

The logo for VTRANS, featuring the word "VTRANS" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. The letter "V" is significantly larger than the other letters.The logo for Virginia's Transportation Plan, featuring a brown silhouette of the state of Virginia above the text "VIRGINIA'S TRANSPORTATION PLAN" in a blue, sans-serif font.

Mid Term Needs Assessment Regional Workshop Summary Central Shenandoah Area Monday July 29, 2019



Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment

1221 E. Broad Street

Richmond, Virginia 23219

Final - September 23, 2019

Prepared for OIPI in support of VTrans, Virginia's Statewide
Multimodal Transportation Plan

Contract Number 47082, Task Two: Agency Involvement

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1 INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the input from a workshop conducted by the Virginia Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIPI) with representatives of local, regional, and state agencies that support transportation planning for the Central Shenandoah area. The purpose of the meeting was to elicit input on the analysis methods (specifically, key performance measures) and the regional results of initial analyses conducted to identify Statewide Transportation Needs for the coming seven to ten years.

2 MEETING LOCATION AND PARTICIPANTS

The workshop was conducted at Blue Ridge Community College in Weyers Cave, Virginia, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Table 1 provides a list of participants.

Table 1: Workshop Participants and Invited Representatives

Name	Agency	Title
Regional and Local Representatives		
Alex Wilmer	Town of Bridgewater	Assistant Town Manager
Angela A. Lawrence	Town of Dayton	Town Manager
Bradford Dyjak	Rockingham County	Director of Planning
Erin Yancey	City of Harrisonburg	Public Works Planning Manager
Gerald Gatobu	Harrisonburg Dept. of Public Transportation	Interim Director
Jonathan Howard	CSPDC/HRMPO	Transportation Planner
Kira Johnson	City of Waynesboro	Associate Planner
Leslie Tate	Augusta County	Senior Planner
Luke Juday	City of Waynesboro	Director of Planning
Nancy Gourley	BRITE Bus Transit Service	Transit Manager
Nickie Mills	City of Staunton	City Engineer

Rhonda Cooper	Rockingham County	Director of Community Development
Sherry Ryder	Bath County	Planner/ Zoning Administrator
Thanh Dang	City of Harrisonburg	Assistant Director of Planning and Community Development
Thomas Roberts	City of Buena Vista	Director of Planning and Community Development
Zach Beard	SAWMPO	Transportation Planner

Additional Regional and Local Representatives Invited but Unable to Attend

Sam Crickenberger	Rockbridge County
Arne Glaeser	City of Lexington
Roberta Lambert	Highland County
Jon Ellestad	Town of Glasgow
Jonathan Lanford	Alleghany County
Allen Dressler	City of Convington
Darlene Burcham	Town of Clifton Forge
Greg Campbell	Shenandoah Valley Regional Airport
Dennis Driver	Town of Mount Crawford
J. C. Smythers	Town of Mount Crawford
Kyle O'Brien	Town of Broadway
Josh Gooden	Town of Elkton
Nathan Garrison	Town of Grottoes
Lee Eshelman	James Madison University
Bryan Chrisman	Town of Luray
Kevin Fauber	Town of Mt Jackson
Alex Berryman	Town of New Market
Sam Crickenberger	Rockbridge County

State Agency Staff

Brad Reed	VDOT Staunton District	District Planner
Adam Campbell	VDOT Staunton District	District Planner
Shane Sawyer	VDOT TMPD	Multimodal Planner
Terry Short	VDOT Staunton District	District Planning Manager
Emily Stock	DRPT	Rail Planner
Jitender Ramchandani	OIPI	Transportation Planning Program Manager
Chris Wichman	OIPI	Transportation Planner
Katie Schwing	OIPI	Transportation Planner
Ronique Day	OIPI	Director

Consultant Facilitators and Scribes

Hannah Twaddell	VTrans Consultant team	Facilitator
John Cowart	VTrans Consultant team	Scribe
Marissa Sperry	VTrans Consultant team	Scribe
Phillip White	VTrans Consultant team	Scribe

3 AGENDA AND MATERIALS

Following a plenary presentation and discussion of the VTrans Needs Assessment method and performance measures, the participants broke into small groups to review the information developed for the region. They regrouped at the end of the meeting to share their findings and to hear about the process and schedule for developing, reviewing, and finalizing the VTrans Mid-term Needs Assessment.

Upon sign-in, each participant received a packet with the following materials, all of which are available for download from VTrans website.¹

- Agenda
- Plenary presentation slides
- VTrans Summer 2019 Newsletter

¹ VTrans website: www.vtrans.org Location of workshop summaries: <http://vtrans.org/get-involved/online-meetings/VTrans-Mid-Term-Needs-Regional-Workshops>

- VTrans Mid-Term Needs Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
- Comment Form
- Regional maps, charts, and/or tables of data developed for the region. Detailed descriptions of each measure and analysis method are included in the plenary presentation slides posted to the VTrans website.
- Summaries of transportation needs in each of the region's designated Urban Development Areas as identified by local governments through an online survey conducted by OIPI in June-July 2019. Participants were invited to comment upon the identified needs, and to identify any potential new Urban Development Areas that the localities in the region might consider adopting prior to April 1, 2020 (the deadline for establishing UDAs as candidates for the 2020 round of SMART SCALE grants).
- A list of Business Ready Sites in the region drawn from the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) database. These sites are locally identified subareas of 100 or more contiguous acres that have the potential to be developed into industrial parks, office campuses, research facilities, or other economic hubs that could generate transportation needs. Participants were asked to identify sites that were in an advanced stage of development planning and investment, and to describe associated transportation impacts might be generated within the coming ten years. They were also asked to comment upon the most appropriate threshold for identifying potential sites across the state, based upon the five levels of business readiness assigned by VEDP.

4 SYNTHESIS OF COMMENTS

The following section provides a summary of comments about each performance measure, compiled from the plenary session, breakout groups, and comment sheets. The appendix includes transcripts of the sessions and sheets, including photos of the marked-up maps developed by each breakout group. After the participants have reviewed and vetted the draft report, OIPI will synthesize the comments that were associated with the maps and upload them to the online InteractVTrans map.² In addition to serving as a repository for regional workshop comments, InteractVTrans provides a publicly available resource for ongoing input from local stakeholders and the public.



OIPI will consider each comment during the process of refining the Needs Assessment methodology and developing the draft needs, and will respond directly to specific questions posed by stakeholder. As noted in the plenary presentation, OIPI will

² InteractVTrans: www.vtrans.org/mid-term-planning/InteractVTrans

present the initial list of Needs to the Commonwealth Transportation Board in October 2019, and the final Needs Assessment with a request for Board action in December 2019.

Table 2 Synthesis of Comments

	Comment
Congestion: Percent Person Miles Traveled in Excessively Congested Conditions (PECC)	
1.	PECC results for this area may be diluted compared to more urban areas because we have a low population but a high number of lane miles, especially in rural areas.
2.	Congestion on I-81 is an economic development issue because of lost productivity for truck drivers
3.	Appropriate PECC threshold is at least 75%, or 90%
4.	Non-recurring congestion (as noted in I-81 study) is more critical than PECC.
5.	The impact of local traffic using Interstates 81 and 64 is important to consider. A lot of people move between just two exits on 81. Local traffic exiting/ entering interstates, and through traffic that is diverted to local networks during incidents, have a big impact on local street network, transit performance, urban placemaking, and bike/ped safety. Much of the congestion caused by backups at a few exits on 81 and 64 is related to growing local commercial development at interchanges not designed to handle that much traffic. It's important to be proactive, anticipate continued development.
6.	The only PECC issue here is on I-64, related to steep grade crossing Afton Mountain
7.	Our congestion is very driven by crashes that often back up traffic for hours. Additionally, tight curves and other road geography can cause traffic backups / slowdowns that appear to be "congestion."
8.	No alternative routes to 64 or 81. US 11 and 250 aren't really viable - doesn't save time
9.	Is there a way to quantify inconsistent event (accident) type delays, such as the amount of time to clear congestion?
Congestion: Travel Time Index (TTI)	
10.	The TTI measure doesn't capture the sorts of bottlenecks that are important here, and generally seems skewed toward more urban contexts. Consider filtering the data by area type, and/ or for urban vs rural facility types.
11.	TTI for non-interstates becomes much worse when major congestion events happen on interstates.

	Comment
12.	Recommend TTI threshold of 1 for this area.
13.	Non-recurring congestion (as noted in I-81 study) is more critical than PECC. Inconsistent, fluctuating travel speeds on I-81 is the main concern. Travel time between activity centers is longer here, increasing the reliability concern.
Reliability: Buffer Time Index (BTI)	
14.	BTI generally captures congestion/ reliability issues better for this area than the other measures.
15.	A BTI threshold of 0.5 might not be a good benchmark for more sparsely populated areas due to rural areas having different network limitations (i.e. fewer alternate routes or multimodal options, longer travel times/distance).
16.	Consider applying area types as filters to BTI (and all) measures. As discussed in the plenary slide with the BTI “triangle,” we need to partition out the attention to areas with high BTI but lesser amounts of traffic volumes. Although those areas have fewer people, a high BTI still makes it hard for them to get around.
Passenger Rail: Amtrak Station On-Time Performance	
17.	What is the purpose of considering passenger rail on-time performance in VTrans needs? Is it to make a change in SMART SCALE funding eligibility or just to understand what the biggest issues are for conceptual planning?
18.	The chart comparing station performance statewide (plenary slides) makes sense for broadly looking at issues, but to identify needs in small communities; we must consider the context and needs of each community.
19.	Consider the interplay between roadway and transit needs; the higher the population affected by the problem, the more likely for Transit and Rail to be a solution.
20.	Most people who travel to get on Amtrak go to Charlottesville to board the train; the Virginia Breeze is the only intercity transit option in area. Perhaps VTrans should look more broadly at long distance commuting from this region to NOVA, etc. to determine possible rail/longer distance travel needs
21.	Long Bridge congestion over the Potomac in DC affects rail performance throughout the state (DRPT’s highest priority).
22.	Show current ridership on rail lines to make the data more meaningful.
23.	Consider freight rail performance as well as Amtrak. Stuarts Draft and Weyers Cave are important freight rail centers.
Accessibility: Transit Access Deficit to Activity Centers	

	Comment
24.	A transit propensity index in conjunction with other transit measures would help to assess accessibility more fully
25.	In this area, the transit-deficit-to-activity-centers measure may not best capture the different needs of different markets. Transit serves the university area/student population well in the city area, but doesn't really try to serve longer distance commuters.
26.	Several Activity Centers did not appear on the maps; participants would like to see more info about activity centers and opportunity to give feedback on their locations and status
27.	Park and Ride lots are greatly needed; perhaps these could be added to the accessibility measure.

Travel Options: Disadvantaged Population Beyond ¼ Mile Access to Fixed Route Transit

28.	The maps are a little confusing- does the measure take the current service area into account? Inset maps would be helpful to see urban areas in more detail, as well as showing the existing transit service routes and the Block Group boundaries.
29.	Areas in Rockingham County (i.e. Hinton, Pleasant Valley, Keezletown Rd) that have disadvantaged populations and/or are a Federal Opportunity Zone may not necessarily be fixed-route-transit viable according to the measure but may have transit needs.
30.	Transit coverage is generally adequate, but improved frequency and amenities in the next 7 to 10 years is incredibly important.
31.	Key concern is for aging population, especially in rural areas that are difficult to serve with fixed route transit.
32.	The biggest need is pedestrian/ bicycle connectivity to accommodate nonmotorized travel options (including transit).The density and interconnectivity in area towns and cities make walking feasible, but there are numerous safety problems and pedestrian barriers.

Safety: Vehicle Crashes

33.	Non-motorized safety is critical in cities and between, such as the US 250 transit stops with no crosswalks. Look at pedestrian and bike plans for safety needs that aren't captured in PSI or UDA data - review and encourage regional bike and pedestrian plans. The State's Pedestrian Safety Action Plan PSAP shows nonmotorized hotspots (some are mapped, some are not)
34.	No matter what the PSI score is, it highlights a need. VTrans should identify all identified crash areas as needs that warrant the PSI rating and dig deeper - some might be just a lighting or cross walk issue, some might be more complex. Don't create a cutoff threshold when it comes to eligibility for funding.

	Comment
35.	Good to consider PSI sites outside the MPO in rural areas that pose safety issues and have low-cost solutions, but don't have the population density or ADT to further support improvements. Contextualize information according to location and scale, in order to not forget rural safety hotspots.
Economic Development: Urban Development Areas and VEDP Business Ready Sites	
36.	Tier 3 and up makes sense as a threshold for including VEDP sites in VTrans needs assessment.

5 APPENDIX: COMMENTS FROM PLENARY PRESENTATION, BREAKOUTS, AND WORKSHOP HANDOUTS

i. COMMENTS DURING PLENARY PRESENTATION

The following section summarizes questions and comments about the topics covered during the plenary presentation by Jitender Ramchandani. Questions from participants are shown in italics, followed by brief responses from the plenary speaker.

INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW

- Jitender re-introduced the purpose of VTrans, the planning context and the federal and state requirements
- He emphasized that the data and analysis presented is meant to spur discussion, and is not the final Needs. He requested that participants also review the data with an eye for completeness/accuracy.

CONGESTION AND RELIABILITY MEASURES

- PECC results for this area may be diluted compared to more urban areas because we have a low population but a high number of lane miles, especially in rural areas.
- Congestion on I-81 is an economic development issue because of lost productivity for truck drivers
- All participants felt a PECC threshold of 75% (54 mph in 70 mph zone) would be considered a congestion problem; some participants felt that the 90% threshold (63 mph) would be considered a problem.

- Non-recurring congestion (as noted in I-81 study) is more critical than PECC. Inconsistent, fluctuating travel speeds on I-81 is the main concern
 - Drivers' expectation is for free-flow speeds -- reliability is the problem because it's hard to plan for travel times.
 - Expectation versus reality in reliability standards: "It takes me 30 minutes to get to work, if it takes longer than that, I consider it congestion"
 - Travel time between activity centers is longer here, increasing the reliability concern

Travel Time Index (TTI)

- Difficult to set a single threshold for all areas, the bar will be too high or too low. Consider filtering the data by area type.

PASSENGER RAIL

- What is the purpose of considering passenger rail on-time performance in VTrans needs? Is it to make a change in SMART SCALE funding eligibility or just to understand what the biggest issues are for conceptual planning?
- The chart comparing station performance statewide (plenary slides) makes sense for broadly looking at issues, but to identify needs in small communities; we must consider the context and needs of each community.
- Consider the interplay between roadway and transit needs; the higher the population affected by the problem, the more likely for Transit and Rail to be a solution.

SUMMARY/WRAP-UP

- The facilitators briefly summarized the discussion and comments received at each table
- Jitender asked the group if there was anything that wasn't covered that the participants expected to cover.

ii. BREAKOUT SESSION COMMENTS

The following synthesis reflects input from all the breakout groups. Participants were asked to reflect broadly upon the issues addressed by the performance measures (i.e., congestion, reliability, passenger rail on-time performance, accessibility to activity centers, travel options for disadvantaged populations, safety, and economic development. They were also asked for input on the regional applicability of each measure.

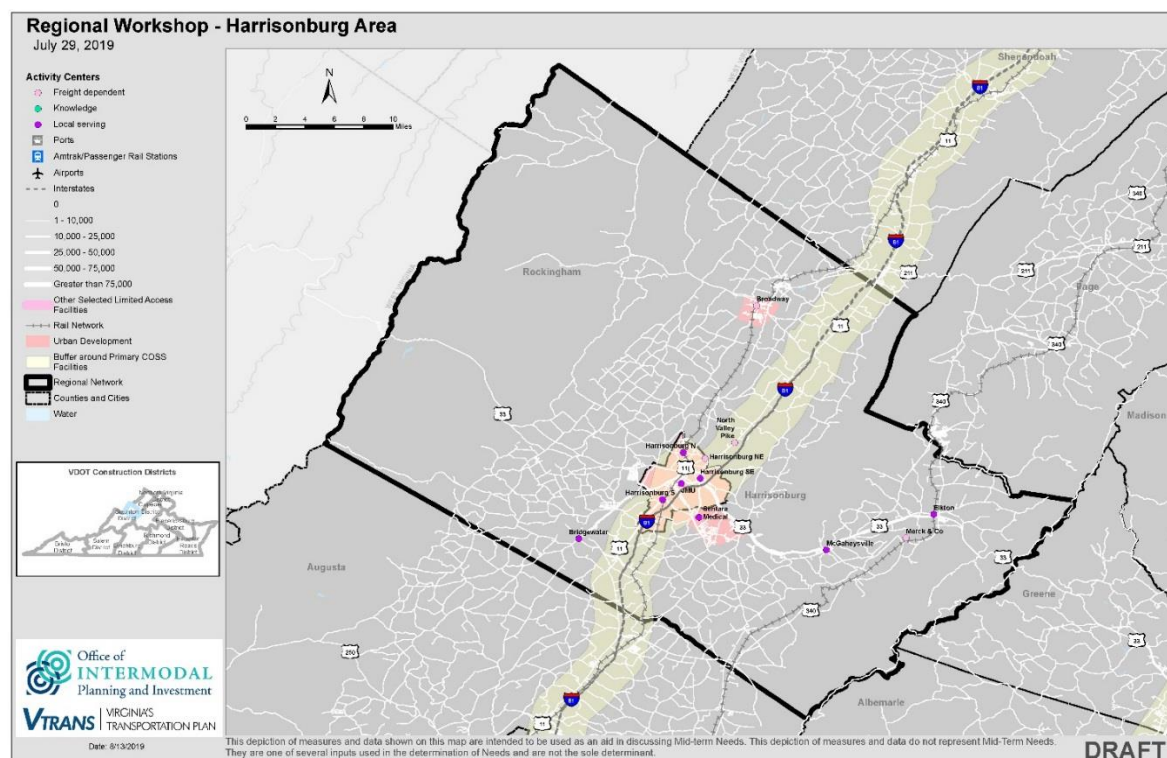
Facilitators and scribes assigned to each group recorded the input by writing notes on a flip chart and on a laptop. For comments with geographic specificity, facilitators and/ or group members placed numbered stick-on dots onto a poster-sized base map and noted the meaning of the numbered dot on the flip chart.

Participants were invited to jot down additional notes on the Comment Form and return it to a facilitator at the end of the meeting, or to fill it out later and email their responses to OIPI staff. A summary of input from the written Comment Forms is included at the end of this section.

GROUP 1 (HARRISONBURG AREA) COMMENTS

Breakout Group 1 Map

Note: Group 1 did not mark up the base map with stick-on dots.



Congestion

- I-81 congestion issues / PECC
 - Widening project for 81 to three lanes through Harrisonburg, which carries a lot of local traffic; Over the next 7-10 years I-81 will get a lot of improvements
 - Is local traffic on interstates mentioned in VTrans? Local uses/ issues/ priorities associated with I-81 not captured by measures
 - A lot of people move between just two exits on 81
 - Harrisonburg's city street improvement plan and LRTP tried to address this by building "outer circle"/improving the arterial network
 - Port Republic Rd has lots of pedestrians, but the bridge doesn't accommodate bike/ped
 - Local traffic on-off I-81 exits impacts the local street network
 - Placemaking efforts in urbanized areas are sometimes in conflict with interstate traffic patterns
 - 81 accidents impact local transit by diverting traffic through the city, clogging up the routes - Happens too frequently; enough to be an issue
 - Rt 11 S widening was SMART SCALE Round 1 project

- Replacing bridge at Exit 257
 - Includes widening and new signal on East side of interchange
 - Realigning 259 where it meets 11
- Presence of trucks on 81 contributes to congestion/issues
 - Non-recurrent congestion is an issue
 - Interchange “friction,” etc. is higher with more trucks
- Concerns about TTI in the area
 - Not a lot of coverage on the TTI map for the area
 - TTI doesn’t seem to capture congestion in this region; our congestion is more about bottlenecks
 - Other performance measures that still address the VTrans goals should supplement the TTI measures for this area
- Highest traffic in region other than 81 is on Rt 33
 - Commercial traffic - people come from as far as West Virginia
 - Access management, poor signal coordination contributes to congestion
 - PSI location there
 - STARS study was done in on Rt 33
- TTI Thresholds for the area
 - Concern that “needs” as measured currently are skewed towards NoVA transportation issues
 - Perhaps there could be different categories or thresholds for congestion for different facility types - e.g., urban and rural arterials.

Reliability

- BTI more accurately captures reliability in the region than the congestion measures
 - Captures areas where travel time issues occur
 - Port Republic Rd is missing (not in count program yet)
 - Reservoir St is missing (not in count program yet)
 - Rt 11 & Stone Spring/Erikson Ave - NB, SB & WB parts of intersection
 - Map data should be classified more finely to capture variation in reliability
- BTI threshold of 0.5 might not be a good benchmark for more sparsely populated areas due to rural areas having different network limitations (i.e. fewer alternate routes or multimodal options, longer travel times/distance).

Passenger Rail On-Time Performance

- Most people who travel to get on Amtrak go to Charlottesville
- Virginia Breeze is the only intercity transit option in area
- Perhaps should look more broadly at long distance commuting to NOVA, etc. to determine possible rail/longer distance travel needs

Accessibility to Activity Centers

- A transit propensity index in conjunction with transit-dependent population would help assess accessibility more fully
- In this area, the transit-deficit-to-activity-centers measure may not best capture the different needs of different markets.
 - Transit serves the university area/student population well in the city area, but doesn’t really try to serve longer distance commuters
 - But there could be some expansion for existing transit to support workers near JMU and downtown who face parking challenges

- Comments on Activity Centers
 - Dayton activity center is missing - Title IV traditionally underserved population within the MPO (Environmental Justice due to low car ownership)
 - Confusion of Harrisonburg S & Harrisonburg SE activity centers
 - Grottoes missing
 - Timberville missing
 - Participants would like to see more info about activity centers, including a map that more clearly shows them, and opportunity to give feedback on their locations and status
- Park and Ride lots for the Harrisonburg Area were mentioned by Group 2
 - Perhaps these could be added into the accessibility measure, as these are not measured anywhere else

Disadvantaged Population

- Confusion over symbology: does this take current service area into account?
- Inset maps would be helpful to see urban areas in more detail, as well as showing the transit service and the Block Group boundaries
- Areas in Rockingham County (i.e. Hinton, Pleasant Valley, Keezletown Rd) that have disadvantaged populations and/or are a Federal Opportunity Zone may not necessarily be fixed-route-transit viable according to the measure but may have transit needs
- Look at intercity demand for transit, not just local service. Breeze shows that it can be successful.

Safety

- Safety is probably already accounted for/prioritized in other VDOT funding mechanisms
- In many rural areas, the only type of projects they can fund with SMART SCALE are for Safety needs
 - Tradeoffs of allowing for flexibility while ensuring safety goals/priorities are met
- The State's Pedestrian Safety Action Plan PSAP shows nonmotorized hotspots (some are mapped, some are not)
- MPO is studying areas of nonmotorized safety issues

Economic Development (UDAs and VEDP Business Ready Sites)

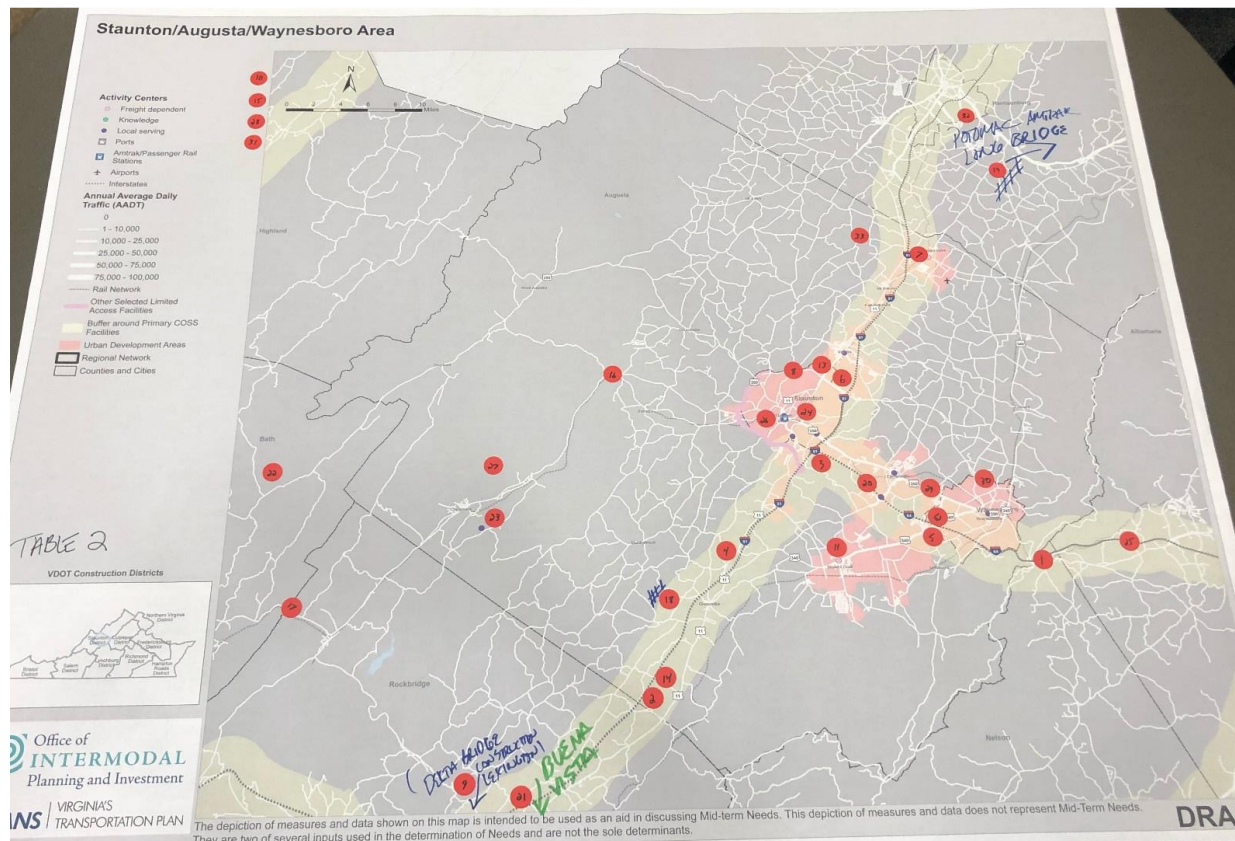
- Tier 3 and up makes sense as a threshold for including VEDP sites in VTrans needs assessment; recognizes areas that can't afford to pour lots of local funding into infrastructure, but have still clearly prioritized these sites through zoning, etc.

Additional comments

- The RCL in the maps is out of date
 - Many key roads aren't included in statewide data collection, e.g., AADT, including Reservoir, University, Neff Ave, Port Republic, Stone Spring
- Inset map at city scale with census blocks for cities would be very helpful

GROUP 2 COMMENTS

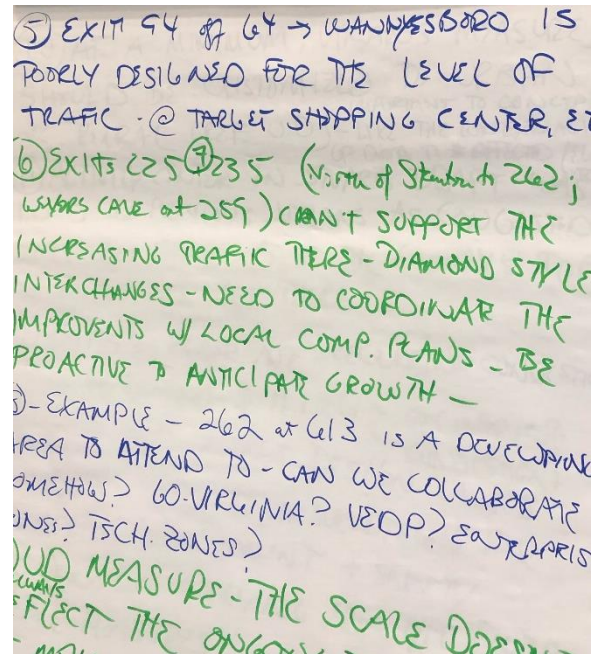
Breakout Group 2 Marked Up Map



Congestion

1. The only PECC issue here is on I-64, related to steep grade crossing Afton Mountain
 - Corridors of statewide significance are ways to get to neighboring communities
2. Example location outside this region (a crash at Lexington in early July/late June that caused 2 hour delay) - illustrates that incident related congestion is all or nothing. Our congestion is very driven by crashes that often back up traffic for hours
 - Additionally, tight curves and other road geography can cause traffic backups / slowdowns that appear to be “congestion”
 - In northern Virginia, congestion is expected, but here we don’t have much congestion except the off chance that there is an event.
 - We don’t plan a buffer of travel time around here because the interstate doesn’t have much congestion. In most cases, it happens because of an accident, and there are no other routes, so you either get there or you don’t
 - Incidents can cause huge economic impacts for the region depending on the company that is not able to have employees present due to delays.
 - The causes of incident related congestion include operational issues - how quickly can we get traffic moving again after an incident?

3. No alternative routes to 64 or 81. US 11 and 250 aren't really viable - doesn't save time
 - o Could they widen 81 to improve these issues instead of seeking alternate routes? The 81 study recommends adding the route ideally.
4. North I 81 study recommends for south potential widening, capacity on 81 and alternate routes
5. I-81 Exit 94 at 64 toward Waynesboro is poorly designed for the level of traffic (at Target shopping center)
 - o The 81 study does not address Exit 94, Waynesboro - it's a tight interchange that was not designed to support the rural characteristics around it. The west bound on-ramp backs up onto the interstate.
6. I-81 Exit 225 is problematic as the area continues to expand. A lot of retail traffic.
 - o Population centers are very compact, so investment areas are targeted.
7. I-81 Exit 235, similar to 225. Diamond style interchanges can't support the increasing traffic there
 - o Need to coordinate the improvements with local comprehensive plans - be proactive to anticipate growth
 - o If we had to make the changes, we made ten years ago in ten years from now, the costs would be so much higher. It is important to be proactive because the current funding wouldn't allow the expansion that was able to be provided.
 - o Being proactive in situations like this is so important because these developments around here become unmanageable. If we can be proactive, we should. Waiting makes it harder to make the changes necessary.
8. Another example of a developing area to attend to: 262 at 613
 - o Can we collaborate somehow [with non-transportation agency programs and policy solutions]? GOVirginia? VEDP? Enterprise zones? Tech zones?
 - o We have a history of wasting money. We need to make targeted changes in these areas.



Reliability

9. UD Measure: the scale doesn't always reflect the ongoing traffic issues it may be related to construction (Delta Drive)

10. At a minimum, VTrans measures should be customized to urban vs. rural
11. Activity center in Stuarts draft was identified in previous VTrans issues as congested - 5 of the county's top 10 employers are there
12. I-64 Exit 94 at Rosser Ave
13. Intersection of 11 and 262 - recurring congestion
14. Exit 205 - merge design causes crashes - needs proactive design fix to address development and safety
15. Consider applying area types as filters to all BTI (and all) measures. As discussed in the plenary slide with the BTI "triangle," we need to partition out the attention to areas with high BTI but lesser amounts of traffic volumes. Although those areas have fewer people, a high BTI still makes it hard for them to get around.

Passenger Rail On-Time Performance

16. Amtrak service is very limited - 3 days a week (at the Staunton Station)
17. Amtrak has poor on time performance, but this is not a state-sponsored line
18. Virginia Breeze intercity bus is this regions' rail equivalent, connecting Blacksburg to northern Virginia with three stops in this region. Very popular, great investment, useful alternative.
19. Long Bridge congestion over the Potomac in DC impacts rail performance throughout the state (DRPT's highest priority).
 - Worst rail congestion in the mid Atlantic. Two track limit creates a terrible bottleneck that congests everything. DRPT is trying to double the capacity of the bridge to help rail traffic throughout the state.
20. BRITE Transit expected to start service to connect Staunton, Waynesboro, and Augusta County to Charlottesville
21. Freight rail access needed in Buena vista - 1 current manufacturer (drainage pipe company) uses freight rail now, small industrial park located on the freight line. See pending study by Chris Miller at UVA at VA freight rail and economic diversity
 - This comment relates closely to the Economic Development/ VEDP topic.
22. Bath County industrial park opportunity for freight rail spur - 2 manufacturers
 - This comment relates closely to the Economic Development/ VEDP topic.

General note on freight rail: DRPT would like to do more with linking freight rail to economic development, but it's not that easy to move the needle on this issue. It is really down to figuring out which industries work best for those lines. Short line routes could be an opportunity in that regard.

Accessibility to Activity Centers

23. Need some improvements to the measures depiction and characteristics - see notes - lay the transit routes on the map so you can see that
 - The high transit access deficit in areas around US 250 might be caused by people driving to work that could be using transit.
24. Transit coverage is generally adequate, but improved frequency and amenities in the next 7 to 10 years is incredibly important. And being able to go over the mountain to Charlottesville.

Travel Options for Disadvantaged Populations

25. Need transit to Charlottesville - high priority
26. Generally, the urban centers are covered in terms of fixed route transit but need better frequency and quality
27. Key issue in aging population, especially in rural areas.



- Many people retire here, but they become isolated when they can't drive, and may leave to find areas with more accessible medical services.
- The data on the map around Craigsville highlights those aging populations and the isolation of those groups because they don't have the option to leave.
- See Bridgewater/VPAS study

Safety

28. The PSI maps do a great job of highlighting safety issues. No matter what the PSI score is, it highlights a need. All identified crashes create a need to dig deeper into issues and contexts such as numbers of people affected, cost, etc.
 - When it comes to ranking, VTrans should identify all identified crash areas as needs that warrant the PSI rating and dig deeper - some might be just a lighting or cross walk issue, some might be more complex. Don't create a cutoff threshold when it comes to eligibility for funding
29. Non-motorized safety is critical in cities and between, such as the US 250 transit stops with no crosswalks
30. Look at pedestrian and bike plans for safety needs that aren't captured in PSI or UDA data - review and encourage regional bike and pedestrian plans

Economic Development

31. It makes sense to consider Tier 3 areas as candidates for needs identification - they're the "furthest along" with identifying actual, viable development potential where investments make sense
32. Park and ride lots are needed in the Staunton and Harrisonburg areas.

General note about all topics/ measures: Many of the measures make more sense in urban areas than in rural areas because there are fewer travel options available in rural areas.

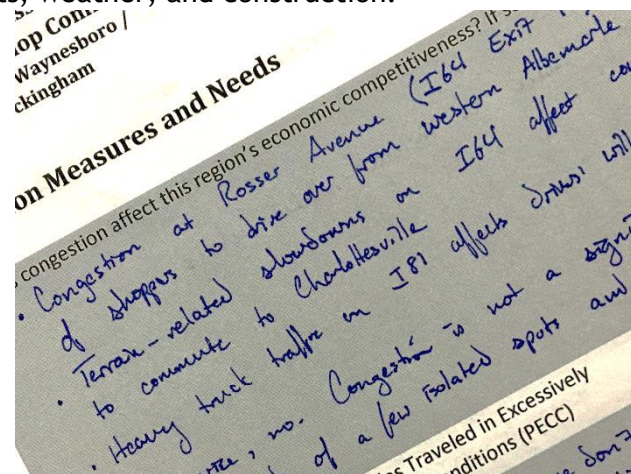
iii. COMMENT SHEET INPUT

The following section lists the written input from participants who chose to fill out the printed comment sheet in their meeting packets. Key points and concepts from this input are reflected in Table 2 (Synthesis of Comments). Some participants planned to send comments to OIPI staff after the meeting; input from these post-meeting messages may not be captured in this meeting summary, but OIPI is considering all continued input during the development of the needs assessment.

Congestion:

Does Congestion affect this region's economic competitiveness? If so- where, how, and why?

- Yes. Primarily from an I-81 standpoint—speed variability, incidents, and the facility's high truck traffic percentage. The I-81 improvement plan should address many of the existing issues. Outside of I-81, the region's congestion needs are more location/ peak period related. These smaller focused needs are not captured in the systematic approach of the data and analysis. The I-81 plan will also not address problematic interchanges along the corridor, the parallel network is still inadequate to support incidents and closures on I-81.
- Yes, on I-81 related to truck traffic and incidents.
- Yes, on I-64 related to weather, incidents, and steep inclines.
- Yes, varies by place, events, accidents, weather, and construction.
- Congestion on Rosser Ave (I64 Exit 94) affects willingness of shoppers to drive over from western Albemarle County
- Terrain-related slowdowns on I-64 affect commuters' willingness to commute to Charlottesville.
- Heavy truck traffic on I-81 affects drivers' willingness to commute on I-81



- Congestion is not a significant concern in this region outside of a few isolated spots and unpredictable delays due to accidents.
- Yes. I-81 near Staunton at afternoon peak hours has unreliable conditions, as does I-64 and US 340. This affects inter-city transit condition.
- Yes, congestion and accidents limit growth and development on Richmond Ave and Greenville Ave.
- Yes. Unreliability on I-81, specifically, is not represented on congestion measures maps but “consistently inconsistent” (specifically defined, not an oxymoron) congestion affects time to market, etc.

Person hours in Excessively Congested Conditions (PECC):

Does this measure reveal the region’s needs as YOU perceive them? If not, why?

- Incident delay/ economic impact is not captured
- Again, this region’s needs are much more location- and peak period- specific
- It reveals that we don’t have a consistent congestion problem, yes.
- Somewhat, as speed fluctuates
- I-81 is excessively congested around/ between mile markers 175 and 225.
- Don’t have to plan for delays but major accidents/ issues can cause very significant long-term delays
- Doesn’t take into account topography (that is the reason for slowdowns) along with sun glare, and scenic highway segments

Do you have an opinion on the Analysis threshold?

- VTrans should consider two analysis thresholds for the state based on expectations (urban and rural)
- Likely fluctuates from 90% to 75%, more often 90%.
- Analysis seems to favor areas with large populations.
- Is there a way to quantify inconsistent event (accident) type delays - amount of time to clear congestion?

In addition to the analysis of statewide measures, what other data or information could help us to pinpoint mid-term needs associated with congestion?

- Local planning studies that focus on specific corridor segments/ intersects/ interchanges of need.

Travel Time Index (TTI):

Does this measure reveal the region’s needs as YOU perceive them? If not, why?

- It reveals that we don't have a consistent congestion problem, yes. It's possibly a better measure for this region than PECC.
- Congestion measures for non-interstates become much worse when major congestion events happen on interstates

Do you have an opinion on the Analysis threshold?

- Recommend TTI = 1.
- Importance of Rt 250 and Rt 11 as secondary routes during interstate congestion events.

In addition to the analysis of statewide measures, what other data or information could help us to pinpoint mid-term needs associated with congestion?

- Local studies that focus on specific corridors (e.g., STARS studies, small area studies)
- I-81 Exit 235 Weyers cave - congested interchange around mega-site zoned industrial
- Rt 608 Draft Avenue - Stuarts' Draft congestion
- Rt 250 Wilson Workforce and Rehab Center congestion

Reliability

Does travel time reliability affect this region's economic competitiveness? If so-where, how, and why?

- See comments made about congestion issues/ measures.
- No, the only issue is incident-related delays
- Important to be proactive at addressing and anticipating congestion needs at intersections along interstate exits.
- I-81 congestion directly affects economic competitiveness with delays making delivery and arrival times unpredictable.
- Yes. Peak hours on Rt 250 and Rt 11.
- Major accident events on I-81.

Person Delay During Unreliable Conditions (UD):

Does this measure reveal the region's needs as YOU perceive them? If not, why?

- Our delays are episodic but often severe. The data may not accurately quantify this, either in duration or severity.
- This measure doesn't help in rural area - not picking up any (or very little) variation; not gleaning anything from this analysis in the region, wasted opportunity.

Do you have an opinion on the Analysis threshold?

- Separate rural areas versus urban areas across VA when evaluating / analyzing data and needs.
- Important to capture peak traffic periods rather than only consistent unreliability

Buffer Time Index (BTI):

Does this measure reveal the region's needs as YOU perceive them? If not, why?

Do you have an opinion on the Analysis threshold?

- Separate rural areas versus urban areas across VA when evaluating / analyzing data and needs.
- Important to capture peak traffic periods rather than only consistent unreliability

In addition to the analysis of statewide measures, what other data or information could help us to pinpoint mid-term associated with travel time reliability in this region?

Passenger Rail on Time Performance

Does passenger rail on-time performance affect this region's economic competitiveness? If so, where, how, and why?

- Minimal. Amtrak Cardinal line is the only passenger rail in the region.
- Yes. Staunton Amtrak is extremely unreliable. The Virginia Breeze is a reliable alternative.
- Freight rail industrial park access - need a spur
- Only in the sense that it's an additional transportation asset that's adding very little right now.
- Reliability is an issue but service limitation is a bigger issue.
- Yes, for tourism
- Yes for freight
- The VA Breeze is filling and expanding an intercity need

Amtrak Station On-Time Performance (and VRE performance, if relevant)

Does this measure reveal the region's needs as YOU perceive them? If not, why?

- No because the biggest bottleneck is Long Bridge across Potomac between DC and NOVA.
- On time performance en route is meaningful, not just OTP at station.

Do you have an opinion on the Analysis threshold?

- Show current ridership to make it more meaningful

In addition to the analysis of statewide measures, what other data or information could help us to pinpoint mid-term needs associated with passenger rail on-time performance in this region?

- Recommend considering this as passenger and/or freight rail performance. Stuarts Draft and Weyers Cave are important freight rail centers.

Accessibility to Activity Centers

Is accessibility to activity centers a concern for this region? If so- where, how, and why?

- Concerns focus on operational issues typical at the “last mile” of access to activity centers. Examples include undersized interchanges, access management (lack of), nonmotorized connectivity, lack of signal coordination.
- Fixed transit routes serve activity centers, but frequency and transit amenities need to be improved.
- Park and Ride lot network is seriously lacking.
- Yes, mostly pedestrian and bicycle accessibility.
- Yes. Pedestrian access to East Richmond Ave, South Greenville Ave, and downtown Staunton are limited. Vehicular traffic congestion impacts these areas as well.
- Nonmotorized (bike/ped) accessibility to Stuarts Draft and Fishersville
- Weyers Cave and Stuarts Draft also have transit routes even though they are labeled as freight-dependent activity centers.
- Stuarts Draft Patton Farm Rd bridge experiences frequent overtopping/ flooding events, a key issue with access to the Stuarts Draft activity center - this is also a reliability issue

Transit Deficit to Activity Centers

Does this measure reveal the region’s needs as YOU perceive them? If not, why?

- Not sure the accessibility deficit map reflects the biggest needs from a transit standpoint. Most of the identified MPO activity centers have hourly transit service.

In addition to the analysis of statewide measures, what other data or information could help us to pinpoint mid-term needs associated with accessibility to activity centers in this region?

- The biggest transit needs in the SAW region are bus stops and pedestrian connectivity to bus stops on the existing routes.

Travel Options for Disadvantaged Populations

Is the availability of travel options for disadvantaged populations a concern for this region? If so- where, how, and why?

- I believe the biggest need is pedestrian/ bicycle connectivity to accommodate nonmotorized travel options.

- The region has a robust transit system given the overall population.
- In the rural areas, transit/ paratransit is unavailable.
- Aging population needs transportation.
- Yes, especially in Waynesboro, the ability to walk and take transit is important for a large portion of our population. Pedestrian accommodations are a huge need - the density and interconnectivity make walking feasible, but there are numerous safety problems and pedestrian barriers.
- Aging population in rural areas, connecting them with medical services.
- Connecting the rural aging population to retirement homes/ centers.
- Aging population/ rural areas of the county, need for paratransit

In addition to the analysis of statewide measures, what other data or information could help us to pinpoint mid term needs associated with travel options for disadvantaged populations in this region?

- Paratransit needs will increase in the future
- Intercity transit connectivity will be a future need as well: Harrisonburg, Staunton, Waynesboro, Charlottesville

Safety:

Is traveler safety a concern for this region? If so- where, how, and why?

- Statewide concern. PSI mapping is a thorough tool utilized for District safety needs.
- Yes. Safety for [urban and] rural areas [affected by] mountains with sharp turns and intersections of main roads
- Pedestrians on main roads
- Bicyclists traveling on main roads without a bike path.
- Yes, big concern. We have too many deaths and rural wide roads running through urbanized areas that would otherwise be very walkable.
- Good to consider PSI sites outside the MPO in rural areas that pose safety issues and have low-cost solutions, but don't have the population density or ADT to further support improvements. Contextualize information according to location and scale, in order to not forget rural safety hotspots.
- Yes. Congestion management needed on East Richmond Ave and I-81 to reduce crash frequency and severity.

Vehicular Crashes/ PSI

Does this measure reveal the region's needs as YOU perceive them? If not, why?

- Yes
- Yes, the data captures episodic issues

Do you have an opinion on the Analysis threshold?

- The established PSI thresholds need to take into consideration that safety is the primary SMART SCALE eligibility outside of UDAs for rural parts of the state.
- PSI reliability - do not identify a threshold or cutoff to consider as a need for funding.

Economic Development

Urban Development Areas

- In other districts, perhaps make it clearer that the workshop is about the VTrans CoSS and Regional Network measures primarily, as well as rail and transit - not about UDAs. If you don't have a CoSS or Regional Network, then you don't need to come.
- Stuarts Draft small area plan - hopefully adopted by end of 2019 (or beginning of 2020) important bike/pedestrian and bridge improvement recommendations

VEDP Business Ready Sites

- Support adding VEDP sites, specifically Tier III

Additional Comments

What did you find useful about this workshop?

- Discussing regional needs in the group with the current data and VTrans thought processes
- Details on how congestion measures, such as TTI, are used.

What could we do to make future workshops better?

- Better explanation of how the needs update will transition/ connect to funding eligibility.
- Number the maps, please!
- Shuffling through the maps and materials was a bit cumbersome; materials were great but it would be nice to find things easier.
- Ensure maps cover whole geography of district.
 - *Note - in response to these suggestions, maps were numbered and organized more clearly for all subsequent workshops, and were revised as needed to ensure full coverage of the area discussed during the meeting.*
- May have needed to schedule a bit more time - maybe 15 more minutes - for discussion.

Any concerns or questions we didn't get a chance to discuss today?

- Bike/ped wasn't really touched on.

- TDM needs such as park and rides weren't really touched on.
- [Intercity] bus service wasn't discussed much in regard to connections to outside areas such as Harrisonburg and Charlottesville.
- Didn't dedicate too much time to activity centers.