



112 MacTanly Place
Staunton, VA 24401

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BRITE Transit Advisory Committee Meeting Summary March 12, 2025, 2:30 p.m.

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

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

	Name	Organization
✓	Amanda Kaufman	City of Staunton
✓	Rodney Rhodes	City of Staunton
✓	Jennifer Whetzel	County of Augusta
✓	Kaitlin Savage	County of Augusta
	Leslie Tate, Vice Chair	City of Waynesboro
✓	Alisande Tombarge	City of Waynesboro
	Krystal Moyers, Chair	Augusta Health
	Abby Calvert	Augusta Health
	Mike Kelley	Wilson Workforce & Rehabilitation Center
✓	Darren Smith*	Staunton Downtown Development
	Josiah Hojohn	Shenandoah Valley Social Services
✓	Melissa Walker	Blue Ridge Community College
	Tammy DuBose	Valley Community Services Board
✓	Becky Messer	Transit Service Rider
✓	Paul Terry	Transit Service Rider
✓	Kyle Trissel*	Department of Rail and Public Transportation

	Name	Organization
✓	Ann Cundy*	CSPDC
✓	Devon Thompson	CSPDC
✓	Paula Melester	CSPDC
✓	Danielle Gannon	CSPDC
✓	Zach Beard, CSPDC	
✓	Garreth Bartholomew*, CSPDC	
✓	Steve Wilson, VRT	
✓	Phil Thompson, VRT	
✓	Alex Wilmer*, Town of Bridgewater	
✓	Brian Borne, Town of Dayton	
✓	Jennifer Brown, Augusta County	
✓	Jessica Davis, Aetna/Public	
✓	Tyler Beduhn*, Kimley-Horn	
✓	Zadie Lacy*, Kimley-Horn	
✓	Poonam Patel*, Kimley-Horn	
	<i>*Indicates participant attended virtually</i>	



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Call to Order

Due to the absence of the Chair and the Vice Chair, Ms. Alisande Tombarge volunteered to conduct the meeting. The March 12, 2025, meeting of the BRITE Transit Advisory Committee (BTAC) was called to order at 2:30 PM by Ms. Alisande Tombarge. Pursuant to §2.2-3708.2 of the Code of Virginia, BTAC members may participate in meetings through electronic communication means. Members who participated virtually are marked accordingly.

Public Comment

Ms. Tombarge opened the floor for public comment. There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Tombarge presented the minutes from the January 8, 2025, BTAC meeting for consideration.

Mr. Paul Terry moved, seconded by Ms. Amanda Kaufman, to approve the minutes of the January 8, 2025, meeting, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Business

Microtransit Feasibility Study Update: Ms. Tombarge opened the floor to Mr. Tyler Beduhn to present a Microtransit Feasibility Study update. Mr. Beduhn and his colleagues from Kimley-Horn, Ms. Poonam Patel and Ms. Zadie Lacy, introduced themselves. Mr. Beduhn began the presentation by summarizing microtransit service.

Microtransit is:

- An on-demand public transportation service
- Open to the public
- Technology enabled (request rides through an app or by phone)
- Flexible (real-time ride requests and routing)
- Zone bound (confined to a small service area)
- Run with smaller vehicles than traditional buses
- A shared ride experience

Ms. Lacy discussed the factors that went into the process of identifying opportunity zones within the BRITE service area. Opportunity zones were identified areas that were well suited for microtransit and had the potential to address specific needs. Considerations for potential service zones were also discussed:

- The relationship between transit potential and transit need: Microtransit service operations require a balance between the amount of transit need and transit potential. This ensures that service could run optimally and as designed (i.e. short wait times).
- Existing BRITE route performance: Lower performing routes have the potential to be replaced by microtransit service. The Stuarts Draft Link, BRCC Shuttle, and Afton Express were identified as good candidates for replacement (but, Afton Express was eliminated from this possibility due to the distance traveled and nature of the service).



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- Travel patterns: Microtransit zones should align with common travel patterns.

Mr. Beduhn presented the potential opportunity zones within the BRITE service area and shared their prioritized rankings. Zones were prioritized based on the criteria and goals identified at the beginning of the study.

Identified Opportunity Zones in Order of Priority:

1. North Staunton
2. South Staunton
3. Fishersville
4. Stuarts Draft
5. Greenville
6. South Waynesboro
7. North Waynesboro

Mr. Beduhn indicated that all identified zones were viable options for future considerations, but the first four zones were being recommended for initial exploration. The details on each of those four prioritized zones were shared. Kimley-Horn was finalizing a draft service plan for each of the four zones. Additionally, they would be taking feedback from this meeting into consideration as they worked to finalize their recommendations and report, and they would be presenting the final report at the next BTAC meeting in May.

Ms. Jennifer Whetzel inquired whether there would be a fare structure to offset the cost of microtransit services. Mr. Beduhn indicated that fare structure would be part of the final recommendations.. Ms. Melissa Walker asked what factors were examined when considering the replacement of fixed route service with microtransit. Mr. Beduhn commented that potential replacement is based on the demand for service. Once demand passed a certain threshold, microtransit service would become more costly to operate than fixed route service. Mr. Beduhn indicated that there were some tradeoffs to consider when replacing fixed route service for microtransit include customer wait time, cost and vehicle capacity (5-6 passengers per hour recommended for microtransit), cost efficiency, customer service, and responsiveness. Ms. Devon Thompson inquired about microtransit service hours and if they typically mirrored those of the fixed route service or surpassed them. Mr. Beduhn commented that microtransit service hours typically mirrored fixed route hours as much as possible.

Fiscal Year 2026 Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) Grants Update: Ms. Danielle Gannon reported that FY 2026 DRPT grant applications were submitted by CSPDC transit staff prior to the February 1 deadline. CSPDC made application for the following grants: Urban and Rural operating, Urban and Rural capital cost of contracting, capital grant for bus shelters, technical assistance grant for the procurement of the new service contract, Commuter Assistance Program operating grant for RideShare, and Commuter Assistance Program project assistance grant for transit marketing, specifically for Afton Express marketing. Grant applications were under review by DRPT, and the draft Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) would be available in April, which was confirmed by Mr. Trissel.

Afton Express Update: Ms. Gannon gave an overview of the results of the 2024 Afton Express Rider Survey.



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- **Overview**
 - The survey was available for the public to take from December to January.
 - 80 participants responded to the survey, including 65 who currently ride the Afton Express.
- **Passenger Profile**
 - The average respondent was female, white, of working age, in the middle-income bracket, owned a vehicle, and rode the Afton Express 3-4 days per week.
 - In the survey, most passengers indicated that in the morning they ride from the west (the Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro area) to the east (the Charlottesville/Albemarle area).
- **Trip Distribution**
 - Responses indicated that Trip 4 was the most utilized trip in the morning and that Trip 2 was the most utilized trip in the afternoon/evening.
- **Motivations for Riding**
 - When asked about their motivations for riding, respondents indicated their top motivations to be economic, quality of life and environmental reasons.
- **2024 Ridership**
 - The Afton Express saw a 16% increase in ridership from 2023-2024, with 19,146 passenger trips total in 2024.

Contractor Update: Mr. Steve Wilson reported on the following topics:

- Passenger numbers had increased on the Afton Express, and BRITE routes stayed consistent.
- VRT has been seeking drivers for BRITE; multiple drivers had been hired on, while multiple were retiring.
- Equipment maintenance was routine.
- Transit Operator Appreciation Month was in March, with the official day of celebration on March 18. VRT staff and drivers would be honored with celebrations on multiple occasions.
- Two stops would be gaining permanent stop signage: Neighbor Bridge (Fishersville), and Huffman Dr / Main Street (Dayton).

Ms. Paula Melester commented that CSPDC transit staff were appreciative of VRT staff and operators. Ms. Rebecca Messer commented that while riding BRITE paratransit recently, the drivers were busy but seem more relaxed. Mr. Phil Thompson replied that over the past several months, VRT management had been instructing drivers on the value of safety over stress, noting that safety should never be sacrificed for the schedule. Ms. Thompson commented that BRITE paratransit hours had also recently increased, which had most likely contributed to drivers feeling more relaxed.

Turnkey Contract Solicitation/Technical Assistance Update: Ms. Melester reported that CSPDC transit staff had hired consultant Kimley-Horn to provide technical assistance for the turnkey contract solicitation, as the current service provider's contract expired June 30, 2026. The procurement would be a technical project, and the solicitation must be compliant at both the federal and state level, with the goal to receive competitive bids. Ms. Melester reported that Ms. Jennifer Whetzel was serving as the representative from the BTAC on the stakeholder group.



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Other Business:

- **RAM Clinic:** Ms. Thompson reported that in 2024, BRITE transit served Augusta Expo for Augusta Heath's one day RAM Clinic. Clinic staff had once again requested BRITE's service for a RAM Clinic at Augusta Expo in March 2026. Ms. Thompson asked the BTAC for their consensus to serve the clinic again in March 2026, and the committee agreed.
- **Augusta Health Community Needs Assessment Survey:** Ms. Thompson reported that Augusta Health was conducting their Community Needs Assessment Survey, which was open until March 24, 2025. BTAC members were encouraged to take a flyer and hand out in their respective communities. Ms. Thompson reported that transportation had been a reported need in previous Community Needs Assessment Surveys.
- **PTASP:** Ms. Thompson gave an update on the annual review and update of the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP), and the BRITE-specific appendix. Ms. Thompson cited that recipients of 5307 Funds were required to complete this process annually, and that there were multiple federal requirements added. The updated PTASP appendix would go before VRT's frontline staff at their quarterly safety training meeting ,and CSPDC's Board of Commissioners at their April meeting.
- **Continuous Riding Policy:** Ms. Thompson reported that VRT operators had reported continual riding challenges. CSPDC transit staff had researched other transit agencies' continuous riding policies and found that other agencies do have language prohibiting continuous rides on their websites and brochures. CSPDC transit staff will add a 'no continuous riding' policy in BRITE's rules of riding, and if best practices were to have a formal policy in place, one would be developed for BRITE.
- **Afton Express Update:** Ms. Melester reported that CSPDC transit staff had been planning to add an additional trip to the Afton Express schedule based on ridership demand. In analyzing potential time frames for this addition, CSPDC transit staff and VRT staff agreed that there were currently underutilized trips, and that adding an additional trip within the confines of the current schedule would be inefficient. Ms. Melester reported that due to the intricate nature of the Afton Express schedule, CSPDC would be hiring a consultant to analyze the current schedule, obtain updated data, and recommend a revised schedule. The goal of the project would be to gain new ridership while retaining existing ridership. Additionally, CSPDC was aiming to implement the schedule in fall of 2025, due to the fact that many new riders typically started riding during the fall, as it aligned with the higher education calendar.

Adjournment

Ms. Tombarge indicated that the next BTAC meeting was scheduled for May 21, 2025, at 2:30 PM.

There being no further business to come before the BTAC, the meeting concluded at 3:12 PM.