



**Policy Committee Meeting Minutes
October 20, 2014**

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

Members Present:

Mr. Paul Milde, County of Stafford (Chair)
Mr. Matt Kelly, City of Fredericksburg
Mr. Mark Whitley, City of Fredericksburg (Alternate)
Mr. Bill Withers, City of Fredericksburg
Mr. Doug Barnes, Spotsylvania County
Mr. David Ross, Spotsylvania County
Mr. Paul Trampe, Spotsylvania County (Alternate)
Mr. Anthony Romanello, Stafford County
Mr. Cord Sterling, Stafford County (In at 7:40 p.m.)
Mr. Alfred Harf, Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC)
Ms. Marcie Parker, Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)
Mr. Hap Connors, CTB Representative (Non-Voting Member)

Others Present:

Mr. Chris Arabia, DRPT
Ms. Emily Stock, DRPT
Ms. Allison Richter, VDOT
Mr. Doug Fawcett, City of Fredericksburg
Ms. Kasey Nabal, FRCC
Ms. Ashley Nixon, Senator Bryce Reeves Office
Ms. Laura Sellers, Stafford County Board of Supervisor – Garrisonville

Staff Members Present:

Mr. Andy Waple, FAMPO Transportation Administrator
Mr. Tim Ware, GWRC Executive Director
Ms. Marti Donley, FAMPO
Mr. Daniel Reese, FAMPO
Ms. Diana Utz, GWRC
Ms. JoAnna Roberson, GWRC

CALL FAMPO MEETING TO ORDER

Chairman Mr. Milde called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. and received acknowledgement that a quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF FAMPO AGENDA

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

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

None

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Mr. Milde welcomed Ms. Laura Sellers and Ms. Emily Stock both attending tonight's FAMPO meeting. Ms. Sellers is a Stafford County Board of Supervisors member who represents the Garrisonville District and Ms. Stock is with DRPT and will be presenting a briefing to the committee later in tonight's meeting on the high-speed rail project from Richmond to Washington.

Mr. Milde stated that a big topic that has been discussed regularly over the last several months is in regard to the Route 630 Interstate Project. Mr. Milde stated that this is a huge project for Stafford County and is also the region's number one transportation priority project.

Mr. Milde relayed that as a result of the CTB and Secretary of Transportation's latest decisions, funding of this priority regional project has been lessened by \$35 million dollars. Mr. Milde stated that in order to match the new decreased funding amount, a list of project elements have been developed by VDOT and presented to Stafford County. These elements would be eliminated from the original project to meet current funding allocations. The project elements would have to be addressed as standalone projects or added to other improvement projects in that area, i.e. the Route 630 widening project.

Mr. Milde stated that this project is scheduled to occur within his district so he personally is interested and concerned about his constituents' as well as to the impacts lessening the project scope that would have major regional negative ramifications.

Mr. Milde relayed that one cut discussed would result in the elimination of new 570 commuter parking spaces in the Park & Ride lot. Mr. Milde stated that the lost parking spaces is one issue; however, the Route 630 Park & Ride lot is already operating at 85% capacity and if there is no additional spaces built, it could pose a problem for car and vanpooling in the Region, especially with the opening of the I-95 Express lanes in December.

Mr. Connors stated that even though less than what was anticipated and hoped for, that the region is receiving \$150 million dollars for the I-95/Route 630 Interchange project and that is a lot of money. Mr. Connors he believes that if everyone works together, the project will get built and the region will still see things happen.

ACTION ITEMS

a.) Approval of FAMPO Minutes of September 15, 2014 – Mr. Andy Waple

Upon motion by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Mr. Ross, with Mr. Romanello & Mr. Whitley abstaining, and everyone else in consensus, the minutes from the September 15th meeting were approved as submitted.

b.) Approval of Resolution No. 14-25, Appointment Staff as a Member and Alternate to the Virginia Association of MPOS (VAMPO) Board – Mr. Andy Waple

Mr. Waple advised that Resolution No.14-25 is requesting appointment of himself as the Staff member to the VAMPO Board and Mr. Tim Ware as alternate.

Upon motion by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Mr. Harf, and all others in consensus, Resolution No. 14-25 was adopted.

c.) Approval of FAMPO Resolution No. 14-26, Amending the FY15-18 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to Authorize an Amendment to the Scope of Work for the Route 1 Signal Optimization Project (UPC #100451) in the City of Fredericksburg and also to Switch the Allocation Years of Funds Between the US-1 Signal Project and the Route 610/Onville Road Intersection Project – Mr. Andy Waple

Mr. Waple advised that Resolution No. 14-26 is a request from VDOT and coordination has occurred between VDOT, the City of Fredericksburg and Stafford County and all concur. The Route 610 Onville Road project in Stafford County has funds allocated for the FY15-16 years; however, this project is scheduled to be re-scoped in the spring of 2015. The City of Fredericksburg signal optimization project is ready to proceed; however, funding was not to be allocated until FY17-18 years so the project allocations are going to be switched and the City's signal project will occur during the FY15-16 years.

Upon motion by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Mr. Romanello, with all in consensus, Resolution No. 14-26 was adopted. Mr. Waple did ask that Mr. Fawcett with the City of Fredericksburg submit an updated application so that VDOT will be able to run its Air Quality Benefit Analysis and that internally, the applications will be consistent.

d.) Approval of Resolution No. 14-27, Endorsing Stafford County's Grant Application to the Virginia Department of Transportation for Fiscal Year 2016 Transportation Alternatives Funding – Mr. Andy Waple

Mr. Waple advised Resolution No. 14-27 is asking for FAMPO endorsement of the FY2016 transportation alternative funding project. Mr. Waple stated that these projects do require FAMPO endorsement; however, FAMPO does not rate or prioritize projects but simply just endorses the process. Mr. Waple also relayed that Phase VI of the Ferry Farm Trail this is the only project submission within the region for the FY2016 Transportation Alternatives program.

Upon motion by Mr. Romanello and seconded by Mr. Whitley, with all in concurrence, Resolution No. 14-27 was adopted.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

a.) DRPT Southeast High Speed Rail Richmond to Washington DC Corridor Tier II EIS Update – Mr. Andy Waple & Ms. Emily Stock, DRPT Manager of Rail Planning

Mr. Waple advised that Ms. Stock, DRPT Manager of Rail Planning will be giving a presentation. Ms. Stock advised that the web-site was launched today and the web address is: WWW.DC2RVARAIL.COM. Ms. Stock encouraged the members to go on the web-site and review the information that is available. Ms. Stock stated that the Tier II EIS project **envisions** a third track between Richmond and Washington, DC. Ms. Stock also encouraged the members to attend one of the upcoming focus meetings scheduled across the State. The meeting for this region will be held on November 12th at the Quantico Museum from 5-7:30 p.m.

Ms. Stock stated the preferred alternatives from the Tier I EIS called for rail improvements that will generate higher speeds and minimization of impacts by using the existing rail infrastructures and railroad right-of-ways. Ms. Stock stated that the Tier II EIS is on a fast track schedule and DRPT hopes to complete the environmental work and secure a record of decision (ROD) within three years.

In addition to the third track, Ms. Stock relayed that Tier II EIS will also include an assessment of additional sidings; straightening out curves; improvement of interlocks, etc. to benefit both freight and passenger rail usage. Ms. Stock advised that the high-speed rail as defined in the Tier II EIS would enable trains to operate as fast as 90 mph.

Ms. Stock relayed that the construction of the third track on the entire corridor already has \$55 million dollars allocated to the project and that the preliminary engineering phase is already at 30% completed.

Mr. Milde asked where the balance of the required funding for construction will be coming from. Ms. Stock stated that the money required to design the project and to complete the environmental work is primarily from a high-speed rail grant from FHWA, matched as required by state and CSXT funds. With regard to construction funds required over and above the already-allocated funds, Ms. Stock advised that DRPT will be looking at other public/private partnerships or other available federal funds. Ms. Stock stated that CSX's contribution will be approximately \$3 million dollars.

Mr. Kelly asked what impacts the high-speed rail would have on the local VRE commuter rail on a long-term basis. Ms. Stock advised that VRE is also a partner on the project and it is anticipated that there will be a greater capacity for commuter rail in addition to intercity passenger rail and rail freight in the corridor.

Mr. Kelly asked who will control the additional capacity. Mr. Milde interjected that at a meeting he attended last Friday, he learned that negotiations with CSX are being rekindled to assess how many more trains can be operated in the corridor as continued, incremental investment is made in the corridor physical plant. Mr. Kelly asked what train operating privileges have already been secured by previously executed agreements, to which Mr. Harf stated that already-executed agreements provide for as many as 38 "VRE train slots" -- 32 currently being used by VRE, 4 on loan to the State; & 2 that are currently unspoken for. Mr. Harf went on to observe that slots beyond the 38 is what the recently comenvced negotiations are about. Mr. Kelly responded that the additional slot commitments need to be in writing, so there's certainty about additional operating privileges are being earned as a product of continuing public investment.

Mr. Harf added that from his perspective, it is difficult to comprehend how the various environmental assessments dovetail with one another, whereby individual projects have been segregated for individual environmental assessments and clearances, citing as an example the environmental assessment work on the Long Bridge across the Potomac River, which is set to begin shortly independent of the DRPT “third track” environmental assessment that is the subject of Ms. Stock’s presentation.

Ms. Stock replied that the various assessments are being coordinated, and she acknowledged that this can be daunting at times. The challenge is differentiating which investments lead to which benefits, and she went on to say that this is one of the things that DRPT is aiming to establish. Ms. Stock added that the environmental assessment work she is presenting this evening will include the development of a full service development plan, with accompanying ridership and revenue expectations. Ms. Stock went on to say that to address the issue of increased train operating privileges as incremental investments are made, modeling will be undertaken to assess how particular incremental investments increase train operating capacity for all prospective users.

Mr. Harf observed that the principle of incremental improvements with a third track as the ultimate aim is an elegant way of allowing benefits to be realized over time, since the third track in its entirety is a costly undertaking that will surely require many years to achieve.

Ms. Stock concurred, noting that this principle was embedded in the Tier I environmental work. Mr. Kelly made the point that in his opinion, VRE commuter rail service expansion is more important to the region than new high-speed capabilities.

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

Mr. Waple advised that since the last Policy Committee meeting, the draft revised Six-Year program has been released, and everyone is now aware of the reduced funding impacts to the region. Mr. Waple stated that Deputy Secretary Donohue will be coming back before FAMPO over the next several months and wants feedback submitted from each MPO regarding the process of how the region will weigh the six required factors for each project submitted.

Mr. Waple stated that staff has met with both VDOT district staff and what is being proposed is that a brief document be developed that outlines the relative recommended weights in conjunction with input from the Technical Committee. Mr. Waple relayed that the document would include a comparison of the 6 required factors within the region’s adopted project prioritization methodology; the relative ranking of the 6 factors for the MPO area, and explanations of the relative rankings (high, medium & low); and finally a prioritization of the 6 factors as to their significance to the Region. There were several comments and questions expressed by committee members at this meeting as well as at the previous meeting. Mr. Waple stated that all of these questions and comments were going to be addressed and reviewed by staff and also submitted to Deputy Secretary Donohue and to the CTB. Mr. Waple advised that this list would be on-going and would be included as an attachment to upcoming Policy Committee agenda packets. Mr. Waple stated that House Bill 2 updates will become a standing agenda item as new information is continually being received so that the FAMPO committees can be kept apprised.

c.) Southeastern Institute of Research (SIR) Telephone Research Survey – Mr. Andy Waple

Mr. Waple advised that the Southeastern Institute of Research (SIR) Telephone Research Survey is included in tonight’s agenda packet as an informational item and will be brought back before the Committee in November for consideration and endorsement.

Mr. Waple relayed that staff would utilize the results of the survey for the preparation of the next Long Range Transportation Plan update. Mr. Waple stated that telephone surveys were completed in both 2009 & 2010. Mr. Waple advised that having this component helps staff formulate goals and objectives and to validate planning assumptions for the Long Range Plan. Mr. Waple stated that a representative from SIR will be in attendance at the November meeting to answer questions the committee may have.

Mr. Waple stated that the questions that will be asked during the survey will come from input received from the three FAMPO committees (Policy, Technical, & TAG). Mr. Waple stated that some of the questions staff has recommended are: citizen awareness of FAMPO; citizen perception of major transportation issues and concerns within the region; citizen understanding of where and how transportation projects as a whole are ranked & prioritized; citizen interest in paying higher taxes in order to get more results; etc.

Mr. Waple advised that citizen feedback, either in support or against, would also be gathered on the major transportation projects within the region to include: Rappahannock Parkway, Berea Parkway, Jackson Gateway & the Rappahannock River Crossing projects as well as the I95 Express Lanes as they are now and the plan to ultimately extend them into Spotsylvania County (Exit # 126).

Mr. Waple stated that the timing of the survey would occur after the HOT lanes project is open. Mr. Waple relayed that the survey would be conducted in January/February of 2015 and would be an approximate 12-minute survey. Mr. Waple stated that the survey will include 75% landline participation and 25% cell line participation. Mr. Waple stated that the survey would be a statistically valid random sample and a total of 900 completed surveys will be received. Of the 900 surveys made, 200 will be to residents of the City of Fredericksburg; 350 to Spotsylvania County & 350 to Stafford County. Mr. Waple stated that the survey process will encompass a total of 8 months; with 4 months of time conducting the survey & 4 months for analysis reports to be generated. Mr. Waple advised that the cost of the survey will not exceed \$39,000.

Mr. Romanello asked if the survey was either state or federally required. Mr. Waple stated that it is not a requirement of any agency. Mr. Romanello stated that he felt that as transportation concerns are already an irritating topic for residents within the region & if you survey citizens to get their input then this will generate a red flag that says if the question is being asked then that must mean something is about to happen. Mr. Romanello also relayed that it is a local election year and a survey on-going during this time period could also be very controversial. Mr. Romanello stated that as the survey is not either a State or Federal requirement that he was not sure that spending \$39,000 to get answers to questions that have been discussed within the region for decades is financially worthwhile.

Mr. Milde asked if the feedback received from those surveyed would serve as a guide on how the region moves towards relieving the traffic congestion experienced daily throughout the region. Mr. Harf advised that PRTC conducts surveys as well and have done so consistently over the years.

Mr. Kelly asked if the results from the previous 2 surveys are available for review by the members. Mr. Waple stated that the survey data is available on FAMPO's website and that this link would be forwarded to all members after conclusion of tonight's meeting.

Mr. Whitley stated that one positive component of the surveys could clearly reveal what the major transportation projects are for the region and then this list could also be submitted to both the Secretary

of Transportation and to the CTB for additional reinforcement to what has already been submitted to them by FAMPO.

d.) 2014 Federal Certification Review – Mr. Andy Waple

Mr. Waple advised that the federal certification reviews are required every 4 years and that FAMPO has obligations to comply as a result of the northern portion of North Stafford County Urbanized Area being a part of the Northern Virginia/DC region, FAMPO and the Washington, DC/Maryland/Northern Virginia Urbanized Area have an agreement whereby FAMPO is responsible for the planning and programming of projects for the North Stafford portion of the Washington, DC/Maryland/Northern Virginia Urbanized Area. Mr. Waple relayed that the region receives RSTP funding as a result of the North Stafford Urbanized Area.

Mr. Waple stated that the report received from the 2010 review provided for specific recommendations and corrective actions for FAMPO to address. Mr. Waple stated that a series of questions were provided to the MPOs to answer and those questions are included in tonight's agenda packet. Actions that have already been taken by FAMPO to correct and/or revise the cited recommendations and corrective actions are included in the questionnaire. Mr. Waple relayed that all of the 2010 recommendations are already in place and that FAMPO should fare relatively well on this assessment. Mr. Waple stated that the certification review process will occur over 2 days in Washington, DC on the 28th & 29th of October and that the entire FAMPO staff, as well as VDOT staff, will be in attendance.

STAFF REPORT

Mr. Waple advised that Mr. Reese will be attending the CTB transportation conference held in Roanoke on November 12th & 13th. Mr. Waple relayed that Ms. Donley, Mr. Reese, & some TAG members attended the United Way Community Appreciation day held this past Sunday at the fairgrounds. Mr. Waple stated that this was a successful event and that a lot of information was distributed in regard to FAMPO, transportation, etc. and that 64 new citizens signed up to receive emails in regard to FAMPO meetings, issues, correspondence, etc.

MEMBER REPORTS

VDOT – Ms. Parker advised that the ribbon cutting ceremony will be held on Thursday, October 30th from 3-6:00 p.m. at the new Staffordboro Park & Ride lot. Ms. Parker stated this is more than just a “ribbon-cutting” ceremony as it will take on more like a “festival” event. Ms. Parker stated that an Express Lane representative will be on site; Easy Pass representative on site who will be able to swap out ez passes to flex passes for commuters; the safety search patrol truck will be on display to show what is available if a commuter gets stranded on the interstates; & that both FAMPO & GWRC will have a table and presentation on site as well.

City of Fredericksburg – Mr. Whitley advised that the Fall Hill Bridge project is opening this week, approximately 6 weeks ahead of schedule, and that the project was very nicely constructed.

GWRC – Mr. Ware stated that he was asked from a committee member from GWRC to bring the following question to the FAMPO Board in regard to the reduced gasoline prices. Mr. Ware stated that the question was in regard to the gasoline price reduction and loss of revenue allocations, have these affected the locality budgets? Mr. Milde stated that he had asked Mr. Waple this same question earlier tonight. Mr. Milde stated that the localities have all been through the rise & fall of gasoline prices before

and if there have been any local impacts that these have been minimal. There was consensus from the other members that they felt Mr. Milde's comments were accurate.

CTB – Mr. Connors stated that he knows there are many concerns because of the uncertainties from the CTB recommendations & allocations; but he wants everyone to continue working together. Mr. Connors stated that all of the answers to questions as of now are still unknown; however, if the region continues to put its best foot forward that we will get through the process. Mr. Connors encouraged the MPO to be specific and thorough with questions compiled to submit back to Deputy Secretary Donohue and to know that the feedback is going to be considered.

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.

ADJOURN FAMPO MEETING/NEXT MEETING, OCTOBER 20, 2014

The FAMPO meeting was adjourned at 8:36 p.m. The next meeting will occur on November 17, 2014 at 7:15 p.m.