



**Citizens Transportation Advisory Group (CTAG) Meeting Minutes
May 13, 2015**

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Committee Members Present:

Mr. Art Snyder, Chair, Spotsylvania County
Mr. Claude Dunn, Spotsylvania County
Mr. Bill Milligan, Spotsylvania County
Mr. Todd Rump, Spotsylvania County
Ms. Michele Trampe, Spotsylvania County (In at 6:12 p.m.)
Ms. Adela Bertoldi, Stafford County
Ms. Fran Larkins, Stafford County
Ms. Dawn McGarrity, Stafford County
Mr. Guy Gormley, City of Fredericksburg
Mr. Rupert Farley, At-Large Member (Spotsylvania County)
Mr. Larry Gross, At-Large Member (Spotsylvania County)

Staff Present:

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

Others Present:

None

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Reese called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The CTAG agenda for May 13, 2015 was approved as submitted, with request by Ms. Larkins to add discussion on the Transportation Workshop that was held this past Monday night.

APPROVAL OF CTAG MEETING SUMMARY OF APRIL 15, 2015

The minutes from the CTAG meeting from April 15th were unanimously accepted as presented.

REVIEW OF FAMPO POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING OF APRIL 20, 2015

Mr. Reese advised that Resolutions No. **15-08** (Directing that a Public comment Period & Public Hearing be held prior to adoption of the FY2016 UPWP) and No. **15-09** (Allocating FY2016-2021 Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement Program CMAQ/Regional Surface Transportation Program funds) were unanimously approved.

Mr. Reese advised that Mr. Nick Donahue gave an updated presentation on HB2. Mr. Reese relayed that there was considerable discussion on this topic and this discussion is included within the minutes in tonight's agenda packet. As a result of the HB2 presentation, the Policy Committee requested that a letter reiterating this region's concerns, comments, etc. be submitted to the State and to the CTB. Mr. Reese also advised that two additional Resolutions were presented and were adopted with a majority vote and these also would be forwarded to the State and to the CTB. These Resolutions are as follows: Resolution **No. 15-10** (requesting that the CTB place the FAMPO region into a Category A rating factor weighting framework for project ratings under the new HB2's project rating system; and **No. 15-11** (requesting that the CTB reconsider the forty-five minute commute time as the standard when evaluating HB2 projects in regard to congestion mitigation). (Mr. Reese advised that the letter and both Resolutions are included under the Correspondence section in tonight's agenda packet).

Mr. Reese stated that discussion occurred on the following topic: Transportation Problems Workshop (Per request of Ms. Larkins, comments and discussion on this item were requested to be added as an additional agenda item for tonight's meeting and will be discussed in more detail at a later point in the meeting).

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Donley welcomed Mr. Todd Rump who is a newly appointed CTAG member from Spotsylvania County and is attending his first meeting tonight.

ACTION ITEMS

a.) Resolution No. 15-12, Adoption of Fiscal Year 2016 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) – Daniel Reese

Mr. Reese advised that staff has received comments from Mr. Gross and these have been reviewed accordingly. Resolution No. 15-12 is approval of the Draft FY2016 UPWP that has already been reviewed by CTAG and the Technical Committee. This will be presented to the Policy Committee at their upcoming May meeting for adoption.

Mr. Gormley advised that there was one minor typo on the Resolution and staff advised this would be amended accordingly. There was unanimous consent from CTAG to forward Resolution No. 15-12 to the Policy Committee for their endorsement.

b.) Transportation Workshop Discussion/Comments

Ms. Larkins stated that both she and Mr. Farley attended the meeting. Ms. Larkins stated that she wished there had been more CTAG representatives in attendance. Ms. Larkins stated that the workshop did allow her to get to meet people and staff that she had not met before.

Ms. Larkins stated that an issue was brought up by Mr. Robinson which she completely agreed with. Ms. Larkins relayed that the region needs to come to a realistic consensus with a strong regional coordination focus. Ms. Larkins stated that everyone knows that there is not, nor will ever be enough money given to the region to construct every project. Realizing that the allocated regional funds that will be received need to be focused on a project somewhere in the region that will provide some congestion relief ultimately does benefit everyone – even if it is a project that is not in your specific district or area. Ms. Larkins stated that improvements made anywhere will help regardless of where they occur. With this being said, that regional cooperativeness is essential, Ms. Larkins stated that she was personally concerned that not a single representative from Spotsylvania County attended or participated in the workshop forum.

Ms. Larkins stated that she spoke on behalf of herself as a citizen and not as representing the CTAG, but she asked to be given a vision for the region's future. Ms. Larkins stated that she also expressed concerns about the freight issues resulting from the Panama Canal and that these were going to be diverted to Norfolk that this will ultimately continue to increase the truck traffic on Route 17 in Stafford.

Ms. Larkins stated that she thought it was an interesting point made by Ms. Parker from VDOT that once a project has been approved and funding has been allocated that the new HB2 bill states that there will not be any future project changes and/or additional funding applied over and beyond the stated amount approved. Therefore, if a project scope changes and are justified and the project ends up costing more than was allocated then HB2 will still only fund the price initially allocated.

Ms. Larkins stated that VDOT had a break-down of various projects within the region to include a small, medium, and large project. Ms. Larkins stated that she felt the information provided by VDOT was helpful and she would like to request that a VDOT representative come to a future CTAG meeting to give the same presentation to the entire committee. It made the projects under construction, with all of the funding options available, easier to understand why some projects are under construction and others are not.

Mr. Gross asked when the HB2 priority list is going to be finalized. Mr. Snyder stated and Mr. Reese concurred that the priority listing will become effective this July; however, any allocated funding given to a region will not be received until FY2016.

Mr. Farley stated that the workshop title “New Approaches to Transportation Planning” was very misleading and a total waste of his time as absolutely nothing “new” was presented. Mr. Farley stated that the presentations given still talk about making a larger mess of things throughout the region than is already here. Mr. Farley stated that he is hopeful that some corrective actions will occur as HB2 is supposed to correct some of the poor decisions that have been made here regionally. Mr. Farley stated that the region needs to focus on long-term sustainable fixes that would be more beneficial than short-term temporary fixes. Mr. Farley stated that the FAMPO region still needs to stop trying to beat the system – HB2 is developing the best transportation plan for the State and FAMPO still has the mindset of how it can alter what HB2 has in place to be of benefit to just “me” (me referring to the FAMPO region). Mr. Farley stated that dollars should not be allocated to a region to pay for bad behavior by encouraging people to live here and drive an hour or longer to work each day.

Ms. McGarrity stated that she did not feel Mr. Farley is in a position to make judgments on what drives other people to do the things they do. Ms. McGarrity stated that with FAMPO pursuing a more aggressive approach does not make them selfish but instead reinforces the realities the region faces. Ms. McGarrity stated that each region needs to address its own real issues and as everyone is competing for the same \$440 million dollars of state-wide money that the region must be able to sell and defend its needs and requests. Ms. McGarrity stated that Bristol for example does not care how much, if any, funding is allocated to this region but will do all that they can to present a case to the CTB and HB2 that their needs have the highest priority. Mr. Gormley stated that state-wide I-95 is the worst and most highly congested road in the State so the needs here in this region no longer just affect the citizens here but are having detrimental effects state-wide and even nation-wide so trying to get a higher allocation of funds is the direction in which we should be pursuing.

Ms. Trampe asked exactly what is the stated goal for the workshop meetings. Mr. Reese stated that the workshops were set-up for two sessions; the first being informational & educational in nature; and the second being to brain-storm projects of benefit for consideration throughout the region. Ms. Trampe reiterated again that she would like to see the real and true numbers on how much money comes into a region and how much goes out. Mr. Farley stated that he did not feel this request was relevant. Ms. Bertoldi stated that this is very relevant – that if citizens are being told their taxes will raise to off-set a specific project and then the tax dollars goes to other region citizens have a right and reason to be mad.

Ms. Bertoldi stated that she would like someone to explain to her why the scope of projects changes and why projects seem to continually get de-funded. Ms. Bertoldi stated that like with the Route 630 project the original scope was to be a complete four-lane road; however, it has now been broken down into smaller segments; some portions will consist of four-lanes and other will still remain as two-lanes.

Mr. Snyder stated that projects are being broken down into segments and phases and if only a certain amount of money is being allocated and not sufficient enough for the total project cost, that the project is then broken into smaller phases to cover as much construction as the money covers.

Mr. Snyder stated that there are two sets of criteria with HB2 in regard to state-wide prioritizations. One is dedicated to congestion relief and the other is related to economic development. Mr. Snyder stated that some of the reasons that congestion occurs is that funds are being diverted to places where ridership is not present and/or are designated to other areas within the State. Mr. Snyder stated that some of the designations to other areas state-wide are purely political thus having the other regions constantly playing catch-up. For example, this region has had an extreme need for a new river crossing project – not only to aid in congestion relief in this area but to aid in the continuous congestion that occurs daily on I-95 going from Washington to Richmond and even state-wide and nation-wide. So when HB2 finalizes its project prioritizations, if this project does not come out as the number one project needed state-wide, he is inclined to personally believe that the other areas who receive more funding are receiving this purely from a political standpoint and not on a true need basis.

Ms. Donley advised that there were twenty-four people in attendance at the first workshop forum and those copies of the minutes from that session are available and were distributed as a hand-out for CTAG members to read and review.

CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Reese advised that correspondence included in tonight's agenda packet is both the letter with comments and Resolutions No. 15-10 & No. 15-11 that relate to request made from the Policy Committee at their April meeting in regard to the HB2 updated presentation.

STAFF REPORT

Mr. Reese advised that he would be attending the Virginia Transportation Conference in Williamsburg later this month. Mr. Reese also relayed that interviews have been finalized with the Policy Sub-Committee in regard to filling the position of Transportation Administrator and that an offer will be made in the near future to the candidate that was recommended by the sub-committee. Mr. Reese also relayed that staff has completed the first round of interviews for the Regional Transportation Planner's position and this interview process should be finalized very shortly as well.

MEMBER REPORTS

Mr. Milligan asked if there was any member in attendance at tonight's meeting who does not agree that the region needs a new by-pass of some kind built somewhere. There was majority consensus that yes a new by-pass is needed. Mr. Milligan stated that citizens within his district in Spotsylvania County have met over many years to develop alternative proposals and he would like to have a spot on next month's CTAG agenda to bring these alternatives to the table so at least CTAG can review them. Mr. Milligan advised that he has maps, hand-outs, etc. remaining from the work done that can be shared with the members. Ms. Larkins stated that she too has information available from alternative proposals considered in the past in Stafford County and would like to present these as well. Mr. Snyder stated that also a third alternative that has never been proposed is to put in express lanes that are in place on the Woodrow Wilson Bridge and Route 270 in Maryland. These have proven to be effective;

however, the real problem this region faces with this alternative is crossing the Rappahannock. Mr. Snyder stated that there has to be some new alternative made available to the region that provides for an additional river crossing option. Mr. Gormley stated that he would like having proposals heading further south than Massaponax reviewed as well.

Mr. Farley stated that the cheaper alternative is to put in congestion pricing which would force the developers to “pay” to “pave”. Mr. Farley stated that it has been proven that beltway concepts are not cost effective or successful so this too should be an option the region stays away from. Ms. McGarrity stated that she was previously from Houston and the beltways that were constructed there were in fact quite successful. Ms. McGarrity stated that they are not as effective now because the population has simply continued to increase since the beltway was constructed.

Mr. Gormley stated that he would like to see the same data that VDOT will be providing to Mr. Ross per his request from the last FAMPO meeting in regard to the HOT lane data. Mr. Gormley stated that he would like for both VDOT and a representative from Transurban to come to the CTAG meeting again in July so follow-up discussion, data, etc. could be explored. Mr. Gormley stated that he specifically wants to see both south-bound and north-bound data prior to Exit 136. Ms. Larkins stated that she would like to see data on whether VRE ridership has increased since the HOT lanes opened.

Ms. Trampe stated that she still would like to see data that shows how much money is given to the region and how much of the money leaves the region. Mr. Reese stated that VDOT has been approached about this request and to date they have not been able to provide any reports that reflect this specific data. Mr. Reese stated that he will follow-up again with VDOT on this request.

Ms. Larkins stated that both she & Mr. Farley attended the VDOT Six-Year Planning meeting that was held at Germanna. Ms. Larkins encouraged the CTAG members to attend an MPO meeting as she has found these to be very informative. Mr. Snyder stated that he would be attending this Monday’s meeting to present a letter to the Policy Committee for their consideration of CTAG having a non-voting seat at the table during the Policy Committee meetings and for CTAG to have a standing agenda spot on the Policy Committee agendas for information to be relayed from CTAG to the Policy Committee as the need arises. Ms. Larkins stated that this meeting would be a great opportunity for CTAG to attend with a good showing and representation.

ADJOURN

The May 13th meeting was adjourned at 7:12 p.m. The next meeting will be held on June 10, 2015.

Meeting Minutes completed by JoAnna Roberson