

PRESENT: T. Cole, Chairman  
E. Shipplett, Vice Chairman  
S. Bridge  
K. Shiflett  
R.L. Earhart, Senior Planner and Secretary  
D. D. Wolfe, County Engineer

ABSENT: C. Foschini  
J. Curd  
K. Leonard  
T. Fitzgerald, Director of Community Development

VIRGINIA: At the Worksession Meeting of the Augusta County Planning Commission held on Tuesday, August 12, 2014, at 4:30 p.m. in the Board Room, Augusta County Government Center, Verona, Virginia.

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The meeting was called to order by Mr. Cole, Chairman.

The Planning Commission reviewed the Mill Place Commerce Park request and the Ordinance Amendments coming before them at their meeting, as well as the items coming before the Board of Zoning Appeals in September.

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### **Comprehensive Plan- Transportation Chapter Review**

Mrs. Earhart presented for discussion the draft Transportation Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan. She stated the reason there are more changes in the Transportation section than in the other sections is because of the State code requirements.

Mr. Cole asked if it was fair to say there are more State mandated changes, but fewer decisions are being made locally because of the State Code requirements and the lack of funding.

Mrs. Earhart stated there is very little funding available from the State, however, that doesn't preclude the need for planning. The Planning District Commission (PDC) is doing a long range transportation plan for the MPO area. If there are projects or recommendations that come out of that plan, they may need to translate over to the local level and be put in our Comp Plan. Putting proposed projects into the plan will not guarantee funding, but, there will be no chance to obtain funding for them if they aren't in the Plan.

The PDC has transportation planners who drafted the majority of the Transportation Plan. A lot of the content was in the 2007 plan so it is not new text, but it has been

reordered to meet the State Code provisions. It has been sent to the VDOT District Planning Office. They will review it and request changes to be made if necessary.

Mr. Cole asked what SAWMPO is.

Mrs. Earhart stated it is the Staunton, Augusta, Waynesboro Metropolitan Planning Organization. It is a federally required transportation planning organization that recognizes the population density of the Verona-Staunton-Fishersville-Waynesboro-Stuarts Draft area.

Mr. Bridge stated it is interesting where the bike lanes are in the Waynesboro area. The bike lanes are designated to be within the roadway and there is no extra lane for bikers.

Mrs. Earhart stated it is marked on the road that the roadway is to be shared with bikers.

Mrs. Earhart referred to the Employment section of Part III Land Use and Planning Assumptions and stated Staff would like input on how to present the commuting data in the Comp Plan to acknowledge the fact that people that are commuting from the cities of Staunton and Waynesboro to their jobs are more than likely using county roads to get to their workplaces. It is not only important to know where the people are coming from who are going to County workplaces, but also where the City residents are going to. This is critical information for the Transportation Plan. She asked the Commissioners how they would like to have this information presented to them; on two new maps (one for Staunton and one for Waynesboro) or in a table format. While the commuting pattern of Augusta County residents is important, it is just as important to look at the commuting pattern from other localities traveling on county roads and the total impact on the road system.

Mr. Shipplett asked how the data outlined in Tables 2 and 3 is collected.

Mrs. Earhart stated the data is collected through the Census.

Mr. Shipplett stated the Census was a number of years ago.

Mrs. Earhart stated the latest Census was done in 2010. There will be other data available from the American Community Survey that may update information more frequently in some cases, however, commuting data may not be updated until the 2020 Census.

Mrs. Shiflett referred to Tables 2 and 3 and asked what "Other" encompasses.

Mrs. Earhart stated it is commuters who may be going to other destinations not shown on the tables or they may not be commuting at all.

Mrs. Earhart asked the Commissioners how they would prefer to view the data.

Mr. Bridge suggested a map for both Staunton and Waynesboro would be helpful to use along with the tables.

Mr. Wolfe asked if it would be helpful for the “Other” component to be broken down further into points north, south, and east to have a better idea of how many commuters are using the interstates and major highways.

The Commissioners agreed it would be helpful to have two additional maps showing commuting data for Staunton and Waynesboro, as well as a map showing points traveled to by the “Other” component on the tables.

Mr. Wolfe suggested possibly having a third map showing Staunton, Waynesboro, and Augusta County and how those areas relate to other areas, as well as interstate travel.

Mrs. Earhart discussed the land use assumptions in Augusta County and the growth areas. Fishersville, Stuarts Draft, and Verona are the areas designated for commercial and industrial growth. Stuarts Draft and Fishersville have areas that are designated for residential growth. Weyers Cave, while it is designated for residential, commercial, and industrial growth, how much growth happens depends on the sewage treatment plant and water improvements being made. With the new sewer in Greenville, more development can occur south of Staunton, but there is not a lot of development area available.

Mrs. Earhart referred to the Transportation System Needs Assessment of the Transportation Plan. She stated the areas with Levels of Service A, B, or C are acceptable Levels of Service, and areas with Levels of Service D, E, and F are not acceptable. When a road gets to the D, E, or F level, it will need to be decided what road improvement projects will be necessary to bring them back to a more acceptable Level of Service.

Mr. Bridge asked who develops the Level of Service numbers.

Mrs. Earhart stated it is an industry standard. VDOT has calculated the levels for us.

Mr. Cole noted the roads in Deerfield are rated as a Level B. He asked why they wouldn't be a Level A because there is no issue with service in Deerfield.

Mrs. Earhart stated it is going to be based on the traffic and what the perceived problems are with the roads like narrow road widths. She had no explanation for why the service levels improved from 2009 to 2035.

In addition to Levels of Service, Mrs. Earhart reviewed with the Commission the crash maps for the County. She indicated that the Greenville interchange is identified as having a high crash history. The PDC and VDOT are looking into that further for the County and may recommend some additional changes to that part of the Plan.

Mrs. Earhart continued to review the Transportation Plan. She referred to the grid system and stated it is a leftover component of the old Comprehensive Plan. Beginning with Map 8 the grid is shown by the gray lines which designate where roads may be needed. She stated this is another area the Commission needs to make a recommendation on. She indicated staff had discussed this in great depth and couldn't reach a consensus. The concept has both positives and negatives associated with it and ultimately it is more of a policy decision for the Commission.

Mr. Wolfe presented a map from the current Comp Plan. He noted the former plan called out new roads that were to be constructed along the grid. He asked the Commissioners if the grid should continue to be shown and then show places on the grid that might be more reasonable than other places to construct a road.

Mrs. Earhart gave an example of where the grid system worked when Stoney Valley Subdivision was being developed. She stated since the need for a potential road was identified in the Comprehensive Plan, they were able to work with the developer to ensure that the internal road system of the development accommodated the ultimate expansion of the road to be a connector from US 340 to Wayne Avenue.

Mr. Shipplett asked what the purpose of the grid is.

Mr. Wolfe stated the grid lines are exactly one mile apart from each other. Roads already in existence were chosen as the major roads and pushed a mile on either side to show where in a development scenario you may want to have another road.

Mr. Cole asked if the one mile grid is considered to be the most efficient way to develop.

Mrs. Earhart stated that was the recommendation from the County's consultants in 2007.

Mr. Bridge asked if new roads would be roads that the developer builds or is money to be expected from VDOT.

Mrs. Earhart stated she thought it would be a combination of both. She stated the grid works better in urban areas and she asked the Commission whether there should be a grid recommending roads in areas where there will be no water and sewer infrastructure and where the County doesn't want to encourage development. One area of particular concern is the area west of Interstate 81. When traffic is diverted off I-81 due to an accident or construction, Rt.11 becomes clogged. The grid system would suggest that another parallel roadway, such as Old Greenville Road, should be improved, as well as connectors between Rt. 11 and Old Greenville Road to handle the traffic. However, Old Greenville Road is predominantly in a Rural Conservation Area.

The Commissioners continued to debate the advantages and disadvantages of using the grid system. It was decided the grid system would be the most efficient and should be kept and used for areas where growth is anticipated.

Mrs. Earhart began to review the identified projects by growth area and stated that any road with a current or projected level of service rating of D or worse was identified as needing an improvement project. Anything that was already in a road plan, was a grant project, or was identified by VDOT as a road need was put on the maps and the project listing. She asked the Commissioners if there are other projects that need to be on the map that aren't.

Mrs. Shiflett stated that Larry Wills, Board of Supervisor for the Middle River District has requested that the improvements for the intersection of Rt. 11 and Rt. 256 be moved up and be identified as a countywide priority project. With the new stop lights at the

interstate, traffic is backed up into Rt. 11. Right turn lanes needs to added from Rt. 256 onto Rt. 11 and from Rt. 256 onto I-81. The interstate interchange also needs to be improved as part of the work done at the intersection.

The Commissioners agreed to make the Rt. 11 and Rt. 256 and the interchange project a priority project for the County.

Mrs. Earhart continued to review the Transportation Plan. She asked the Commission if improvements are made at the Rt. 612 (Laurel Hill Rd.) and Rt. 792 (Indian Mound Road) intersection, should additional road improvements be made on Rt. 789 (Pleasant Grove Road) and Rt. 792 and over to include Balsley Rd. down to Rt. 250 and make that a parallel roadway to handle traffic from I-81 and Rt. 11.

The Commission decided additional improvements to Rts. 789 and 792 were not necessary. The existing roadways appeared to have sufficient capacity.

Mrs. Earhart reviewed with the Commission the priority projects being recommended as part of the Plan. This is a combination of bridge projects, projects that are close to being built by VDOT, grant projects, and projects that have been identified as having a high priority. These projects are not listed in any priority order, however, and the Planning Commission recommended that the map note that the project numbers do not reflect a priority order but are for identification purposes only.

The Planning Commission agreed to continue the discussion on the Goals, Objectives, and Policies after the regular agenda items were completed. The Commission adjourned for dinner.

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Chairman

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Secretary