



**FAMPO Technical Committee Meeting Minutes
June 8, 2015**

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Members Present:

Joey Hess, Chair, County of Stafford
Bassam Amin, City of Fredericksburg
Erik Nelson, City of Fredericksburg
Dan Cole, County of Spotsylvania
Brad Johnson, County of Stafford
Chris Arabia, Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)
Rodney White, Fredericksburg Regional Transit (FRED)
Diana Utz, George Washington Regional Commission (GWRC)
Cynthia Porter Johnson, Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC)
Allison Richter, Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)
Sonali Soneji, Virginia Railway Express (VRE)

Others Present:

Ed Keasler, Stafford

Staff Members Present:

Lloyd Robinson, FAMPO
Marti Donley, FAMPO
JoAnna Roberson, GWRC

CALL TO ORDER

The FAMPO Technical Committee meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

APPROVAL OF TECHNICAL COMMITTEE AGENDA

The Technical Committee agenda for June 8, 2015 was approved as submitted.

APPROVAL OF TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 4, 2015

The Technical Committee minutes from the May 4th meeting were approved as submitted.

REVIEW OF FAMPO POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING OF MAY 18, 2015

Mr. Robinson advised that the minutes are included in today's packet. Mr. Robinson advised that under the Chairman's comments, that Mr. Milde expressed support for completion of the southern segment of the I-95 Express Lane projected and instructed staff to prepare a status report and action plan for moving forward.

Mr. Robinson relayed that there was considerable member comment and discussion on Mr. Milde's request and these comments are included within the minutes included in today's agenda packet. Mr. Robinson advised that the status report has been completed by staff and will be discussed in greater detail in the Discussion Item category on today's agenda.

Mr. Robinson advised that Resolution No. 15-12, adopting the FY2016 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) was unanimously adopted. Mr. Robinson relayed that no comments were received during the public comment period and/or at the public hearing. Mr. Robinson stated that a CTAG member provided extensive comments prior to the public comment period ending and that these comments were made individually and not consensus from the CTAG committee. Mr. Robinson advised that the comments forwarded to staff were more of technical reviews and/or comments and did not require changes within the UPWP. Mr. Robinson stated that the comments submitted were acknowledged and addressed by staff and responses forwarded back to the citizen accordingly.

Mr. Robinson advised that under the Discussion category, CTAG had requested to have the Policy Committee address two concerns. Mr. Robinson relayed that CTAG (Citizen's Transportation Advisory Group) recently changed its name and was previously the FAMPO TAG committee. Mr. Robinson stated that the two CTAG requests are as follows:

that CTAG be given a permanent non-voting seat on the Policy Committee that will be held by either the CTAG chair or a designee; and

that CTAG be given a standing item on the Policy Committee agendas that allows for a brief report, re-cap, feedback, etc. as needed on a specific transportation project or concern that reflects CTAG committee consensus and not an individual member comment

Mr. Robinson stated that staff was asked to get comparisons state-wide and nationally on how other citizen advisory groups are conducted. Mr. Robinson stated that even though not mandatory but however consistently that a citizen's advisory group is part of the MPO's that were polled. Mr. Robinson stated that there is no consistent name that each organization is called but they are all volunteer committees that work in conjunction with an MPO. Mr. Robinson stated that of those that were polled, that member representation in a non-voting capacity to the Policy Committee is pretty standard. Mr. Robinson also advised that having the committee have a standing item on the regular Policy Committee agendas was not uncommon either.

Mr. Robinson advised that it was unanimous from the FAMPO Policy Committee that the two requests submitted by CTAG for Policy Committee endorsement were both approved. Mr. Robinson stated that CTAG representation will begin with the June Policy Committee meeting.

Mr. Robinson advised that discussion items included the FAMPO workshop meeting that was held in conjunction with VDOT staff. Mr. Robinson stated that there were approximately 25 people in attendance and that Stafford was well represented with both elected officials and staff members. Mr. Robinson relayed that the City had two elected officials in attendance and that Spotsylvania had no representation.

Mr. Robinson advised that the second part of the workshops will be more of a focus on coming together on projects and goals on a regional perspective. Mr. Robinson stated that the meeting date has not been finalized to date; however, will occur somewhere between July 6th – July 15th. Ms. Richter stated that it was important that this meeting occur before the next CTB meeting. Mr. Robinson advised that there will be categories whereby the region will receive funding and these are the state-wide allocations that will encompass the HB2 project application process and designation and the VDOT district-wide funding source which will allow individual localities to submit projects. Mr. Robinson stated that the state-wide funding category will include allocations that will enable a project to become fully funded through all phases of development and construction. Mr. Robinson stated that it would financially aid a region if one specific project is submitted and endorsed. Mr. Robinson relayed that the TIP which has been endorsed by all localities currently includes several top projects and these are: the Route 630 interchange project (which is now fully funded); the Rappahannock River Crossing project; Jackson Gateway; and southern extension of the HOT lanes project. Mr. Robinson stated that the percentages assigned to each of these projects as the region's most needed are as follows: Route 630 – 75%; Rappahannock River Crossing – 75%; Jackson Gateway – 71%; & southern HOT lanes extension – 46%.

Mr. Robinson advised that all local officials will be invited to participate in the upcoming second workshop meeting and that the CAO monthly meeting was held last week at GWRC & each locality was advised that it would be beneficial for each to have staff members in attendance as well. Mr. Robinson stated that per request from the Policy Committee that this region has now been classified into a Category A rating (the region was previously classified as a Category B).

Ms. Richter stated that the second workshop meeting would be an opportunity for localities to bring in individual projects that have higher project cost associated with them. Ms. Richter stated that she just recently attended a training session on HB2 and HB1887. In order for a locality to submit an individual project, each locality needs to participate in a two-part training seminar and Ms. Richter stated that the second workshop meeting can serve as both a meeting to gather a regional focus on the top priority project and also satisfy one of the two required meetings for locality participation for HB2/HB1887. Ms. Richter stated that the final segment of the required training will occur later in the summer.

Lastly, Mr. Robinson advised that the Policy Committee has hired Mr. Paul Agnello to be the new FAMPO administrator and that he should be starting within the next several weeks.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

ACTION ITEMS

a.) Election of Officers – Lloyd Robinson

Mr. Robinson advised that unless the Technical Committee desires to make other recommendations that the Chairman's and Vice-Chair's positions should rotate to Spotsylvania County and the City of Fredericksburg respectively.

There was unanimous committee endorsement that the FAMPO Technical Chair for the upcoming year will be Dan Cole and the Vice-Chair will be Erik Nelson.

b.) Resolution No. 15-14, Recommending that GWR Authorize the Retention of Cambridge Systematics and Michael Baker Companies as On-Call Transportation Planning Consultants – Lloyd Robinson

Mr. Robinson advised that the two consulting firms that scored the highest will be submitted to the MPO for their endorsement at the upcoming June Policy Committee meeting. Mr. Robinson stated that the selection committee includes most people in attendance at this Technical Committee meeting and that the two firms who received the highest ratings are: Cambridge Systematics and Michael Baker. There was unanimous consensus from the Technical Committee to forward Resolution No. 15-14 to the Policy Committee for endorsement.

c.) Resolution NO. 15-15, Amending the FY15-FY18 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to Provide Adjustments to Various DRPT Grants Affecting the FAMPO Region – Lloyd Robinson

Mr. Robinson advised that Resolution No. 15-15 includes two types of amendments. The first are notated in blue within the document included in today's agenda packet and are essentially just house-keeping and administrative requirements. The second type includes an additional \$50,000 of DRPT funding to be allocated to FRED. Mr. Robinson stated that this additional funding to FRED does not take away from funding allocated to other categories or other agencies. There was unanimous consensus from the Technical Committee to forward Resolution No. 15-15 to the Policy Committee for endorsement.

DISCUSSION ITEM

a.) Extension of I-95 Express Lanes from Exit 143 to Exit 126 – Lloyd Robinson

Mr. Robinson advised that this topic arose from the Chairman's comments at the May 2015 FAMPO Policy Committee meeting. There was substantial discussion and some of the main points from the discussion are as follows:

the completion of the Northern Express HOT lanes has now moved congestion issues that previously occurred at Exit 152 to South of Exit 143

the extension of the Express Lanes to Exit 126 will not solve the problems so should not be pursued

the extension of the Express Lanes to Exit 126 will solve the problems and should in fact be pursued

the completion of the Northern Express lanes hurt I-95 traffic heading southbound and ruined I-95 and needs to be rectified

the completion of the Northern Express lane project wasted a billion dollars

the Southern extension of the Express lane project will cost two billion dollars and should no longer be considered

completion of the Southern Extension of the Express lanes was FAMPO's highest interstate priority in 2040 LRTP and was wrongfully so

VDOT is on record as stating that the cost of the Southern extension project was fully funded and would be completed between 2020 and 2024

since HB2 has become law, the assurances from VDOT for full funding to the Southern extension project are no longer valid

what work, if any, is now being undertaken on the Southern Express lanes

Mr. Robinson stated that FAMPO was tasked with following up on the concerns mentioned above and to report back to the committee at the upcoming June meeting with a current status. Mr. Robinson provided the following updates:

the Northern Express lanes have now moved congestion south of Exit 143 – Mr. Robinson stated that all of the personal testimony received to date does support this contention and that VDOT has also publically agreed to parts of this assessment. Mr. Robinson advised that FAMPO staff has compiled a real time I-95 traffic data report for before and after the opening of the Northern Express HOT lanes project.

the Southern Express lanes will or will not solve problems – no staff recommendation at this time

the Northern Express lanes ruined I-95 – no staff recommendation at this time

the Northern Express lane project wasted one billion dollars – no staff recommendation at this time

the Southern Express lane project will cost two billion dollars and should be cancelled – no staff recommendation at this time; however, with regard to the cost of project, please refer to VDOT’s cost estimate of \$735 million dollars included in the attached letters from both the former VDOT Commissioner Whirley and the current Commissioner Kilpatrick from the 2012 cost estimates. Mr. Robinson stated that in the adopted 2040 LRTP the cost estimates were inflated by 3% annually and the total cost implementation for the Southern Express lane project was at \$1.05 billion in the current plan with a scheduled implementation date to occur between 2020 and 2024

Completion of the Southern Express Lane project was FAMPO’s highest interstate priority Project in the 2040 adopted LRTP and was wrongfully so – Mr. Robinson stated that the reason this project was included within the Constrained LRTP as being fully funded was a result of the attached VDOT Commissioners’ correspondence to FAMPO assuring staff that completion of the Southern Express lane project was fully funded. This item was debated and discussed at length by the Policy Committee and both VDOT & FHWA. The Southern Express lane project was to be funded outside of the previous fiscal constraints and was therefore not subject to competition with other interstate priority projects. Mr. Robinson advised that the actual ratings for the region’s top interstate priority projects that is included in the 2040 Plan, and was developed according to the adopted FAMPO Project Prioritization methodology is as follows:

Project	Score	Rank
I-95 Exit 140 Interchange	75	1
I-95 Rappahannock River Crossing Exits 133-130	75	1
Exit 126 Interchange (Jackson Gateway)	71	3
Southern Express lanes	47	4

VDOT Commissioner letters assuring full funding for the southern express lanes project are currently in a limbo status and final recommendations are unknown at this time whether it is valid and/or no longer valid. FAMPO Staff has asked VDOT for clarification and to date are still awaiting response back from VDOT; however, due to both previous VDOT letters, the Southern Express lane project was to be fully and was to be included within FAMPO’s Constrained LRTP.

What work, if any, is currently being undertaken on the Southern Express lane project – Mr. Robinson stated that to date, it is not known what work, if any, is currently underway on the project; however, it is known that the project has an approved Environmental Assessment (EA) completed under both state and federal environmental law that would allow the project to advance through the design, right-of-way, and construction phases if funding becomes available.

Mr. Robinson advised that staff completed a study on the I-95 corridor for traffic conditions between exits 126 and 143 for a before and after the opening of the I-95 Northern Express lane project. Mr. Robinson stated that the study compared northbound a.m. average speeds at specific

points for two time periods – August 2014 to November 2014 (before the HOT lane project opened) and February 2015 to May 2015 (after the HOT lane project opened). These data counts occurred seven days a week and were not based on a specific week day or weekend day. The results showed that at Exit 126 there was a one mile per hour speed reduction after the HOT lanes project opened; at Exit 130 there was essentially a balance between the before and after speeds; at Exit 133 there was a 9.04 MPH speed increase after the opening; at Exit 136 there was a significant speed reduction after the opening of 15.20 MPH; at Exit 140 there was a significant speed reduction after the opening of 17.20 MPH; and at Exit 143 there was a speed reduction of 20% after the opening.

Mr. Robinson advised that the analysis for the southbound p.m. data showed the following: at Exit 143 there was an 11.44 MPH speed decrease after opening; at Exit 140 there was 11.28 MPH speed decrease after opening; at Exit 136 there was 5.26 MPH speed decrease after opening; at Exit 133 there was 2.84 MPH speed decrease after opening; at Exit 130 there was a 4.34 MPH speed decrease after opening; and at Exit 126 there was a balance.

Mr. Robinson stated that the observations obtained from the study going northbound showed a minor increase in the average speeds between Exit 126 and Exits 133 at 2.4 mph after the opening of the I-95 HOT lanes project. Mr. Robinson stated that a significant decrease in average speeds occurred between Exit 136 and Exit 143 after the opening. Mr. Robinson stated that indications from our Northern Virginia counterparts have indicated that conditions have improved into Prince William County after the opening.

Mr. Robinson stated that the southbound observations showed a significant decrease in speed between Exits 143 and 136 at 9.3 mph after the opening of the I-95 Express lane project. Mr. Robinson stated that a minor decrease in speed between Exits 133 and 126 at 1.51 mph occurred after the opening of the express lane project.

Mr. Robinson relayed that the methodology that was utilized to compile the data was obtained from the Vehicle Probe Project Suite. The analysis looked at data that addresses average travel speeds and congestion rates during each of the four-month segmented time frames. Mr. Robinson stated that the analysis does show degradation to the interstate mainline system in the FAMPO Region following the opening of the I-95 Express lane project.

CORRESPONDENCE

In packet and self-explanatory

STAFF REPORT

None

MEMBER REPORTS

George Washington Regional Commission (GWRC): Ms. Utz advised that work is being finalized on the Six Year TDM plan and a presentation will be upcoming soon. Ms. Utz also advised that GWRC has taken over the Advantage Vanpool Self-Insured program and that it is now live on the website. Ms. Utz stated that testing has been on-going and GWRC will completely become responsible for the maintenance of this program effective July 1st.

County of Spotsylvania: Mr. Cole advised that the County will be conducting a transportation committee meeting this Thursday on a Route 3 Access Management Study. The VRE station is probably looking at a fall time frame for completion and currently the parking lot and signal work is being completed.

Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT): Mr. Arabia advised that DRPT is conducting a field travel survey and this is an on-line survey being done by invitation only so if calls are received, the survey is legit. Mr. Arabia also advised that the CTB will be meeting on June 19th and both DRPT and VDOT will be looking to receive approval on the SYIP.

Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC): Ms. Porter Johnson advised that Mr. Eric Marx has taken over the helm of full responsibility for his new position as PRTC Interim Director.

Virginia Railway Express (VRE): Ms. Soneji advised that VRE is still hopeful that the Spotsylvania VRE station project will in fact be completed by summer and that is still VRE's projection date.

NEXT TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING, JULY 13th, 2015/ADJOURN

The next Technical Committee meeting will be held on Monday, June 13th at 9:00. The Technical Committee meeting for June 8th was adjourned at 10:07 a.m.