



**Policy Committee Meeting Minutes
September 15, 2014**

<http://www.fampo.gwregion.org/committees/policy-committee/>

Members Present:

Mr. Paul Milde, County of Stafford (Chair)
Mr. Bev Cameron, City of Fredericksburg
Mr. Matt Kelly, City of Fredericksburg
Mr. Bill Withers, City of Fredericksburg
Mr. David Ross, Spotsylvania County
Mr. Paul Trampe, Spotsylvania County (Alternate)
Mr. Keith Dayton, Stafford County (Alternate)
Mr. Cord Sterling, Stafford County
Mr. Alfred Harf, Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC)
Ms. Marcie Parker, Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)

Others Present:

Mr. Chris Arabia, Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)
Ms. Allison Richter, Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)
Mr. Craig Van Dussen, Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)
Mr. Tom Hickey, Virginia Railway Express (VRE)
Mr. Scott Shenk, Free Lance Star

Citizens:

Mr. Rupert Farley, Citizen, Spotsylvania County

Staff Members Present:

Mr. Tim Ware, GWRC Executive Director
Mr. Andy Waple, FAMPO
Ms. Marti Donley, FAMPO
Mr. Daniel Reese, FAMPO
Ms. Diana Utz, GWRC
Ms. Leigh Anderson, GWRC

CALL FAMPO MEETING TO ORDER

Chairman Milde called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Mr. Waple advised that a quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF FAMPO AGENDA

Upon motion by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Mr. Ross, with all in consensus, the agenda was approved as submitted.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

None

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Mr. Milde welcomed Mr. Tom Hickey, VRE Chief Development Officer, who was in attendance at tonight's meeting.

ACTION ITEMS

a.) Approval of FAMPO Minutes of July 21, 2014 – Mr. Andy Waple

Upon motion by Mr. Harf and seconded by Mr. Kelly, with Mr. Dayton, Mr. Ross and Mr. Sterling abstaining, and everyone else in consensus, the minutes from the July 21st meeting were approved as submitted.

b.) Approval of Resolution No. 14-23, Requesting that the Governor Restore Full Funding for the I-95/Route 630 Interchange Project (UPC 13558) in Stafford County – Mr. Paul Milde & Mr. Andy Waple

Mr. Milde relayed that Mr. Sterling has the background on this project so he is going to make comments accordingly.

Mr. Sterling stated that he thinks everyone is aware that the governor has now removed \$5 million dollars of funding that was previously allocated to the Route 630 interchange project. Mr. Sterling stated that even though there have been specific comments made to him regarding the reasoning for this funding shift; he does not plan to re-address these comments.

However, Mr. Sterling stated the funding deficit now stalls the project and also puts it back into the State's prioritization process which will be controlled by staff in Richmond. Mr. Sterling stated that it is his feeling that this region will not fare well under the new process.

Mr. Sterling stated that he feels this region is considered to be a "fly-over" region essentially with the current administration. Therefore, if the region does not fight for every dime it can get, and for every dime we were previously promised, that he is afraid the funding will just continue to be whittled away.

Mr. Sterling stated that if funding is restored, then the project can continue to proceed with right-of-way acquisition and construction and then the region can continue to move forward on the next project. Mr. Sterling stated that he fears that if money is not restored back to the project that the money allocated here will begin to drift to other regions within the State.

Mr. Ross stated that he has not read anything and would like to know what the reasons were for the funding reduction. Mr. Sterling advised that the “stated” reason is because of House Bill 2 which required project prioritizations. However, House Bill 2 actually says that any project that has been fully funded through the right-of-way process would then be grandfathered in. The Route 630 project was fully funded through this process. Now with taking the money away, the project is no longer fully funded and will go back into the re-prioritization process. Mr. Sterling stated that to date, the new prioritization process and criteria have not even been developed.

Mr. Sterling relayed that when he was serving as the region’s CTB member that presentations and briefings were given on this project and this project has been discussed with FHWA for the last twenty years.

Mr. Sterling stated that several years ago there was a CTB briefing given that outlined the economic activity that infrastructure projects generated at a time when the State is facing a financial budget crunch that a freeze should not occur by putting a hold on any infrastructure project.

Mr. Sterling relayed that he has also been told that \$200 million dollars of funding for new projects in the Charlottesville area that did not previously exist will now go forward. Mr. Sterling stated that he questioned this and was told that these projects were different because they were “campaign” promises projects.

Mr. Ross stated that as Mr. Connors is not here tonight, has he weighed in on this concern. Mr. Milde stated that Mr. Connors is aware and has taken a more careful approach of not taking a position at this time; however, does remain optimistic.

Mr. Milde stated that what has become clear with meetings held with Mr. Connors and with VDOT, is that originally we were led to believe that \$30 million dollars of funding was removed from the project as a result of financial constraints state-wide. Mr. Milde stated however it seems obvious that they are removing money from the project for the sole purpose of having it go back into the evaluation prioritization process. Mr. Milde stated that this body has made this project the number one interstate/interchange project region-wide.

Mr. Milde stated that the Route 630 project is tied in to coincide with other projects in Stafford Courthouse Area. Mr. Milde stated that not moving forward on the project is devastating to the Courthouse re-development in Stafford County and to the region’s transportation network system. Therefore, Mr. Milde relayed that the Stafford County Board of Supervisors is going to do everything it can to keep the project on track.

Mr. Sterling stated that to his knowledge, this is the only project that has already gone through the prioritization process where funding has then been reduced. Mr. Sterling relayed that the State has stated that there are 20-30 other projects state-wide that are in the same classification. However, to date, no other projects have been specifically identified. Mr. Milde stated that the project is not about money but in fact related to something else.

Mr. Kelly stated that he wanted to reiterate a comment made by Mr. Sterling. Mr. Kelly stated that the Route 630 interchange project has been a number one priority for FAMPO as long as he has been affiliated with the organization.

Mr. Kelly stated that the reason it has remained the number one regional project is that when this district went forward with the airport interchange project, FHWA came in and said the airport project would receive funding. However, the region must make needed improvements to Route 630 as per federal mandates. Mr. Kelly stated that for now for the State to no longer support this project, there is something else involved in lieu of project prioritizations.

Mr. Milde stated that by not restoring the full funding previously allocated to the Route 630 project in Stafford County this will in turn have negative impacts on other projects throughout the region. Mr. Milde asked that the Policy Committee consider endorsement of Resolution No. 14-23 and that the Resolution request also be forwarded to the Governor.

Mr. Waple advised that he will be presenting FAMPO's request and Resolution No. 14-23, if approved, at the upcoming VDOT meeting on October 2nd and that staff will also be forwarding the Resolution to the CTB, to the Governor and to the Secretary of Transportation.

Upon motion by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Mr. Trampe, with Ms. Parker abstaining, and all others in consensus, Resolution No. 14-23 was adopted.

c.) Approval of FAMPO Resolution No. 14-24, Amending the Fiscal Year 2012-2015 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to Include Funding for Project UPC #105832 for the Installation of a Traffic Signal at US-1 & Massaponax Church Road/Rt.608 – Mr. Andy Waple

Upon motion by Mr. Ross and seconded by Mr. Kelly, with all in consensus, Resolution No. 14-24 was adopted.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

a.) Virginia Railway Express (VRE) System Plan – Mr. Andy Waple and Mr. Tom Hickey

Mr. Waple advised that Mr. Hickey, who is VRE's Chief Development Officer, is in attendance tonight and he is going to brief the Policy Committee on VRE's 2040 System Plan.

Mr. Hickey stated that VRE is known for safe operation, high customer satisfaction, quality service, reliability and strong partnerships with the railroads. Mr. Hickey relayed that the significant issues include the worst congestion in the United States, the limitations of economic growth in Northern

Virginia, VRE is approaching capacity, and the growth expected by 2040 will result in a 20-30% percent increase in employment and a 40-90% population increase.

Mr. Hickey relayed that the goals of the VRE 2040 System Plan are to provide passengers with rolling stock, stations, and services that will be maintained at the highest quality. Mr. Hickey stated that VRE will improve and expand service for its current passengers; will address the emerging ridership markets; will advance VRE's role as a partner for multimodal regional mobility options; and will invest in partnerships that will add capacity to the multi-use rail corridors.

Mr. Hickey stated that the VRE ridership has doubled since 2000. For 2013, VRE now has reached a capacity of 19,000 weekday trips. Mr. Hickey relayed that over the next 25 years that VRE could more than double its current ridership by offering more options to riders and by delivering substantial mobility improvements to both the congested corridors on I-95 & I-66.

Mr. Hickey advised that in Phase 1 of the System Plan, VRE plans to expand capacity for up to 25,000 weekday passengers. Mr. Hickey stated that as the planned phases are completed that VRE will provide increased weekday peak trains, initiate reverse-peak services, and expand off-peak service. Mr. Hickey stated that in Phase 1, from FY2014-2020 that the region will see more trains, longer trains, station and parking expansions and a third track on the Fredericksburg line.

b.) House Bill (HB) 2 Update – Mr. Andy Waple

Mr. Waple advised that VDOT's Draft Revised FY15-20 SYIP will be presented to the CTB in September. This revision reflects the revised revenue estimates and will also show the projects within HB2 that have been defunded and are now subject to the prioritization process. Mr. Waple stated that the CTB is scheduled to vote on the revised draft in November.

Mr. Waple stated that VDOT will be conducting joint public hearings and meetings around the State. The Fredericksburg District meeting will be held on October 2nd at Germanna Community College. There will be a local briefing beginning at 5:00 p.m.; followed by an open house at 5:30 p.m.; and a public hearing to be held at 6:30 p.m.

Mr. Waple relayed that FAMPO has begun discussions with the region's CTB member and the Chairman of FAMPO to discuss the involvement strategy for the HB2 process. Mr. Waple stated that FAMPO will be coordinating with other MPO's to send a unified message to the Secretary's office.

Mr. Waple stated that MPO input and public involvement within the HB2 process will be discussed at the upcoming September 24th VAMPO Board meeting. The intent of the discussions will be to formulate a letter to the State that communicates VAMPO's stand on the process and its involvement moving forward.

Mr. Waple advised that FAMPO staff has had discussion with the following MPO's in regard to their involvement and strategies within the process and their comments to date are as follows:

Transportation Planning Board (Washington, DC area MPO) – not much discussion to date has occurred and at this time they do not expect to play a significant role within

the process.

Richmond Regional MPO – this MPO has delayed work on its own prioritization methodologies due to the re-structuring of their MPO Board and their lead staff person who was responsible for the prioritization process is no longer with their MPO.

Hampton Roads TPO – this MPO has held brief discussions with their CTB representative; however, have not initiated any further follow-up at this time.

Mr. Waple stated that House Bill (HB) 2 updates will become a standing agenda item as new information is received so that the FAMPO committees can be apprised accordingly.

STAFF REPORT

None

MEMBER REPORTS

None

FAMPO CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence is included in tonight's agenda packet and is self-explanatory.

FAMPO COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Both the FAMPO Technical Committee (FTC) and the Transportation Advisory Group (TAG) meeting minutes are included in tonight's agenda packet.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – DISCUSSION OF FAMPO PERSONNEL – Chairman, Mr. Milde

Mr. Milde advised that the FAMPO Policy Committee meeting was now adjourned so that the committee members only would go into Executive Session to discuss a personnel related issue.

ADJOURN FAMPO MEETING/NEXT MEETING, SEPTEMBER 15, 2014

The FAMPO meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m. The next meeting will occur on October 20, 2014 at 7:15 p.m.