



112 MacTanly Place  
Staunton, VA 24401

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**BRITE Transit Advisory Committee Meeting Summary  
January 13, 2021, 2:30 p.m.**

*Video Conference Meeting via Zoom*  
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                               |
| ✓ | Mike Kelley      | 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                        |
| ✓ | Steve Wilson     | Virginia Regional Transit                    |
| ✓ | Steve Hennessee  | Department of Rail and Public Transportation |

|   | Name                             | Organization |
|---|----------------------------------|--------------|
| ✓ | Ann Cundy                        | CSPDC        |
| ✓ | Devon Thompson                   | CSPDC        |
| ✓ | Bonnie Riedesel                  | CSPDC        |
| ✓ | Kira Johnson, City of Waynesboro |              |
| ✓ | Angela Lawrence, Town of Dayton  |              |
| ✓ | Jason Illig, DARS                |              |
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**Call to Order**

The meeting of the BRITE Transit Advisory Committee (BTAC) was called to order at 2:31 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 10, 2020 BTAC meeting.



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Mr. Steve Rosenberg moved, seconded by Mr. Mike Kelley, to approve the minutes of the November 10, 2020 meeting, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Business**

FY 2021 DRPT Grant Status Update: Ms. Devon Thompson indicated that at their December meeting, the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB), approved the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Six Year Improvement Plan (SYIP). The FY21 SYIP included funding for Afton Express transit service and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Phase I in addition to transit operating funds for BRITE and transportation demand management (TDM) operating funds for Rideshare, a commuter assistance program done in partnership with the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC).

FY 2022 DRPT Grant Application Update: Ms. Thompson indicated that the application process for FY 2022 DRPT grants opened on December 1, 2020, and kicked off with two webinars with DRPT staff regarding the application process. Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC) staff was working on six grant applications to be submitted:

- 5307 Urban – Operating and Capital/Capital Cost of Contracting
- 5311 Rural – Operating and Capital/Capital Cost of Contracting
- Commuter Assistance Operating Funds
- Technical Assistance – Transit Development Plan

Ms. Thompson reviewed the aspects of a Transit Development Plan (TDP) since it would be the first time the BTAC had participated in the development of one. DRPT requires public transit operators in receipt of state funding prepare, adopt, and submit a TDP. TDP's help improve efficiency and effectiveness by identifying the need and required resources for modifying and enhancing services provided to the general public. TDP's cover a 10-year planning horizon, and serve as a planning, management, and policy document for the transit operators; inform DRPT of transit operators' capital, operating, and maintenance needs; and to provide a clear understanding of unmet or unfunded needs.

Ms. Thompson indicated that the last TDP was completed in 2015, prior to the creation of this committee – the formation of the committee was a recommendation in the original TDP. Ms. Thompson also indicated that committee members' input and engagement would be needed for this planning activity along with coordination with the Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), and that the process would be led by a consultant. DRPT has bench contracts with various consultants who complete these planning documents.

Lastly, Ms. Thompson indicated that once a TDP had been completed and adopted, an annual update letter was completed and sent to DRPT. Staff was in the process of finalizing the letter prior to the submittal deadline of January 15, 2021.



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Afton Express Update: Ms. Thompson presented a comprehensive update on the Afton Express service. As previously mentioned, the approval of the FY21 SYIP included Demonstration Grant funding for the startup of the Afton Express public transit service. This bus service would connect stops serving Staunton, Fishersville, and Waynesboro on the west side of Afton Mountain to stops in Charlottesville and at Fifth Street Station in Albemarle County. Charlottesville stops would include University of Virginia (UVA), UVA Medical Center, downtown at the Transit Center, and the Fifth Street Station would include stops at the existing CAT bus stop and Wegmans.

Current plans call for the startup of service in July 2021 contingent on the rollout of the COVID vaccine and recovery of public transit use. In preparation for service implementation, the following tasks had been completed or were well underway:

- Creation of a brand – logo and color scheme;
- Webpage creation;
- Development of a marketing campaign, including advertisements, social media ads, and promotional materials;
- Creation of bus stop signs; and
- Development of an addendum for the operating contract with VRT

VRT had begun the process of acquiring the three buses that would be required to operate the service. Two buses would be used to operate the service, with one spare bus to ensure reliability and safety. The buses would be branded with the logo and color scheme.

UVA Telework Survey: Ms. Thompson announced that the CSPDC, in cooperation with UVA and Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC), would be conducting a public survey to determine the need for a Coworking Space located in the Fishersville area, specifically the upstairs space at the BRITE Transit Facility. During the past year working remotely had become a standard routine, and there were estimates that 25 to 30 percent of the workforce would be working from home multiple days a week by the end of 2021. While this was a great advantage, teleworking had presented unique challenges such as distracting environments, unreliable internet access, and lack of ergonomic equipment and furniture for many employees. This survey would ascertain the demand for a Fishersville collective workspace that would include convenient access to major highways and Interstate 64; private, secured offices or shared work areas; reliable high-speed internet access; communal office amenities; and free onsite parking. The survey was pending approval from UVA, and would remain open until early- to mid-February. Once the survey was approved, Ms. Thompson indicated that the link would be forwarded to committee members to share with their respective contacts.

Ms. Karen Clark inquired as to which departments at UVA were involved with the survey. Ms. Bonnie Riedesel indicated that the survey was being done in conjunction with the UVA Department of Parking and Transportation, but all of UVA was involved. Many UVA employees, non-medical, had been working from home since the onset of the pandemic. A significant number of those employees resided in the Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro region, and they had been commuting to UVA for work. The survey was to gauge the number of employees, as well as non-UVA



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employees, who would utilize a safe, convenient co-working space rather than working from home with various distractions. This would help UVA determine the need of having a space at the BRITE Transit Facility to offer to their employees. Ms. Riedesel indicated that there were approximately 15 offices on the second floor of the BRITE Transit Facility that could potentially be leased out different businesses, like UVA. Ms. Clark indicated that the Greater Augusta Regional Chamber of Commerce (GARCC) might have some members that would be interested in leasing office space as well. Ms. Riedesel agreed, and indicated that the CSPDC had been in contact with the Chamber and that they did have members seeking office space. Mr. Kelley also indicated that some of the Governor's Executive Orders had language encouraging State agencies, to the extent possible, to support alternative office locations and telework situations. Ms. Riedesel agreed, and indicated that many state agencies the CSPDC worked with were still teleworking.

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

- Operations:
  - COVID operations continued, and free masks were being offered to passengers and social distancing was being observed on the buses.
  - The Old Kmart stop in Waynesboro was relocated away from the building due to construction/rehabilitation of the building.
  - A new temporary stop was installed at the intersection of Rosser Avenue and Windigrove Drive – this was requested by the WARM shelter that was housing patrons in the Days Inn nearby.
  - The bus shelter at the Waynesboro Walmart that had been temporarily relocated due to Walmart's employee COVID procedures was in the process of being permanently relocated across from the Verizon store.
  - The change implemented from traveling on C Street to Grubert Street in Staunton was working well.
  - The 250 Connector would be rerouted to accommodate the construction and demolition at the Staunton Mall. The shelter that was located there had been removed and was being stored at the BRITE Transit Facility.
- Staunton-Augusta Health Department & Pinnacle Drive Stop Requests Update: Mr. Wilson indicated that the health department was still in the process of gathering bus stop usage data. Mr. Wilson indicated that the timeline for implementing the Pinnacle Drive bus stop continued to be postponed due to the pandemic. Implementation would resume after construction of the Gateway Senior Apartments.
- Myers Corner Bus Shelter and Bench Installation Update: Mr. Wilson indicated that within the Myers Corner development in Fishersville a new bench and shelter would be installed. CSPDC and VRT staff had met with the developer, VDOT, and the Augusta County Service Authority to determine final placement, and staff were awaiting preparations of the developer, like pouring concrete pads, so the amenities could be installed.



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Other Business:

- Ms. Thompson reported that there was no new SMART SCALE update available, but more information would be shared at the March meeting.
- Ms. Bonnie Riedesel mentioned her participation in a call with Central Shenandoah Health District Director, Dr. Laura Kornegay, regarding COVID vaccination distribution. Ms. Riedesel outlined the different tiers set up for vaccination distribution order. Mr. Steven Hennessee discussed DRPT's role in the vaccinations of transit workers in Virginia. Registration link information for the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) had been passed along, and any other assistance that would be provided by DRPT would be from requested vaccine transport to locations. Mr. Wilson indicated that vaccination information discussed by Mr. Hennessee had been passed along to VRT personnel.

**Adjournment**

Chair Rodgers indicated that the next BTAC meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, March 10 at 2:30PM. The meeting would be held via video conference.

There being no further business to come before the BTAC, the meeting concluded at 3:01 PM.