

VTRANS | VIRGINIA'S
TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Mid Term Needs
Assessment Regional
Workshop Summary
Crater-Southside Area
Thursday, August 15, 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 Crater-Southside 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 Virginia State University in Petersburg, 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		
Tim Blumenshire	Petersburg National Battlefield	
Alton Mason	City of Emporia	Interim Public Works Director
Barb Smith	Chesterfield County	Program Manager
Brigitte Tanner Carter	RideFinders	Account Executive
Chad Neese	Southside Planning District Commission	GIS Planner
Charles Koonce Jr.	Petersburg Area Transit	Director of Mass Transit
Horace Wade	Prince George County	Planner
Jay Ruffa	Crater PDC	Director of Planning and GIS
Johnnie Butler	City of Hopewell	City Engineer
Leslie Weddington	Brunswick County	Assistant County Administrator

Lewis Rogers	Petersburg National Battlefield	Superintendent
Mark Bassett	Dinwiddie County	Planning Director
Michelle Peters	City of Petersburg	Director of Planning
Ron Svejkovsky	Tri-Cities Area MPO	Director
Todd Flippen	City of Colonial Heights	Assistant Director of Public Works
Michelle Peters	City of Petersburg	Director of Planning
Melody Foster	Commonwealth Regional Council	Executive Director

Additional Regional and Local Representatives Invited but Unable to Attend

Taylor Harvie & David Whitaker	Amelia County	
Pat Sanders	Bay Transit	
Andrew Menefee	Fort Lee Directorate of Public Works Master Planning	
Lin Pope	Greenville County	
Tracy Gee	Lunenburg County	
Maegan Hailey	Nottoway County	
Jonathan Lynn, William Saunders, and Frances Bailey	Surry County	
Andre Greene & Vandy Jones	Sussex County	
Philip Vanoorbeeck	Town of Blackstone	
Mayor Johnny Kirkland	Town of Boydton	
Councilman Andrew Dugger	Town of Brodnax	
Mayor Joe Morrisette	Town of Burkeville	
Angela Lawrence	Town of Chase City	
Jeff Jones	Town of Clarksville	

Wade Walker	Town of Crewe	
Robyn Fowler	Town of Kenbridge	
F.A. Hendrick Jr.	Town of LaCrosse	
Allen Elliot & Kim Callis	Town of South Hill	
Rodney Newton	Town of Victoria	

State Agency Staff

Desmond Smallwood	VDOT	Planning Specialist
Jasmine Amanin	VDOT - Richmond District	Planning Supervisor
Emily Stock	DRPT	Manager of Rail Planning
Marsha Fiol	VDOT	TMPD - Division Administrator
Jitender Ramchandani	OIPI	Transportation Planning Program Manager
Chris Wichman	OIPI	Transportation Planner
Katie Schwing	OIPI	Transportation Planner

Consultant Facilitators and Scribes

Walt Cole	EPR-PC	Facilitator
Will Cockrell	EPR-PC	Facilitator
Taylor Gestwick	ICF	Facilitator
Marissa Sperry	EPR-PC	Scribe
Jessica Dimmick	EPR-PC	Scribe
Thomas Jackson	EPR-PC	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 the VTrans website.¹

- Agenda
- Plenary presentation slides
- VTrans Summer 2019 Newsletter
- 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.

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 stakeholders. As noted in the plenary presentation, OIPI will present the draft list of VTrans Needs to the Commonwealth Transportation Board in October 2019, and the final VTrans Needs assessment with a request for Board action in December 2019.

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

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

Table 2 Synthesis of Comments

	Comment
Congestion: Percent Person Miles Traveled in Excessively Congested Conditions (PECC)	
1.	The exit to Washington Street is an issue. Beyond the ramp, the merge with I-95 and I-85 functions better, but the Washington Street exit backs up into the acceleration lane. Issue is not appearing in the data.
2.	There is a congestion point, southbound on I-95 in the right lane at the I-85 exit. Motorists use the middle lane to avoid the slow down, but then must weave back over to the right lane for the exit. Issue is not appearing in the data.
3.	Between Route 10 and 288, on I-95 North: the posted speed is 55 mph but travel speeds are closer to 35 mph. Not apparent in the data.
4.	There was a request to differentiate between weekend and weekday traffic, with an element that shows numbers by travel direction.
5.	There is non-systemic congestion, due to special events.
Congestion: Travel Time Index (TTI)	
6.	Route 36, at Puddledock in the City of Petersburg, the new signal worsened congestion. This area does not show on the congestion maps, but it does show on the reliability map (BTI)
7.	Certain places in the area have sight distance issues, do to changing elevation and bridges. If unfamiliar with the area, these conditions can be difficult to navigate
8.	The data is not showing the portion of Temple Avenue, east of I-95 and Puddledock Road.
9.	There were concerns with trucks hauling materials, causing travel delays.
Reliability: Buffer Time Index (BTI)	
10.	Truck traffic, mostly hauling logs, create travel delays in the South Hill area. Motorists need to add buffer time in these areas.
Passenger Rail: Amtrak Station On-Time Performance	
11.	Northbound is on time more often than southbound trains.
12.	The Richmond to Raleigh EIS recommended a “closed rail corridor,” eliminating at-grade crossings and designed to 10% these grade-separated interchanges. Property and road impacts provide benefits for future growth.
Accessibility: Transit Access Deficit to Activity Centers	
13.	The maps should show Park and Ride lots.

	Comment
14.	There is a need for transit access at Southpoint Business Park which is a major regional freight employment center, however, method excludes freight-dependent activity centers.
15.	Transit ridership is lower, due to poor connectedness.

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

16.	Needs: most roadways throughout the Crater region are not ADA accessible (no sidewalks or curb ramps). For example: at the Southpoint Wal-Mart, there are no pedestrian facilities for transit riders.
17.	The definition/threshold for “viable” transit may need an urban and rural differentiation.
18.	How do you factor in non-fixed transit?
19.	There is a need for transporting elderly to hospital/medical care. How can this metric reflect that?

Safety: Vehicle Crashes

20.	In Dinwiddie: at an unsignalized intersection, people attempt to cross Route 460 (at Courthouse) and do not have enough time.
21.	There is significant truck activity and hauling on Route 460, with narrow lanes that cause risks
22.	Woods Edge, Ruffin Mill & I-95: There is no lighting at this interchange and a significant number of accidents. There is a double left turn with difficulty seeing the signals
23.	Emporia, 58/I-95 interchange: Two statewide corridors intersect, with a high number of incident rates due to crossovers.
24.	All along Route 460, there seems to be more accidents.

Economic Development: Urban Development Areas and VEDP Business Ready Sites

25.	Most Tier 5 sites likely have decent roads and transportation infrastructure, already. If Tier 3 is included, there may be more sites that have transportation needs.
26.	Recommend analyzing Tier 3 or higher.
27.	Tier 4 is too high of a threshold because many sites in the region do not have good road access

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.

VTRANS NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROCESS

- *Why wouldn't safety/accessibility be a UDA need?* Safety and Accessibility are analyzed across multiple travel markets. The UDAs are locality designated areas and a survey went to localities to identify needs which in some cases include Needs for bicycle and pedestrian safety, transit accessibility, among other localized type Needs.

CONGESTION MEASURES

Percent Person Miles Traveled in Excessively Congested Conditions (PECC)

- *How do you measure the road segment?* Segment length varies, from about .25 miles to about 3-4 miles. It is based on an existing network for which the data is available and not uniquely created from VTrans.
- *Does there have to be a condition where it is below the speed limit vs at the speed limit?* If you are going 70 mph on a 70 mph roadway, we do not consider that a problem.
- *It is relative (Colonial heights) to peak periods of congestion. For Example: Dale City. Moving at a fluid pace is ok if you are used to it.* Agree, definition of congestion depends on your expectations.

Travel Time Index (TTI)

- *How do you use the cell phone data?* Many mobile applications with geolocation services that can track how fast you are traveling, ex if you are using Google maps or other apps.

That data is sold to INRIX and the State buys it. The data shows averages and numbers in aggregate rather than reporting for individual vehicles.

- *Does it include dashboard GPS?* INRIX does collect data from fleet vehicles as part of the sample as well. Ultimately the State is an end users or customer of the data, which is collected and aggregated by third party providers.

RELIABILITY MEASURES

Buffer Time Index (BTI)

- *What do you mean by an acute problem?* I think of an acute problem as something that may be more severe in intensity, but in this example less severe in terms of magnitude (i.e. is not affecting a high number of vehicles). The question is whether a problem that is less severe in intensity (with a relatively lower BTI) which would be considered a moderate issue that affects a greater magnitude (i.e. more vehicles) should be considered the bigger issue compared to the acute issue affecting fewer vehicles.

ACCESSIBILITY TO ACTIVITY CENTERS MEASURES

Transit Access Deficit to Knowledge-Based and Local-Serving Activity Centers

- *For activity centers, what is the methodology?* If you think there is a place that is a regional hub of population or employment that people are traveling to, please share that with us. Consider train stations, regional medical facilities, something of significance that attracts people from within and from nearby regions.

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. There were no comments.

ii. BREAKOUT SESSION COMMENTS

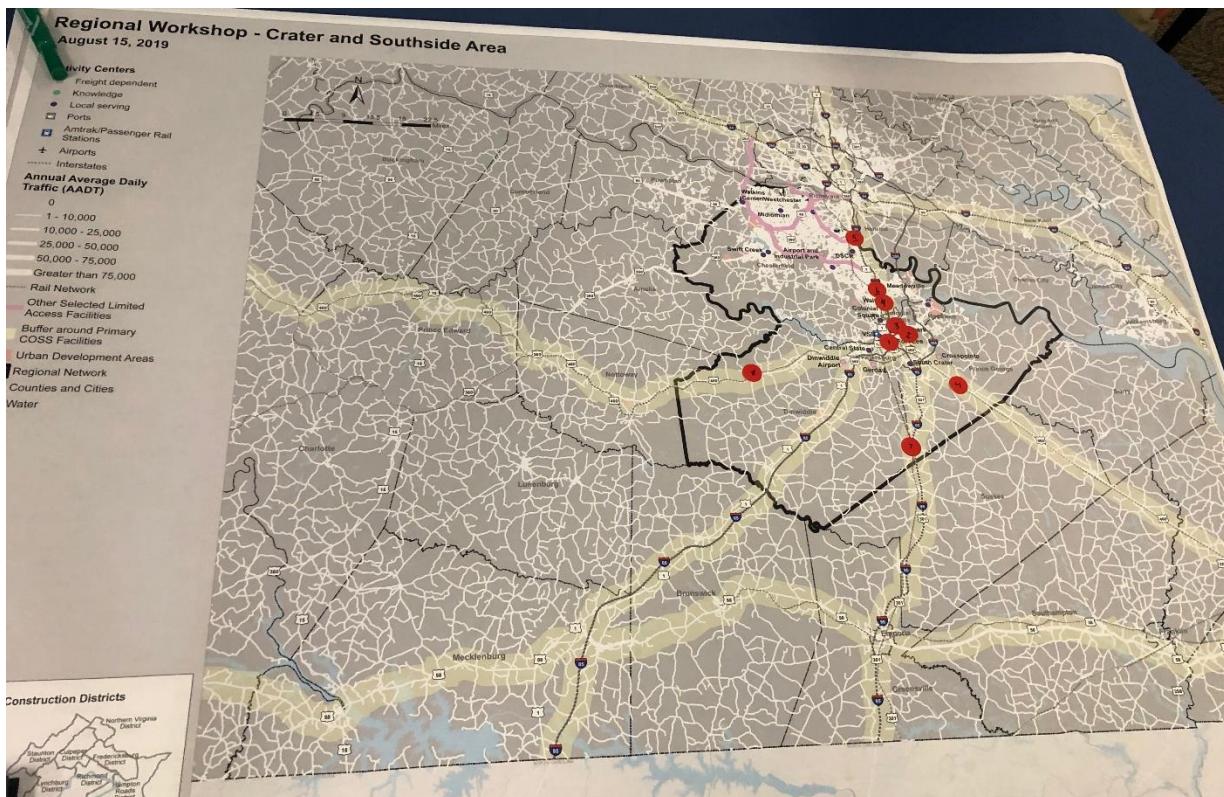
The following reflects input received from all the breakout groups. Participants were asked to reflect broadly upon the issues addressed by the performance measures (i.e., congestion, reliability, passenger rail on-time performance, accessibility to activity centers, travel options for disadvantaged 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 COMMENTS

Breakout Group 1 Marked Up Map



Congestion

- 1) Biggest issue is exit to Washington Street. Once you get beyond this, the merge with 95 and 85 works ok. The Washington Street exit is what backs up into the acceleration. - EXIT 52
- 2) Rt 36 at Puddledock (City of Petersburg)- put a new signal and it made it worse (this adds 15 minutes to get through the one light) - this area does not show up on the congestion maps, but it does show up on the reliability map (BTI)
- 3) Temple Ave west of Fort Lee, particularly west of Puddledock (east of I-95) - traffic Ts up to get onto I-95

There is not a lot of congestion in the area on a regular basis, however, at highway interchanges the congestion is so bad that vehicles cannot even travel at the posted speed limit. Road safety assessments have been completed, but there has been no progress since. Trains also come through frequently and disturb the flow of traffic.

Reliability

- 4) Woods Edge Road - set up for a signal, but warrant analysis 10 years ago when it was built did not call for it - since then, it has experienced industrial park growth has exploded

Most reliability has to do with people trying to get on I-95 or truck and industrial activity.

Safety

- 4) Safety issue on Rt 460 - between Queens Street and Heinz Rd
- 5) I-95 SB and NB between Woods Edge and Temple Ave - there are a LOT of crashes here
- 6) NB I-95 Exit 45 (Prince George County) - had a serious bus accident - signage on the road created driver error, ramp geometrics require 25 mph speed
- 7) Rt 460 in general - EB and WB lanes are very close to each other, a lot of truck activity, tractor-trailers are hauling!! - EIS identified Rt 460 in Prince George County as the #1 Safety need.

There are a lot of crashes where there is the most traffic. Signage on roads has caused a few of the accidents in this area due to driver confusion. A lot of truck activity due to hauling which causes issues because of narrow lanes. Poor lighting at interchanges causes accidents because of low visibility of signals.

Passenger Rail On-Time Performance

- 8) Bellwood location is where this is a problem because trains are exceeding dwell time limits.

Northbound is more often on time than southbound trains. This area is very busy for rail and causes a lot of traffic delays because of road blockage.

Accessibility to Activity Centers

There are no park and rides in the area, but one is currently being built. GRTC is going to start going down Jefferson Davis Highway. South Point Business Park has needs for transit access. Amazon and Wal-Mart distribution centers were trying to

come up with a service for shift workers, but many workers were not willing to utilize the service. Dinwiddie would benefit from Petersburg transit extensions.

Economic Development

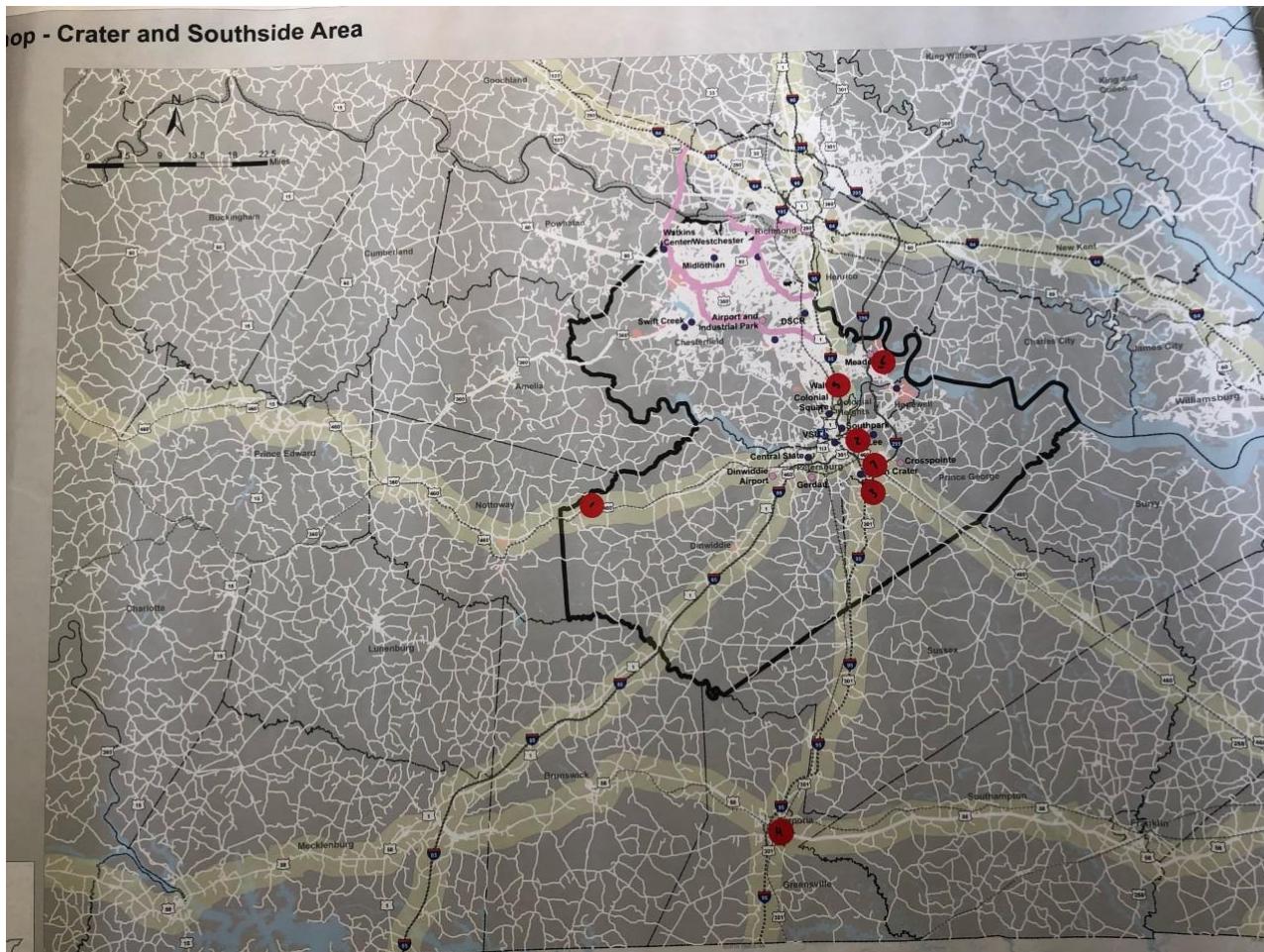
Tier 5 is too high for this area. Dropping the threshold down to a tier 3 would capture more of the sites that have transportation needs.

Travel Options for Disadvantaged Populations

WATA proposed a connection to Charles City in order to pick up in the area before heading down to Virginia Beach. Virginia Career Works wants Petersburg Transit to expand into Emporia, Greenville, and other rural counties but the fleet for Petersburg needs to be replaced so this need will have to wait until equipment is able to travel further distances. Currently Access on Demand provides pick up services and requires no advanced notice. Many roads in Crater are not ADA accessible which prevents people from taking public transit.

GROUP 2 COMMENTS

Breakout Group 2 Marked Up Map



Congestion

Between I-85 and I-95 north, there is always traffic traveling below the speed limit, not just at peak times. The data is not picking up the areas that have congestion in this region. Some congestion could be reliability issues.

Reliability

Most of the congestion in this area is actually reliability issues.

Safety

7) 460 and Wagner Intersection

There are a lot of fatal crashes in this area. Many trucks are entering and exiting roadways where there are blind spots.

Passenger Rail On-Time Performance

No comments.

Accessibility to Activity Centers

Accessibility in the areas is there, but there isn't a large need for it because it is not a connected system. Also need to implement a bike and pedestrian network in the area. Some areas in the region are not served at all (Hopewell). Amazon uses a private bus to pick up workers from Hopewell and take them to their shift. They are looking to implement paratransit or a dial-a-ride service over a fixed route.

Economic Development

- 1) 460 Rail Site near 53
- 2) Interchange with 95, 85, 295, 460, etc is a huge safety issue because of the sharp exit lanes and little to no merge lanes.
- 3) Prince George Rolls Royce Hoya Facility
- 4) Boars head in Jared

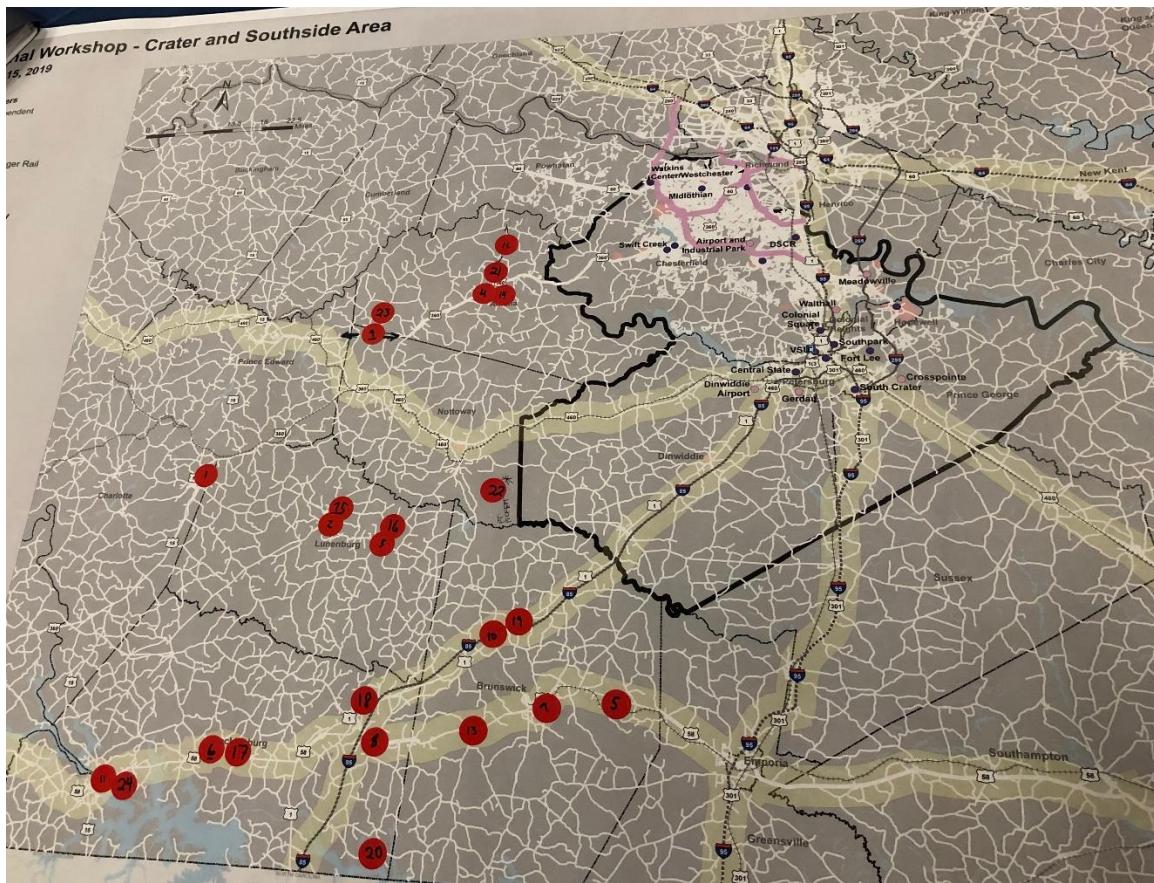
Overall, the group thinks that Tier 3 should be considered. Traffic on Route 10 and Route 301 are restricted at peak times in order to get shift workers to their jobs on time. The design of the roads was implemented in the 1970s and needs to be updated. There is a desire to expand transit in the area, but the data doesn't show a high enough need.

Travel Options for Disadvantaged Populations

No comments.

GROUP 3 COMMENTS

Breakout Group 3 Marked Up Map



Congestion

- 9) Mecklenburg interchange that adds local traffic and interstate traffic. Happens mostly on the weekends because locals are shopping.
- 22) Fort Pickett traffic in the future because service members will be deploying from there.
- 11) Clarksville has congestion because there is changing elevation and sight challenges in addition to a bridge

Congestion in this area is relative to the area. It is mostly school traffic, but this causes a lot of slowdowns. It is not continuous throughout the day. Most congestion is non-systemic and only occurs when there is an event taking place.

Reliability

Reliability does not affect the economic development of the region and differs between weekday and weekend. Logging activity is a major reliability issue because there is always uncertainty of where and when logging trucks will be on the road. This is also a safety concern for the area. Travelling through South Hill always required additional buffer time.

Safety

- 7) Brunswick Square Shopping Center
- 8) interchange on 85
- 9) Route 307
- 10) Community College
- 11) Clarksville
- 6) Microsoft Site
- 12) Chula Road
- 13) High crashes, needs improvement

Brunswick Square Shopping Center has a corridor with a speed limit of 55 mph, but no merging or turning lanes, so in order to get to the shopping center, people must slow down on 58, which causes people to swerve into the median lanes. VDOT put caution lights there, but they have not helped. Route 307 is a hazard. The angle of the intersection around the community college creates issues even with the caution lights that have been put in. Clarksville has high speeds and awkward traffic movements which causes crashes regularly. Looking at the number of crashes instead of only looking at fatal crashes would be helpful in order to prevent fatal crashes from happening. Fatal crashes are a bad benchmark.

Passenger Rail On-Time Performance

No comments for this area.

Accessibility to Activity Centers

- 14) Amelia Activity Center - Industrial Park
- 15) Town of Kenbridge - Unincorporated Town
- 16) Town of Victoria - Unincorporated Town
- 17) Future site of a combined school center for the entire county of Mecklenburg
- 18) south hill hospital in Mecklenburg County
- 19) Regional Jail
- 20) Large interest in RV/Camping
- 21) Amelia Motor Raceway
- 22) Fort Pickett expansion - moving a military operations facility there
- 23) Sailors Creek Battlefield - State Park in Amelia County
- 24) State Park

A lot of these areas are accessible, but they are combined areas of traffic from the state park, jail, campgrounds, and Fort Pickett.

Economic Development

- 1) Regional industrial park that supports 6 counties
- 2) Industrial Park - VEDP site
- 3) Kenbridge Industrial Park - VEDP Site
- 4) Amelia Industrial Park - VEDP Site
- 5) Economic Development Site - Hotpot
- 6) Microsoft Site

For this area, 4 is too high of a threshold. Going down to three would be beneficial because a lot of the area doesn't have road access. There is a lot of traffic on the roads leading to the Microsoft site that wasn't intended. There are no UDAs at all right now in Brunswick County.

Travel Options for Disadvantaged Populations

Rail is no longer anywhere from Pamplin to Burkeville. Amelia, Nottoway, and Lunenburg all have transit. The definition threshold for "viable" transit may need urban and rural differentiation. How can we use this metric to reflect getting elderly community members to the hospital and to seek medical care? And how do you factor in non-fixed services?

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.

Note: There were no written comment forms submitted. The Comment Form included the following questions.

Congestion:

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

Person hours in Excessively Congested Conditions (PECC):

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

Do you have an opinion on the Analysis threshold?

Travel Time Index (TTI):

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

Do you have an opinion on the Analysis threshold?

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

Reliability

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

Person Delay During Unreliable Conditions (UD):

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

Do you have an opinion on the Analysis threshold?

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?

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?

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?

Do you have an opinion on the Analysis threshold?

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?

Accessibility to Activity Centers

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

Transit Deficit to Activity Centers

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

Do you have an opinion on the Analysis threshold?

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?

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?

Disadvantaged Population Beyond 1/4 Mile Access To Transit Service

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

Do you have an opinion on the Analysis threshold?

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?

Safety:

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

Vehicular Crashes

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

Do you have an opinion on the Analysis threshold?

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

Economic Development

Urban Development Areas

VEDP Business Ready Sites