



112 MacTanly Place  
Staunton, VA 24401

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**BRITE Transit Advisory Committee Meeting Summary  
January 9, 2019, 2:30 p.m.**

Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission  
112 MacTanly Place  
Staunton, VA 24401

	Name	Organization
✓	Steve Rosenberg	City of Staunton
✓	Jennifer Whetzel	County of Augusta
✓	Luke Juday	City of Waynesboro
✓	Karen Clark	Augusta Health
✓	Russell Neyman	Wilson Workforce & Rehabilitation Center
✓	Julie Markowitz	Staunton Downtown Development Association
✓	Terry Rodgers	Shenandoah Valley Social Services
✓	Cynthia Page	Blue Ridge Community College
✓	Becky Messer	Transit Service Rider
✓	Susan Newbrough	Virginia Regional Transit
	Steve Hennessee	Department of Rail and Public Transportation

	Name	Organization
✓	Nancy Gourley	CSPDC
✓	Devon Thompson	CSPDC
	Bonnie Riedesel	CSPDC
✓	Zach Beard, CSPDC	
✓	Connie Fahey, Staunton Veterans Clinic	

**Call to Order**

The meeting of the BRITE Transit Advisory Committee (BTAC) was called to order at 2:32 PM by Ms. Terry Rodgers, Chairperson.

**Public Comment**

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

**Approve Minutes**

Chair Rodgers presented the minutes from the November 14, 2018 BTAC meeting.

Ms. Karen Clark moved, seconded by Ms. Jennifer Whetzel, to approve the minutes of the November 14, 2018 meeting, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.



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## **Business**

Bylaw Amendment Action: Ms. Nancy Gourley reminded the committee of the proposed bylaw amendment introduced at the November 2018 BTAC meeting. The amendment addressed membership and removed the CATS Board representative, since they are no longer in existence, and replaced with a second rider representative. The committee recommended to move this amendment forward to the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC) Commissioners for action, which was done at the Commission's December meeting. The CSPDC Commission voted to endorse the recommendation of the BTAC.

The next steps will be to advertise and recruit the new rider representative, and Ms. Gourley indicated that staff was open to suggestions on the best approach for soliciting interested riders. Ms. Whetzel believed all the avenues available to publicize that were discussed at the November meeting were sufficient. Ms. Julie Markowitz suggested that drivers could make recommendations as well. Ms. Gourley indicated that work will move forward on soliciting expressions of interest, and get a representative in place by the March meeting.

Ms. Becky Messer inquired about how she was selected to be a rider representative. Ms. Gourley indicated that during the original selection of representatives the CSPDC Commission appointed the organizations to be represented and those organizations named the representative. Ms. Messer was recommended, and expressed interest in being involved with the committee.

250 Connector Study Update: Ms. Gourley indicated that the 250 Connector Study is underway. Many committee members are participating in the stakeholder group, who is working with the consultant, Kimley-Horn. The rider survey had recently been completed, and there was some media coverage on the survey and the study. Kimley-Horn is working to develop recommendations that will be presented to this group and then to the public.

FY 2020 DRPT Grant Applications: Ms. Gourley announced that the state grant applications are open. Ms. Gourley indicated that the process is different this year since the General Assembly mandated performance-based funding. Capital applications will be scored similar to SMART SCALE applications, following the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) model. Operations funding will be based on performance measures, such as ridership, cost per passenger, and cost per mile.

The application deadline is February 1, 2019. The CSPDC will be making a minimum of four applications – two capital applications for the contracting and two operating applications for urban and rural. An application may be made for the Town of Bridgewater for up to three bus shelters within the town limits, for which they will provide the local match and be in charge of the installation. The Town has until mid-January to give a definitive answer as to whether they want to move forward with the application.



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Ms. Clark inquired about capital and operating applications. Ms. Gourley indicated the two capital applications are for capital cost of contracting, which is part of operations and the way some of the operations are funded. These applications are made by the CSPDC, and the applications are template-based, supported by numbers and budgets. An inquiry was also made on the success of past applications, and it was indicated that applications have been successful in the past. The money awarded should be equal to or greater than that received the prior year. Ms. Whetzel sought confirmation that the CSPDC is doing both urban and rural funding applications, and this was confirmed by Ms. Gourley.

2019 Triennial Review: Ms. Gourley indicated that this is the year for the Triennial Review with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Initial email correspondence was received in December and staff has been assembling the necessary information. FTA is closed due to the current partial federal government shutdown. At the time of the original correspondence, contracts had not been awarded to those performing the reviews, so a definitive schedule has not been established. The timeline for 2019 reviews will either be delayed or compressed. Staff is moving forward with preparations so they will be ready when the government reopens and a timeline has been provided.

BRITE Punch Cards Update: Ms. Devon Thompson indicated that punch card printing logistics are solved with Mid Valley Press. The committee had expressed interest in economical ways to protect against counterfeiting, and this has been taken into consideration. In November, a recommendation was made to research embossing the cards. There are many detailed and costly steps that go into having paper products embossed, such as the creation of the template, special ordered ink, and the exact footprint of the embossed object.

Through this process, Ms. Susan Newbrough proposed using a gloss card stock to print the punch cards on – similar to what Virginia Regional Transit (VRT) prints their business cards on. The printer proposed using a heavy, gloss card stock with a UV coat on one side. This should be a reasonable measure to protect against counterfeiting, and the cards should be distinct and fairly durable.

Ms. Thompson proposed that staff move forward with pursuing the gloss card stock, and if counterfeiting does become a problem, different methods can be looked into for future versions.

Contractor Update: Ms. Newbrough discussed various items with the committee:

- New Bus Stop Request – Staunton VA Clinic: Ms. Gourley began by giving the history of the Staunton Veterans Clinic bus stop request. A letter was received from the Veteran Outreach Coordinator at the Salem VA Medical Center requesting a bus stop at the Staunton Clinic, located on Lacy B. King Way. Correspondence between BRITE and the Veterans Clinic commenced to gather further information, and staff initiated the process outlined in the BRITE route and bus stop request protocol. BRITE staff conducted the necessary research, and Ms. Newbrough would be presenting the findings. Staff is at the point where they need direction from the committee as to how to move forward with the request. Ms. Gourley also



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introduced Ms. Connie Fahey from the Staunton Veterans Clinic. Ms. Fahey said a few words to address the need of the stop and the population and demographic of those they serve at the clinic, and Ms. Fahey indicated that she would be available for any questions.

Ms. Newbrough presented information on the new bus stop request (refer to the presentation materials attached). Ms. Newbrough provided the committee with background information on the stop's nearest route – the Staunton North & West Loops. This route originally began as the Staunton Silver Trolley in 2001, as a one hour loop operating Monday through Friday. When the service became BRITE, the adopted Transit Development Plan (TDP) recommended breaking the one hour loop into two thirty minute loops. This recommendation was implemented in 2016, creating the North & West Loops. Ms. Newbrough went on to discuss the connectivity and seamless timed transfers provided by the routes. The North & West Loops connect to the 250 Connector, BRCC Shuttle South, and the Downtown Trolley routes. Additionally, the service areas were outlined and increased ridership from 2016 to 2018 was reported. The North & West Loops route map was shown, and Ms. Newbrough indicated where the stop request was in relation to the existing route. The closest stop is 0.9 mile away at Bridge St / Maple St on the West Loop. While the clinic is served by BRITE Access, paratransit service, to serve the clinic with a fixed route the West Loop would have to be altered.

Ms. Newbrough indicated that under the established protocol, this request was classified as a “Adding a Stop to an Existing Route Creating a Significant Impact on a Route.” Some factors considered include: schedule timing impacts; safety check path and stop; BTAC discussion/direction; impacts on current rides; and financial impact. Ms. Newbrough indicated that including the stop on the route would add an additional 15 minutes of travel time – from the existing route to the requested stop and to get back to the route. The current schedule does not allow for additional time. There would be a significant impact to the timed connections made at the Staunton Hub, causing passengers to miss connections to other routes and adding longer wait times. There were no safety issues regarding the clinic location or drop-off or pick-up of passengers. Ms. Newbrough reviewed the current ways to access the stop, including the use of BRITE Access or walking from the current closest bus stops, 0.9 mile and 1 mile away, along Middlebrook Road or Montgomery Avenue, which lack pedestrian amenities. The Veterans Clinic approximated that 100 passengers would utilize the stop, and Ms. Newbrough added that BRITE does not have any data to support the frequency or usage of the stop. Ms. Newbrough stated that this additional stop would create a negative impact on the route, thus requiring a public hearing.

Ms. Cynthia Page inquired as to whether there was any data on the BRITE Access usage. Ms. Newbrough answered that it could be obtained, and of her knowledge there were at least five regular riders who utilize the service to access the stop. Ms. Newbrough specified that BRITE Access is based on eligibility since the service is for passengers with disabilities.



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Ms. Newbrough indicated staff's recommendation of denying the request due to negative impact it would place on the Staunton West Loop's timely and seamless transfers with other BRITE routes and the number of passengers impacted by the change in route. However, BRITE staff is available to work with clinic staff to review other transportation opportunities and ideas to best serve the veterans. Discussion ensued regarding different transportation opportunities, including increased use of BRITE Access, volunteer drivers (currently there are no volunteer drivers for the clinic), and outreach and education. Consensus was reached that the first step would be to do outreach and education at the clinic to the staff and providers and letting them know what transportation options are available.

Ms. Whetzel moved, seconded by Ms. Page, to accept the staff recommendation presented and to move forward with education for individuals and staff at the Veterans Clinic. Motion carried unanimously.

- Demo Driver Assistance Project: Ms. Newbrough reminded committee members of the Demo Driver Assistance Project, in which BRITE was selected by the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) to receive three Mobile Eye Shield Plus technologies to be placed on the Staunton Downtown Trolley, 250 Connector, and Waynesboro Circulator. At the previous meeting, it had been reported that installation was delayed, but now all devices have been installed. Currently, the devices are in "stealth" mode – it is not alerting the driver, but is reporting data. Next steps will include scheduling a training for drivers and staff.

Mr. Russ Neyman inquired about the cost of the devices. Ms. Gourley indicated that each device cost \$10,000, but the cost of all three were covered 100% by a state grant.

- Waynesboro Bus Stops & Shelter: Ms. Newbrough indicated, and Mr. Luke Juday confirmed, that Waynesboro received and installed the new bus stop signs; Ms. Thompson and Ms. Jeannie Puffenbarger will be verifying the locations for accuracy later in the week. The shelter for the Waynesboro Public Library was delivered to VRT, along with four other shelters. All shelters were packaged together, and VRT staff is working to disassemble them for Waynesboro Public Works to pick up. In the past, deliveries have been made with individualized packaging, but the bulk packaging style was not anticipated.

Discussion ensued regarding delivery logistics, in particular the transportation of the glass panels. Ms. Julie Markowitz suggested employing a local glass company to deliver the glass, as to reduce liability in transporting it from Fishersville to Waynesboro. BRITE staff will research delivery logistics and confer with Waynesboro.

- VRT Employee of the Year – BRITE Driver: Ms. Newbrough proudly announced that VRT's Employee of the Year was BRITE driver, Mr. Rich Cooper. Mr. Cooper has been with VRT for 15 years and drives the Saturday Night Trolley. His other employment is with the City of Staunton as a mechanic.



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#### Other Business:

- Chair Rodgers introduced the new CSPDC Transportation Planner, Mr. Zach Beard. Mr. Beard introduced himself to the committee and provided them with his background and what programs he would be working with at the CSPDC.
- Ms. Gourley previously mentioned the partial federal government shutdown, and provided further details on the effects. FTA is shutdown, project managers are not available, and money is not available to be drawn down. Ms. Gourley indicated that currently this is not an issue for BRITE, but if the shutdown persists it will become an issue. If that does occur, staff will call a meeting to discuss potential options. Ms. Gourley added that the shutdown affects DRPT since they also draw down money from FTA.

Mr. Juday inquired about the amount of time before the shutdown became an issue, and Ms. Gourley indicated a timeframe of 60-90 days. Ms. Gourley added that the shutdown affects all other agencies, not just BRITE. Ms. Whetzel inquired about recouping costs once the shutdown was over, and Ms. Gourley confirmed that the reimbursements will be made.

- Ms. Thompson indicated that new brochures were available and being delivered. To help with the delivery process, Ms. Thompson would distribute some to committee members to take back to their respective offices. All brochures have been edited, and older copies can be disposed of.
- Ms. Markowitz announced the availability of window displays in the lobby of the Stonewall Jackson Hotel in Staunton. The Staunton Downtown Development Association (SDDA) were given two displays to invite local businesses to advertise in, and Ms. Markowitz suggested that BRITE look into reserving the space and would be available to further discuss this opportunity.

#### **Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the BTAC, the meeting concluded at 3:22 PM.

The next meeting will be held at the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission office on Wednesday, March 13, 2019 at 2:30 PM.