



112 MacTanly Place
Staunton, VA 24401

Phone: (540) 885-5174
Fax: (540) 885-2687

**BRITE Transit Advisory Committee Meeting Summary
September 11, 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
✓	Paul Terry	Transit Service Rider
✓	Susan Newbrough	Virginia Regional Transit
✓	Steve Hennessee	Department of Rail and Public Transportation

	Name	Organization
✓	Nancy Gourley	CSPDC
✓	Aidan Quirke	CSPDC
✓	Devon Thompson	CSPDC
	Bonnie Riedesel	CSPDC
✓	Ann Cundy, CSPDC	
✓	Kira Johnson, City of Waynesboro	
✓	Robert Nutt, Valley Feed	

Call to Order

The meeting of the BRITE Transit Advisory Committee (BTAC) was called to order at 2:34 PM by Ms. Terry Rodgers, Chairperson.

Public Comment

Chair Rodgers opened the floor for public comment. Mr. Robert Nutt, Valley Feed, introduced himself to the committee, and indicated that he was in attendance to learn.



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Approve Minutes

Chair Rodgers presented the minutes from the May 8, 2019 BTAC meeting.

Ms. Becky Messer moved, seconded by Mr. Luke Juday, to approve the minutes of the May 8, 2019 meeting, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Business

Introduction of New Transit Program Manager: Ms. Nancy Gourley introduced Mr. Aidan Quirke to the committee. Ms. Gourley indicated that she would be retiring at the end of the calendar year, and Mr. Quirke has been hired to be the new Transit Program Manager at the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC). Mr. Quirke was previously employed as a Transit Planner in Savannah, Georgia, and prior to that he graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) and interned with the Greater Richmond Transit Company (GRTC). Mr. Quirke began working at the CSPDC in late July. Mr. Quirke indicated that he was happy to be in Staunton working at the CSPDC and is excited to work with the BTAC.

250 Connector Route Study Presentation: Mr. Tyler Beduhn presented the 250 Connector Bus Route Evaluation and Recommendations. The 250 Connector is a critical route for the BRITE system, and provides connections between Staunton and Waynesboro, as well as connects with other system routes. Currently, it faces reliability challenges – it is a long route that can be impacted by traffic delays, route deviations, and mobility device loading. Bus stop safety and potential opportunities to serve new development along the corridor were also noted during the study. The presentation was a comprehensive overview that included information on the following (see presentation attached):

- Project scope, goals, and process;
- Customer survey summary;
- Origin-destination travel patterns;
- On-time performance;
- Customer priorities;
- Service improvement needs;
- Alternatives analysis; and
- Final recommendations (phases 1, 2, and 3).

The final recommendations were broken into three phases. The First Phase included more direct service to the Staunton Mall; converting Valley View Senior Apartments to a Call Stop; extending BRITE Access hours; and extending Blue Ridge Community College Shuttle(s) hours on Fridays. The Second Phase included implementing a South Loop (contingent upon funding and reevaluation of reliability after phase one); more direct travel between Downtown Staunton and Walmart; adding a new Waynesboro Downtown Hub; adjusting the Stuarts Draft Link route to serve the Waynesboro Town Center, Walmart, and Lew Dewitt Boulevard; continuing to implement bus stop safety improvements at high-priority locations; and relocating bus stops from US 250 to Frontier Center



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(contingent on road extension). The Third Phase included extending service into US 250 developments; extending Stuarts Draft Link service hours; and continuing to implement bus stop safety improvements.

Ms. Whetzel inquired as to whether funding for the Second Phase would be requested in Fiscal Year (FY) 2021, and Ms. Gourley indicated that funding would be requested in FY 2022, which would allow for two years to evaluate the incremental steps taken in the First Phase.

Mr. Beduhn noted that some of the recommendations had been implemented since completion of the study. Ms. Newbrough indicated that in August and the beginning of September, Valley View Senior Apartments had been made a Call Stop (an extensive time saver for the route); additional hours were added to BRITE Access (decrease number of deviations made on the route); and direct travel on Greenville Avenue in Staunton (no longer travel Barterbrook Road). These changes have helped the route some, but it continues to be a busy route. Mr. Steve Rosenberg inquired about the timing and logistics of the Valley View Senior Apartments bus stop becoming a Call Stop, and Ms. Newbrough explained how the built-in timing has changed and the effect timed stops have on keeping the route running as timely as possible. If there is a domino effect from running behind schedule resources will be pooled to help get the route back on schedule.

Fare Increase and Service Reduction Policy: Ms. Gourley introduced the topic of the Fare Increase and Service Reduction Policy. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requires that all recipients of federal transit funds have a written policy that describes the public meeting and comment process on increases to the fare structure and on major service reductions. Ms. Gourley indicated that neither of these events – a fare increase or major service reduction – has occurred since the CSPDC has managed the transit service. Per FTA guidelines, recipients are responsible for defining what constitutes a major service reduction, and the policy must include how a public meeting would be hosted and how the results of the public meeting would be considered in the process of changing fares and service. Due to the regional nature of the transit service, the draft BRITE policy includes flexibility of location and participants based on the potential impacts of the proposed change. Ms. Gourley indicated that input on the policy would be appreciated from the BTAC, and that the policy should be adopted by the BTAC today, either with changes or as is.

Ms. Devon Thompson briefly reviewed the draft policy and its components. Ms. Thompson indicated that policy procedure defined BRITE's fare increase as any increase to a fare price per unit of service. Service reduction was defined as any reduction that exceeds 10 percent of the total service hours currently provided or elimination of a route. Advertising and public engagement avenues were outlined. Public meetings will be advertised thirty days in advance of the meeting, and notifications will be posted on all revenue service vehicles; posted on BRITE and CSPDC websites and BRITE social media pages; published in local newspapers; and said notifications will include a notice of the provision of sign language or non-English language interpreters that could be made available upon request. Meeting locations and times were defined. Public meetings will be conducted in the area(s) where the change will have an impact, either Staunton, Waynesboro, or parts of Augusta County. Public meetings will be



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hosted at locations and times that are accessible by transit routes, and meeting times will be during the day and evening to accommodate various work schedules of the public. All meetings are open to the public, and BTAC and Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (SAWMPO) representatives will be encouraged to attend. Ms. Thompson indicated that exceptions to the policy were identified, such as seasonal variations like the Staunton Downtown Trolley winter hours. It was also noted that periodic surveys would be conducted outside of any service reduction or fare increase to obtain passenger feedback.

Ms. Ann Cundy suggested the SAWMPO be listed as one of the websites where public meeting notifications were advertised. Ms. Gourley inquired as to whether the jurisdiction websites (Staunton, Augusta County, and Waynesboro) should also be listed as an additional location for advertisement. Ms. Whetzel indicated it could be logistically difficult to assure accountability for those outside of BRITE and the CSPDC. Ms. Whetzel inquired as to whether the activities, advertising, engagement, and meeting times and locations, listed in the policy were required. Ms. Gourley answered that they are not required – the requirement is to have a meeting and opportunity for public feedback and to consider the comment – but, the notification avenues listed are common practice for all BRITE changes or public meetings.

Mr. Juday moved, seconded by Ms. Whetzel, to approve the policy, with the addition of the SAWMPO website advertisement, as suggested by Ms. Cundy. Motion carried unanimously.

2019 Triennial Review Update: Ms. Gourley indicated that the FTA Triennial Review is a comprehensive review of 21 areas of compliance that occurs every three years. The Review is conducted by consultants under contract to the FTA, and the CSPDC will be going through their second review. In May 2019, all required documents were submitted. In June 2019, staff participated in the Triennial Review Workshop in Richmond that prepares attendees for the Triennial Review. Ms. Gourley indicated that reviewers have completed their examination of the submitted documents, and will be onsite September 26 and 27, 2019 to review and interview staff on eight of the 21 compliance areas and tour the transit facility. Prior to their departure, an exit interview will be conducted in which findings will be summarized.

Afton Express Update: Ms. Gourley indicated that the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) has taken the lead on the next level of planning for the proposed transit service that would connect Staunton, Waynesboro, and Augusta County to Charlottesville. DRPT has retained the services of Kimley-Horn to reaffirm some of the data from the original feasibility study that was completed in 2017, and then will develop a service plan, budget, peer comparison, and performance measures. Ms. Gourley indicated that the initial chapter of background information and history has been drafted. A conference call was held with CSPDC staff, DRPT, and the consultant recently to discuss progress thus far and the structure and operations of nine potential peer transit services that might be used in the peer review. Stakeholders have been identified for this planning and the initial meeting of the group will be held on September 23, 2019 at the BRITE Transit Facility. The consultant will also



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make a presentation at the Joint Meeting of the SAWMPO and Charlottesville-Albemarle Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) on October 1, 2019.

Ms. Messer inquired as to whether there would be any public involvement or input in this planning process. Ms. Gourley indicated that during the original feasibility study there was an extensive survey completed that garnered over 600 responses. There isn't a lot of public input scheduled for this particular scope of work, but StreetLight data will be used in the analysis. Ms. Cundy clarified potential demand will be determined through StreetLight data, which indicates where commute trips begin and end.

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

- Proposed Waynesboro Circulator Change: Ms. Newbrough presented on a proposed change to the Waynesboro Circulator. A safety concern along Port Republic Road has been identified, and staff has proposed a recommendation to remedy the challenge. The presentation included the following information (presentation attached):
 - Introductory information on the Waynesboro Circulator route – days and times of operation, ridership, and accident tracking;
 - Service area information on Port Republic Road (where the change would occur), including Google Map street views;
 - Bus video showing the challenging situation along Port Republic Road; and
 - Proposed change to the route – to move the route path from Port Republic Road to Bridge Street to Florence Avenue to Bridge Street.

Ms. Newbrough indicated that the change to Florence Avenue would include the addition of three new bus stops on Florence Avenue. The bus stops would be located at the intersections of Florence Avenue and Gum Street; Florence Avenue and Fontaine Street; and Florence Avenue and Hemlock Street. There is currently one stop along Port Republic Road, the Rosenwald Community Center, and the new stop at Florence Ave / Fontaine St would be the closest to the community center (one block away). Ms. Newbrough showed a map that compared the current route with the proposed route.

There was consensus among the BTAC members that this was a logical solution to the challenge. Mr. Juday noted that Florence Avenue is more of an arterial road than Port Republic Road. Mr. Paul Terry inquired as to whether there would be any changes to the timing of the route, and Ms. Newbrough answered that there would be no changes to the route timing. Mr. Steven Hennessee inquired into how this change would be implemented with the new policy discussed previously, and Ms. Gourley answered that this change is not a major service reduction, so it would not be applicable. The notification for the change would go through the regular channels that all changes go through – social media, website, press release, and postings on vehicles. Ms. Newbrough indicated that there is usually a two week to a month period before the changes are implemented to give drivers time to be debriefed so they can explain the changes



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to passengers. Mr. Juday also suggested the change notification should emphasize that the change is being made due to safety concerns since Port Republic Road is a historic district and a historically African-American neighborhood. Ms. Gourley inquired as to whether there would be Title VI implications, and Mr. Juday indicated that it should not be. But, it was noted, that most residents on Port Republic will have no objection to the bus not travelling along the road.

Ms. Newbrough proposed mid-October to initiate the change. Ms. Gourley noted some of the work that needs to be done to implement the change, like making new bus stop signs and changing the website, and suggested the beginning of November.

- 250 Connector & BRCC Shuttles Service Change: Ms. Newbrough indicated that changes had been initiated on the 250 Connector, as previously mentioned, and BRCC Shuttles. The BRCC Shuttles hours were extended on Fridays – the BRCC South Shuttle ends at 7:30 p.m. (previously 5:30 p.m.) and the BRCC North Shuttle ends at 8 p.m. (previously 6:00 p.m.). Ms. Newbrough indicated that she is compiling a report on ridership during the first month of the change.
- Farecard Update: Ms. Newbrough reported that farecard sales and usage continue to do well. Approximately \$1,400 in sales have been reported in the past few months, and they are still well received.

Other Business:

- CSPDC 50th Anniversary Celebration: Ms. Gourley announced that the CSPDC is celebrating its 50th Anniversary with a special event on September 17th, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., at the Frontier Culture Museum. Ms. Gourley and Chair Rodgers will be making a joint presentation on BRITE at the event.
- Try Transit Week: Ms. Thompson announced that Try Transit Week will take place September 16th-20th. Posters were printed and made available to BTAC members to distribute. Ms. Gourley indicated that all rides on all BRITE routes would be free on Wednesday, September 18th.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the BTAC, the meeting concluded at 3:21 PM.

It was proposed that the next meeting would be held at the BRITE Transit Facility on Wednesday, November 13, 2019 at an earlier time, with lunch served. There was consensus among the committee to make this change.