



## **Citizens Transportation Advisory Group (CTAG) Meeting Minutes**

**October 14, 2015**

[www.fampo.gwregion.org/transportation-advisory-group](http://www.fampo.gwregion.org/transportation-advisory-group)

### **Committee Members Present:**

Mr. Guy Gormley, Chair, City of Fredericksburg  
Mr. Todd Rump, Spotsylvania County  
Mr. Art Snyder, Spotsylvania County  
Ms. Michele Trampe, Spotsylvania County  
Ms. Adela Bertoldi, Stafford County  
Mr. Larry Gross, At-Large Member (Spotsylvania County)

### **George Washington Regional Commission (GWRC) Staff:**

Mr. Paul Agnello, FAMPO  
Ms. Marti Donley, FAMPO  
Mr. Nick Quint, FAMPO  
Ms. JoAnna Roberson, GWRC

**Others Present:** None

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Gormley called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The CTAG agenda for October 14, 2015 was approved as submitted with request of Mr. Agnello to remove item number 7B under the Action Item category. Item 7B was Resolution No. 16-11 that were to endorse the City of Fredericksburg's Grant Application for the FY2017 Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Funding. Mr. Agnello relayed that request from the City was given to FAMPO staff earlier today to remove Resolution No. 16-11 from the agenda.

### **APPROVAL OF CTAG MEETING SUMMARY OF SEPTEMBER 16, 2015**

The minutes from the CTAG meeting from September 16, 2015 were unanimously accepted as presented.

### **REVIEW OF FAMPO POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING – SEPTEMBER 21, 2015** – Paul Agnello

Mr. Agnello advised that the minutes from the September 21, 2015 Policy Committee meeting is included in tonight's agenda packet. Mr. Agnello relayed that there were five HB2 priority projects



submitted by the MPO; 3 from GWRC and 2 from FAMPO. Mr. Agnello stated that all 5 projects were submitted to the State prior to the September 30<sup>th</sup> deadline and all 5 met the criteria process for which the projects will be rated and scored.

Mr. Gormley stated that there was ongoing discussion between the Policy Committee members in regard to a 3<sup>rd</sup> project that was also initially proposed to be submitted to HB2 from FAMPO. Mr. Agnello concurred that a 3<sup>rd</sup> project had been included which consisted of a highway widening project in Stafford County. This project was submitted as a potential short-term fix to the current congestion issues that have occurred between Exit 143 and Exit 140 as a result of the express lane project that opened in December of 2014.

Mr. Gormley stated that the submission of the third project had been requested by either/or VDOT and Stafford County; however, endorsement of the project had not been received from the Policy Committee prior to the September 21<sup>st</sup> meeting.

Mr. Agnello relayed that the request to submit the 3 projects to HB2 from FAMPO was not endorsed and upon a vote count of 6 yes; 3 no; and 1 abstention, what was adopted was submittal of just the 2 Rappahannock River Crossing projects (both south-bound and north bound lanes).

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

## **NEW BUSINESS**

None

## **ACTION ITEMS**

- a.) **Resolution No. 16-10, To Amend the 2040 CLRP to Include the Brooke and Leeland Virginia Railway Express Rail Stations in Stafford County, the Virginia Railway Express Rail Station in Spotsylvania County and the I-95 J-Ramp Project at Exit 126 in Spotsylvania County – Paul Agnello**

Mr. Agnello stated that this Resolution will be submitted to the Policy Committee for adoption at the upcoming October 19<sup>th</sup> meeting. Mr. Agnello relayed that the Brooke and Leeland Rail Stations in Stafford County are a \$28.5 million dollar project and currently there are \$18.5 million dollars of actual committed funds allocated. GWRC has submitted this project as 1 of the 3 to HB2 for funding for the additional \$10 million dollars to complete the project. Mr. Agnello relayed that the VRE Rail Station in Spotsylvania County should have already been included within FAMPO's CLRP; however, due to the ongoing completion dates not being adhered to, the project was not in the latest CLRP.

Mr. Agnello stated that if funding is received for the VRE projects the funding would not pay for the proposed third tracks from this region; however, it would pay for the platform extensions at each of the Fredericksburg stations. Mr. Agnello relayed that the new Spotsylvania Station will start off with 8 car platforms and the Brooke/Leeland stations will be converted from the current 5 car platforms to 8

cars as well. Mr. Agnello stated that the current Fredericksburg station does not have capacity to expand to an 8 car platform without the cost being prohibitive and 7 car lengths are being planned as an alternative.

Mr. Rump stated that he felt the platform extensions would save the commuters' time; however, the money that is being requested to make improvements at Route 1 and Route 17 in Spotsylvania County is being applied to fix something that is already working. He stated that he would rather see funding being applied to another project that is currently not in this category.

Mr. Agnello stated that Mr. Rump's comments were in regard to the proposed J-Ramp project in Spotsylvania County. Ms. Trampe stated that this project is part of the larger Jackson Gateway project, and she thinks the county has re-addressed the needs and the cost and have decided to pursue implementing the Jackson Gateway project in smaller and more manageable projects rather than focusing on the ultimate long-term project completion. Mr. Gormley asked if the Jackson Gateway project is currently in the 2040 Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP). Mr. Agnello acknowledged that it is in the 2040 CLRP for study only but no construction phase or costs are included.

Upon motion by Ms. Trampe and seconded by Ms. Bertoldi, with all in consensus, Resolution No. 16-10 was endorsed with a request that it be submitted to the Policy Committee for adoption at the upcoming October 19<sup>th</sup> meeting.

It was requested by both Mr. Gross and Mr. Gormley that if possible for staff to accommodate accordingly, that maps be attached to each Resolution being reviewed because it would be helpful for everyone to physically see where a project is going to occur. Mr. Gormley also requested that whenever possible a paragraph be included on the map and/or resolutions that gives a total project cost, total amount of funds already allocated, and total amount of funding remaining that is currently unfunded.

**b.) Resolution No. 16-12, Endorsing Stafford County Grant Application to the Virginia Department of Transportation for FY2017 Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Funding – Paul Agnello**

Mr. Agnello stated that as northern Stafford County is part of the Washington Metropolitan region that it is eligible for additional funding for projects such as sidewalk construction, etc. Resolution No. 16-12 is support of a project in northern Stafford County that would qualify for funding allocations from the TAP funding program. This project would be a connective sidewalk project that fills in a gap on Route 610.

Upon motion by Ms. Bertoldi and seconded by Ms. Trampe, with all in consensus, Resolution No. 16-12 was endorsed with a request that it be submitted to the Policy Committee for adoption at the upcoming October 19<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Mr. Agnello advised that the following three Resolutions (No. 16-13; No. 16-14; and No. 16-15) are all resolutions supporting individual locality House Bill (HB) 2 applications. Mr. Agnello stated that the projects have been submitted from the localities and needs FAMPO endorsement as well. Mr. Agnello stated that the projects from the localities that are requesting funding will be funds allocated

from the state-wide district grant program. Mr. Agnello stated that the City of Fredericksburg is submitting one project; the County of Spotsylvania is submitting two projects; and the County of Stafford is submitting three projects.

- c.) **Resolution No. 16-13, Endorsing District Grant Application Submission from City of Fredericksburg** – Paul Agnello
- d.) **Resolution No. 16-14, Endorsing District Grant Application Submission from Spotsylvania County** – Paul Agnello
- e.) **Resolution No. 16-15, Endorsing District Grant Application Submission from Stafford County** – Paul Agnello

Upon motion by Ms. Trampe and seconded by Mr. Gross, with all in consensus, Resolutions No. 16-13; No. 16-14; and No. 16-15 were endorsed with a request that they be submitted to the Policy Committee for adoption at the upcoming October 19<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

- a.) **Bypass Alternatives** – Paul Agnello

As Mr. Milligan was not in attendance at tonight's meeting, the Bypass Alternative discussion item was tabled until the November 10<sup>th</sup> meeting. Mr. Snyder stated that he did have a question and was wondering if anyone at the table tonight had any input. Mr. Snyder asked why, many years back when the initial outer connector concept was discussed in the region that the Route 3 eastern bypass project was never pursued.

Both Mr. Gross and Ms. Trampe stated that the eastern bypass option was looked at but the MIS study that was completed at that time resulted in this connector point not making the initial scoring grade to pursue additional discussion. Mr. Gross stated that he felt it had something to do with the Route 3 east area having the widest access points to the Rappahannock River which would have resulted in a much higher cost for the bridge replacements. Mr. Snyder stated that with the historical concerns and National Park service land in place he does not ever see a Route 3 west-bound alternative being successful either.

- b.) **95 Express Lanes Update** – Paul Agnello

Mr. Agnello stated that three previous 95 Express Lane studies have been completed. The first was completed by Transurban in the spring of 2015 and the study was completed both before and after the express lanes opened in December of 2014. Mr. Agnello stated that the results of these studies showed the following data from studies from Exit 143 to 169:

- The findings were that the 95 Express Lane project significantly reduced travel times.
- The limitations of this study were that there was no study data of traffic effects south of Exit 143 and currently the traffic at Exit 126 and Exit 130 has gotten worse.

Mr. Agnello stated that FAMPO staff completed a study in the spring of 2015 and showed the following data for studies from Exit 126 to Exit 143:

- The findings were that the 95 Express Lane project increased travel times south of Exit 143 significantly.
- The limitations of this study were that the data studied was compared to different times of the year and did not account for seasonal variations and as the Express Lane project just opened in December of 2014 it could not be compared for a year's worth of data until December of 2015.

Mr. Agnello stated that the 3<sup>rd</sup> study was completed by VDOT in the summer of 2015 and provided data from Exit 126 to Exit 169 and showed the following information:

- The findings were that the 95 Express Lane project slightly reduced travel times North of Exit 143 but increased travel times south of Exit 143.
- The limitations of this study are that data was used from the 95 Express Lanes for the “ramp up period” that occurred early in 2015 and this study did not account for the time for the users to become acquainted with the new project.

Mr. Snyder asked if this data was north-bound, south-bound, or both. Mr. Snyder asked if weather conditions were factored in. Mr. Snyder asked what the actual statistics showed – i.e. were the results the same in both the a.m. and p.m. directions and on both the north bound and south bound lanes. Mr. Snyder asked if the study looked at strictly express lane traffic, the general purpose lanes, or a combination of both lanes. Mr. Agnello relayed that the data provided was all completed on just the general purpose travel lanes.

Mr. Agnello stated that in the fall of 2015 that FAMPO instituted a new study which would encompass Exits 126 (Rt. 1/Rt.17) and 169 (Springfield). Mr. Snyder asked if the same data source was utilized for all of the studies because if so the data would already appear to be skewed.

Mr. Agnello relayed that the data used this fall is INRIX data which is a commercial data source which is widely used to obtain traffic speed and travel time information. Mr. Snyder stated that if the timeframes for comparison would be the May through July time frame that this time period is historically the least travelled volume times on the interstate. Mr. Snyder asked if the data recently used is the same data that currently depicts signage on I95 that depicts backups, etc. Mr. Agnello stated that staff would check on this and report back to the committee next month. Mr. Snyder stated that the signage back-up information that is being displayed to commuters and those utilizing I95 are incorrect and invalid in regard to the actual amount of time one is being held up in traffic – i.e. Mr. Snyder stated that many times the signage indicates that a back-up may be 15 minutes; however, in all actuality, the back-up is realistically a 45-minute back-up. Mr. Snyder requested that data be studied from the following months to get a more accurate and real traffic pattern: October 2015, February 2015, and March 2015.

Mr. Gormley also requested that the data be done separately for Thursday and Friday studies. Mr. Gormley stated that Thursday is now the new Friday and that back-ups on Friday extend at least an additional hour's worth of overall travel times to his weekly commute. Mr. Gormley also asked staff to look at the pictures included in the handout tonight that depict what effect the express lanes have on the general purpose lanes. Mr. Gormley stated that the picture on the left side of the page depicts the HOV lanes inside the beltway and not the 95 express lanes. Mr. Gormley asked if FAMPO could study the following 2 areas: from Massaponax to Garrisonville and from Garrisonville to Exit 169. Mr. Gormley asked specifically if a study could be done that depicts current traffic patterns and travel delays from Exit 143 in Garrisonville to Exit 152 at Dumfries.

Mr. Gormley stated that the data depicts an accurate story; however, it is not a true story. Mr. Gormley stated that he does not think any data should be presented that displays data north of Exit 143. Mr. Agnello advised that staff will re-run the data from May 2014 to May 2015, follow up on the signage delay accuracy; and run data counts on both Thursday and Friday independent of each other and provide the updated information for review at the upcoming November meeting.

Both Mr. Gormley and Mr. Snyder concurred that presenting the current statistical data and results are going to reflect that the Rappahannock River Crossing project is in fact not needed to solve the region's transportation needs and that again; no data north of Exit 143 should be included with the handout to the upcoming FAMPO committees.

Mr. Agnello stated that even though more study needs to occur, the conclusions to date from the 3 previous studies shows the following:

- that 95 Express lanes traffic has decreased overall during the peak travel times between Exits 126 and 169;
- that 95 Express lanes travel times have decreased significantly between Exits 143/169;
- that 95 Express lanes travel times have increased significantly between Exits 126/143; and
- that 95 travel times occurring during peak travel hours are still significantly longer than the uncongested travel times on 95 even with the express lane improvements

**c.) HB2 Update and Debriefing on Submittal Process – Paul Agnello**

Mr. Agnello provided an update on HB2 key dates and these are as follows:

- September 30<sup>th</sup> – HB2 application deadline for project submissions
- Late October – HB2 accepted application deadlines will be released to the CTB/public
- November 12<sup>th</sup> – VDOT Fredericksburg District Fall Transportation meeting (the November 12<sup>th</sup> meeting will be held at Germanna Community College Lee Hill site and will be a town-hall meeting forum beginning at 5:00 p.m.)

- January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016 – Expected release data of HB2 project scoring process – (Mr. Agnello relayed that the CTB can still add 1-2 projects up until the January 15<sup>th</sup> release date and that by this date the region will have a 95% certainty of which
- Projects submitted by GWRC/FAMPO have been accepted and funded)
- March/April 2016 – VDOT Fredericksburg District Spring Transportation meeting
- May, 2016 – CTB funding allocations for FY17-22 will be disbursed based on HB2
- June, 2016 – Final SYIP for FY17-22 will be released
- August, 2016 – Beginning date for round 2 for HB2 project submissions

Mr. Gross asked if projects do not make the selection and scoring criteria process this time around then what happens to the projects not considered – do they automatically qualify for re-consideration in round 2? Mr. Agnello stated that all projects not accepted in round 1 are not automatically considered in round 2 and those projects need to be re-submitted again for consideration just as if they were new projects.

In regard to the statewide HB2 applications and funding process, Mr. Agnello relayed that there were 256 agencies eligible to submit projects for consideration; however only 88 actually applied. Mr. Agnello stated that state-wide there were a total of 327 applications submitted and that there will be \$1.2 billion dollars in funding made available. This funding will encompass 2 categories: \$600 million dollars for statewide high priority projects and \$600 million dollars for district grant projects. Mr. Agnello stated that the Fredericksburg region is the second smallest region within the state and is expected to receive approximately \$41 million dollars in funding.

Mr. Snyder stated that over \$4 million dollars that was existing previously does not carry over into the FY17 funding allocations, and as confirmed at the previous meeting this funding is not in an escrow account and actually has now been spent.

Mr. Agnello concurred that when the State completed the HB2313 bill that it made assumptions on what revenues would be available and some of those included things such as the hybrid vehicle tax being a new funding source and that gasoline prices would continue to increase. However, unfortunately, this did not occur as the hybrid vehicle tax failed and gasoline prices actually decreased instead of increasing.

Mr. Agnello stated that the state effectively overpromised on the amount of projects it could financially support and to off-set this deficit they had to significantly reduce the amount of funding available for new projects for a few years in order to fully fund existing projects. Funding was designated to go to projects that were previously in the plan and ones ready to move forward and already underway.

In regard to the projects submitted within the GWRC region under the district grant application process, the GWRC region submitted a total of 8 projects that had a cost of \$43 million dollars. The remainder of the Fredericksburg district which includes an additional 8 localities in the Northern Neck area, etc. submitted a total of 8 projects as well that had a cost of \$22 million dollars. Mr. Agnello relayed that combined there was a total of \$65 million dollars in projects submitted for the entire Fredericksburg District with approximately \$41 million dollars of funding expected to be allocated to the Fredericksburg District. Mr. Agnello stated though that funding would possibly be higher as \$57 million dollars of the \$65 million are projects that also met the criteria for funding considerations under the Statewide High Priority funding category so some of the projects could receive funding from this category and not solely from the Fredericksburg District Grant program.

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

Mr. Agnello advised that correspondence included in tonight's agenda packet and is self-explanatory.

### **STAFF REPORT**

Mr. Agnello relayed that DRPT is planning to conduct a series of public meetings in December for updates on the high-speed rail projects and information regarding these meeting dates will be included in the agenda packet for the upcoming November meeting. Mr. Agnello also relayed that updates on the revised express lane data will be discussed in November as well. Mr. Agnello advised that he would be attending the upcoming 2015 Governor's Transportation Conference on October 28<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Donley relayed that the following upcoming meetings are scheduled; November 12<sup>th</sup> – VDOT Fall Transportation Planning meeting beginning at 5:00 p.m. and will be held at Germanna Community College's Lee Hill site; November 19<sup>th</sup>, VDOT Transportation Forum meeting beginning at 8:30 a.m. and will be held at the Hyatt Place in Fredericksburg; and the upcoming November CTAG meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 10<sup>th</sup> as November 11<sup>th</sup> is a holiday.

### **MEMBER REPORTS**

None

### **ADJOURN**

The October 14th meeting was adjourned at 8:12 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 10, 2015 as Wednesday November 11<sup>th</sup> is a Federal holiday.

*Meeting Minutes completed by JoAnna Roberson*