



112 MacTanly Place
Staunton, VA 24401

Phone: (540) 885-5174
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**BRITE Transit Advisory Committee Meeting Summary
March 11, 2020, 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
✓	Greg Beam	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 / Steve Wilson	Virginia Regional Transit
✓	Steve Hennessee	Department of Rail and Public Transportation

	Name	Organization
	Ann Cundy	CSPDC
✓	Aidan Quirke	CSPDC
✓	Devon Thompson	CSPDC
✓	Bonnie Riedesel	CSPDC
	Nancy Gourley	CSPDC
✓	Kira Johnson, City of Waynesboro	
✓	William Park, Pinnacle Construction	

Call to Order

The meeting of the BRITE Transit Advisory Committee (BTAC) was called to order at 2:35 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 January 8, 2020 BTAC meeting.



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Mr. Steven Hennessee moved, seconded by Ms. Becky Messer, to approve the minutes of the January 8, 2020 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Business

Introduction of New SDDA Representative and VRT Transit Manager: Chair Rodgers introduced Mr. Greg Beam, Staunton Downtown Development Association (SDDA) Executive Director, and Mr. Beam shared his background with the SDDA.

Ms. Susan Newbrough introduced Mr. Steve Wilson, Virginia Regional Transit (VRT) Transit Manager, and Mr. Wilson shared his background prior to VRT and his role in the company prior to this new position.

Mr. Aidan Quirke took a moment to thank Virginia Regional Transit (VRT) for taking the time to meet with himself, Ms. Devon Thompson, and funding partners and stakeholders. Mr. Quirke was appreciative of the time partners took to get to know Mr. Wilson and have extended conversations with BRITE staff about the present and future of the system.

Contractor Update: Mr. Wilson discussed various items with the committee:

- BRCC Change: Mr. Wilson indicated the change made to the Blue Ridge Community College (BRCC) Shuttles was going well – most passengers appreciated the one-seat service from Staunton to Harrisonburg.
- Bus Stop Request – Lifecore Drive: Mr. Wilson presented a bus stop request along Lifecore Drive at Pinnacle Drive (see attached presentation). Mr. Wilson reviewed the following with the committee:
 - Requested stop location;
 - Impact to the existing route;
 - Benefits and expected ridership;
 - Bus stop sign location and easement concerns;
 - Safety issues;
 - Cost; and
 - Estimated timeline

Mr. Wilson indicated that the Stuarts Draft Link would serve the requested stop, and presented a map of the current route and timetable to show the potential impacts (current connections would not be diminished). Mr. Wilson reviewed the current Stuarts Draft Link route, and proposed how the requested stop could be added into the route. The Stuarts Draft Link currently serves the Augusta Health campus and the route could be shifted slightly to serve Pinnacle Drive, and the Stuarts Draft Link has time in its schedule to make that change. Mr. Wilson noted that one potential impact could be the Augusta Regional Clinic – the bus currently passes the clinic twice, in and out of the Augusta Health campus, but if a change was made it would only be passed on its initial trip into the Augusta Health campus. Mr. Wilson indicated that the change could be communicated to the clinic as to not disrupt patients that utilize the bus.



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Mr. Quirke inquired about safety challenges at the proposed stop location, and Mr. Wilson indicated that there was a pull over lane at the proposed stop location as well as sidewalk access and room for a bus stop sign. Ms. Riedesel inquired as to the impetus for the change and stop request, and Mr. Quirke indicated that two senior/assisted living facilities are slated for construction along Pinnacle Drive. Mr. William Park, Pinnacle Construction, addressed the committee and provided additional details about the new developments. Mr. Park indicated the stop would be most likely be utilized by both staff and senior/assisted living and affordable senior housing tenants.

Ms. Messer asked for clarification regarding what areas of Lifecore Drive and the Augusta Health campus were served, and Mr. Wilson and Mr. Quirke reviewed the service area and routes that serve Lifecore Drive and the Augusta Health campus. Ms. Jennifer Whetzel inquired as to whether or not there would be a loss of a stop on the current Stuarts Draft Link route to accommodate the addition of the Pinnacle Drive stop, and Mr. Wilson indicated that there would not be loss of a stop. The bus would still pass by the Augusta Regional Clinic, which is an informal stop, if patients needed to ride the bus. Mr. Hennessee inquired as to whether or not any public hearings or meetings had been scheduled for the change, and Mr. Quirke indicated that no public hearings or meetings had been scheduled and since it was not a major service change the protocol for implementing the change would not need to be overly robust. Changes would be communicated to the public through the usual channels. Ms. Whetzel inquired about the sign installation, and Ms. Thompson indicated that County assistance would be needed to install the sign.

Mr. Luke Juday moved, seconded by Ms. Whetzel, to move forward with staff recommendation regarding the implementation of a new bus stop at Pinnacle Drive in Fishersville. Motion carried unanimously.

FY 2021 Grant Application Update: Mr. Quirke indicated that a summary of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) grant applications was included in the meeting packet. Mr. Quirke reviewed the applications that were submitted:

- Operating;
- Capital Cost of Contracting;
- Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS);
- Waste Oil Heater for the BRITE Transit Facility;
- Solar Panels for the BRITE Transit Facility;
- Afton Express Demonstration Grant; and
- Rideshare Program

Mr. Quirke indicated that from conversations with DRPT, he was confident and optimistic that the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC) would receive good news after their review process. Mr. Quirke indicated that he was happy to answer any questions the committee may have. No questions were presented.



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Mr. Steven Hennessee announced that DRPT had completed the first and second phases of grant application reviews, and the third phase would commence in the coming days. Mr. Hennessee also indicated that there was a new timeline in place for grant approvals through the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) – April submittal has been moved to May. The draft Six Year Improvement Plan (SYIP) should be available mid-May.

2019 Transit Development Plan (TDP) Update Letter: Mr. Aidan Quirke indicated that after a transit agency's Transit Development Plan (TDP) has been completed they are required by the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) to submit a yearly update letter. A TDP update letter described implemented progress of the TDP and any significant changes. A copy of the letter was included in the packet for the committee to review. Mr. Quirke also announced that in the coming year CSPDC would have to undertake the development of a new TDP with a ten-year outlook.

Mr. Quirke indicated that he was happy to answer any questions the committee may have. Mr. Juday observed that ridership was increasing despite the national average showing decreased ridership. Mr. Quirke indicated that nation-wide the trend was decreased ridership except for transit agencies actively engaged in increasing their ridership with programs such as route redesigns. Mr. Hennessee added that the state of Virginia was fighting the national trend with increased ridership – some areas were experiencing a decrease though. Mr. Hennessee cited the price of gas as being a cause for the nationwide decreases.

Round 4 (FY22) SMART SCALE Applications: Mr. Quirke provided an update on additional applications the CSPDC would be submitting this year. Work was being completed on the pre-application process for the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) SMART SCALE applications, Round Four. Mr. Quirke indicated that the applications were for safety and pedestrian improvements at dangerous and high-traffic areas and intersections. Amenities added would include pedestrian crossings, high-visibility crosswalks, curb ramps, sidewalks, and lighting. Three pre-applications were developed for three different locations – Route 250 at Sangers Lane; Route 250 at Lew Dewitt Boulevard; and Route 11 at Dick Huff Lane (Augusta County Government Center). A previous application was submitted for Route 250 at Sangers Lane, and this application was modified to be submitted in this newest round of applications.

Ms. Whetzel inquired about the third location of Route 11 and Dick Huff Lane (Augusta County Government Center) and whether or not it was part of the sidewalk project for that area. Mr. Quirke indicated that the CSPDC was in close communication with Augusta County personnel, Ms. Leslie Tate and Mr. Doug Wolfe, to coordinate efforts.

Mr. Hennessee indicated that, if awarded, funding for the projects would not be available until FY 2026, and there may or may not be an opportunity to have money available earlier. Ms. Bonnie Riedesel indicated that the proposed projects were smaller in scale, and if there were a way to move up the timeline it would be appreciated. Mr. Quirke inquired as to whether or not DRPT reviewed the VDOT SMART SCALE applications directly, and Mr. Hennessee indicated that DRPT and VDOT jointly reviewed applications when transit and highway components were addressed in the application.



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Ms. Riedesel also indicated that pre-applications were due at the end of March, which then go through a vetting process. If prerequisites are met, appliers would be invited to make a full application due on August 1. The CSPDC can provide assistance to all of their localities, and would be working on multiple pre-applications and applications in the coming months.

2019 Triennial Review Update: Ms. Devon Thompson reviewed the last update that the committee received from Ms. Nancy Gourley – of the three findings from the 2019 review, two were closed and one was pending. Ms. Thompson indicated that as of February 28, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) was in receipt of the final corrective action for the third and final finding. The finding was closed out, the CSPDC has completed all corrective actions, and thus the 2019 Triennial Review has been closed out. The next Triennial Review would happen in three years, and Ms. Thompson indicated that she and Mr. Quirke would attend the annual Triennial Review workshop hosted by FTA.

Afton Express Update: Ms. Bonnie Riedesel announced that application was made to DRPT for the Afton Express transit service and submitted on February 3. All six partners committed to funding the local match portion of the operating expense of the Afton Express – City of Staunton, Augusta County, City of Waynesboro, University of Virginia, City of Charlottesville, and Albemarle County. This commuter bus system would originate in Staunton, with stops in Fishersville (BRITE Transit Facility), Waynesboro (Park & Ride Lot), University of Virginia (academic and medical campuses), Downtown Charlottesville, and Fifth Street Station (Wegmans); and the reverse commute would be made.

CSPDC staff has been working with VRT staff to continue the service planning and develop the following tasks:

- Refine the timings and locations of the stops in Staunton (options were being evaluated since currently there is no park and ride lot), Waynesboro, and Charlottesville;
- Develop a logistical plan for the use of the current Waynesboro Park & Ride Lot until and during construction of the expansion and improvements;
- Develop the brand – logo, color scheme, and tagline;
- Develop the specifications for the buses so they can be ordered immediately following the award of the Demonstration Grant; and
- Create a webpage on the BRITE website dedicated to the Afton Express service.

Ms. Riedesel indicated that these preparations would help ready the system for a launch in the first quarter of 2021. Ms. Riedesel reviewed logistical information about the system. There would be two 32-passenger buses operating the route, with one spare bus. The service would consist of four morning trips and four evening trips Monday through Friday, with a one-way fare of \$3. Initial ridership projections were estimated to be 81 daily boardings, with the hope that it would grow. Ms. Riedesel indicated that committee members received copies of the Afton Express Fact Sheet at their partner meetings, but more were available if needed. Ms. Gourley was leading the project, and CSPDC would keep committee members informed of any progress or updates on the project.



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Ms. Karen Clark inquired as to whether the fare was fixed, even if a passenger was making a shorter trip from UVA to Wegmans within Charlottesville. Mr. Juday indicated that trips within the cities would be made by the local transit system, and Ms. Riedesel added that the Afton Express would connect to the local transit systems (CAT and BRITE). Ms. Riedesel also indicated that frequent users could purchase a discounted pass. Ms. Becky Messer commented on peak traffic times. Ms. Riedesel indicated that travel times for the Afton Express would be staggered. Mr. Wilson also indicated that alternate routes were being determined in the event of an accident on Interstate 64, and there would be reliance on dispatch to provide timely information to drivers regarding any traffic incidents that would occur. Mr. Juday suggested that if this commuter bus was successful, a next step or improvement could be to study downtown connections, in both Waynesboro and Staunton, that would eliminate having to drive to a central point to connect to the bus. Ms. Riedesel indicated that hopefully the local bus system could connect to the area stops. Mr. Quirke added that once the Afton Express stops have been finalized, BRITE Bus connections could be reviewed.

Other Business:

Other business brought before the BTAC included:

- Coronavirus update: Mr. Quirke indicated that BRITE was working closely with DRPT and FTA concerning the novel coronavirus outbreak. BRITE staff participated in webinars and conference calls and received updated information and guidance from the agencies. VRT had adopted a more rigorous disinfection routine on high-traffic areas on the buses. BRITE staff had also increased communications with riders, with updates posted on the website, social media, and on the buses. BRITE was prepared to make any changes to adapt to the fluid situation. Mr. Quirke asked that if partners had any additional information on COVID-19 to please share with BRITE staff. Ms. Riedesel inquired as to whether or not VRT had seen a decrease in ridership as of that moment, and Mr. Wilson indicated that he had not seen any noticeable changes as of yet. Mr. Quirke also inquired as to whether or not Ms. Clark had any updates from Augusta Health. Ms. Clark briefed the committee on some updates from the hospital regarding topics such as regional emergency management response updates, management plans, monitoring procedures, screening procedures, increased community communications, and testing through the Virginia Department of Health.
- Recognition for Ms. Susan Newbrough: Chair Rodgers acknowledged Ms. Newbrough's last BTAC meeting, and the committee recognized and thanked her for all her hard work, dedication, and support for BRITE. Ms. Newbrough had been serving as the VRT General Manager for six years.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the BTAC, the meeting concluded at 3:30 PM.



Proposed Stop Request for the Stuarts Draft Link

- Request to add Pinnacle Dr. along Lifecore as a stop to the Stuarts Draft Link
- Impact to existing route
- Benefits
- Expected Ridership
- Sign Location and Easement Concerns
- Safety Issues
- Cost
- Estimated timeline

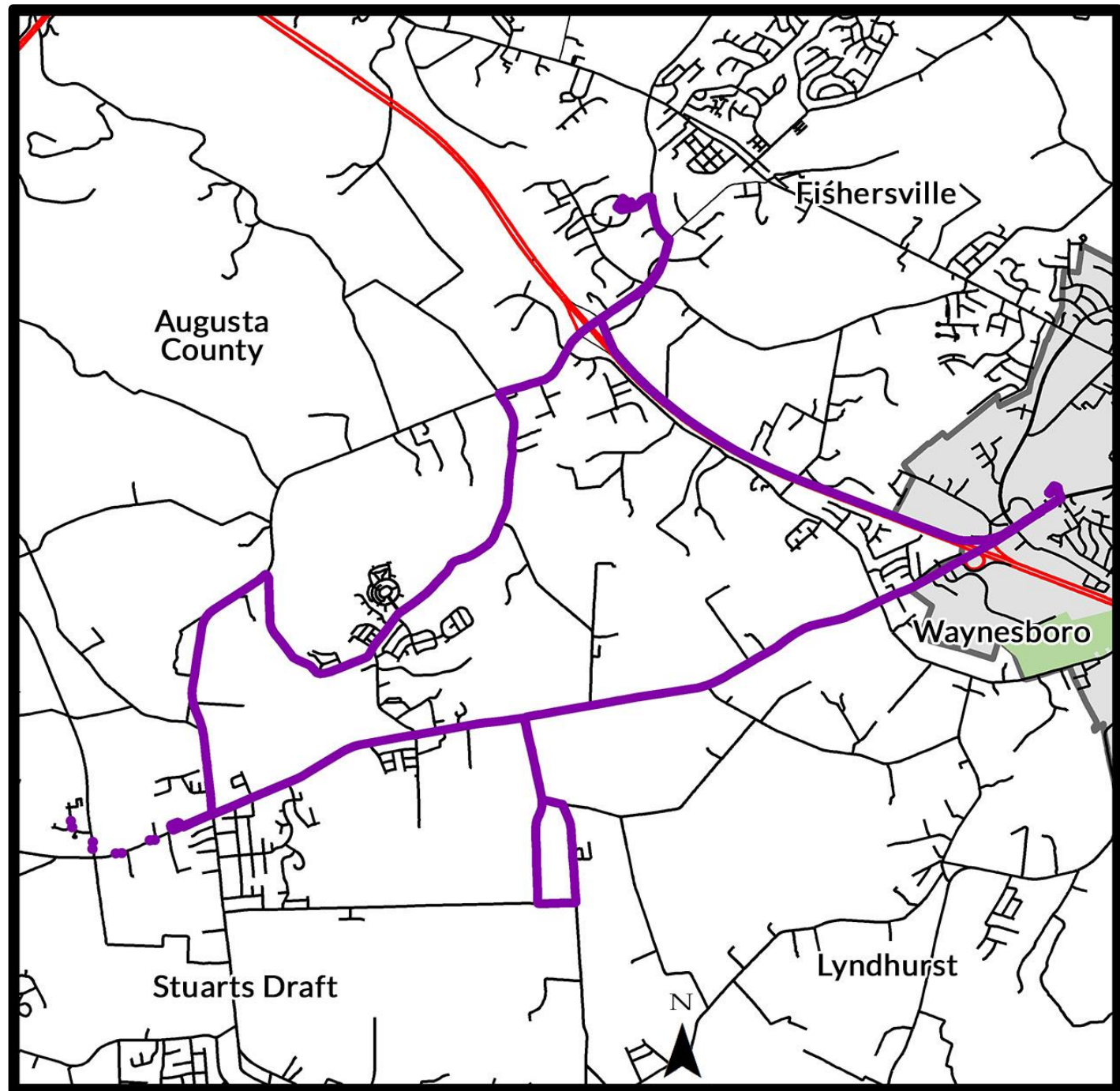


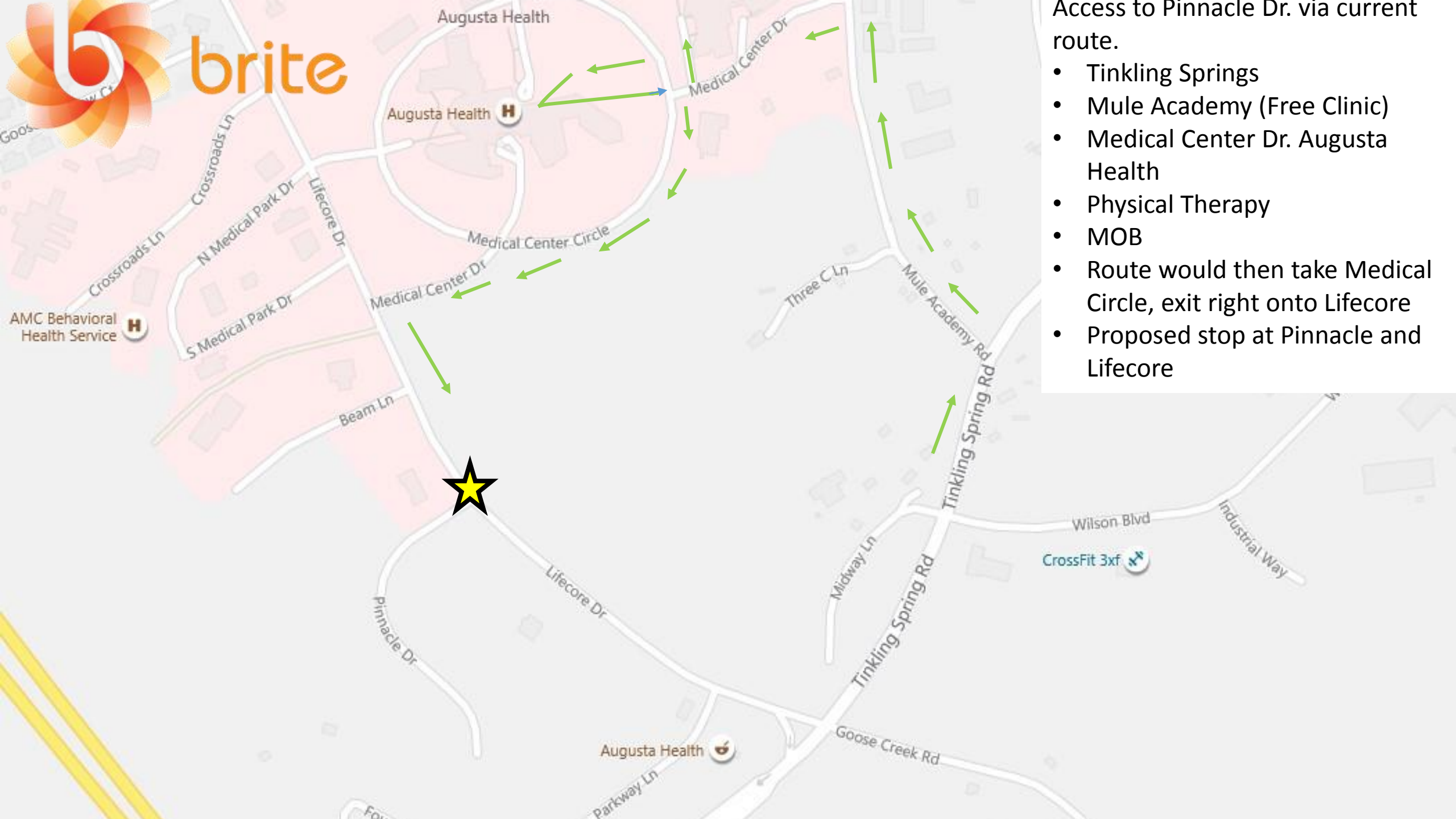


Consistent Schedules Link Stuarts Draft, Fishersville, And Waynesboro.

Our Stuarts Draft Link provides bus service within Stuarts Draft and connections with Fishersville and Waynesboro. Our routine service runs Monday through Friday from 6:50 a.m. to 6:43 p.m., and is perfect for the commuter traveling to work, medical appointments and shopping. Stops include, but are not limited to:

- Stuarts Draft residential areas
- Augusta Health Stuarts Draft
- Target Distribution Center
- Stuarts Draft Retirement Community
- Walmart
- Augusta Health Campus.





Access to Pinnacle Dr. via current route.

- Tinkling Springs
- Mule Academy (Free Clinic)
- Medical Center Dr. Augusta Health
- Physical Therapy
- MOB
- Route would then take Medical Center Circle, exit right onto Lifecore
- Proposed stop at Pinnacle and Lifecore

AUGUSTA FARMS APARTMENTS	6:50	7:50	8:50	9:50	10:50	11:50	12:50	1:50	2:50	3:50	4:50	5:50
BRITTANY KNOLL	6:53	7:53	8:53	9:53	10:53	11:53	12:53	1:53	2:53	3:53	4:53	5:53
HIGHLAND HILLS APARTMENTS	6:58	7:58	8:58	9:58	10:58	11:58	12:58	1:58	2:58	3:58	4:58	5:58
AUGUSTA HEALTH STUARTS DRAFT	7:00	8:00	9:00	10:00	11:00	12:00	1:00	2:00	3:00	4:00	5:00	6:00
MONTAGUE APARTMENTS	CALL	CALL	CALL	CALL	CALL	CALL	CALL	CALL	CALL	CALL	CALL	CALL
TARGET DISTRIBUTION CENTER	7:08	8:08	9:08	10:08	11:08	12:08	1:08	2:08	3:08	4:08	5:08	6:08
STUARTS DRAFT RETIREMENT COMMUNITY	7:09	8:09	9:09	10:09	11:09	12:09	1:09	2:09	3:09	4:09	5:09	6:09
WALMART (WAYNESBORO)	7:30	8:30	9:30	10:30	11:30	12:30	1:30	2:30	3:30	4:30	5:30	6:30
AUGUSTA HEALTH FITNESS	7:40	8:40	9:40	10:40	11:40	12:40	1:40	2:40	3:40	4:40	5:40	6:40
AUGUSTA HEALTH MOB	7:43	8:43	9:43	10:43	11:43	12:43	1:43	2:43	3:43	4:43	5:43	6:43



New Stop Requests

Add Stop to an Existing Route

- Current Route – Stuarts Draft Link
- Current schedule has available time
- Will not diminish current connections with other BRITE routes
- No Safety Issues
- Walking is possible from current closest bus stop (0.6 -.75 of a mile)
- Cost is minimal
- Estimated timeline, could be as early as Monday April 6th. Requires driver training and notification
- Unidentified passenger need