



112 MacTanly Place  
Staunton, VA 24401

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

**BRITE Transit Advisory Committee Meeting Summary**  
**January 12, 2022, 2:30 p.m.**

*Video Conference Meeting via Zoom*  
Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission  
112 MacTanly Place  
Staunton, VA 24401

[Click Here for Audio Recording of Meeting](#)

	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
✓	Terry Rodgers, Chair	Town of Bridgewater
✓	Cynthia Page	Blue Ridge Community College
✓	Becky Messer	Transit Service Rider
✓	Paul Terry	Transit Service Rider
✓	Steve Wilson	Virginia Regional Transit
✓	Steven Hennessee	Department of Rail and Public Transportation

	Name	Organization
✓	Ann Cundy	CSPDC
✓	Bonnie Riedesel	CSPDC
✓	Devon Thompson	CSPDC
✓	Paula Melester	CSPDC
✓	Lib Rood, KFH Group	
✓	Alisande Tombarge, City of Waynesboro	
✓	Rodney Rhodes, City of Staunton	
✓	Leslie Tate, Augusta County	
✓	Caroline Vanterve, Augusta County	
✓	Phil Thompson, VRT	
✓	Zach Beard, CSPDC	

**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.

**Public Comment**

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

**Approve Minutes**

Chairperson Rodgers presented the minutes from the November 10, 2021 BTAC meeting for consideration.



112 MacTanly Place  
Staunton, VA 24401

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

***Ms. Jennifer Whetzel moved, seconded by Mr. Mike Kelley, to approve the minutes of the November 10, 2021 meeting, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.***

## **Business**

Introductions: Chairperson Rodgers introduced Ms. Paula Melester, a new planner for the CSPDC. Ms. Melester introduced herself. All participants in attendance introduced themselves.

Afton Express Update: Ms. Devon Thompson provided an update on Afton Express service. Ms. Thompson stated that Afton Express entered its fifth month of operation, and passengers took nearly 1,900 trips as of the end of December. Daily passenger counts are averaging between 17 to 27 across the four morning and four evening runs. Ridership was expectedly soft in December, due to University of Virginia's (UVA) winter break and the Christmas and New Year holidays. Ms. Thompson stated that Virginia Regional Transit (VRT) and Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC) staff continue to monitor passenger counts and route performance to advise future changes to the schedule. Ms. Thompson noted that changes to the schedule and route may occur in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, and announced that the CSPDC applied for an additional Demonstration Grant through the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) to cover operating expenses through FY2023.

Ms. Thompson described a new text messaging system, TextMarks, that was implemented to alert riders to service changes and delays on the Afton Express route. Passengers could voluntarily opt in to receive real-time alerts, and there were currently 30 subscribers. Ms. Thompson mentioned the Afton Express marketing committee was planning for advertising and marketing strategies to be launched in early 2022; these campaigns would include geofencing, Weather App advertisements, Spotify advertisements, and outreach events at UVA.

FY 2023 Grant Applications (DRPT): Ms. Ann Cundy stated that CSPDC staff were in the process of submitting FY2023 to DRPT by the February 1 deadline. Application submissions included requests for funding for Urban Operating and Capital (capital cost of contracting), Rural Operating and Capital (capital cost of contracting), as well as the additional Demonstration grant for Afton Express previously described by Ms. Thompson. Ms. Cundy thanked DRPT for allowing this additional Demonstration grant, and expressed that this was a generous offering by DRPT.

Ms. Cundy noted that the CSPDC would submit a was exploring submitting a SMART SCALE application for the Lewis Street Hub rehabilitation project as a back-up in the event they are unsuccessful in obtaining the discretionary FTA bus and bus facilities grant that was applied for in November. However, Ms. Cundy remained hopeful that they will receive the FTA grant.

Ms. Cundy offered to answer any questions, to which there were no questions. Mr. Steven Hennessee announced that the State's grant submission system, OLGA, was still not operational, and indicated that DRPT staff created a work-around process to allow grant applications to be submitted via email. Mr. Hennessee emphasized that review of grants would still begin on February 2 as planned.



112 MacTanly Place  
Staunton, VA 24401

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

Transit Development Plan (TDP) Update: Ms. Lib Rood provided an update on the Transit Development Plan (TDP) process. In partnership with CSPDC, Ms. Rood had been working on the TDP for the past few months collecting information, and was now beginning to draft chapters. Ms. Rood noted that drafts of chapters one and two were completed and were being reviewed by the CSPDC staff prior to BTAC review (see attached presentation slides).

- Chapter 1: Included background, history, governance, organizational structure, transit services provided and areas served, fare structure, the fleet and facilities, transit security program, intelligent transportation systems, data collection and reporting, coordination with other transportation providers, and public outreach. Ms. Rood noted that most of the content in this chapter was taken from the previous TDP and was updated to reflect current operations.
- Chapter 2: Included the mission statement, BRITE's goals, objectives and standards, and a list of the issues to be addressed in this TDP. Ms. Rood reminded the group of the September meeting discussion regarding the potential revision of the mission statement. Ms. Rood drafted a revised mission statement and shared it with the group, and requested feedback. In regard to BRITE's goals, objectives, and standards, Ms. Rood noted that there were currently six goals. Based on previous discussions, Goal 4 was revised. Ms. Rood also recommended adding an additional goal (Goal 7) to incorporate the IT and technology-related improvements BRITE was planning for the future. The service standards section of the chapter included BRITE's Title VI Service Standards, and Ms. Rood proposed adding the performance standards used by DRPT for performance-based funding. Finally, Ms. Rood shared an overview of the issues that would be addressed in the TDP. The full list of issues was provided in the presentation slides, and was developed based on discussions in previous meetings.

Ms. Rood shared a preview of trend data, route profiles and on/off data, and passenger survey results that would be in chapter three. Full survey results would be available in the draft of chapter three, but Ms. Rood highlighted the most frequently expressed issues in the passenger survey data so far. These requests were, in order of importance: service on Sunday, additional shelters and benches, later evening service, and additional Saturday service. Ms. Rood also noted that survey respondents were highly satisfied with service provided by BRITE, with the highest positive feedback being related to drivers.

Ms. Rood outlined the next steps in the process:

- Send out chapters one and two to BTAC for review;
- Complete chapter three for CSPDC review; and
- Send chapter three to BTAC for review.

Ms. Rood offered to answer any questions, to which there were no questions. Ms. Thompson offered thanks to Mr. Steve Wilson and Mr. Phil Thompson for their oversight of VRT in light of the positive comments received by riders through the survey.



112 MacTanly Place  
Staunton, VA 24401

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

Contractor Update: Mr. Steve Wilson provided an update on BRITE operations. He noted that the federal mask mandate for public transit was still in place. Mr. Wilson stated VRT experienced an increase in COVID cases among their employees, and there were some staffing concerns related to that. New drivers had been hired, however, with other drivers leaving/retiring, their staffing needs continued. He indicated that Afton Express was going well, and hoped to see an increase in ridership numbers. Mr. Wilson also praised the implementation of the TextMarks alert system previously referenced. Mr. Wilson noted a concern related to Afton Express timeliness impacted by traffic patterns at the 5<sup>th</sup> Street Station stop in Charlottesville, and staff would continue to look for ways to increase efficiency.

Ms. Bonnie Riedesel inquired as to whether or not there had been consideration for utilizing the TextMarks technology for BRITE in addition to Afton Express. Mr. Wilson stated that he thought it would be a great enhancement to the BRITE service.

Proposed Route Changes: Mr. Wilson presented proposed route changes to the Staunton North and West Loop routes (see attached presentation slides). Proposed changes would improve route safety, reduce route redundancies, and reduce unnecessary route exposure (travel on roads that do not have bus stops).

**Proposed changes to the West Loop:**

- Eliminate travel on Forrest Street and Austin Avenue, and re-route to Peck Street and Hays Avenue before resuming the current route onto W. Beverly Street. Mr. Wilson indicated that travel along Forrest Street was difficult for buses because street parking, and was frequently blocked by vehicles. This change would eliminate one stop located at the corner of Austin Avenue and W. Beverly Street, but a stop was located one block away on W. Beverly Street that would remain.
- Eliminate travel on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and Thornrose Avenue. Instead, the bus would continue on Grubert Avenue to stop at Gypsy Hill House before returning back downtown via Churchill Avenue. Mr. Wilson cited safety concerns on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street as the reason for this change – a very steep and narrow road that drivers frequently had to bypass during inclement weather. This proposed change would eliminate two stops on Thornrose Avenue, however both stops were also served by the Staunton Downtown Trolley.

Gypsy Hill House is currently served by the North Loop, so Mr. Wilson explained that the proposed changes to the West Loop would also remove Gypsy Hill House from the North Loop. Mr. Wilson noted that this change would eliminate the need for the North Loop to back-track on Churchill Ave. Mr. Wilson emphasized that there are no additional stops on the North Loop that would be affected, and that eliminating the extra trip on Churchill Ave. would save time.

Questions were asked and answered. Mr. Hennessee inquired about public engagement regarding the proposed changes, and who would be responsible for hosting those meetings; Ms. Thompson replied that the CSPDC would



112 MacTanly Place  
Staunton, VA 24401

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

be responsible if a meeting was necessary. Ms. Thompson noted that a public meeting would be required if the changes met a certain threshold. Ms. Riedesel inquired about the time frame for making the changes; Mr. Wilson responded that the timeline was flexible and noted that new brochures would need to be printed to reflect the changes. Ms. Cynthia Page inquired as to whether there was data to reflect how many individuals would be impacted by the proposed elimination of stops along Thornrose Avenue; Mr. Wilson responded that based on the on/off data collected in October 2021, there were five people who utilized those stops over a 2-week period. Mr. Wilson also noted that these individuals would be able to get to the Lewis Street Hub from these stops more quickly via the Staunton Downtown Trolley.

Ms. Thompson mentioned that though Mr. Steve Rosenberg was not in attendance, both he and Mr. Rodney Rhodes were briefed on these changes prior to the BTAC meeting and were in favor of the change. Mr. Rhodes confirmed support for the changes.

***Mr. Luke Juday moved, seconded by Mr. Paul Terry, to approve the North and West Loop route changes as proposed. The motion carried unanimously.***

Other Business: Chairperson Rodgers asked if there was any other business to come before the committee.

Ms. Page inquired about a timeline for proposals for the spending on the federal infrastructure money. Ms. Thompson asked Mr. Hennessee if he had any information on this matter, and Mr. Hennessee responded that they have not received further guidance at this time.

### **Adjournment**

Chairperson Rodgers indicated that the next BTAC meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, March 9, 2022, at 2:30PM at the CSPDC offices.

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

# BRITE TDP

Study Update | January 12, 2022



## Today's Discussion



- **Summary of Chapters 1 and 2**
- **Sneak Preview of Chapter 3**
- **Next Steps**



## Chapter 1 – Overview of Public Transportation in the Region



### Introduces the TDP and BRITE and updates the following major sections:

- ▷ Background
- ▷ History
- ▷ Governance
- ▷ Organizational Structure
- ▷ Transit Services Provided and Areas Served
- ▷ Fare Structure
- ▷ Fleet
- ▷ Facilities



3

## Chapter 1 – Overview of Public Transportation in the Region



- ▷ Transit Security Program
- ▷ Intelligent Transportation Systems
- ▷ Data Collection and Ridership/Revenue Reporting
- ▷ Coordination with other Transportation Providers
- ▷ Public Outreach

11:33 AM - 12:05 PM (32 min)	
11:40 AM from Manchester Townhouses	
8 min	
Schedule explorer	
Staunton Mall	11:00 AM
VA Lee Jackson Hwy #1250, Staunton, VA 24401	
F walk	
about 7 min, 0.3 mi	
Manchester Townhouses	11:40 AM
1000 Valley View Senior Apartments	
7 min, 0.3 mi	
Augusta Health MOB	12:05 PM
F walk	
about 7 min, 0.3 mi	
Augusta Health	12:05 PM
700 Medical Center Dr, Fishersville, VA 22939	
Stairs and elevators	
BRT Bus - Transdev/Transit - 1 (800) 940-8000	
These directions are for planning purposes only. You may find that construction projects, traffic, weather, or other events may cause conditions to differ from the map results, and you should plan your route accordingly. You must obey all signs or notices regarding your route.	

4

## Chapter 2 – Goals, Objectives and Standards



### **BRITE Mission Statement**

*"To deliver quality, accessible public transportation services that link people, jobs, and communities in the Central Shenandoah Valley"*

### **Proposed updated Mission Statement** (based on BTAC input)

*"To deliver accessible, affordable, efficient, equitable, high quality, and safe public transportation services that link people, jobs, and communities in the Central Shenandoah Valley and to regionally significant destinations"*

5

## Chapter 2 – Goals, Objectives and Standards



### **BRITE Goals**

**Goal 1:** Provide coordinated, cost-efficient, and effective public transportation services that support the mobility and economic development goals of the communities served.

**Goal 2:** Maintain the current ridership base while seeking opportunities to increase ridership and serve new markets.

**Goal 3:** Maintain strong relationships with area human service transportation providers and neighboring transit programs to maximize mobility options in the region.

**Goal 4:** Establish, strengthen, and market a brand identity for the transit program.

**Goal 5:** Responsibly leverage federal and state funds with local funds and fare revenue to ensure the financial viability of the system.

**Goal 6:** Provide a safe and secure transit system.

6



## Chapter 2 – Goals, Objectives and Standards



### **Proposed Update to BRITE Goals** (based on BTAC input)

**Goal 4:** *Strengthen and market the BRITE bus brand identity*

*Proposed New Goal 7:*

**Goal 7:** *Improve the convenience, reliability, and customer service of BRITE services*

7

## Chapter 2 – Goals, Objectives and Standards



### **BTAC input on unmet transportation needs in the community**

- ▷ **Geographic Coverage**
  - ▷ Other areas of Augusta County
  - ▷ Streamlining the Route 250
  - ▷ BRCC Shuttle – Bridgewater NB and SB
  - ▷ Stuart's Draft Link – Can it be a more linear route to improve ride time?
- ▷ **Types of Service**
  - ▷ First mile/last mile connections
  - ▷ Additional paratransit services
  - ▷ Fixed route on hourly headways is difficult for parents dropping off kids at daycare

8

## Chapter 2 – Goals, Objectives and Standards



### BTAC input on unmet transportation needs in the community

- ▷ **Days and Hours of Service**
  - ▷ Later in the evening
  - ▷ Earlier in the morning
  - ▷ Paratransit on Saturdays
- ▷ **Frequency of Service**
  - ▷ Expensive to improve frequency
  - ▷ Riders will have a chance to voice opinions

9

## Chapter 2 – Goals, Objectives and Standards



### BTAC input on unmet transportation needs in the community

- ▷ **Technology**
  - ▷ Real-time transit information
  - ▷ Wi-Fi on all buses – perhaps solicit a sponsor for this?
- ▷ **Other**
  - ▷ The need for additional bus stops and safer, higher quality bus stops

10

## Chapter 2 – Goals, Objectives and Standards



### Potential Community Mobility Initiatives

- Just keep growing with frequency of stops, more hours, and more technology. Baby steps to meet long term goals.
- Public education to gain more riders – additional community partnerships
- More education and information so that people know what exists, encourage use, and make information easily accessible.
- Have an open communication with the business community concerning the current services.
- The Virginia Breeze and the Afton Express are great programs to meet specific needs. As other needs are identified, solutions can be put forward.
- Continue to expand the existing network (number of stops, direction, days/times).

11

## Chapter 2 – Goals, Objectives and Standards



### Potential Community Mobility Initiatives

- Improve frequency of service in certain areas, public education/outreach (more strategic targeting of choice riders in particular). Explore new community partnerships.
- Promote BRITE services to a broader demographic. Afton Express may be a good model for expanding the demographic of riders. Is there an opportunity for more direct shuttle type services to Harrisonburg?
- As the Afton Express proves successful, increase the number of stops (e.g., downtown areas). Agree with the broad consensus about expanding the existing network.
- Target service to elderly and low-income.

12

## Chapter 2 – Goals, Objectives and Standards



### Service and Performance Standards

- **BRITE Title VI Service Standards**
  - Maximum vehicle load: 1.3 (ratio of passengers to total seats) for all vehicle types. For example, if there were thirty seats on the bus, the maximum vehicle load would be 39 passengers (39 divided by 30= 1.3)
  - Vehicle headways: every sixty minutes, weekdays, and weekends (if applicable)
  - On-time performance: ninety percent or greater (a vehicle leaving a scheduled time point no more than 1 minute early or five minutes late is considered on-time)
  - Service availability within the urbanized area: eighty percent of all residents in the service area are within a ½-mile walk of bus service

13

## Chapter 2 – Goals, Objectives and Standards



### Service and Performance Standards

- Propose the addition of the performance standards that DRPT uses for performance-based funding:
  - Passengers per revenue vehicle hour (20%)
  - Passengers per revenue vehicle mile (20%)
  - Operating cost per revenue vehicle hour (20%)
  - Operating cost per revenue vehicle mile (20%)
  - Operating cost per passenger trip (20%)

14



## Sneak Preview – Chapter 3

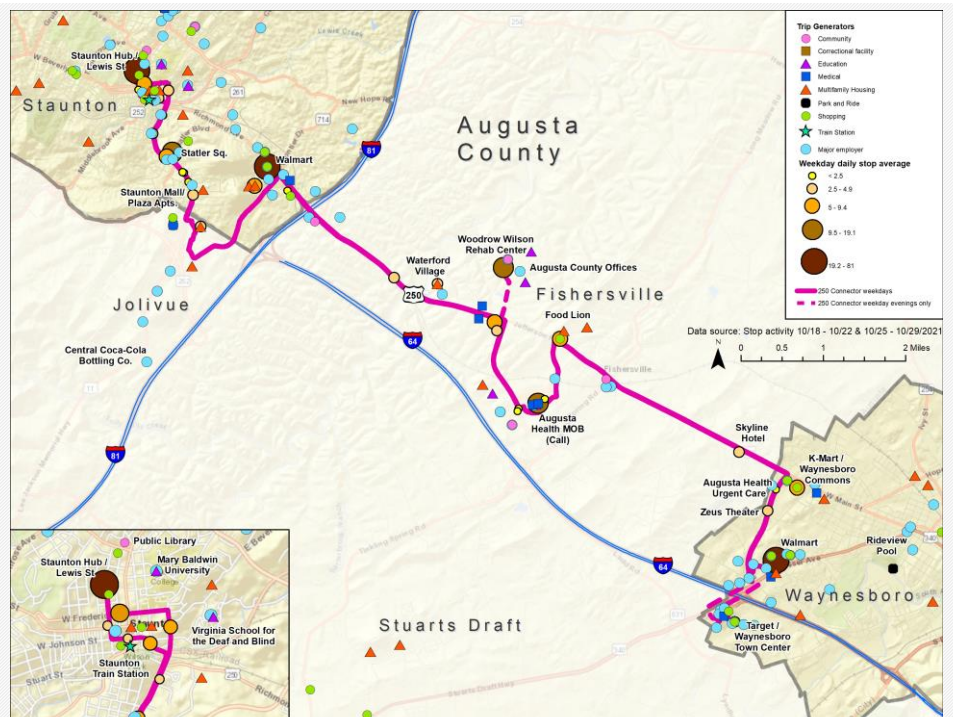


### Trend Data

- System consolidation FY2018
- Added hours of service FY2020
- Covid effects FY2020 and FY2021

Metric	FY2017	FY2018	FY2019	FY2020 (1)	FY2021 (2)
Passenger Trips	220,832	265,439	263,278	233,930	149,731
Revenue Hours	21,046	30,715	29,629	33,363	33,157
Revenue Miles	320,957	567,463	581,542	606,434	604,899
Total Operating Costs	\$1,439,213	\$1,393,205	\$1,338,360	\$2,301,037	\$2,252,410
Passenger Trips per Revenue Hour	10.49	8.64	8.89	7.01	4.52
Passenger Trips per Revenue Mile	0.69	0.47	0.45	0.39	0.25
Cost per Revenue Hour	\$68.38	\$45.36	\$45.17	\$68.97	\$67.93
Cost per Revenue Mile	\$4.48	\$2.46	\$2.30	\$3.79	\$3.72
Cost per Passenger Trip	\$6.52	\$5.25	\$5.08	\$9.84	\$15.04
Miles per Hour	15.3	18.5	19.6	18.2	18.2

### Route Profile Example – Route 250 Connector – Weekday Usage



## Sneak Preview – Chapter 3



### Passenger Surveys

- 35 Surveys – 18 fixed route; 17 demand response

### Fixed Route Survey Highlights

- Public transit primary mode of transportation (66%), followed by walking
- 94% walked to bus stop
- 66% did not transfer between routes
- 56% work trips; 33% shopping trips
- 44% use the bus 5-6 days per week; 33% 3-4 days per week
- Top 4 desired improvements, in order: Sunday service (77%); bus shelters and benches at stops (44%); service later in the evening (39%); and additional Saturday service (33%)
- 88% have smart phones; 76% do not have a driver's license; 70% do not have access to a vehicle

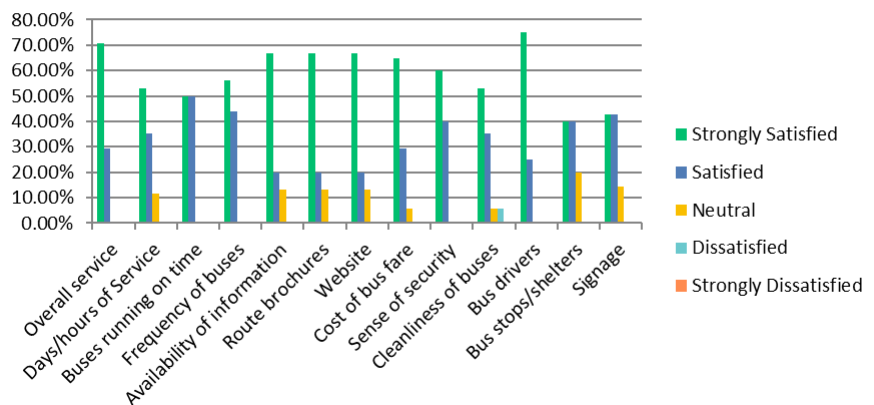
17

## Sneak Preview – Chapter 3



Fixed Route rider satisfaction levels are high, with the most satisfaction expressed for the drivers.

### Please rate BRITE's services in the following areas





## Sneak Preview – Chapter 3



### Demand Response Survey Highlights

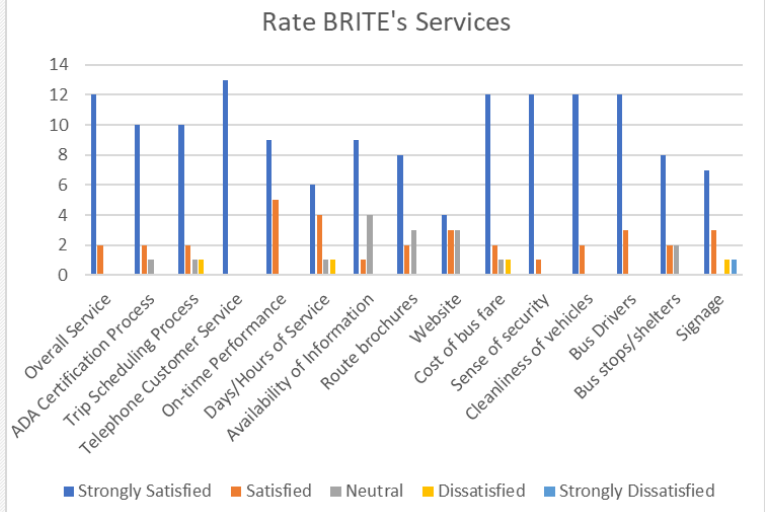
- 82% sometimes use the fixed routes
- Primary trip purpose medical (53%), followed by shopping/errands (24%)
- 41% use the service 3-4 days per week; 35% use the service 1-2 days per week
- Desired improvements: Saturday service (41%); service later in the evenings (35%); Access service to other areas of Augusta County (29%); and service earlier in the mornings (29%)
- 57% have smart phones; 78% do not have a driver's license; 93% do not have access to a vehicle

19

## Sneak Preview – Chapter 3



Access rider satisfaction levels are high, with the most satisfaction expressed for the telephone customer service.



## Sneak Preview – Chapter 3



### Demographic Trends

	Augusta County	Staunton City	Waynesboro City	Virginia
2000	65,615	23,853	19,520	7,078,515
2010	73,750	23,746	21,006	8,001,024
2020	76,544	25,190	22,741	8,590,563
% Change 2010 - 2020	3.8%	6.08%	8.26%	7%
% Change 2000 – 2020	16.7%	5.6%	16.5%	21.4%

21

## Next Steps



- Circulate Chapters 1 and 2 for review
- Complete Chapter 3, which will include the full trend data, route profiles, peer information, results of the public survey, and the updated demographics
- Circulate Chapter 3 for review
- Develop alternatives for the plan

22



## Proposed BRITE Bus Route Change

### BRITE TAC January 2022 Meeting

- Staunton North & West Loop – Proposed Route Change



## Reasons for Proposed Changes

- Enhanced Route Safety
- Reduced Route Redundancy
- Eliminate Unnecessary Route Exposure

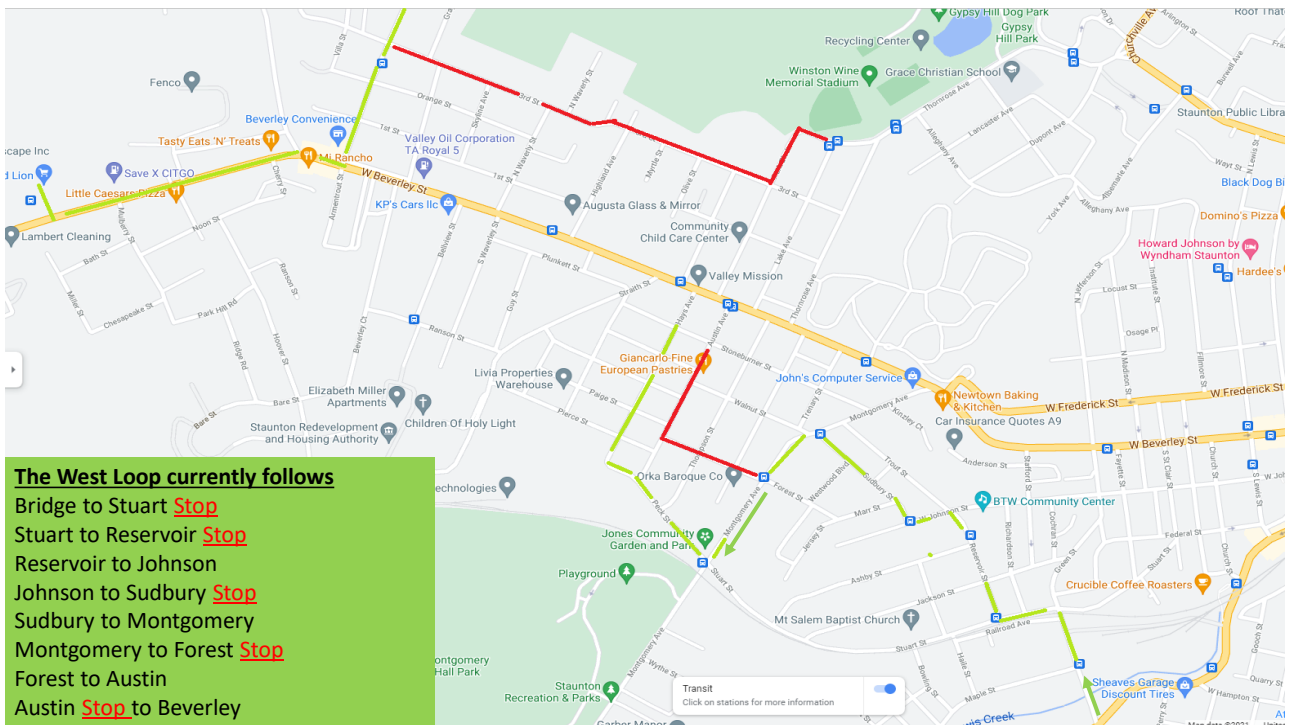
# Proposed Changes to West Loop

## Current Route

- Montgomery Ave to Forest St Stop
- Forest St to Austin Ave (eliminate)
- Austin Ave to Beverley St (eliminate)
- Grubert/ 3<sup>rd</sup> St. (eliminate)

## Proposed Change

- Montgomery Ave to Forest St Stop
- Montgomery Ave to Peck St (new stop)
- Peck St, turns to Chrysler St, turns to Hayes Ave to Beverley St
- Add Gypsy Hill House via as last stop.







## Proposed Changes to North Loop

### Current Route

- Beverley St Food Lion to Grubert Ave
- 3rd St to Circle Dr Stop
- Gypsy Hill Park
- Lewis St Hub

- *Gypsy Hill House is currently the first stop on the North Loop*

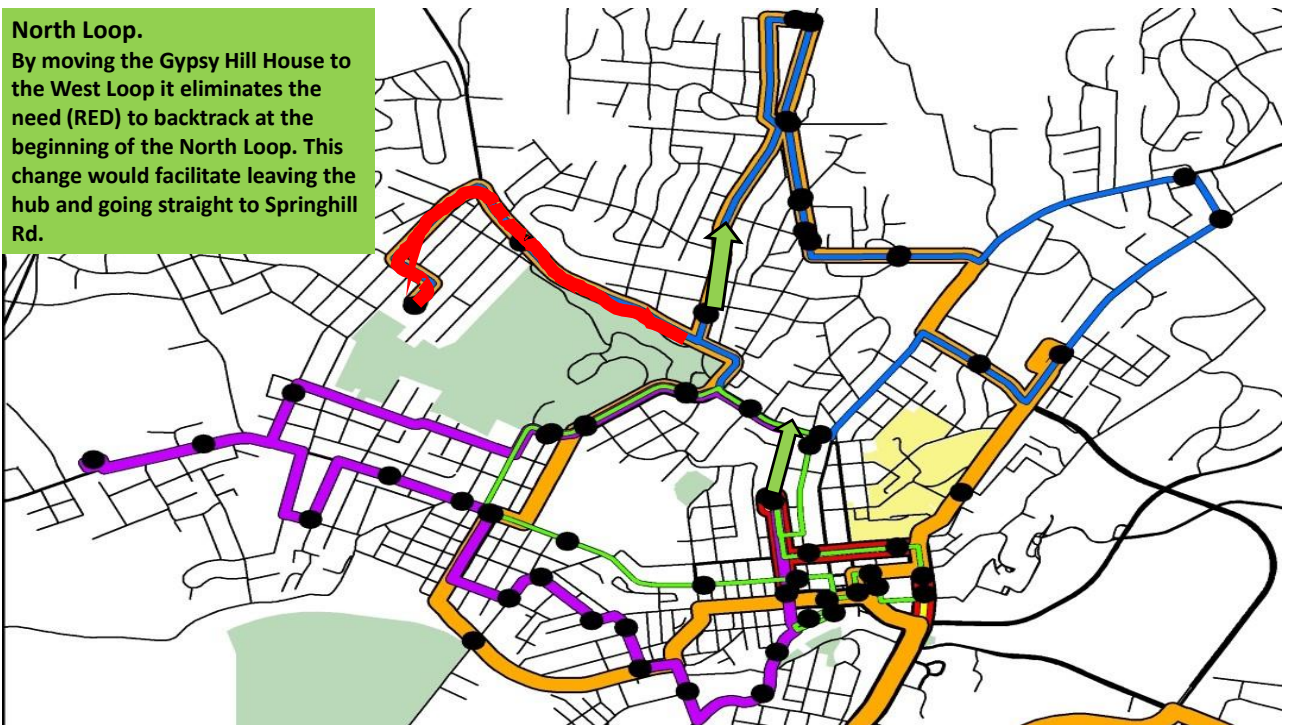
### Proposed Change

- Beverley St Food Lion to Grubert Ave
- Eliminate 3rd St to Circle Dr Stop
- Eliminate Gypsy Hill Park
- Grubert Ave to Gypsy Hill House

- *West Loop to continue down Grubert Ave to Hickory & C Streets to Gypsy Hill House making it the last stop on the West Loop*

### North Loop.

By moving the Gypsy Hill House to the West Loop it eliminates the need (RED) to backtrack at the beginning of the North Loop. This change would facilitate leaving the hub and going straight to Springhill Rd.





# Benefits of Route Changes

- Alleviate safety concerns
- Address redundancies between routes
- Eliminate Unnecessary Route Exposure