

FREDERICKSBURG AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (FAMPO)

Fredericksburg City
Spotsylvania County
Stafford County

Matt Kelly
Chairperson

Lloyd Robinson
FAMPO Administrator

FAMPO RESOLUTION 14-12

A RESOLUTION OF THE FREDERICKSBURG AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (FAMPO) FINDING THAT FAMPO WORK ON THE I-95 EXIT 126/JACKSON GATEWAY PROJECT HAS BEEN VALUABLE AND DIRECTING FAMPO STAFF TO TRANSMIT ALL RESULTS OF THIS WORK TO SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY AND THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (VDOT) AND DIRECTING STAFF TO UNDERTAKE CERTAIN ACTIONS

WHEREAS, for the past several years, FAMPO, partnering with VDOT, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Spotsylvania County, land owners, consultants and others, has undertaken a detailed assessment of present and future development and traffic conditions in the areas of I-95 Exit 126 and Jackson Gateway in Spotsylvania County, and

WHEREAS, this work was conducted in accordance with VDOT and FHWA requirements for potential changes to I-95 and adjacent arterials, and

WHEREAS, the work completed by FAMPO and its partners includes assessments of present and future traffic and development conditions, development of alternatives to accommodate future traffic, costing and funding of those alternatives, analysis and gradation of those alternatives according to benefits, costs, impacts and other factors, and

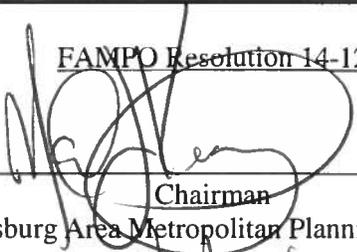
WHEREAS, FAMPO considers that its work on this project is both highly valuable in the public interest and complete.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE FREDERICKSBURG AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (FAMPO) THAT IT THANKS ITS STAFF AND PARTNERS FOR WORK COMPLETED ON THE I-95 EXIT 126/JACKSON GATEWAY STUDY, AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT FAMPO FINDS THIS WORK TO BE COMPLETE AND OF GREAT VALUE TO THE PUBLIC GOING FORWARD, AND

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED THAT FAMPO DIRECTS STAFF, AT NO ADDITIONAL COST TO FAMPO, TO PUBLISH THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY AND TO PROVIDE THOSE SAME MATERIALS TO SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY, VDOT AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES, SO THAT THEY MAY PURSUE IMPLEMENTATION OF I-95 AND ARTIRIAL IMPROVEMENTS OF THEIR CHOICE IN THE EXIT 126 AND JACKSON GATEWAY AREAS OF SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY.

Adopted by the FAMPO Policy Committee at its meeting on May 19, 2014.

FAMPO Resolution 14-12


Chairman
Fredericksburg Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
Date: 5/19/2014

OPTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE JACKSON GATEWAY I-95 STUDY (DRAFT)

Lloyd Robinson, FAMPO Administrator

February 7, 2014

Background

Project Inception and Development: This project is now in its final phase, as planned by FAMPO and its partners: Spotsylvania County, VDOT, FHWA, affected land owners and consultants. The project was initiated in 2008-2009, when the county and VDOT approached FAMPO to conduct a study of the I-95 interchange at Exit 126, a known bottleneck, and to determine the feasibility of different solutions.

At the request of the FAMPO Policy Committee, a scope of work for an interchange study was developed and agreed to between the County, VDOT, FHWA and FAMPO. The FAMPO Policy Committee agreed to undertake this work and pledged \$600,000 of RSTP funds for consultant costs to complete an interchange study which complied with State and Federal requirements.

FAMPO/GWRC issued a Request for Proposals and selected Kimley-Horn in a competitive process, as the consultant to lead the work. The selection committee was composed of representatives from VDOT, the County and FAMPO staff. A Technical Committee for the project was established, consisting of staff from the County, VDOT, FHWA and FAMPO. During the course of the project development, input was also obtained from land owners and others in the affected area.

Project Progress and Continued Development: In accordance with the agreed scope, by early 2012 the project Technical Committee had agreed on a short list of analyzed and ranked project solutions for Jackson Gateway. This short list was composed of near term modifications to Exit 126, collector/distributor (C/D) lanes extending south from Exit 126 for approximately three miles, improvements to the adjacent roadway system (US 1, US 17 and others) and construction of new I-95 access in the vicinity of Milepost 123 (this new access being connected to Exit 126 by the new C/D lanes). During this time, updates on the progress of the study were provided to the FAMPO Policy Committee and the Spotsylvania BOS, and positive feedback was obtained.

Alternative VDOT Proposal: In May and again in July 2012, VDOT provided the Technical Committee with a set of alternative proposals for solutions. In presenting these alternatives, VDOT described its objective as being to provide some relief to problems at Exit 126, although not a complete fix, but at a reduced cost.

Committee Selection of a Preferred Alternative and Phasing of the Project: In August 2012, the Technical Committee met and reviewed the short list of alternatives they had selected, as well as the new VDOT alternatives. The Committee decided to select a Preferred Alternative which included the near term fixes to Exit 126, the C/D lanes, the improvements to local roadways and the I-95 access south of Exit 126, as described above. The Committee also did two other things at that meeting: 1) they agreed to have the VDOT alternatives included in the Appendix to the project report, and 2) they agreed, based on findings of independent utility and benefits, to recommend phasing of the Preferred Alternative, so as to reduce the cost of the overall project to manageable segments.

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FAMPO and the County BOS agreed to the Committee's recommendation, and acted to fund the extra work required to phase the project.

The consultants continued their work to wrap up the preferred alternative as a phased set of projects with independent utility, and the Committee concurred with their recommendations.

Presentation and Apparent Endorsement of the Phased, Preferred Alternative: In June 2013, FAMPO and the consultants came before the Spotsylvania BOS to present the phased Preferred Alternative, which the BOS embraced in their comments at that time.

Between June and December 2013, at the direction of FAMPO staff, the consultants refined the project report into an "Interchange Modification Report" (IMR) to meet State and FHWA requirements, and solicited final comments from Committee members. The plan at that time was for FAMPO and the consultants to present the final report to the Spotsylvania BOS and the FAMPO Policy Committee, obtaining their endorsements, and to provide the report/IMR to VDOT and FHWA for approval.

Re-emergence of the Alternative VDOT Proposal: However, in January 2014, the Spotsylvania BOS requested that VDOT come before them and present their alternatives. On January 14, 2014 VDOT made its presentation on its Jackson Gateway alternatives to the BOS, and the BOS embraced the VDOT alternatives in their comments at that time.

Therefore, based on the outcome of that presentation, it is now unclear what Jackson Gateway alternatives the Spotsylvania BOS supports, and whether VDOT now supports the Committee's Preferred Alternative, as phased.

But it is also clear that this project has no budget remaining, as the budget has been fully expended in pursuing and completing the scope of work as agreed to and amended by all parties. And the VDOT alternative will need to be fully fleshed out as to its components, benefits, utility, costs and impacts, before FHWA will accept it.

Options to Complete the Jackson Gateway Study

Overview: Interstate interchange studies in Virginia are historically long and costly, compared to some other States. The reason for this is that the VDOT procedure is to utilize interchange studies, not just as traffic studies to justify new interstate interchanges or modifications to existing interchanges, but also to delve deeper into the potential projects, to understand and overcome key environmental and design issues which could derail a project at greater public expense later in the process. So the principle behind this VDOT Interstate access practice is 'to spend a few dollars on the front end of the project, to save major time and expense on the back end of the project.' The Jackson Gateway study followed this VDOT procedure and was agreed to by VDOT, the County, FHWA and FAMPO.

Of course this method of 'longer in front, shorter in back' has many theoretical aspects to recommend it, including potential time and cost savings. It also has some potential drawbacks, including political change in the Commonwealth and/or local government during the long study time.

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In the FAMPO Region, we have seen the results of these drawbacks on major project development over the past fifteen years, first with a reversal of attitude and cancellation of the Outer Connector, second with a reversal of attitude and cancellation of the Rappahannock Parkway, and, now, with an apparent change in the Preferred Alternative for the Jackson Gateway project. This is not to say that the changes/rejections to these projects were wrong. In the case of Jackson Gateway, the Committee arrived at a phased set of solutions which solved the long term problems in the area, albeit at a significant total cost. The VDOT alternative also offers a phased set of solutions, which do not seek to totally solve the problems, but which appear viable and at a much-reduced cost. But it is to say that this start/stop method of approaching major projects in the FAMPO Region presents real issues which must be dealt with dispassionately. Hence the options below.

- 1) **Complete the Original Study:** This would involve packaging the original Preferred Alternative, as phased, and presenting it to VDOT and FHWA as an Interchange Modification Report (IMR), for their approval. The VDOT alternative would be included in the Appendix. This could be completed within the existing budget. The problem with this option is that it is unclear whether or not VDOT or Spotsylvania County would endorse the IMR, given the results of the January 2014 meeting between VDOT and the County BOS.
- 2) **Issue the Report as a Resource and Information Document:** This would involve packaging the report as is, showing the Committee's Preferred, Phased Alternative and including the VDOT alternative in the Appendix. The County and VDOT would then be free to use the report and its data to craft an IMR based on the Committee's Phased, Preferred Alternative, or to craft a new Preferred Alternative based on the VDOT proposal. The costs of crafting a new alternative IMR would need to be paid by the County and/or VDOT, as FAMPO has exhausted its budget for this project.

FAMPO looks to guidance from Spotsylvania County and VDOT so as to successfully conclude its work on the Jackson Gateway project.