

2045 Long Range Transportation Plan

Chapter 1: Planning Context

1 – 1 Introduction

As a result of the 2010 U.S. Census, the Cities of Staunton, Waynesboro, and the urbanized portions of Augusta County met the criteria to be defined as an urbanized area (UZA), which requires the formation of a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) under federal law. UZA's are defined as densely developed residential, commercial, and other nonresidential areas of 50,000 people or greater. The SAWMPO was formed in November 2012, and received official recognition from the Governor of Virginia on March 26, 2013. Similar to other MPOs in Virginia, the SAWMPO is administered by a Planning District Commission (PDC). The Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC) acts as the fiscal and administrative agent for the SAWMPO.

The MPO is governed by a Policy Board comprised of elected and appointed officials representing the respective jurisdictions. The Policy Board appoints members to a Technical Advisory Committee that is charged with making recommendations to the Policy Board and providing assistance in reviewing issues related to regional transportation priorities and key technical or procedural matters in updating planning documents. Both bodies operate under a set of by-laws that define leadership responsibilities and terms.

The SAWMPO's partner agencies include the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), and the Virginia Department of Aviation.

1 – 2 Purpose of the Plan

The 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for the SAWMPO outlines the goals, objectives, policies and improvements that are needed to maintain a safe and efficient multimodal transportation system for the movement of people and goods throughout the area in a manner that will enhance the economic, social and environmental qualities of the community. The purpose of this document is to satisfy the metropolitan planning requirements of the federal transportation planning process and to identify priority transportation investments in the region.

The 2045 LRTP replaces the 2040 LRTP, which was adopted on December 2, 2015. The 2045 LRTP update process began in March 2019, and plans for transportation projects to 2045. The MPO formed an LRTP Working Group comprised of SAWMPO TAC members to establish the goals of the region's transportation network and guide the planning process.

2045 Long Range Transportation Plan

1 – 3 Federal Laws and the Transportation Planning Process

The SAWMPO LRTP has been developed in accordance with the federal transportation law, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). This federal law shapes the way transportation investments are conceived, planned, funded, and implemented at the state and regional levels of government. In December 2015, President Obama signed the Fixing American’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act into law. The FAST Act provided four additional years of funding for surface transportation projects, and upheld the performance based planning and programming requirements of MAP-21.

The Federal Transportation Planning Framework

The MPO must meet the requirements of the federally-mandated transportation planning processes. These processes include the development of several documents:

1. The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) defines MPO planning activities and is updated each year. The UPWP is the annual work program and budget for the MPO. It details the administrative and planning activities to be undertaken during the fiscal year, and the federal, state and local funds used for these activities. The Policy Board can make recommendations to MPO staff on the activities and funding levels in the UPWP during the annual process of developing the Plan. VDOT and DRPT provide the MPO with annual allocation of planning funds in the spring.
2. The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that identifies transportation projects to be funded within the next six years. The TIP is the region’s fiscally-constrained four-year programming document for all transportation and transit projects scheduled to receive federal transportation funds, require a federal action, or are deemed “regionally significant.” Federal regulations require that all transportation projects and programs in the MPO’s region funded under U.S.C Title 23 and 49 be listed in the TIP
3. The LRTP defines the long-range transportation needs and includes a fiscally-constrained list of projects that will be eligible for inclusion in the TIP. Through the LRTP, the MPO establishes the investment priorities of federal transportation. The LRTP is reviewed and updated every 5 years, and must cover at least a 20-year planning horizon, with the SAWMPO using a 25-year planning horizon to 2045.

Federal Transportation Planning Factors and the 3-C Agreement

Planning Factors

MAP-21 identifies ten planning factors (23 CFR 450.316) which must be considered as part of the transportation planning process for all metropolitan areas. These planning factors were integrated into the development of the LRTP, and include the following:

- Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;
- Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users;
- Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users;
- Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and for freight;

2045 Long Range Transportation Plan

- Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns;
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight;
- Promote efficient system management and operation;
- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system;
- Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation; and
- Enhance travel and tourism

In compliance with MAP-21, the LRTP addresses these factors in the Plan goals, existing conditions, and the CLRP. Strategic planning concepts were integrated throughout development of the LRTP to support development of a sustainable, multimodal, and cost-effective transportation plan. These concepts include bicycle and pedestrian mobility, travel demand management, safety and security, and intermodal considerations, as well as the financial limitations for investing in these strategies. These comprehensive planning strategies align with the SAWMPO planning goals and objectives and have shaped development of the CLRP.

3-C Agreement

Regional long-range transportation planning, by legislative definition must be:

- Comprehensive (including all modes)
- Cooperative (involving a broad array of stakeholders and other interested parties)
- Continuous (ever improving and evolving)

Planning efforts must reflect an overall purpose to efficiently move people and goods, while supporting regional land use and economic development plans and policies. This process directs cooperation with all levels of government to develop a plan which addresses long- and short-range multimodal goals and strategies for transportation improvements and priorities for the implementation of projects to fulfill those goals.

1 – 4 Compliance with Federal Regulation

A primary purpose of the LRTP is to establish the MPO's compliance with all current federal laws and regulations.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

The SAWMPO is a sub-recipient of federal financial assistance and is required to comply with Title VI and other federal non-discrimination laws as well as provide an overview of how the SAWMPO addresses Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice as well as Executive Order 13166 on Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and complies with the Title VI plan. Detailed Environmental Justice guidelines and outreach strategies for protected classes are included in the SAWMPO's Public Participation Program. As part of addressing Environmental Justice,

2045 Long Range Transportation Plan

a Benefits and Burdens Analysis is included in Chapter 7, where the Plan's fiscally constrained projects are identified with respect to the location of underserved or potentially vulnerable population segments. This analysis provides a tool for decision makers to gauge how projects and programs may impact social equity and environmental justice.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Enacted in 1990, The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination by public entities on the basis of disability. A primary function of transportation is to deliver opportunities for basic mobility to society. The greatest challenge of the LRTP is to prioritize and implement a transportation network that is multimodal and inclusive of all users. Transportation facilities should be accessible to all users allowing full participation in society – including employment, school, commerce and recreation activities. It is vital that government strive to ensure that transportation systems are not only safe and efficient, but usable by all. Projects identified in the LRTP go through a subsequent, detailed ADA-compliance review process during the design and engineering stage of implementation.