



112 MacTanly Place
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**BRITE Transit Advisory Committee Meeting Summary
May 8, 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
✓	Paul Terry, Transit Rider	
✓	Steve Wilson, Virginia Regional Transit	

Call to Order

The meeting of the BRITE Transit Advisory Committee (BTAC) was called to order at 2:30 PM by Ms. Terry Rodgers, Chairperson.

Two introductions were made. Ms. Susan Newbrough introduced Mr. Steve Wilson, the new Safety and Fleet Specialist for Virginia Regional Transit (VRT). Chair Rodgers introduced Mr. Paul Terry, the new transit service rider member of the committee.

Public Comment

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



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Approve Minutes

Chair Rodgers presented the minutes from the March 13, 2019 BTAC meeting.

Mr. Luke Juday moved, seconded by Mr. Russell Neyman, to approve the minutes of the March 13, 2019 meeting, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Business

250 Connector Route Study Update: Ms. Nancy Gourley provided an update on the 250 Connector Route Study. Ms. Gourley indicated that the route study has been on-going since late November 2018. In December 2018, rider surveys were completed, and after evaluating the data the consultant has proposed two alternatives for the route – splitting or shortening the route. In April 2019, two public meetings were hosted in Staunton and Waynesboro. Attendance wasn't high, thus there was little feedback gained. Information and public comment cards were made available on the buses in the month of April. Additionally, a driver roundtable was hosted and insightful feedback was received from the drivers on the proposed alternatives. Drivers know the service and know riders' needs.

Alternative 1 proposed shortening the route. This alternative introduced the idea of starting a new route in Staunton, the South Loop, which would run from the Staunton Hub/Lewis Street to Staunton Walmart via Greenville Avenue. That particular segment of the route would be taken off the current 250 Connector route, and the 250 Connector would be able to travel directly from the Staunton Hub/Lewis Street to Staunton Walmart without having to cover Greenville Avenue stops. An additional modification included relocating the Waynesboro Hub from the Waynesboro Walmart to Downtown Waynesboro – this was proposed in both Alternative 1 and 2. The exact location of the Downtown Waynesboro Hub will be determined in the future in conjunction with City of Waynesboro staff .

Alternative 2 proposed splitting the route. This alternative introduced the idea of having a Staunton 250 Connector and a Waynesboro 250 Connector, and both buses would hub and transfer at Augusta Health. One of the challenges with this idea was that Augusta Health is not the half-way point of the current 250 Connector route – the actual halfway point is nearer the intersection of Route 250 and Sangers Lane and Rowe Road. This could create some timing issues with the schedule.

A comparison of the two alternatives, including cost, reliability, productivity, convenience, and safety, was completed. Ms. Gourley indicated that one of the main differences between the two alternatives was that Alternative 1 called for an additional bus and route, which was a significant budget impact.

Neither alternative is appropriate at this time, so staff worked with the consultant to develop a phased approach incorporating ideas from both alternatives to attain immediate benefits (this phased approach will be added to the consultant's final report). This phased approach would allow for near- and long-term improvements to be made, as needed. Some long-term projects would allow time for additional infrastructure and funds to be



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available; for example, the alternative that proposed an additional bus route to serve the new developments at Frontier Center and Staunton Crossing would be better suited when both locations are fully developed. Some near-term improvements that would be made have already been projected and budgeted in the five-year plan. In the coming fiscal years:

- Discontinue the 250 Connector traveling on Barterbrook Road in Staunton and the Staunton Mall would be accessed via Greenville Avenue.
- Extend afternoon/evening service hours on the Stuarts Draft Link to match the schedule of the Waynesboro Circulator.
- Change Valley View Senior Apartments from a regular stop to a CALL stop. Ridership numbers show there is not enough demand to have the bus stop every single time, and this would help with timing on the 250 Connector.
- Add two service hours per day on the two BRITE Access paratransit buses, and have them support the 250 Connector route during high capacity times for the route.

Mr. Neyman inquired as to whether or not those changes would use existing drivers to operate or need additional drivers. Ms. Newbrough answered that it would be dependent upon when the changes would be implemented and the number of hours that would be added, but most likely, a few additional drivers would need to be hired to cover most of those changes. Mr. Paul Terry inquired about potential route changes to the Waynesboro Circulator and Stuarts Draft Link. Mr. Terry indicated currently the Waynesboro Circulator leaves the Waynesboro Hub and travels to the Waynesboro Town Center and suggested that the Stuarts Draft Link travel to the Waynesboro Town Center. Ms. Newbrough indicated that this potential change had been suggested, and Ms. Gourley noted she would address this later on in the presentation.

Ms. Gourley outlined potential phase two, long-term improvements:

- Relocate the Waynesboro Hub from Waynesboro Walmart to Downtown Waynesboro. There would need to be concurrence with the City of Waynesboro as well as a determined accessible location and added infrastructure, like bus shelters. This change would also constitute changing the existing route.
- Serve Waynesboro Town Center, Waynesboro Walmart, and Lew Dewitt Boulevard with the Stuarts Draft Link, which would mean the Link route would no longer serve the Augusta Health campus. Stuarts Draft Link riders would transfer to the 250 Connector to travel to the hospital. The drivers noted the redundancy of the Stuarts Draft Link and the 250 Connector serving the Augusta Health campus.
- Change the Stuarts Draft Retirement Community stop from a regular stop to a CALL stop. This has not been a heavily used stop.
- Serve Medical Park Drive at Augusta Health with the 250 Connector, across from the campus and off of Lifecore Drive. This stop would be preceded or followed by the stop at the Medical Office Building (MOB). Augusta Health indicated that a shelter could be installed at a determined location along the Drive. Calls for drop-offs and pick-ups are requested currently.



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- Remove Greenville Avenue from the 250 Connector route. Instead of having a new South Loop route as the proposed alternative, use the Staunton Downtown Trolley. Currently, the Staunton Downtown Trolley is the only route in the system that operates on a half hour headway, and if it were to serve Greenville Avenue it would then operate on an hour headway.
- Start service on the Staunton Downtown Trolley earlier, if used to cover Greenville Avenue. Currently service begins at 10 AM on the Staunton Downtown Trolley, but it would need to be changed to match the 250 Connector schedule.
- Serve more of the Frontier Center and Staunton Crossing developments once they have been built out to their extent.

Mr. Steve Rosenberg sought clarification and inquired about the changes to the Staunton Downtown Trolley. This would mean patrons in the historic downtown area would wait twice as long for service, and Mr. Rosenberg was unsure if this would be consistent with the original intent of the Staunton Downtown Trolley and voiced his concerns. Ms. Julie Markowitz indicated she may have access to origin history on the Staunton Downtown Trolley that could be shared and reviewed. Ms. Gourley indicated that all of these changes are proposed ideas, and more discussion would be needed to move forward with any decision. Ms. Jennifer Whetzel sought additional clarification of the phased improvements to the 250 Connector. The route itself will see minimal modifications initially with changes to other routes providing support to the 250 Connector. Ms. Newbrough confirmed and indicated that more paratransit vehicles would be a large help to the 250 Connector, as there are many calls for route deviations. Proposed changes outlined would work towards adding more time into the 250 Connector, and in the future more improvements could be evaluated for the route.

In discussing phased improvements to the 250 Connector, Ms. Gourley also indicated two additional service changes, not part of the 250 Connector study:

- Add Saturday service for the Waynesboro Circulator and Staunton North & West Loops.
- Add service hours to the Blue Ridge Community College Shuttles on Friday evening – ridership numbers indicate passengers don't use the Shuttles on Fridays because they are not able to get home from work.

Bus Shelters Update: Ms. Devon Thompson updated the committee on the status of bus shelter installations within the service area. Ms. Thompson indicated that the Waynesboro Public Library shelter was installed in April, thanks to the coordinated efforts of VRT, Waynesboro Public Works, and Staunton Glass and Mirror. The next installation has been scheduled at Augusta County Library. Augusta County maintenance staff has picked up the shelter from the BRITE Transit Facility, and efforts will be coordinated with Staunton Glass and Mirror again for the transportation and installation of the safety glass. Lastly, the Bridgewater shelters have been recommended for funding, and once approved the shelters will be ordered in the Summer and should arrive around Fall/Winter.

2019 Triennial Review Update: Ms. Gourley indicated that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) had executed the contracts with the consultants that would be conducting the comprehensive reviews. The Central Shenandoah



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Planning District Commission's (CSPDC) deadline for documentation submission was May 3, 2019. To prepare, staff will attend a two-day workshop at the end of June in Richmond, VA. The onsite review has been tentatively scheduled for the end of September 2019.

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

- Service: Ms. Newbrough indicated that the service is running well overall, and there was an increase in ridership in April.
- Community Transportation Association of Virginia's Annual ROADEO: Ms. Newbrough announced that VRT participated in the Community Transportation Association of Virginia's (CTAV) Annual ROADEO on April 13, 2019. Drivers from all over the state participated in this ROADEO, and VRT's two representatives were BRITE drivers. Both drivers won awards – one placed 5th and the other placed 10th in the entire ROADEO (out of 35 participants).
- 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. The devices went live in January 2019.

Ms. Newbrough reviewed device capabilities and demonstrated the data-collecting software. Devices alert drivers of warnings with display and audio alerts. The devices and software highlights various information on the vehicles and driving patterns, such as when the engine is cut off, which warnings were activated, vehicle speed, trip replay, and high risk and hot spot area detection. Data reports can be scheduled and created for each of the vehicles. Staff is awaiting direction as to whether or not this data needs to be reported to DRPT.

Ms. Becky Messer inquired as to whether or not the system has been beneficial. Ms. Newbrough indicated that it has been, and cited an example of monitoring vehicle speeds. Ms. Cynthia Page inquired if there had been any surprises in the data obtained, and Ms. Newbrough answered that so far there have been no surprises. Ms. Newbrough also indicated that staff is working with MobileEye to obtain specific definitions on the alerts as to better understand and use the data. For example, an alert will indicate hard braking, but staff currently does not have a definition as to what constitutes a hard brake. Mr. Juday clarified that the device detects every pedestrian that crosses the bus's path and inquired as to whether or not this data could be disseminated and used for sidewalk and crosswalk planning, and Ms. Newbrough agreed that it could possibly be used in that capacity.

Ms. Newbrough indicated that there had been an earlier issue regarding the placement of the devices on the buses' windshields. The Virginia State Police cited that there are state guidelines prohibiting objects



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installed three inches below the top of a windshield (L3 line), and the devices are placed lower on the windshield. BRITE was not the only transit system in the state questioned for this, and DRPT worked with the State Police to receive a waiver allowing for the placement of the device.

- Farecard Update: Ms. Newbrough reported BRITE farecards sales made since March 2019, when they were introduced. Ms. Newbrough indicated that drivers have found the implementation of the farecards to be beneficial and has led to less passengers not paying. In March, 327 farecards were sold, collecting about \$1,500 in fare revenue, and farecards were used for about 1,900 trips. In April, 318 farecards were sold, collecting about \$1,400 in fare revenue, and farecards were used for about 2,700 trips. Ms. Newbrough indicated that the farecards are proving to be very popular; among the different fare media that are tracked, the farecards are some of the most used. The farecards are most used on the 250 Connector and Waynesboro Circulator routes.

Ms. Jennifer Whetzel inquired about clarification on one of the earlier statements on the farecards and passenger payments, to which Ms. Newbrough clarified that occasionally passengers claim they don't have exact change, and it seems this is happening with less frequency with the farecards being available.

- Preston Yancey Fire Department Visit: Ms. Newbrough indicated that BRITE hosted firefighters from the Preston L. Yancey Fire Department in Fishersville at the transit facility. The firefighters who were in attendance started with a brief introduction, and proposed opportunities for bus fire safety trainings with the drivers and staff. The visit also included a tour of the facility to provide a fire safety assessment – assessing access management in case of an emergency at the facility. A few items were identified through this assessment, such as:
 - The addition of larger or more fire extinguishers in the shop. Ms. Newbrough indicated that maintenance had added two additional extinguishers since the visit.
 - The installation of a Knox box at the front exterior of the building for after hours emergency access. Ms. Newbrough indicated that a Knox box had been ordered.
 - The provision of a master key and code available only to the fire department. Ms. Newbrough indicated that a master key was being obtained, and the master key and key code would be secured in the Knox box.

Firefighters were also provided with blueprints of the facility so a safety exit map could be created. They will be in touch once those diagrams have been created.

Other Business:

- No other business was announced.



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Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the BTAC, the meeting concluded at 3:20 PM.

The next meeting will be held at the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission office on Wednesday, July 10, 2019 at 2:30 PM.