



112 MacTanly Place
Staunton, VA 24401

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**BRITE Transit Advisory Committee Meeting Summary
November 13, 2019, 1:30 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
✓	Kira Johnson, City of Waynesboro	
✓	Steve Wilson, VRT	
✓	Bob Nutt, Valley Feed	
✓	Beth Daisey, SWAN & SAW Democratic Committee	
✓	Sheila Ahmadi, SWAN & SAW Democratic Committee	

Call to Order

The meeting of the BRITE Transit Advisory Committee (BTAC) was called to order at 1:32 PM by Ms. Terry Rodgers, Chairperson.

Public Comment

Chair Rodgers opened the floor for public comment. Ms. Beth Daisey, Strong Women's Action Network (SWAN), introduced herself to the committee. Ms. Daisey informed the committee about SWAN's background. Furthermore, Ms. Daisey indicated that the idea and purpose of attending the BTAC meeting was to discuss and develop various ways the action group could get involved and offer support to community organizations with job access and transportation. Ms. Daisey introduced Ms. Sheila Ahmadi to the committee. Ms. Ahmadi indicated that through personal interviews a list was compiled of identified needs concerning job access and transportation,



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which she shared with the committee. SWAN proposed researching the transportation challenges further by contacting several local companies to determine obstacles, as well as research formal and informal systems of transportation that could involve collaborating with the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC) and BRITE.

Chair Rodgers indicated that one important issue is funding. Route expansions are made when possible, and additional funding, that is not readily available, is needed to implement these expansions. Discussion ensued regarding other potential monetary contributions, employment transportation, and transportation gaps and barriers. Various BTAC members offered additional and contextual information and viable alternatives regarding the claims and information provided by the action group. It was further noted that public transportation's mandate is to serve the locations where the most people want to go at the same time.

Ms. Bonnie Riedesel provided the action group with information about the CSPDC's Rideshare program – a commuter matching and assistance program. Ms. Ahmadi indicated that she met with CSPDC staff previously and information on the program was provided. Ms. Riedesel indicated that this program could be promoted to the organizations Ms. Ahmadi mentioned to provide awareness of the resource. Ms. Riedesel also shared that other employer services could be offered – such as commuter mapping of employees. A suggestion was made to have further conversations at another time to discuss alternative strategies that could help address the issues the action group identified, as well as coordinate and share information and resources of Rideshare.

Approve Minutes

Chair Rodgers presented the minutes from the September 11, 2019 BTAC meeting. Chair Rodgers noted one correction to the minutes on page 4 – after the motion was moved there was an unanimous vote to approve the policy.

Mr. Luke Juday moved, seconded by Ms. Becky Messer, to approve the minutes of the September 11, 2019 meeting, with the noted correction. Motion carried unanimously.

Business

Saturday Service Implementation: Mr. Aidan Quirke announced that Saturday service would be implemented on the Staunton North & West Loops and the Waynesboro Circulator beginning in January 2020. There was positive feedback and consensus from committee members. Mr. Steve Hennessee inquired on the specific date of implementation, and Ms. Susan Newbrough indicated that it would be the first Saturday in January, January 4, 2020.

FY 2021 Budget: Mr. Quirke indicated that staff is in the process of developing the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 budget. The total budget would be close to the same amount as the previous fiscal year – around \$2.5-2.6 million. Mr.



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Quirke announced that the CSPDC would be asking financial partners for a 2 percent increase for local match. Mr. Quirke indicated that he would be glad to further discuss this with partners if questions or concerns arose.

2019 Triennial Review Update: Ms. Gourley indicated that the Federal Transit Administration (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 recently completed their second review (the first was completed in 2016). In May 2019, documents pertaining to the 21 areas of compliance were sent to the reviewers. An onsite visit was conducted in September 2019, and eight of those areas were further reviewed. In addition to reviewing the eight areas, during the two-day onsite visit a tour of the BRITE Transit Facility was conducted as well as discussion on how the facility was managed.

From the eight areas reviewed, deficiencies were found in three areas – two were related to financial processes and one was related to Title VI language. The financial findings were related to financial processes due to the resignation of the Fiscal Officer in August 2019. The findings indicated a matter of not having all of the knowledge needed to answer the questions being asked. The Title VI finding dealt with specific language in the Title VI statement in which too many classes of persons were being protected and this was corrected onsite. Commendation was received for contractor and facility oversight practices. Reviewers also asked to use the BRITE processes as examples of best practices. Staff is working on correcting the findings, and they should be rectified by the end of the year. A new Director of Finance has been hired at the CSPDC, which will help in closing out the financial findings. Ms. Gourley noted that overall it was a successful review.

Mr. Steven Hennessee clarified that for the Title VI finding, there was specific language as to what the Title VI statement should cover, and that the other classes of persons being protected could be included with language elsewhere, just not under the Title VI section. Per an inquiry, it was clarified that Title VI pertained to non-discrimination and civil rights. Mr. Juday inquired about the financial findings, to which Ms. Riedesel indicated that the processes in place to draw down funds was the main purpose of the findings. Ms. Riedesel noted that it is rare for any review to not have a single finding, and having just three findings was commendable.

Afton Express Update: Ms. Gourley reviewed the background information for this project. The Afton Express is service contemplated between Staunton, Waynesboro, and Augusta County and Charlottesville. The service would primarily serve commuters, but also serve those with medical needs. 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 and has retained the services of Kimley-Horn to reaffirm the need and data from the original feasibility study, as well as develop a service plan, budget, peer comparison, and performance measures. A stakeholder meeting was hosted in September 2019, with an additional meeting planned this month. During the next meeting, the consultant will review the work that has been completed thus far and facilitate a discussion on the funding formula for the local match funds. Currently, it is a very active project.



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Ms. Karen Clark inquired about employment opportunities in the Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro (SAW) region versus the Charlottesville-Albemarle region. Ms. Gourley referenced the original study where a public survey was conducted, and over 600 responses were collected and it demonstrated the amount of commuting there is between the two regions. Ms. Riedesel also noted that this information reflected those that already make the commute across Afton Mountain to the University of Virginia (UVA). UVA is one of the project stakeholders, and was able to identify 1,800 of their employees that live in the SAW region. Mr. Juday indicated that it will benefit the SAW region to have access to more sources of income, which could contribute to housing stock and the community. Ms. Gourley also noted that StreetLight data – autonomized cell phone data that tracks origins and destinations – was used to reaffirm commuting data from the original study. Mr. Juday sought clarification on the final figure that would make up the local match funds, and Ms. Gourley indicated that the number – which was dependent upon the State and Federal contributions – would be finalized by the next stakeholder meeting.

Ms. Gourley indicated the operation schedule would include a three-hour window in the morning and a three-hour window in the evening. Potential stop locations would include UVA (University and Medical Center) and Downtown Charlottesville, and connect to Charlottesville Area Transit (CAT). Ms. Messer inquired as to whether or not the route would include stops at the bus and train stations in Charlottesville, and Ms. Gourley indicated that the route goes by the stations and can stop if it is requested.

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

- Inclement Weather Notification Policy: Ms. Newbrough has been working to update the contact information for the inclement weather plan. All committee members were provided with a copy of the current policy and instructed to let Ms. Newbrough know of any additional changes. A final copy will be sent out to all partners.
- Waynesboro Circulator Change: Ms. Newbrough reminded committee members of her presentation at the September meeting regarding the Waynesboro Circulator route that traveled along Port Republic Road and the proposed change to Florence Avenue. The change occurred Monday, November 4, 2019. The transition was successful – there were no issues or complaints, and the drivers are happy and comfortable with the change.
- Free Election Day Rides: Ms. Newbrough indicated that on Election Day, Tuesday, November 5, 2019, BRITE again offered free rides to all passengers on all routes. Many of the routes serve several of the polling locations in the region. In 2018, BRITE provided 1,179 passenger trips on Election Day, and in 2019, BRITE provided 1,186 passenger trips on Election Day. Overall, Ms. Newbrough felt the initiative was successful.

Mr. Steve Rosenberg inquired as to whether or not staff had considered offering free rides for local city elections in Staunton (May) and Waynesboro (June). Ms. Riedesel noted that free rides have only been



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offered for federal and state elections, and not local elections. Ms. Riedesel and Mr. Quirke indicated that this was something that could be up for further discussion. Mr. Juday suggested that the routes serving the respective locality with the election could be free. Mr. Rosenberg expressed his interest in further conversations to hear the history of the decision for cost-free service for federal and state elections. Mr. Quirke indicated that there is no cost-free Election Day service policy, but maybe one could be created to promote clarity and transparency.

- Holiday Service Hours: Ms. Newbrough reported on the 2019 Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's holiday schedule:
 - Thanksgiving
 - Wednesday, November 27: BRCC Shuttles will operate on Friday schedule (service concluding at 7:30PM and 8:00PM)
 - Thursday, November 28 (Thanksgiving): No service
 - Friday, November 29: Regular service
 - Christmas
 - Tuesday, December 24: All services will conclude at 6:30PM
 - Wednesday, December 25: No service
 - Thursday, December 26: Regular service
 - New Year's
 - Tuesday, December 31: All services will conclude at 6:30PM
 - Wednesday, January 1: No service
 - Thursday, December 2: Regular service

Other Business:

- Holiday Parades: Ms. Devon Thompson announced that BRITE would again be participating in local Christmas parades:
 - Staunton – Monday, December 2
 - Waynesboro – Saturday, December 7
 - Bridgewater – Saturday, December 7
 - Stuarts Draft – Saturday, December 14
- Ms. Gourley's Last Meeting: Mr. Rosenberg indicated that this would be Ms. Gourley's last BTAC meeting, and wanted to acknowledge her contributions. Ms. Gourley was the founding transit manager for BRITE, and what we see operating today in the region is largely thanks to Ms. Gourley. Mr. Rosenberg expressed that he has enjoyed working with Ms. Gourley and has valued her professionalism and dedication, and expressed well wishes for Ms. Gourley's retirement. The committee concurred with Mr. Rosenberg's sentiments with a round of applause.



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- 2020 Meeting Calendar: Chair Rodgers announced the meeting calendar for 2020:
 - January 8
 - March 11
 - May 13
 - July 8
 - September 9
 - November 11 – *due to the Veterans Day holiday this meeting was rescheduled to November 10 at 1:30 p.m.*

There were no objections to the dates and times of the meetings listed.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the BTAC, the meeting concluded at 2:15 PM.