



Minutes of the Full Commission
Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission Meeting
112 MacTanly Place
Staunton, VA 24401
August 18, 2025, 7:00 p.m.

Attendance: 30

	Augusta County		Rockbridge County		Staff
✓	Butch Wells		Jay Lewis	✓	Zach Beard
✓	Pam Carter*		Chris Slaydon	✓	Philippe Bone
✓	Julia Hensley		Rockingham County	✓	Jeremy Crute
	Bath County	✓	Sallie Wolfe-Garrison	✓	Ann Cundy
	Lynn Ellen Black		Joel Hensley	✓	Danielle Gannon
	City of Buena Vista	✓	Rachel Salatin	✓	Donnie Kern
✓	Tyson Cooper	✓	Kim Sandum	✓	Rachel Kinzer
	City of Harrisonburg		City of Staunton	✓	Paula Melester
✓	Laura Dent	✓	Brad Arrowood	✓	Kimberly Miller
	Nasser Alsaadun	✓	Sharon Angle	✓	Rich Sagui
✓	Adam Fletcher		City of Waynesboro	✓	Carrie Sensabaugh
	Highland County	✓	Terry Short	✓	Devon Thompson
	Henry Budzinski	✓	Leslie Tate	✓	Kayla Dixon
	City of Lexington				Others
✓	Frank Friedman, Chair			✓	Senator Emmett Hanger
				✓	David Blount, VAPDC
				✓	Jim Youngquist*, SERDI

*Virtual Participation by Zoom; record of action attached to file minutes

Call To Order

The Commission meeting of August 18, 2025, was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairperson, Frank Friedman.

Public Comment

Chair Friedman opened the floor for public comments. There were no public comments.

Special Presentation: VAPDC Legislative Lifetime Achievement Award

Chair Friedman introduced David Blount, Executive Director of the Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions, who presented the 2025 Legislative Lifetime Achievement Award to the Honorable Emmett W. Hanger, Jr., Virginia General Assembly, retired.

Mr. Blount recognized Senator Hanger for nearly 40 years of state service and leadership, noting his contributions to promoting regional planning and economic development in Virginia. Mr. Blount shared personal remarks about working with Senator Hanger for approximately 30 years, praising him as both

a statesman and a kind individual who consistently made decisions for the benefit of the Commonwealth.

Senator Hanger expressed appreciation for the recognition and reflected on his legislative service. He noted his continued involvement in certain issues including aging services and court appointed special advocates. Senator Hanger acknowledged the challenging political climate and emphasized the importance of the work done by planning district commissions.

Consideration of Minutes

Chair Friedman presented the minutes of the meeting held on June 16, 2025. ***Minutes were approved unanimously.***

Chair's Report

Chair Friedman reported on several items:

- **Strategic Assessment:** He introduced Jim Youngquist, Executive Director of SERDI, who joined virtually to lead the PDC's strategic agency assessment. Chair Friedman emphasized the importance of Commissioner participation in surveys and inquiries to ensure the quality of the assessment.
- **Virginia Housing SPARC Program:** Chair Friedman announced that Virginia Housing allocated approximately \$4.5 million through the PDC's SPARC program for first-time home buyers, which provides interest rate buy-downs to improve affordability.
- **North Main Street, Lexington Dedication:** Chair Friedman invited Commissioners to join the dedication of Lexington's North Main Street improvement project on August 27th at 10:30 a.m. The featured speaker will be Secretary of Transportation, Shep Miller. The project was funded through SMART SCALE approximately eight years ago.

Executive Director's Report

Ms. Cundy reported on the following items:

1. **October Meeting Location:** She confirmed plans to hold the October Commission meeting in Monterey at the Highland Center, marking the first visit there since 2016. The meeting will start earlier to accommodate travelling across the mountains to return home.
2. **Summer Webinar Series:** Augusta County Chief Administrative Officer, Tim Fitzgerald participated in the PDC's summer webinar series alongside former Arlington County administrator Ron Carlee, discussing local government relationships with planning district commissions.
3. **Staff Retreat:** The annual staff retreat is scheduled for Friday at a farm located in Lexington, focusing on AI capacity building and strategic planning to ensure staff have tools to serve communities effectively.
4. **Airport Feasibility Study:** Ms. Cundy reported traveling to Roanoke with Jay Lewis from Rockbridge County Board of Supervisors and Jay Williams from Rockbridge EDA to speak with the Virginia State Aviation Board about funding a feasibility study for a general aviation airport in

Rockbridge County. The board agreed to fund the study, which will be conducted with the State Department of Aviation and Delta Aviation over the coming months.

5. Infrastructure Perspective: Ms. Cundy shared a personal reflection on the recent water main break in Staunton that resulted in a boil water order, emphasizing appreciation for basic infrastructure and the city staff who worked through the night to resolve the issue.

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Terry Short introduced the report by highlighting the PDC's continued strong financial position due to new collection methods and realized savings. Mr. Kern reported that fund balances increased by approximately \$331,000 at year end, while cash on hand increased by \$1.1 million over the previous year due to improvements in cash collections. The transit program showed significant improvement with accounts receivable decreasing from \$1.8 million last year to \$600,000 this year, demonstrating the PDC's enhanced collection of funds during the year.

Mr. Kern reported total revenues of \$7.7 million that exceeded expenses, with the majority of the PDC's lower expenses due to allocation of wages and indirect expenses to grant-funded programs. This will help position the organization for lower indirect rates in the future. The PDC made significant capital investments including two new HVAC units, which Commissioners could feel during the meeting. The organization is positioned for a positive audit for FY25.

Chair Friedman encouraged Commissioners to share the positive financial news with their respective councils and boards of supervisors. ***Mr. Short moved, seconded by Ms. Dent, to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. The motion carried unanimously.***

CSPDC Strategic Assessment

Mr. Jim Youngquist, Executive Director of SERDI, joined virtually to present the strategic assessment process. Mr. Youngquist noted it had been 12 years since the last assessment and that many recommendations from that report have been implemented. He explained that the Southeast Regional Directors Institute (SERDI) started the Strategic Assessment Program in 1996 and completed 70 assessments over that time, with this being the second one for Central Shenandoah.

Mr. Youngquist emphasized that the assessment aims to maximize and strengthen the relevancy and services the PDC provides to local governments throughout the region. The assessment process will begin with online surveys running from August 25 through September 5 for Board of Commissioners, locality managers and administrators, regional leaders, planning and development leaders, and PDC staff. During the week of September 15, six focus group sessions will be organized geographically, including separate sessions for Rockbridge County, Lexington and Buena Vista; Bath and Highland counties; Staunton, Waynesboro and Augusta County; Rockingham County and Harrisonburg; valley managers and administrators; and PDC staff.

At the October 20 meeting at the Highland Center, Mr. Youngquist will present preliminary findings and recommendations based on all survey and focus group input, as well as one-on-one interviews with community leaders who may not serve on the Board of Commissioners but represent other regional interests. The group will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the preliminary recommendations and determine if any should be modified or added. Within three weeks after the October meeting, the first draft of the complete report will be provided, with iterations continuing until implementable recommendations are developed that maximize the strength of the CSPDC.

Ms. Dent asked about focus group locations, and Mr. Youngquist confirmed they would be held at central locations within each geographic area.

Presentation: I-81 Corridor Improvement Plan Phase 2

Mr. Brad Reed, VDOT District Planner, presented updates on the I-81 Corridor Improvement Plan Phase Two. Mr. Reed acknowledged Senator Hanger as the sponsor of the original bill that established the I-81 Capital Improvement Fund, calling it a generational investment for the corridor. Currently, 65 projects from the 2018 CIP are advancing or have advanced to construction throughout the Valley, with 26 of these projects in the Staunton District representing approximately \$2 billion in funding. Mr. Reed explained that the Capital Improvement Fund is a continuing revenue source, allowing VDOT to identify the next tranche of projects through this CIP update to make I-81 safer and more efficient.

The improvement plan follows a four-phase public input schedule running from March through December 2025, with issue identification completed in April, potential solutions presented in July, solutions refinement scheduled for October, and the final corridor plan to be published in December. The process uses a data-driven approach to identify the top 25% of one-mile segments on the corridor with performance issues including crash severity (fatal and severe injury crashes), crash frequency (rate of crashes), person hours of delay (from congestion, incidents, and weather), and person hours of incident delay (incidents causing lane closures for an hour or more).

Performance measures clearly demonstrated that the Staunton District has the most significant issues, with 59 one-mile segments in the top 25% for crash severity, 49 for crash frequency, 93 for person hours of delay, and 109 for person hours of incident delay - substantially higher numbers than the Bristol or Salem districts. This data supports the anticipation of prioritized improvements in the Staunton District.

Public outreach for the first phase occurred April 1-15 with 4,700 participants providing 4,000 comments that were incorporated into the planning process. Key issues identified included 42% congestion (higher than other districts), 23% safety concerns, and 20% truck operations problems. Four in-person public meetings were held during the week of July 14th at Blue Ridge Community College, Shenandoah University, Bristol, and Salem to present potential solutions.

The 2025 CIP recommendations include 40 total projects across all three districts with 137 miles of improvements. Within the Staunton District specifically, 23 projects are recommended including 13 widening projects (70.7 miles), one auxiliary lane project (0.7 miles), two truck climbing lanes (5.6 miles), and seven acceleration/deceleration lane extensions (2.2 miles), totaling 79.2 miles of improvements.

Mr. Reed acknowledged that potential solutions identified far exceed the anticipated \$2-2.25 billion in available revenue, necessitating a SMART SCALE-like prioritization process with 40% weight for safety metrics, 40% for congestion, and 20% for access to jobs and accessibility. The presentation included detailed corridor maps showing existing conditions, performance measures, and potential improvements throughout the district. Mr. Reed noted that all of this information is available on the website [Improve81.org](https://improve81.org) (specifically <https://improve81.vdot.virginia.gov/get-involved/2025-cip-update/>).

Ms. Sandum asked about operational improvements, and Mr. Reed explained that the first round of projects had addressed most low-cost operational improvements like variable message signs, traffic cameras, and quick tow initiatives in the Staunton District, which is why none appear in the current recommendations. She also asked about projects off the main corridor, and Mr. Reed clarified that the

focus remains on mainline I-81, though some interchange improvements may be bundled if they affect mainline performance.

Ms. Dent inquired about project definitions and bidding processes, with Mr. Reed explaining that projects are discrete sections similar to SMART SCALE applications, though some may be bundled for economies of scale or delivered through design-build contracts to optimize delivery.

Senator Hanger provided historical context about the 2020 legislation that established the funding mechanism through regional taxes, fuel tax adjustments, and a billion-dollar bond authorization, supplemented by federal infrastructure funding. He noted that while revenues may be slightly behind projections due to factors like electric vehicles and cost overruns, the continuing revenue sources should be adequate to complete the work over time.

Intergovernmental Reviews (Board Memo #25-05)

Chair Friedman noted the intergovernmental reviews were included in the packet for informational purposes and encouraged Commissioners to raise any questions or concerns with Ms. Cundy.

Other Business

Chair Friedman reminded Commissioners that the Central Shenandoah Development Corporation Annual Meeting would follow immediately. There was no other business to come before the Commission.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kimberly Miller, Commission Clerk