

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Draft Meeting Minutes

Monday, September 13, 2021 - 9:30 am
406 Princess Anne Street, Fredericksburg, VA 22401
<https://www.fampo.gwregion.org/>

Committee Members Present:

Chairman Paul Agnello, Spotsylvania County
Mr. Rodney White, Spotsylvania County (remote attendance – personal reason, arrived at 9:37am)
Vice Chair Jamie Jackson, City of Fredericksburg (arrived at 9:44am)
Second Vice Chair Alex Owsiak, Stafford County
Mr. Brandon Brown, Stafford County
Mr. Nick Minor, King George County
Mr. Stephen Haynes, Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) (remote attendance – medical reason)
Mr. Jim Ponticello, VDOT
Dr. Bob Schneider, Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC)
Ms. Ciara Williams, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)
Ms. Christine Hoeffner, Virginia Railway Express (VRE)
Mr. Nick Ruiz, VRE
Mr. Aidan Quirke, FREDericksburg Regional Transit (FRED)
Ms. Kate Gibson, GWRideConnect
Ms. Leigh Anderson, GWRideConnect (arrived at 9:39am)

Committee Members Present (remotely, without virtual participation request):

Mr. Dan Grinnell, VDOT
Mr. Joe Stainsby, PRTC
Mr. Bassam Amin, City of Fredericksburg

Committee Members Absent:

Mr. Bryon Counsell, Stafford County
Mr. Jacob Pastwik, Spotsylvania County
Mr. Leon Hughes, Spotsylvania County
Mr. Mike Craig, City of Fredericksburg
Mr. R. Craig Reed, FRED
Ms. Kimberly Wilson, King George County
Mr. Mike Finchum, Caroline County
Mr. Craig Pennington, Caroline County
Mr. Ivan Rucker, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Ms. Michelle Shropshire, VDOT
Mr. Todd Horsley, DRPT

Others Present:

Mr. Zach Harris, Michael Baker International (remote attendance)
Ms. Linda LaSut, VDOT (remote attendance)
Ms. Katherine Youngbluth, DRPT (remote attendance)
Ms. Susan Gardner, VDOT
Ms. Cathie Coffey, VDOT

Staff Present:

Ms. Kari Barber, Transportation Planner/Bicycle & Pedestrian Coordinator
Ms. Jordan Chandler, Transportation Planner
Ms. Stacey Feindt, Public Involvement/Title VI Coordinator
Mr. Adam Hager, Transportation Planner
Mr. Matthew Lehane, Transportation Planner
Mr. Ian Ollis, FAMPO Administrator

1. Call to Order – Chairman Paul Agnello
The meeting was called to order at 9:33am.
2. Roll Call and Determination of Quorum – Stacey Feindt
Ms. Feindt conducted roll call and determined that a quorum was present.
3. **Approval of the September 13, 2021 Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Agenda (ACTION ITEM)**

Motion was made to approve the September 13, 2021 TAC agenda.

Motion: Mr. Owsiak; Second: Mr. Agnello

Abstentions: None

Motion passed with unanimous consent.

4. **Approval of the August 2, 2021 TAC Meeting Minutes (ACTION ITEM)**

Motion was made to approve the August 2, 2021 TAC meeting minutes.

Motion: Mr. Owsiak; Second: Mr. Agnello

Abstentions: None

Motion passed with unanimous consent.

5. Review of August 16, 2021 Policy Committee Meeting
Mr. Ollis reviewed the Policy Committee meeting summarizing presentations and actions for the FAMPO transportation survey results, an update regarding the 2050 LRTP process, the FY21-24 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) amendment for a FRED project, appointment of an At-large Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC) member, the closed session to discuss on-call consultants, and a resolution to appoint 3 new on-call contracts with Michael Baker International, VHB, Cambridge Systematics.

Mr. Agnello asked if GWRC and FAMPO could use any of the consultants for a task order or is one firm the top priority. Mr. Ollis said that staff can go to any of the consultants, no specific priority is given, and request a task order. At this time Mr. Ollis noted that the GWRC attorney is working to review and finalize contracts.

Ms. Hoeffner asked if there were provisions for outside agencies to use the consultants. Ms. Gibson said that the contract does not include a rider clause, meaning that only FAMPO/GWRC can issue task orders to the selected consultants under this contract.

6. Public Comment

No public comments were made.

7. Discussion/Action Items

a. CARES/5307 Funding Discussion

Dr. Schneider discussed the breakdown of COVID-19 federal grants in relation to urban transit systems. He noted the grant was through Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Stability (CARES) Act which was allocated by 5307 and 5311 formulas. He added that CARES is not capital or asset-centric. The second legislation he described was Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) which has allocation limits as to not exceed 75% of an operating budget. Dr. Schneider gave a specific example that showed VRE had refunded subsidies to the localities so localities could use the funds in other ways. Lastly, he described the American Rescue Plan (ARP) which has similar rules as the previous sources but has a spending deadline. He added that ARP is intended to spur economic growth and allocations cannot exceed 132% of operating costs. Dr. Schneider noted that funds can be transferred to capital if no layoffs occurred and then 5307 funding rules would apply.

Mr. Agnello asked if GWRC would receive CRRSAA and ARP funds. Dr. Schneider noted that at this time PRTC has not received these funds as they must be divided by Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), provided to PRTC and then given to the transit agencies. He was hopeful that within 45 days the funding would be sorted out.

Mr. Agnello asked if there were spending deadlines for both CRRSAA and ARP. Dr. Schneider said that CRRSAA does not have a spending deadline but ARP must be obligated by September 30, 2024.

Mr. Agnello asked if the local agencies have spent most of their CARES funding. Dr. Schneider noted that PRTC has spent almost all of the CARES funds and would be transitioning to CRRSAA. Ms. Hoeffner was not aware of VRE's CARES spending at the time.

Mr. Agnello asked what the next steps would be for allocating the GWRC CARES funding. Ms. Gibson noted that all of the funding currently available is from the CARES Act and the organization does not expect to receive CRRSAA or ARP funds. She noted that GWRC received letters from VRE, FRED, and OmniRide in relation to how each organization could use the funds to substitute the jurisdictional subsidies. She noted the next step would be for the GWRC board to take action to determine how to allocate the funds.

Mr. Agnello asked if there was dollar amounts that would estimate the reduction in jurisdictional subsidies. Ms. Gibson replied that currently OmniRide and VRE do not have FY23 budgets and FRED provides the original cost of the subsidy minus the COVID-19 relief funds.

Ms. Hoeffner asked if there were any restrictions to the use of the converted 5307 capital funding, provided that VRE did not experience any layoffs. Dr. Schneider mentioned that he has not seen any specific restrictions.

Mr. Agnello asked when the GWRC CARES funding would be allocated. Ms. Gibson said that she wanted to bring this item back to the board but added that this money will not come into play until FY23 so there is limited urgency behind allocations at this time.

b. Fall Commonwealth Transportation Board Meeting Discussion

Mr. Ollis told the committee that the Commonwealth Transportation Board (TPB) fall meetings are in the near future. He mentioned that in the spring FAMPO brought a list of preexisting projects to the board. This fall Mr. Ollis wants FAMPO to create a list of broad and significant issues, not related to individual projects, that can be brought to the meetings. He asks that the committee provide comments by Monday September 27th.

c. Lafayette Boulevard Traffic Study Update

Mr. Harris said this update relates specifically to traffic congestion and safety for the second phase of the study. He mentioned four near term and two longer term recommendations have been developed. The most significant distinction between the two project timelines is that near term projects stay within the existing footprint of the road and the long-term projects include right-of-way (ROW) and other significant expansions to the road. He noted that the study has taken some time to complete. Mr. Harris also included the construction efforts that are currently underway along the corridor. Lastly, he reviewed the specific recommendations for each of the near- and long-term recommendations.

Mr. Agnello asked if additional work had been completed relating to comments made at the stakeholder meeting regarding updated cost estimates and access management options from Harrison Rd heading north into the City of Fredericksburg. Mr. Harris said that Baker was still working to incorporate the feedback and provide updated information based on the comments received at the stakeholder meeting, and that the revised version needs to be submitted to VDOT. He noted that the revised version will include locations for potential access management that can be implemented as the localities develop the area. He added that most access management solutions do not close off driveways but rather construct a feature, such as a median, within the existing ROW to prevent specific turning movements.

Mr. Amin pointed out that some of the improvements presented on have specific access management improvements and that more detailed recommendations similar to the one shown should be provided throughout the corridor. Mr. Harris noted that he was not planning on giving specific recommendations but rather provide general areas where access management could be investigated in the future.

Mr. Ollis commented that the City of Fredericksburg requested these specific recommendations in the study results so that when development occurs, then the city planning staff can point to this study to provide an additional layer of support and guidance as to how the developers can implement these features.

Mr. Amin noted that the ROW on Lafayette Blvd has been an issue and from Baker's recommendations that roadway cannot be widened within the City of Fredericksburg due to the cost of ROW and working within the current footprint is acceptable. He mentioned that if a recommendation is obtaining ROW to include a sidewalk or trail that an additional one to five feet of ROW could be reserved for access management. Mr. Harris said that he looked along the corridor and most commercial areas have multiple access points for parking and parking lot flow. He mentioned that he has identified areas where various access management features could be implemented as development occurs but felt that it was not part of the study to list specific access points that need to be closed.

Mr. Agnello asked if FAMPO staff had all the needed details to create the pre pre-applications for SMART SCALE. Mr. Lehane and Mr. Ollis noted that the form provided by VDOT could request specific information but at this time the information from the sketches should be sufficient for the initial review.

d. **Resolution 22-06: Supporting Transportation Alternatives Program Applications (ACTION ITEM)**

Ms. Barber reviewed the resolution and the attached project descriptions. She asked if Stafford County was still considering the addition of Belmont Ferry Farm Phase VI as a third application and if the resolution could be modified. Mr. Owsiak mentioned that the Stafford board was still undergoing the TAP application selection process and wanted to include this application the regional resolution of support to cover the board's potential applications.

Ms. Jackson asked if the Stafford board did not move forward with the Belmont Ferry Farm Phase VI project whether county staff would move forward with the application in TAP. Mr. Owsiak said that if the board does not approve the trail, it would be withdrawn from TAP.

Motion was made to approve Resolution 22-06.

Motion: Mr. Agnello; Second: Mr. Owsiak

Abstentions: None

Motion passed with unanimous consent.

Ms. Gardner added that the October 1st deadline for submitting applications is coming rapidly and that any information not in the portal would not be considered for review.

Ms. Barber offered FAMPO staff support to the localities during their application process.

e. **SMART SCALE Round 5 Update**

Mr. Lehane provided an update to the SMART SCALE Round 5 process. He noted that regional and local applications have been separated, then regional projects were scored based on the LRTP Project Prioritization scoring measures. The top ten were selected for GWRC and FAMPO regional lists. He noted that at this time, ten projects - five for each organization - are selected for the pre-application phase but ultimately the list will need to be pared down to eight total; four for each organization. Lastly, he noted that FAMPO/GWRC staff will be working with VDOT to begin the pre pre-application screening.

Mr. Ollis added that staff had a meeting with VDOT and determined that the projects being suggested at this time can be amended as this is the pre pre-application screening.

Mr. Agnello asked VDOT if a FAMPO or GWRC pre pre-application is screened out could it be transferred to a localities project list. Ms. Coffey said that this list of projects is to begin initial cost assessments, sketches, and information that would be needed for the full application. She stated that this is a request for assistance rather than an evaluation process.

Ms. Williams asked if pre-applications could be changed or substituted for other projects. Ms. Coffey said that the pre-applications submitted should be the intended final application with the exception of only minor changes.

Ms. Williams asked that if any locality or agency was submitting projects that included transit elements to please include DRPT in the process to keep them up to speed.

Mr. Agnello asked if FAMPO staff could create a graphic for the Virginia Central Railway (VCR) Regional Project. Mr. Lehane said yes.

Mr. Agnello asked what the Route 2 and Lansdowne Road Improvements project include and if a meeting could be created to discuss the details. Mr. Ollis said that there is a meeting already in place for September 23rd.

f. **Congestion Management Process (CMP) Performance Monitoring Program Overview**

i. CMP Performance Monitoring Program Link

Mr. Lehane provided a starting point for the CMP performance monitoring program. He mentioned how staff intends to monitor the data in three month increments and pointed out the initial CMP covered the GWRC region but now it only covers the FAMPO region. Mr. Lehane continued by saying the performance monitoring program can be used to identify congested areas that might need projects with congestion reduction solutions. He noted that the CMP dashboard provide metrics for each of the corridors then he gave a demonstration of the platform.

Mr. Agnello asked if the CMP document would be updated in accordance with the 2050 LRTP. Mr. Hager said that minor updates would occur to get the document more current.

Mr. Agnello asked what the process would be to include Route 208, a primary road, in the CMP process. Ms. Barber noted that this road is not federally required to be reviewed based on its functional classification.

g. Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) and Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Project Selection Process Update

i. Special December TAC Meeting Date/Time

Mr. Hager reviewed the timeline for the CMAQ and STBG Project Selection Process Update between September 2021 and June of 2022. He discussed basic starting points that staff would use such as the LRTP Project Prioritization process and reviewing other Virginia MPO best practices. He mentioned that FAMPO staff would like to have a draft that is 70 percent complete for the October TAC meeting.

Mr. Agnello asked if the timeline was a firm schedule and that the allocations had to be approved in April. Ms. Gardner responded that she needs the allocations prior to the spring CTB meetings, and the schedule could be adjusted with minor delays. Mr. Ollis added that the FAMPO Policy Committee should not be briefed on the information and vote during the same meeting, and this would be a limiting factor in the timeline.

Mr. Agnello suggested that update meetings should occur more often than solely at the TAC meetings, and he agreed with the proposal to have a December TAC meeting. Mr. Ollis mentioned that this process would not include a substantial overhaul since staff plans to use the LRTP Project Prioritization scoring measures as a foundation since it has been approved by all of the committees. Mr. Agnello noted that Spotsylvania County does not necessarily want the CMAQ and STBG methodology to reflect SMART SCALE scoring process. Mr. Owsiak questioned if the LRTP Project Prioritization scoring measures would be fitting to score projects that related to air quality and congestion mitigation. Ms. Jackson noted that as we go through this update process everyone needs to agree on definitions of terms so that the committee can make progress on this task.

Mr. Agnello said that beginning with rules for the project intake process could be voted on prior to the rest of the methodology since they would be less controversial. He also mentioned that there is a short turn around between the call for projects and project submission deadline and requested more time be given to applicants. Mr. Ollis noted that if the methodology is not proposed in conjunction with the project intake process it could create an unfair playing field.

Mr. Brown noted that prior to and during the last CMAQ and STBG funding process major fundamental changes were proposed, and that the committee would like to be more involved in the vetting process.

Ms. Jackson mentioned she had no adverse issue with creating a smaller working group but noted that the LRTP framework is not new and that the LRTP working group was extremely successful.

Mr. Agnello summarized the committees' comments suggesting that more frequent meetings should be created.

Ms. Gardner asked the committee to trust the funding methodology that will be created regardless of the allocation results and to acknowledge that there is not enough funding for every project. Mr. Agnello stated once this update is approved only minor changes should be made as appropriate. Mr. Hager agreed that funding allocated to projects would be agreed upon based on the approved CMAQ and STBG methodology. Ms. Jackson added that the committee should focus on the criteria to evaluate projects rather than the amount of money given to the projects.

The committee discussed that the sub-committee would occur after the October TAC meeting and established who would be attending the meeting. The first sub-committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday October 14th at 10:30am. FAMPO staff also asked for any comments about the current or a potential proposed process by September 27th.

- h. **Resolution 22-07: Approving the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Fiscally Constrained Project Lists (ACTION ITEM)**
 - i. Public Comments Received – Staff noted that several public comments were received and members had the full text in their agenda packets.
 - ii. Presentation
 - iii. Draft 2050 LRTP Project Lists
 - iv. **Resolution 22-08: Endorsing the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan and FY21-24 Transportation Improvement Program Fiscally Constrained Project Lists for Air Quality Conformity (ACTION ITEM)**

Mr. Ollis introduced the LRTP updates and then turned over the presentation to Ms. Chandler. Ms. Chandler briefly reviewed the five items on the agenda relating to the LRTP, two resolutions, the draft constrained project list, public comment, and a presentation about updates since the August TAC. She noted the three updates to the draft list including removing the cost redundancy between highway and active transportation project elements, the inclusion of TAP applications in concurrence with BPAC, and adjusting the inflation rate used in the mid- and out- years to include a compounding interest rate. She reviewed the overall number of projects in the draft list and their breakdown by mode and agency/jurisdiction.

Motion was made to approve Resolution 22-07 and endorse Resolution 22-08.

Motion: Mr. Agnello; Second: Mr. Owsiak

Abstentions: None

Motion passed with unanimous consent.

8. Correspondence

Ms. Feindt reviewed a comment provided by a Fredericksburg area resident, Ms. Jane Leeds. The comment outlined the steps that need to be taken to improve transportation options for those with mobility challenges, such and those with disabilities or older adults.

9. Staff Reports

Mr. Ollis noted several open seats for the FAMPO Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee

(CTAC) and encouraged local jurisdictions to add new members. Ms. Feindt added that during their September meeting, the Policy Committee will consider appointing two people to fill the open at-large positions.

Mr. Hager informed the committee about language from the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) related to the forthcoming surface transportation bill and the potential implications that could impact metropolitan planning organizations. Additionally, he reviewed the FY22 FAMPO committee calendar pointing out the changed date for the November TAC meeting. Mr. Agnello asked if the calendar could be sent to the committee and Mr. Hager noted it would be attached to the TAC meeting follow-up email.

10. Member Reports

Mr. Owsiak noted that Stafford County staff has been working on Revenue Sharing (RS) and TAP applications.

Ms. Gardner reiterated the TAP applications deadline of October 1st at 5pm.

Mr. Minor said King George is working to finalize TAP and SMART SCALE applications.

Ms. Williams mentioned that DRPT just kicked off their Transit Equity and Modernization study which is a legislative requirement and staff is working with consultant Kimley Horn. She noted that there will be plenty of opportunity for stakeholder engagement. Lastly, she reiterated a previous comment requesting involvement in the SMART SCALE Round 5 application process for anyone that is planning transit improvements.

Ms. Hoeffner informed the committee that VRE has experienced some service delays regarding recent weather events, but overall ridership has been increasing. She also noted that the VRE survey and master agreement survey are current works in progress.

Dr. Schneider mentioned that ridership counts are updated for the PRTC board packet each month and provides data that FAMPO staff could utilize. He noted that the data is sorted by each route and includes performance measures. He also added that updated mask guidelines have been extended until January 2022.

Mr. Ruiz introduced himself adding that he previously worked with DRPT in Richmond on the rail side.

Mr. Quirke told the committee that FRED service will begin an hour earlier on October 18th and all corresponding hiring has been completed. FRED is preparing for DRPT grants that are forthcoming and staff is prepped funding for the process. He mentioned that FRED has noticed an uptick in ridership and the organization is monitoring mask mandates.

Mr. Agnello noted that Spotsylvania County conducted the first county bond referendum meeting and the second will be held on October 21st. He also noted the county is hiring a transportation planner.

11. **Adjourn Technical Advisory Committee Meeting/Next Meeting October 4, 2021 at 9:30 am**

Interagency Consultation Group (ICG) meeting prior to October TAC meeting at 9:00am

Motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 12:02pm.

Motion: Mr. Owsiak; Second: Mr. Quirke

Abstentions: None

Motion passed with unanimous consent.