



**Citizens Transportation Advisory Group (CTAG) Meeting Minutes
July 13, 2016**

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Committee Members Present:

Mr. Todd Rump, Chair, Spotsylvania County
Ms. Adela Bertoldi Stafford County
Ms. Fran Larkins, Stafford County
Mr. David Swan, Stafford County
Mr. Rupert Farley, At-Large Member (Spotsylvania County)
Mr. Larry Gross, At-Large Member (Spotsylvania County)

George Washington Regional Commission (GWRC) Staff:

Mr. Paul Agnello, FAMPO
Ms. Marti Donley, FAMPO
Mr. Daniel Reese, FAMPO
Ms. JoAnna Roberson, GWRC

Others Present:

Mr. Randy Comer
Mr. Michael McCabe, City of Fredericksburg
Mr. Michael Leitch, Stafford County
Mrs. Pat Leitch, Stafford County

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Rump called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The CTAG agenda for the July 13, 2016 meeting was approved as submitted.

APPROVAL OF CTAG MEETING SUMMARY OF JUNE 8, 2016

Upon motion by Mr. Farley and seconded by Mr. Swan, with all in consensus, the minutes from the June 8, 2016 CTAG meeting were approved as submitted.

REVIEW OF FAMPO POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING OF JUNE 20, 2016

Mr. Agnello advised that the minutes are included in tonight's agenda packet and are self-explanatory. Mr. Agnello relayed that two items to highlight are that the Policy Committee discussed utilizing paperless agenda materials for their meetings. Mr. Agnello stated that by going paperless, the cost savings would be approximately \$12,000 a year. Mr. Agnello stated that this item is also on tonight's CTAG agenda for

discussion and comment and has also been presented to the Technical Committee at Monday's meeting. Mr. Agnello also advised that there has been a new major VDOT project update and details of the new developments will be discussed at the upcoming July 18th Policy Committee meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Leitch from Ferry Farms spoke in opposition to the proposed Eastern High-Speed Rail By-Pass alternative that was discussed at last week's meeting held at Fredericksburg Christian High School. Mr. Leitch stated that the public was informed of what the purpose for the study is and that three alternatives are being considered.

Mr. Leitch stated that the proposed By-Pass alternative is for a connector point to the Dahlgren Spur which would result in having two additional passenger trains go through the City of Fredericksburg that will save passengers 15-20 minutes of commute time and will cost \$13 million. Mr. Leitch stated that if an additional 5,000 persons per day utilize the train option then the Ferry Road/Argyle Heights railroad crossing will continually stay congested. This increase to the rail lines would cause for safety issues to residents entering and exiting from the neighborhoods and would cause increased congestion while traffic is stopped to wait for the trains to pass the crossings.

Mr. Leitch stated that this alternative also is not addressing the haz-mat effects to the historical sites. Mr. Leitch stated that more building would need to occur as there is currently no track to cross over the existing rails. Mr. Leitch stated that there are many other options that are available for consideration; however, the Eastern By-Pass alternative makes no sense and the math does not add up. Mr. Leitch asked that CTAG make the voices known to the Policy Committee.

Mr. Leitch also stated that many questions were asked by citizens at last week's meeting and most questions asked were not answered by the representative from DRPT. Mr. Leitch stated that he would like to hear the actual perimeters of the study and that the citizens deserve the right to have questions answered.

Mr. Swan asked Mr. Leitch if he has gone to the VRE website to check for more information there than what was relayed at the public meeting held last week. Mr. Leitch stated that the VRE website still does not articulate how the study is formed nor defines any perimeter alternatives. Mr. Swan asked if a public/citizen association has been formed. Mr. Leitch stated that there were over 300 people in attendance at last week's meeting and at least 90% of those who spoke and/or were in attendance were there to speak against the Eastern By-Pass alternative. Mr. Leitch stated the citizens are not asking that the rail projects stop but instead are asking that all alternatives be explored; that data presented is accurate and concise; and that questions asked of Ms. Stork be answered. Mr. Leitch stated that he is certain that an unofficial grassroots effort will be in place after the results of last week's meeting.

Mr. Rump relayed that as the CTAG chairman, CTAG does have a non-voting seat at the FAMPO Policy Committee meeting and that he would express the concerns stated at tonight's meeting.

Mr. McCabe stated that he is a new resident to the City of Fredericksburg. Mr. McCabe stated that he was speaking to voice his support for widening of the major arteries on Route 1 and Route I-95. Mr. McCabe stated that he did not feel that the State has been upfront with all of the details involving the I-95 improvements.

Mr. McCabe stated that he is a local commuter and commutes from his home in the City to his employer on Route 17 in Stafford County. He says daily the congestion from those entering or exiting onto I-95 experience consistent traffic delays. Mr. McCabe stated that he is requesting that alternatives for improving I-95 include something similar to what has been done in Alexandria, whereby you have more lane widening without any special lane designations being applied which would be more beneficial to the region.

Mr. McCabe stated that the region has been discussing a Western By-Pass alternative for over thirty years that would go from the City of Fredericksburg to Route 17 in Stafford County. Mr. McCabe stated that the Falmouth Bridge improvements have in fact made a huge positive impact and he is requesting that a similar design alternative be considered for the Route 1 and Route 3 areas.

After the citizens spoke at the meeting, CTAG members made the following comments. Mr. Rump stated that he too had attended last week's meeting and he also felt that the presenter was vague in answering questions that were asked. Mr. Farley stated that he felt Mr. Leitch's questions regarding the perimeter alternatives were valid. Mr. Rump stated that there were no answers provided by DRPT when asked if the noise levels, the house vibrations, the safety factors, where the actual rail line would be, etc. had been studied and if data was available to back-up the alternative being considered.

Mr. Agnello stated that the detailed analysis is probably not completed to date and that possibly the letters sent out to the stakeholders were sent out with preliminary information and was released before actual facts, documents, etc. were available. Mr. Agnello advised CTAG that these concerns would be relayed to DRPT.

NEW BUSINESS

None

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

- a.) **Resolution of No. 17-01, Amending the FY2015-2018 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to Include the Addition of a Project to Make Safety Improvements to I-95 at Exit 130** – Mr. Paul Agnello

Mr. Agnello advised that Resolution No. 17-01 was brought before the FAMPO committees in April and includes the Route 3 safety improvements. Mr. Agnello stated that a public hearing is upcoming and that the Route 3 safety improvement projects are being geared to feed into both the Southbound and Northbound Rappahannock River Crossing projects.

Upon motion by Ms. Larkins and seconded by Mr. Rump, with Mr. Farley voting no and all other members in consensus, Resolution No. 17-01 was endorsed with a recommendation that it be adopted by the FAMPO Policy Committee at the July 18th meeting.

Mr. Swan also requested that FAMPO consider extending the safety project for study of exit ramp extensions into Central Park but not further west on Route 3. Mr. Agnello advised that CTAG could formally request that FAMPO consider this request. Mr. Farley stated that he felt extending the exit ramps into Central Park to Lowe's would be feasible; however, felt the memo to FAMPO should stipulate that these ramps not be paid for from any taxpayer monies and that Silver Company/Celebrate Virginia should assume all associated costs. Mr. Swan stated that at this time he felt it was premature to stipulate or request any funding cost and/or who would be responsible but as this extension is a short distance from where the proposed safety improvements are going to occur anyway that possibly the cost for the extension would be minimal and would certainly cause some additional positive impacts to this congested area.

Upon motion by Mr. Swan and seconded by Ms. Larkins, with Mr. Farley voting no and all others in consensus, a request was made for FAMPO staff to formulate a letter to be signed by CTAG chair that the request for the extension of exit ramps into Central Park at Lowe's be considered as part of the Route 3 safety improvements already planned.

b.) Atlantic Gateway Project Update – Mr. Paul Agnello

Mr. Agnello stated that a letter in the correspondence section of tonight's agenda packet discusses the Atlantic Gateway project. Mr. Agnello stated that Virginia did very well as having \$165 million allocated for construction of several road and rail infrastructure projects along the I-95 corridor. Mr. Agnello advised that of the \$800 million available nationally, that more than 20% of the funds were allocated to Virginia. Mr. Agnello stated that the funding is provided by the government and will be included within the FY2016 TIP. Mr. Agnello relayed that projects that are applicable for the \$165 million funding sources must be under construction by September of 2019.

Ms. Bertoldi asked which projects would begin in FY2017. Mr. Agnello stated that there are fifteen different projects that will be recipients of the funding allocated to Virginia and the biggest ones in our region will be the Stafford Courthouse Interchange improvements and Park & Ride lots improvements and/or new Park & Ride lot construction. Mr. Agnello stated that these projects will begin construction in FY2017 and be completed in FY2020.

Mr. Farley asked for clarification on the allocation made to the Atlantic Gateway project which stipulates there is a \$45,000,000 limitation. Mr. Agnello relayed that he too has asked the State for clarification on this category but to date, has not received a reply back from them.

c.) High Speed Rail Update – Mr. Paul Agnello

Mr. Agnello advised that the high speed rail project is one that is looking at rail improvements from DC to Richmond. Mr. Agnello stated that the current progression is in the early stages of preparing the Draft EIS with a range of alternatives still being considered. Mr. Agnello stated that the purpose of the EIS is to gather data that be used in evaluating the merits of the different alternatives. A recommendation for a preferred alternative will be a part of the EIS.

Mr. Agnello stated that DRPT will evaluate the alternatives against a no-build alternative which serves as the benchmark for comparisons. If the build alternatives are found to have significant environmental impacts, then

FRA could select the no-build option as the preferred alternative. Mr. Agnello stated though that a no-build option does not prohibit future growth in either the freight or passenger train traffic.

Mr. Agnello advised that the current options being carried forward are the following:

A third main-line track being added through Fredericksburg on the East side of the existing tracks

A two-track bypass going to the east of Fredericksburg

A minor improvement that would not additional track but would include improvements to crossings, signals, safety and platforms

No-build alternative

d.) Smart Scale Regional Priorities – Mr. Paul Agnello

Mr. Agnello advised that included in tonight's agenda packet is the potential projects for Smart Scale submission for Round 2. Mr. Agnello stated that this list is approximately 95% finalized; however, PRTC has an operations meeting scheduled for this Friday so potentially changes could still emerge.

Mr. Agnello stated that there are now 23 projects that will be submitted for funding considerations. Five of these projects are being submitted by either GWRC or FAMPO. PRTC is submitting one project; the City of Fredericksburg is submitting two projects; and the counties of Caroline, King George, Spotsylvania and Stafford are submitting the following number of projects respectively: 1, 2, 8, and 4.

Mr. Agnello advised that even though the Fredericksburg region is submitting the Brooke and Leeland VRE Stations for project submissions for funding considerations, that VRE is also submitting a grant application project that will in fact include capacity expansion for the Fredericksburg line.

Mr. Agnello stated that the VRE System Plan for 2040 has the key element for additional rail capacity on the I-95 corridor. The Phase 1 of this plan is to run longer trains, provide more railcars, provide additional station parking, provide for more train storage tracks, and for second and longer platforms being constructed. These improvements are planned for both the entire Fredericksburg and Manassas lines.

Mr. Agnello stated that Phase 2 & 3 of the VRE 2040 system plan will allow for additional trains, third/fourth tracks, Long Bridge, and the Gainesville/Haymarket extension. Mr. Agnello stated that the VRE grant if approved will complete the underfunded projects listed in Phase 1.

Mr. Agnello advised that the VRE Smart Scale application is asking for consideration of \$95.0 million; with \$26.3 million of committed funds available; for a total project cost of \$121.3 million.

e.) **Paperless Agendas – Mr. Paul Agnello**

Mr. Agnello advised that the discussion for going to paperless agendas at the Policy Committee meeting was discussed at the June meeting. Mr. Agnello stated that staff had provided cost estimates for how much the printed packets cost annually. If paperless agendas are approved, then there will be an approximate \$12,000 of cost savings to GWRC/FAMPO. Mr. Agnello stated that the Policy Committee voted to try a paperless approach for six months where it will be re-evaluated after the trial period to see if this will be implemented on a permanent basis. Mr. Agnello also advised that printed copies of the agenda will be available at Policy Committee meetings for both the committee members and the public. Also, there will still be a minimum number of printed agenda packets available for the public and/or for a committee member who does not have access to either their personal and/or county electronic tablets. Mr. Agnello relayed that agenda materials will be posted as a power point presentation and if special or critical items are to be discussed, these items will also still be in a paper copy format. Mr. Agnello relayed that the Technical Committee received the same presentation and they too have agreed to try a paperless agenda concept for six months.

There was consensus from CTAG to also try a paperless agenda process for six months with staff having ten printed agenda packets available at each meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Agnello advised that there was just piece of correspondence included in tonight's agenda packet and this item has already been discussed under the Atlantic Gateway project update earlier in the meeting.

STAFF REPORT

Mr. Agnello advised that FAMPO's UPWP has officially been approved by the Federal Government. Mr. Agnello stated that a press release from DRPT has been released which announced a new Chief of Transportation. Lastly, Mr. Agnello advised that Mr. Quint is not at tonight's meeting as he is getting married this weekend. CTAG expressed congratulations to Mr. Quint.

MEMBER REPORT

Mr. Farley stated that he would like to commend Mr. Leitch for attending tonight's meeting and for participating in the Public Comment section in addressing his concerns regarding the proposed High Speed Rail project.

Mr. Gross stated that there has been a lot of discussion on the building of new bridges throughout the region and the environmental and historical factors this could have. Mr. Gross stated that he is very familiar with the river and utilizes it regularly. Mr. Gross stated that in response to planning for upcoming projects that will affect the river itself that do not be disillusioned about the thought process for those who take the river seriously. Mr. Gross stated that there is a totally different perspective and reaction to up-stream versus down-stream issues.

Mr. Gross complimented Mr. Agnello for his presentation that was given to the Spotsylvania Board of Supervisors on the potential new Harrison Road interchange that was as a result of the final alternatives to recommend moving forward from the results of the Phase I I-95 Corridor study. Mr. Gross stated that he had

previously thought this alternative was fully supported by the Board of Supervisors; however, realized that two supervisors do not support a Harrison Road interchange project to be moved forward.

Mr. Agnello relayed that initially, there was a 5-2 split vote, with 5 in favor and 2 against. However, when the actual resolution was approved and adopted, the vote count changed to a 6-1 vote. Mr. Agnello stated that Spotsylvania County will submit an application for SMART SCALE funding for the cost of completing an Interchange Justification Report (IJR) to determine the feasibility of the Harrison Road Interchange project alternative moving forward.

Ms. Larkins advised that the Fredericksburg Chamber of Commerce meeting is going to be held on July 20th and these meetings are now free for the public to attend. Ms. Larkins stated that she encouraged any CTAG members who can attend to do so.

Ms. Larkins asked if staff has any analysis available from Trans Urban in regard to the cost to the commuters for utilization of the HOT lanes – i.e. how much money has Trans Urban made; are the commuters being charged too much to off-set expenses; Ms. Larkins stated that she would like to see a report that shows how much was expected to be received; how much actually has been received; how/why the fees vary, etc.

Mr. Agnello stated that staff has not seen a report of this nature but he will follow-up with Trans Urban to see what statistical data is available for citizen and locality review.

Ms. Larkins stated that the recently announced funding the region will be receiving is very positive and she is glad that a large portion of the funding allocations will be dispersed here. Ms. Larkins stated that she hopes the Northern Rappahannock Crossing project will help in eliminating most of the traffic congestions issues consistently experienced from Route 610 at Garrisonville to Route 126 at Massaponax.

Ms. Larkins stated that as Route 17 in Stafford is another corridor of state-wide significance, that she would still like to see an eastern by-pass alternative re-examined for further study under either the Phase 2 or Phase 3 of the upcoming I-95 corridor studies.

Mr. Swan asked if anyone on the committee was aware of a 2008 bond referendum that was approved in Stafford County. Mr. Swan stated that the referenced referendum was approved to fund several specific projects within the county. Mr. Swan advised that one project specifically was for repairs to Poplar Road. Mr. Swan relayed that the money approved was designated for safety improvements to be made on various roads in the County. Mr. Swan stated that the Poplar Road project is now in Phase 3, and eight years later, the project has not advanced and is in a stalemate situation. Mr. Swan relayed that he has contacted the Planning Director in Stafford County for further information; however, to date, he has not heard back from him. Mr. Swan stated that he would like explanation of where the money went that was specifically ear-marked for road improvements within the County.

Mr. Gross stated that he was vaguely aware of the 2008 bond referendum in Stafford County but did not recall any specifics. Mr. Gross stated that in Spotsylvania County, approval of bond referendums only gives the locality the authority to pursue bonds; however, a locality is not required to pursue bond referendums as a source of project revenue.

Mr. Swan stated that as we are fortunate to have responsible people working in all of the localities and local issues directly affect citizens, that when the FAMPO committees begin looking at project prioritization that the safety factors surrounding a project should be given a higher emphasis.

ADJOURN

The July 13, 2016 meeting concluded at 8:42 p.m. The next CTAG meeting will be held on September 14, 2016 at 6:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes completed by Joanna Roberson