VDOT					
✓	Joel DeNunzio				
	Brad Reed (Alt)				
	Don Komara (Alt)				

*Virtual attendance

Call to Order

The August 19, 2026, Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (SAWMPO) Policy Board meeting was called to order at 10:03 a.m. by Chair Jim Wood.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Arrowood presented the minutes from the June 17, 2026, Policy Board meeting.

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

Public Comment

Chair Jim Wood opened the meeting for public comment. There was no public comment.

Presentation: Virginia Statewide Rail Plan Update – Taylor Holden, DRPT

Mr. Taylor Holden, Rail Planning and Data Manager at DRPT, joined virtually to present an update on the Virginia Statewide Rail Plan. DRPT submits the plan to the Federal Railroad Administration on a four-year cycle and expects to submit the update in February 2027. The presentation covered plan development, stakeholder and public engagement thus far, survey results relevant to the SAWMPO region, and rail funding items including improvements planned for the Staunton Amtrak station. The full presentation is available via the meeting slide deck and meeting recording on the SAWMPO website.

Following the presentation, Mr. Joel DeNunzio noted that the public survey drew no comments on rail crossings of concern within the SAWMPO region and asked whether comments were still being accepted. Mr. Holden confirmed DRPT is still accepting input on the plan with a virtual public meeting scheduled for September 8, 2026 and a second public survey to be released this fall. Ms. Ann Cundy suggested that MPO staff compile a list of regional rail crossings of concern to submit to DRPT in coordination with locality staff, and other Board members expressed support for a coordinated regional submission.

Frontier Drive Corridor Study Update – Garreth Bartholomew, SAWMPO

Mr. Garreth Bartholomew provided an update on the SAWMPO FY27 Frontier Drive Corridor Study in Augusta County and the City of Staunton. MPO staff issued a notice to proceed and held a kickoff meeting with the consultant Timmons Group on August 5, which included the City, the County, VDOT planning and residency staff, and BRITE.

Mr. Bartholomew explained that the Frontier Drive/Richmond Road intersection analysis will be coordinated directly with VDOT's separate US 250/Richmond Road pipeline study. The Frontier Drive study is moving into data collection and traffic counts. Staff anticipate developing alternatives for key intersections and corridor segments this winter, holding a public open house in early 2027, and finalizing the study in spring 2027.

In response to a question by Chair Jim Wood, Mr. Bartholomew confirmed that the planned Frontier Culture Museum addition is expected to include a public access point on Frontier Drive, currently limited to employee access, that could serve as a secondary entrance.

Virtual Meeting Process Update – Paula Melester, SAWMPO

Ms. Paula Melester presented proposed changes to the Board's virtual and hybrid meeting process. Ms. Melester said that based on a review of peer MPO and public body practices, staff identified two concerns with the current process: ensuring meetings remain open and accessible to the public while protecting against cybersecurity risks, and improving staff's ability to moderate meetings, manage the chat, and control virtual participant audio and video without disrupting presenters.

Staff is moving future virtual and hybrid meetings to a Microsoft Teams webinar format. Meeting mail-outs will include a one-click registration link rather than a static recurring meeting link. Each meeting will have a unique link generated upon registration and sent via Outlook calendar invite. Registered attendees, whether they attend in person, attend virtually, or miss the meeting, will receive an automated email within one to

two days after the meeting with the presentation slides and meeting recording, in advance of the minutes. In-person attendance remains the expectation for voting members to maintain quorum.

Agency Updates

VDOT

Mr. Shane McCabe provided the following updates:

- The Staunton District received 28 Smart Scale Round 7 applications totaling approximately \$342 million, including four applications from this area totaling approximately \$83 million. Submitted applications will be validated and scored through the remainder of 2026. The Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIPI) will present a draft funding scenario to the CTB in January 2027, and the CTB will use project scores to inform selections for the FY28 Six-Year Improvement Program, to be adopted in June 2027.

Mr. Joel DeNunzio provided the following updates:

- The Mill Road bridge superstructure replacement on Route 778 over the Middle River in Augusta County is underway, with cofferdams in place and construction progressing on the roughly year-long bridge closure.
- The I-81 Staunton project is approximately 65 percent complete, with completion targeted for fall 2027. Nighttime detours on Route 262 continue for traffic shifts, without reported issues. Speed camera enforcement in the work zone is active. As of a July 1 law change, work zone speed enforcement, including cameras, applies only while workers are present, and the standard work zone speed limit of 60 mph is likewise only in effect while workers are present. Fines from camera enforcement are directed to the state literary fund for school construction and do not go to VDOT or the localities.
- The I-81 Weyers Cave project is approximately 45 percent complete, with significant rock work underway and a completion date of December 2027.
- The I-81 Harrisonburg project involves shoulder strengthening, largely performed at night, with completion expected between 2030 and 2032.
- Route 254 intersection improvements east of the I-81 corridor are complete.
- The Laurel Hill Road Park and Ride double-left-turn improvements in the Verona area are substantially complete.
- The Route 250/Woodrow Wilson Avenue project was awarded to A&J for approximately \$4 million. A pre-construction meeting was held August 19 at the Verona Government Center, with work expected to begin the following week.
- General maintenance activity is focused primarily on mowing.

DRPT

Ms. Stankus provided the following updates:

- Ms. Lauren Breyer, a new DRPT transit planner, will become the DRPT representative for SAWMPO. Ms. Stankus and Ms. Breyer plan to conduct an in-person handoff at an upcoming meeting.

BRITE Transit and Afton Express

Ms. Devon Thompson provided the following updates:

- Under the turnkey services contract, Resource Management Systems (RMS) continues to finalize fleet upgrades and build proficiency operating BRITE routes.



- DRPT's required four-year comprehensive assessment of transit facilities took place this year. The Staunton transit facility was found to be in good condition. BRITE was also awarded FY27 DRPT grants for new facility equipment, and staff will begin procurement in the coming months.
- BRITE is working with Hawk Security to install solar-powered security cameras at the Lewis Street Hub for driver and passenger safety, with installation expected by the end of the month. In response to a Board question, Ms. Thompson noted that footage will be retrievable by BRITE staff, which will support the agency's ability to reference incidents involving passenger behavior or safety concerns and to work with the Staunton City Police Department, with whom BRITE has an agreement to enforce trespassing.
- The SMART SCALE-funded BRITE pedestrian improvements project, addressing improvements at the Government Center and Sangers Lane, will hold its pre-construction meeting on August 25.
- Staff summer public outreach has included university welcome and back-to-school events. Afton Express ridership continues to be monitored following last year's schedule change.

Locality Updates

Augusta County

Mr. Fitzgerald and Ms. Bragg provided the following updates:

- The Woodrow Wilson Avenue project is advancing. The County continues to pursue a second entrance to the government center.
- A revenue sharing project to improve access into the Government Center is under construction and may cause temporary access delays.
- Ms. Ann Cundy, CSPDC staff, received the Gordon Dixon Award from the Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions, recognizing her work.

City of Staunton

Ms. Leslie Beauregard provided the following updates:

- Johnson Street will close in mid-September as the downtown tunnel repair project continues; Frederick Street will reopen and serve as a detour. Access to the Johnson Street parking garage will remain available from Central Avenue, though through-traffic on Johnson Street will not be possible during the closure. New Street will fully reopen as part of this final phase of the tunnel project.
- City Council continues to discuss the possibility of daylighting the interior portion of the wharf, unrelated to VDOT funding.
- The City repurposed a public works position into a design engineer position in the engineering department, primarily to support stormwater-related work, and recently posted the position.
- The City is processing a large passenger rail grant announced in the press for ADA improvements at the downtown Amtrack station. Staff plan to meet with the VPRA in early September, after the Authority's own meeting with grantors to clarify the City's role. The City noted a related \$2.2 billion statewide passenger rail improvement announcement.

City of Waynesboro

Chair Jim Wood provided the following update:

- The City had no updates.



Other Business

There was no other business.

Upcoming Meetings

Chair Jim Wood noted that the next TAC meeting is scheduled for September 2, 2026. The next Policy Board meeting is scheduled for September 16, 2026.

Meeting Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Jim Wood adjourned the meeting at 10:57 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Paula Melester", is positioned below the "Respectfully submitted," text.

Paula Melester,
Director of Transportation

A short, horizontal red line with a small, dark mark or smudge in the center, located below the signature and title.