



112 MacTanly Place
Staunton, VA 24401

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BRITE Transit Advisory Committee Meeting Summary
May 11, 2022, 2:30 p.m.

Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission
112 MacTanly Place
Staunton, VA 24401

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

	Name	Organization
✓	John Blair	City of Staunton
✓	Jennifer Whetzel	County of Augusta
✓	Luke Juday	City of Waynesboro
✓	Krystal Moyers	Augusta Health
✓	Mike Kelley	Wilson Workforce & Rehabilitation Center
✓	Greg Beam*	Staunton Downtown Development
	Terry Rodgers, Chair	Shenandoah Valley Social Services
✓	Anastasia Triplett	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

**attended via videoconference (Zoom)*

	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*	
✓	Zach Beard, CSPDC	

Call to Order

The meeting of the BRITE Transit Advisory Committee (BTAC) was called to order at 2:31 PM by Ms. Krystal Moyers, Vice Chairperson.

Public Comment

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



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Approve Minutes

Vice Chairperson Moyers presented the minutes from the January 12, 2022 BTAC meeting for consideration.

Ms. Jennifer Whetzel moved, seconded by Mr. Mike Kelley, to approve the minutes of the January 12, 2022 meeting, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Vice Chairperson Moyers presented the minutes from the March 9, 2022 BTAC meeting for consideration.

Mr. Paul Terry moved, seconded by Ms. Becky Messer, to approve the minutes of the March 9, 2022 meeting, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Business

Introductions: Ms. Devon Thompson initiated introductions of meeting attendees.

Staunton Lewis Street Hub Rehabilitation Update: Ms. Ann Cundy announced the progress of the Staunton Lewis Street Hub Rehabilitation project. Ms. Cundy indicated that CSPDC staff was working with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to obtain an environmental document, and with that document the grant award would be secured. For the \$1.2 million project to rehabilitate the Staunton transit hub, a little over 80 percent would be funded by FTA, the State would contribute 16 percent, and the difference made up of local dollars. The environmental document would be completed in the following weeks, and subsequently the grant awarded. A consultant would need to be hired to develop a scope of work and fee proposal for engineering and construction administration for the project. The intent was to issue a Notice to Proceed this Summer.

Mr. Luke Juday inquired as to whether a future Afton Express stop would be at the downtown Hub, and Ms. Cundy answered that potentially that could occur. Ms. Messer indicated that a stop downtown would help with service accessibility.

FY 2023 Grant Applications (DRPT) Update: Ms. Thompson indicated that the draft Six Year Improvement Plan (SYIP) had been released. Recommended funding included grant applications submitted for BRITE for Urban Capital and Operating, Rural Capital and Operating, an additional Demonstration Grant for Afton Express, and Commuter Assistance Program (CAP) operating funds for CSPDC's RideShare program. The Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) would vote on the draft SYIP at their June meeting. Contract agreements would be initiated once voted on.

Mr. Steven Hennessee indicated that there should be no issues leading up to the vote. For reimbursements, Urban grants would be available July 1 and Rural grants would be available September 1.



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Afton Express Update: Ms. Paula Melester reported that Afton Express operations were going well. A single-day high of ridership was reached in April – 50 passenger trips. Average daily passenger trips for the month of April were about 38 passenger trips per day. This was up from 34 average daily passenger trips in February and March. May numbers would be available at the end of the month. The hope was that the ridership numbers would continue to increase.

Ms. Melester announced that in April, CSPDC entered into a partnership with the University of Virginia (UVA) to sell Afton Express farecards online through the Parking and Transportation department. UVA employee riders would now be able to purchase discounted farecards directly from their employer. Since the inception, UVA had sold 47 farecards, and most of those were repeat customers. This partnership would hopefully increase efforts to attract UVA employee commuters. Additionally, on April 18, some adjustments were made to the afternoon run times. The changes reflected increased traffic and actual arrival/departure times.

Vice Chairperson Moyers inquired as to whether UVA offered payroll deduction for farecards. Ms. Melester wasn't aware of whether the program was through payroll deduction, but indicated that UVA employees could purchase directly from the Parking and Transportation department website, through which UVA could track purchasing information. Ms. Moyers noted that when Augusta Health utilized payroll deductions there was higher usage of the program.

Transit Development Plan (TDP) Update: Ms. Lib Rood presented on the Transit Development Plan (TDP) alternatives for service, infrastructure, and technology. Ms. Rood prefaced that this was the first draft, and there would be time to make additions or edits.

Ms. Rood presented on the following service-related alternatives (see attached presentation for more information), and outlined costs, ridership estimates, advantages, and disadvantages for each of the alternatives:

- Microtransit Pilot Project
 - Under the microtransit model, riders would be able to request trips in real-time via smartphones and could track their trips as they waited for the vehicle. Riders without access to smartphones would continue to request trips via a dispatcher. Service areas were defined, geo-fenced areas within the agency's broader transit service areas.
- Staunton South Route
 - This route would connect the Staunton Lewis Street Hub to the Staunton Walmart via Greenville Avenue and the Staunton Mall (redevelopment). This route would be extended to serve the Frontier Center and Staunton Crossing, once completed. This added route would allow the 250 Connector to stay on US 250 for a shorter travel time back to the Lewis Street Hub, and was discussed in the 2015 TDP and recommended in the 2019 250 Connector Study.
- Saturday Paratransit Service



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- The BRITE Access rider survey results indicated that Saturday paratransit service was the highest rated potential improvement. Currently, persons with disabilities were accommodated via route deviations on Saturdays.
- Sunday Service
 - The most requested improvement from the fixed-route rider survey was for Sunday service. An eight-hour service day on the Staunton Loops, the 250 Connector, and the Waynesboro Circulator was proposed, and routes would deviate to accommodate persons with disabilities similar to current Saturday service.
- Later Hours of Service
 - Later hours of service were requested by riders and BTAC stakeholders. The focus of this proposal was to extend the hours of the Waynesboro Circulator since other routes operate relatively late on most weekdays.
- Additional Service for Rural Augusta County
 - Zonal demand response could provide service in Augusta County each weekday, with services geared to different areas of the County on different days of the week. The service would link to the fixed-route system, either in Staunton, Waynesboro, or Weyers Cave, depending on the trip.
- Afton Express Adjustments
 - CSPDC had been approved for funding for a third bus, and schedule adjustments that incorporated the third vehicle would allow for two more trips in the AM and PM. There had also been several comments that requested a stop at the UVA Fontaine Research Park, which could be accommodated as either the first or last stops in Charlottesville.
- Modifications to the Waynesboro Circulator
 - Added stops at Vector Industries and proposed service along West Main Street between Lew Dewitt and Rosser Avenue.
- Modifications to the Stuarts Draft Link
 - The Stuarts Draft Link would shift from counterclockwise loop operations to bi-directional. The alternative proposed to make the route out and back to Waynesboro without serving the Fishersville area.
- Additional Service between Staunton and Harrisonburg
 - The need for additional transit service options between Staunton and Harrisonburg was identified in the 2015 TDP, and again via the public survey during this TDP process. The proposed options would be similar to the Afton Express concept, with fewer stops than the Blue Ridge Community College (BRCC) Shuttles and a schedule geared to employment and education trips (6AM-10AM and 2PM-6PM).

Ms. Rood also presented on infrastructure- and technology-related projects included in the TDP:

- Lewis Street Hub Improvements
- Additional Shelters and Benches
- Improved Connectivity – Staunton Crossing Park & Ride Lot



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- Additional opportunities – SMART Scale Grants
- Technology – Continued Implementation of 2017 ITS Plan

Ms. Rood indicated that next steps were to choose TDP projects; develop draft TDP report; finalize TDP report; and CSPDC Board adoption. The draft chapter would be sent out to the committee for review, and it was requested that they provide feedback for any missed projects/opportunities.

Mr. Kelley inquired about the microtransit pilot project's software and smartphone application-based nature and whether or not there had been any conversation about a BRITE Transit smartphone application that tracked real-time information and call service requests. Ms. Thompson indicated that it was one of the listed projects in the ITS Plan, and Ms. Cundy indicated that Afton Express had a text alert system in place to notify passengers of changes in service or delays.

Mr. Juday inquired about the ranges among cost per trip and the efficiencies of the proposed projects. Ms. Rood indicated that it would be difficult to ascertain as ridership estimates were preliminary and based on current productivity, and would be hesitant of services that would go over \$30 per trip since they are public resources. Per trip costs were driven by ridership, which was hard to control – during a pandemic or otherwise. Ms. Rood noted that factors that should be considered included evaluation of services most used and which were most helpful to riders. This prompted discussion regarding the rural county service feasibility – expensive to provide with a lower ridership. Ms. Whetzel stated that Augusta County had not received any inquiries about transportation services in the rural areas of the County.

Mr. Juday also requested, that if possible, some resources be allocated to studying additional Afton Express stops in downtown Staunton and Waynesboro. Discussion ensued and revolved around serving downtowns on certain/select trips; new connections created with current ridership; added time for interstate access; added service that would not disrupt current ridership; and possibility of further study through a Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (SAWMPO) study.

Ms. Whetzel inquired about the best way to provide feedback on the presented alternatives. Ms. Rood and Ms. Thompson agreed that the presentation and chapter would be distributed to the committee for review and feedback.

Contractor Update: Mr. Wilson reported on the following:

- **Mask Mandate:** As a result of a court order, the Federal mask mandate was suspended on April 18. There was now a mix of those wearing or not wearing masks on the buses. Masks would still be available for passengers should they want them.
- **Ridership:** Ridership had been fluctuating month-to-month in 2022, with lower ridership seen in January, but increased in February, March, and April. Monthly average ridership in 2019 was 23,000; 2020 was 14,000; 2021 was 13,000; and 2022 had been 13,000 for the first part of the year (January-April).



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- **Employment Opportunities:** VRT continued to solicit employment for additional drivers. Mr. Wilson indicated he reached out to BRCC about training and passenger endorsements. Raised wages and competitive markets were some of the challenges they had been facing for seeking new candidates.
- **Route Changes:** Staff was moving forward with the BTAC approved changes to the Staunton North & West Loops. CSPDC staff was in the process of getting new brochures printed.
- **Plans & Studies:**
 - VRT staff had been reviewing the TDP chapters.
 - VRT staff assisted with a data collection call with Kimley-Horn for the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) mobile data collection system project.

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

- Ms. Thompson added to Mr. Wilson's update on the ITS project, and announced that work had commenced on the mobile data collection system with technical assistance from consultant Kimley-Horn. A data gathering meeting would be held to learn current VRT systems to help craft a Request for Information (RFI) to be issued prior to the Request for Proposals (RFP).

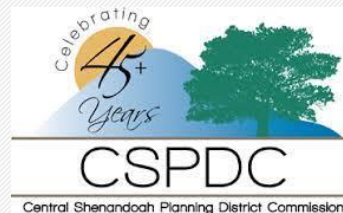
Adjournment

Vice Chairperson Moyers indicated that the next BTAC meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, July 13, 2022, at 2:30PM at the CSPDC offices.

There being no further business to come before the BTAC, the meeting concluded at 3:44 PM.

BRITE TDP

Study Update | May 11, 2022



Today's Discussion – TDP Alternatives



- Service
- Infrastructure
- Technology
- Next Steps



Service



- Microtransit Pilot Project
- Staunton South Route
- Saturday Paratransit
- Sunday Service
- Later Hours of Service
- Additional Service for Rural Augusta County
- Afton Express Adjustments
- Modifications to the Waynesboro Circulator
- Modifications to the Stuarts Draft Link
- Additional Service between Staunton and Harrisonburg

Microtransit Pilot Project

Under the microtransit model, riders are able to request trips in real time via smart phones and can track their trips as they wait for the vehicle. Riders who do not have smart phones continue to be able to request trips via a dispatcher. The service areas are defined, geo-fenced areas within each agency's broader transit service areas.

- **Costs** – the software platform and ongoing fees
 - About \$250,000 with annual fees of \$24,000
 - About \$280,000 annually – 2 vehicles, five days per week, 10 hrs./day
- **Ridership Estimate** – based on 5,100 service hours- 15,300 annual trips



Microtransit Pilot Project

Advantages

- On demand service, accessed through smart phones
- Riders would not have to schedule trips the day before or call BRITE
- Introduces a modern approach to public transportation
- Would allow potential streamlining of fixed routes
- Adds service in areas currently not served

Disadvantages

- The service area would need to be relatively small in order to ensure an acceptable response time
- There are significant costs associated with the software platforms
- There are riders who do not use smart phones; however, these riders could use a call-in number

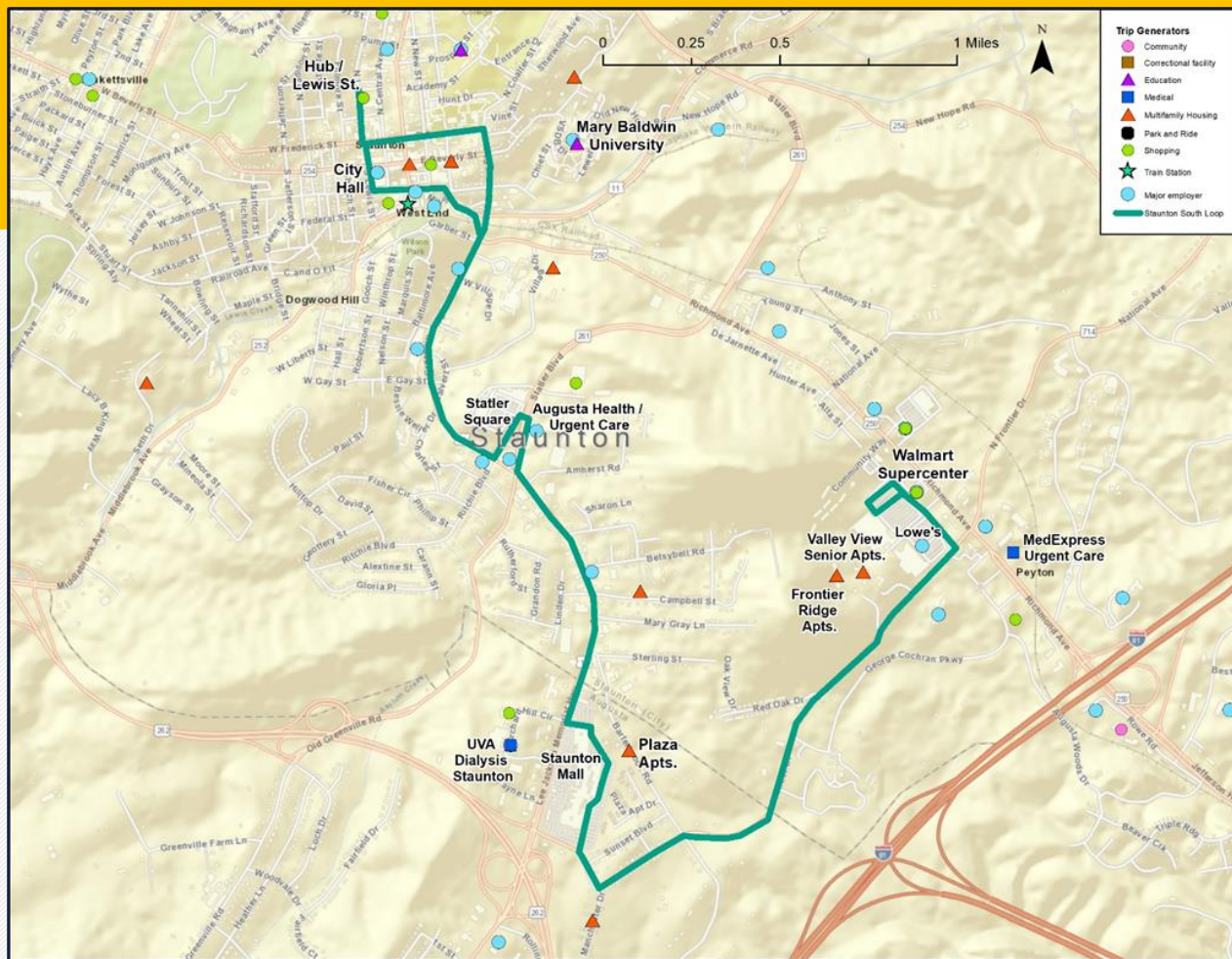
Staunton South Loop

This route would connect the Lewis Street Hub to the Staunton Walmart via Greenville Avenue and the Staunton Mall. This route would be extended to serve the Frontier Center and Staunton Crossing, once completed. Adding this route would allow the 250 Connector to stay on U.S. 250 for a shorter travel time back to the Lewis Street Hub. Discussed in 2015 TDP. Recommended in the 2019 250 Connector Study.

Costs - Using VRT's FY2023 rate, the total annual operating expenses would be \$205,530. This is based on service operating M-F from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., and on Saturdays from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. This equates to 3,783 revenue service hours.

A vehicle would be required, which the contractor would need to purchase.

Ridership - The FY2019 study estimated 25,000 annual passenger trips. Some of these would be diverted from the current 250 Connector ridership base



Proposed Staunton South Loop

Staunton South Loop

Advantages

- Provides a convenient connection between the Lewis Street Hub, the Staunton Mall area, and Walmart (Staunton)
- Eliminates this segment from the 250 Connector, which will allow it to remain on U.S. 250, adding service to that corridor
- Allows the 250 Connector to provide a more direct connection between the Lewis Street Hub and Waynesboro
- Reduces the mileage of the 250 Connector, which will improve the reliability of the route
- Allows for additional stops to be added on the 250 Connector in growth areas of Augusta County
- Responds to a need that has been identified for several years

Disadvantages

- Adds significant operating costs while adding a relatively small new area of service

Saturday Paratransit Service

The BRITE Access rider survey results indicated that providing paratransit service on Saturdays was the highest rated potential improvement. Currently people with disabilities are accommodated via route deviations on Saturdays.

Costs - \$25,426 annually, assuming a nine-hour service day for one vehicle

Ridership – Annual ridership estimated to be 842, based on the productivity of the current service

Advantages

- Responds to the needs of current riders with disabilities, addressing the most requested improvement
- Eliminates the need for Saturday route deviations

Disadvantages

- Adds operating costs without adding new service areas

Sunday Service

The most requested improvement from the fixed route rider survey was for Sunday transit service. For this alternative, the proposal includes providing an eight-hour service day on the Staunton Loops, the 250 Connector, and the Waynesboro Circulator. The routes would deviate to accommodate people with disabilities, similar to the current Saturday pattern.

Costs - \$90,405 assuming an eight-hour day for three routes (four vehicles)

Ridership – Estimated to be 9,900 annually

Advantages

- Responds to the needs of current riders, addressing the most requested improvement.
- Provides mobility for riders on Sundays

Disadvantages

- Eliminates the only day off for BRITE, which may be an issue given the current employment environment within which VRT is experiencing challenges remaining fully staffed
- Adds service on a day that typically has lower ridership levels

Later Hours of Service – Waynesboro Circulator

Later hours of service were requested by riders, and the need for later hours of service was also articulated by BTAC stakeholders. Given that the BRCC routes, the 250 Connector, and the Staunton Loops already operate relatively late on most weekdays (BRCC 10:30 – 11:00 p.m.; 250 Connector – 9:30 p.m.; Staunton Loops – 9:00 p.m.), and evening usage is relatively low, the focus of this alternative is to provide later hours of service on weekdays for the Waynesboro Circulator. The focus of this proposal is to extend the hours of service from the current end time of 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Costs - \$27,700 annually, based on two additional hours of service each weekday (510 additional hours annually)

Ridership – Estimated to be about 2,040 annually

Advantages

- Responds to the needs of current riders, addressing the third most requested improvement
- Allows Waynesboro riders to stay later at their jobs and other activities of daily life

Disadvantages

- There may be low ridership on the additional two hours of service
- It may be difficult to schedule an extra two hours of service, depending upon the way in which the drivers' shifts are constructed

Additional Rural Service for Augusta County

Zonal demand response to provide service in Augusta County each weekday, with services geared to different areas of the County on different days of the week. The service would link to the fixed route system, either in Staunton, Waynesboro, or Weyers Cave, depending upon their trips.

Costs - \$154,000 annually for M-F, 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday

Ridership – Estimated to be about 3,646 annually

Advantages

- Meets a need that was articulated by stakeholders
- Uses a demand-response model that is better suited to the rural nature of the county
- Provides additional mobility options for Augusta County residents to be able to access necessary appointments

Disadvantages

- Provides a relatively low level of service that would not accommodate work trips
- Adds a service that will likely have relatively low productivity given the low-density areas served

Afton Express Adjustments

CSPDC has been approved for funding for a third vehicle – schedule adjustments that incorporate the third vehicle will allow for two more trips in the a.m. and p.m. In addition, there have been several comments requesting a stop at the University of Virginia Fontaine Research Park. This stop could be accommodated as either the first stop upon arriving in Charlottesville or the last stop upon leaving Charlottesville.

Costs – Small incremental increase in expenses by adding the stop

Ridership – Estimated to be 1,000 additional trips annually (low end)

Advantages

- Meets a need that was articulated by riders and potential riders
- Would add ridership to the route as the Fontaine Research Park is a major employment center (1,350 employees) and is considered too far to walk from the nearest Afton Express stop

Disadvantages

- Will add travel time to the route, though it appears that it could be served relatively easily, either as the first or last Charlottesville stop



Modifications to the Waynesboro Circulator

- Adding Vector Industries as a stop
- Considering service along West Main Street between Lew Dewitt and Rosser



Vector Industries Stop

Vector Industries is located just off Hopeman Parkway, ½ mile from the current DMV stop along King Avenue and Hopeman Parkway. Vector Industries is a non-profit business that trains and employs people with diverse abilities. Many of Vector's employees do not drive. Data provided by VRT indicates that four people currently use BRITE Access to travel to and from Vector Industries on a regular basis.

Costs – Incremental costs associated with mileage if an out and back option chosen. Minor reduction in costs if Hopeman/N. Delphine chosen

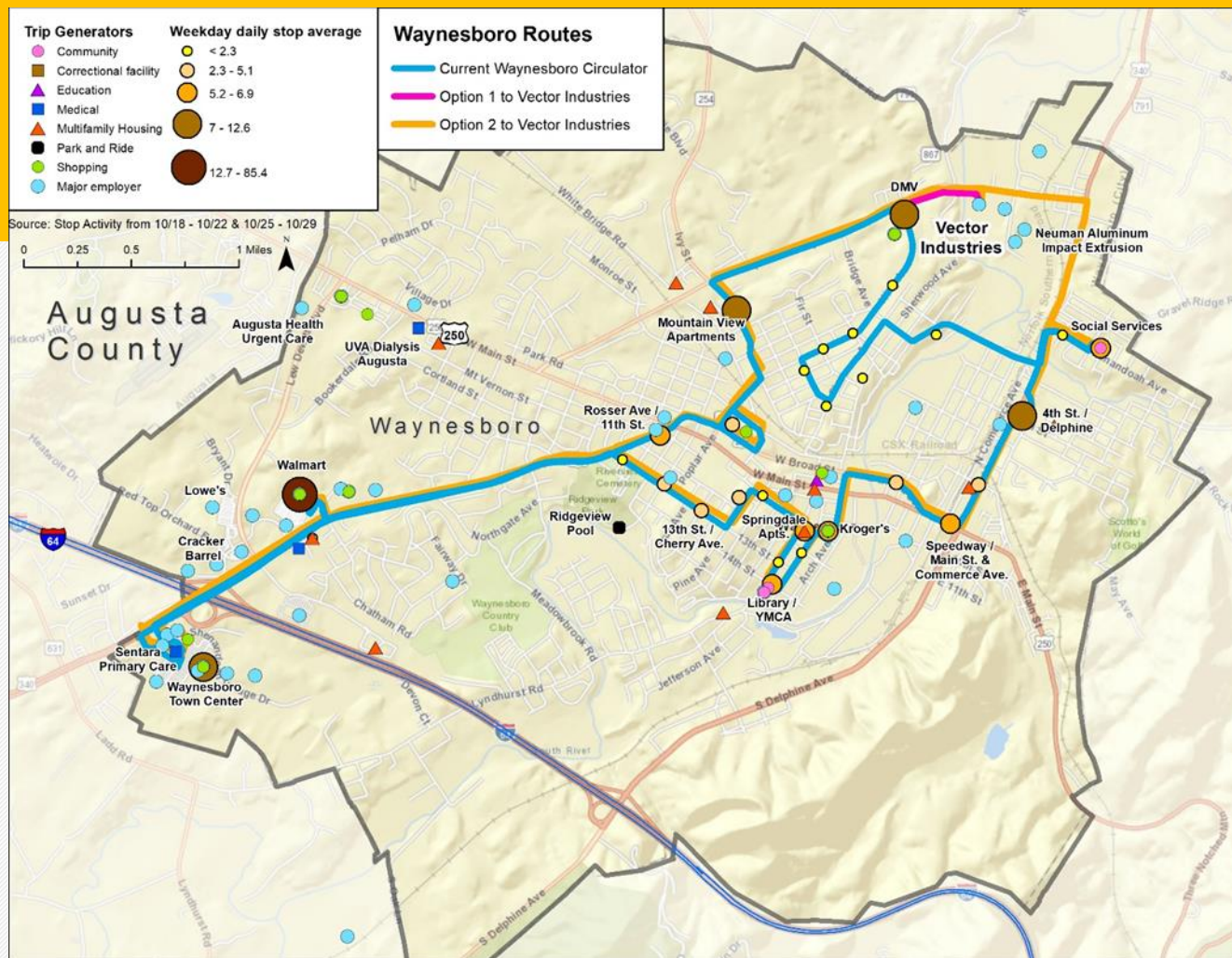
Ridership – If the four current ADA riders can switch to the Circulator and travel three days per week, the added annual ridership would be 1,248 trips. There may be additional ridership from people who currently travel via family/friends.

Advantages

- Meets a need that was articulated by stakeholders
- Provides service to non-profit employer of people with disabilities
- May reduce demand for ADA paratransit to the site if the riders are able to use the fixed route option

Disadvantages

- Out and back – may make the route too long
- Hopeman- N. Delphine – would eliminate several residential stops, though the route length would be reduced



Waynesboro Circulator – West Main Street

A comment received via the survey (and also from a passenger while riding the bus) requested service along West Main Street between Rosser Avenue and Lew Dewitt Boulevard. This segment includes both commercial and residential uses.

Costs – Incremental costs associated with added mileage

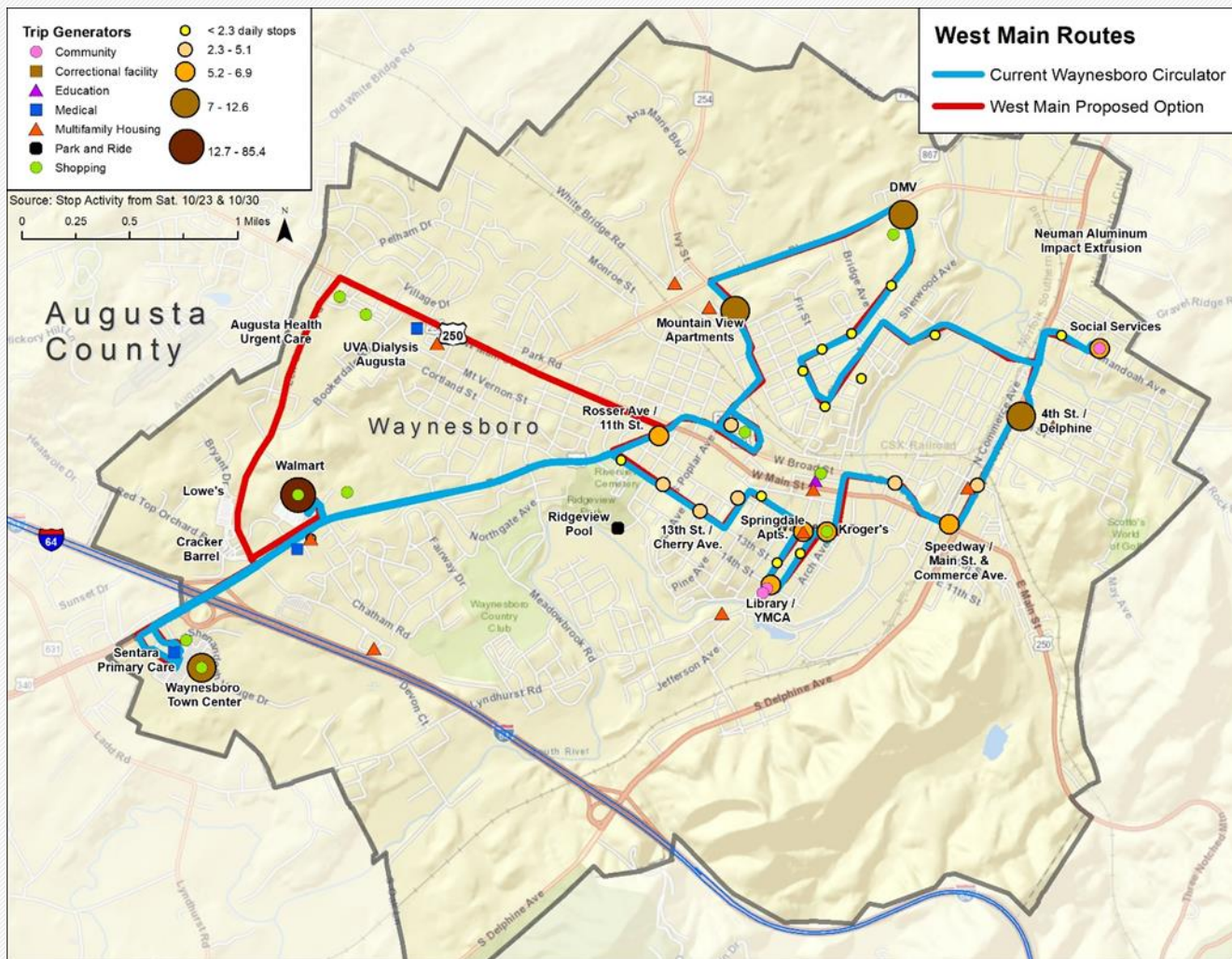
Ridership – Likely a small increase in ridership, as additional transit origins and destinations would be served along West Main Street and Lou Dewitt Boulevard. Note that the 250 Connector already serves Lew Dewitt Boulevard.

Advantages

- Meets a need that was articulated by stakeholders
- Adds additional trip generators to the route

Disadvantages

- It may not be feasible to make this change, as it would add 2.6 miles to the route (1.3 miles each way)



Stuarts Draft Link – Bi-directional

The Stuarts Draft Link currently operates as a counterclockwise loop. This “loop” causes long travel times for trips within the Stuarts Draft community. This alternative proposes to make the route out and back to Waynesboro, without serving the Fishersville area.

Costs – Cost neutral, minor change in mileage

Ridership – The route would lose some riders that currently travel between Waynesboro and Augusta Health but may gain some local riders who find the current loop inconvenient.

Advantages

- Significantly decreases travel time for local Stuarts Draft trips
- Eliminates the duplicative route segment between Waynesboro and Augusta Health (250 Connector)
- Minor reduction in total route mileage

Disadvantages

- Would require that Stuarts Draft riders who travel to Augusta Health in Fishersville make a transfer at Walmart



Direct Service in between Staunton and Harrisonburg

The need for additional transit service options between Staunton and Harrisonburg was identified in the 2015 TDP and again during this current TDP process via the public survey effort. The proposed option would be similar to the Afton Express concept, with fewer stops than the BRCC Shuttles and a schedule that is geared to employment and education trips. Proposed concept is two vehicles, operating between 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. and again from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Costs - \$289,109 annually, two additional vehicles would need to be purchased by contractor

Ridership – Estimated to be about 12,750 annually

Advantages

- Meets a need that was articulated by the public
- Provides a relatively direct connection between Staunton and Harrisonburg
- Allows transit riders to travel between Staunton and Harrisonburg earlier in the day that is currently possible.
- Could be linked to the Afton Express in the future to increase inter-regional connectivity

Disadvantages

- Potentially competes with the current BRCC Shuttles
- There may not be enough demand to support this type of service in the near term
- Service on I-81 would be subject to traffic delays, which would affect schedule reliability

Infrastructure and Technology



- Lewis Street Hub Improvements
- Additional Shelters and Benches
- Improved Connectivity – When Staunton Crossing Park and Ride opens; Additional opportunities – Sangers Lane
- Technology – Continue implementation of 2017 ITS Plan



Next Steps

- Choose TDP Projects
- Draft TDP Report
- Final TDP Report
- CSPDC Board Adoption