

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Monday, September 12, 2022 – 9:30 a.m.
406 Princess Anne Street, Fredericksburg, VA 22401
www.fampo.gwregion.org

Committee Members Present:

Chair Jamie Jackson, City of Fredericksburg
Rodney White, Spotsylvania County
Mohamed Benomar, Spotsylvania County
Bassam Amin, City of Fredericksburg
Mike Craig, City of Fredericksburg
Matthew Lehane, Stafford County
Nick Minor, King George County
Amy Garbarini, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)
Michelle Shropshire, Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)
Stephen Haynes, VDOT
Bob Schneider, PRTC
Nick Ruiz, Virginia Railway Express (VRE)
Kate Gibson, GWRideConnect

Committee Members Present (remotely):

Joe Stainsby, PRTC

Committee Members Absent:

First Vice Chair Alex Owsiak, Stafford County
Second Vice Chair Paul Agnello, Spotsylvania County
Jacob Pastwik, Spotsylvania County
Kimberly Wilson, King George County
Bryon Counsell, Stafford County
Mike Finchum, Caroline County
Craig Pennington, Caroline County
Ivan Rucker, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Jim Ponticello, VDOT
Dan Grinnell, VDOT
Craig Reed, FREDericksburg Regional Transit (FRED)
Christine Hoeffner, VRE
Leigh Anderson, GWRideConnect
Ciara Williams, DRPT

Others Present:

Chris Daily (VHB), Drew Morris (VHB), Paul Prideaux (Michael Baker International), Darrel Smith (VHB- remote), Melvin Cosely (Remote), Colin Burch (Remote)

Staff Present:

Ian Ollis, FAMPO Administrator
Becky Golden, Transportation Planning Manager
Colie Touzel, Public Involvement and Title VI Coordinator
John S. Ridout, Transportation Planner

1. Call Technical Advisory Committee Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:31 am by Chair Jackson.

2. Roll Call and Determination of Quorum

Colie Touzel conducted roll call and determined that a quorum was present.

3. Approval of the September 12, 2022, Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Agenda (ACTION ITEM)

Motion was made to approve the September 12, 2022, TAC agenda with modification.
Modification: Remove item 7.d. Discussion of funding for Commuter Lot, postponed.
Motion: Rodney White; Second: Nick Ruiz
Abstentions: None
Motion passed with unanimous consent.

4. Approval of the June 6, 2022, TAC Meeting Minutes (ACTION ITEM)

Motion was made to approve the August 1, 2022, meeting minutes.
Motion: Rodney White; Second: Mohamed Benomar
Abstentions: Mathew Lehane
Motion passed.

5. Review of the June 27, 2022, Policy Committee Meeting

Ian Ollis informed the attendees that Safe Streets for All (SS4A) proposal was presented to the Policy Committee. The Policy Committee agreed to include all five GWRC jurisdictions: Stafford County, Spotsylvania County, Caroline County, King George County, and the City of Fredericksburg. SS4A application will be submitted on September 15, 2022. The Policy Committee amended the Committee's by-laws to add a non-voting member of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC). The Policy Committee approved the proposed TIP amendments. Ian Ollis also informed the TAC that the VDOT-FAMPO travel demand modeling efforts would be postponed until after February 2023. Chair Jackson asked if transit entities should include their most recent data. Ian confirmed yes, and that the modeling efforts will revisit for post covid data. Ian Ollis informed the TAC that Becky Golden has been compiling TDM information with the last update completed approximately in mid-August. If there are any localities that wish to provide updates, please let FAMPO staff know.

6. Public Comment

- a. Velynn Sanders: Wants VRE on weekends. Colie Touzel forwarded this email to VRE.
- b. Chris Sauers: Concerns of Lafayette and Rt3 and there are two crosswalks that are dangerous. The crosswalks would benefit from HAWK and flashing signs.

7. Action/Discussion Items

a. East West mobility study

1. Update by Ian Ollis on Phase I Report:

Phase I is completed, with phase II in progress. The study is looking at 13 corridors, 7 potential SMART SCALE readiness, and two large transit projects and four multi-use paths. The Phase II transit report is in the agenda pack and will seek a public comment period from the Policy Committee. Engineering for Phase II will begin when both Phase I and Phase II are completed.

2. Phase II Presentation from Chris Daily, Drew Morrison, and Darrell Smith with VHB

Darrell Smith: The study looked to other similar Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) services providing examples of other BRT such as Ft Collins, Colorado that operated at 20-minute headway, 12 stations, half dedicated lanes, half not. In addition, the study surveyed funding sources such as federal small starts grant, capital investment grant – less than 100 million. The study then considered two types of projects: fixed guideway where buses run in dedicated spaces, and corridor based without dedicated right-of-way. Finally, the study considered other minimal requirements for service including branded and identifiable buses and stations, 14 hours service weekdays, 10 hours service weekends, 15-10/20minutes headways, ADA infrastructure, and signal priority. From their research, VHB considered and proposed the following options with an assumed service day of 16.5-hour weekday, 11-hour weekends. Up to 15-minute headways on peak weekdays with 30 headways more common for off-peak weekday and weekends with four route alternatives.

- Option 1 Downtown and Salem Church route. 6 vehicles requirements
Option one does not go into the hospital campus but skirts the edge.
- Option 2 is Option 1 with the addition of Gordon Road – 7 buses
- Option 3 goes into the Mary Washington Hospital campus. route
- Option 4 is Option 3 with the extension to serve Gordon Road

All routes focus on providing service for the downtown core, park and ride lots, University of Mary Washington, Mary Washington Hospital, Apartment development, and other general travel.

VHB's model assumed 323K-402K riders per year depending on the route.

VHB felt the model did not catch the park and rides or new apartments, nor the UMW students, so other assumptions were added to the model.

Total system trips were 122 trips per weekday – with Option 4 providing the most service hours. The routes would be between 6-9 miles and cover 760-1100 service miles per day. 18-16 riders per day on weekdays. Weekends remain between 18-21 passenger per hour.

VHB concluded that Option 3 would see the highest use, Option 1 would have the lowest cost per passenger trip/service mile.

Cost for the proposed options appear similar to other BRT services as well as Fred/PRTC. Cost per service hour is about \$97.06 per service hour. Cost per mile is about \$7.20-\$7.66 and the cost per passenger is \$5.42-\$7.75.

VHB noted that the cost for Gordon Road service would add about 60-70 cents per passenger trip to all passenger trips.

Option 1 and 3 are the most cost effective. Recommending phased approach with service ending at Salem Church and extending to Gordon Road if user demand was heard.

Ian Ollis provided a note: This service would be targeting the peak 79K AADT on Route 3.

VHB continued the options' other requirements including adding signal priority and there will be some major needs for signalization in Central Park including queue jump and center running lane.

3. Phase II Stafford County Transit Center

Drew Morrison with VHB shifted to another section of the Phase II Study:

Stafford County's Downtown Transit Center – The goal of the transit center would be to target park and ride, bus turnaround, transfers, and raises Stafford transit profile. Looked at four proposed locations, which makes sense in a service and operational needs. Western location (location 1) is great for longer distance commuter bus. Options 2, 3, and 4 might be better for future local demand and would have central access from south and east. Location 1 might be best for transfer riders but will need to connect with stops into the downtown area. The Location 1 facility with a stop and suite of stops in the proposed downtown so that local service can access downtown area. Service will need about 6 bus bays.

4. Bike and Pedestrian Paths

Chris Daily continued: Proposes to connect Stafford to Brooke station. Identify route that have lower traffic speed. Consider resource constrains. Connects with civil war park, align with pipeline study, and environmental constraints. 10-foot Shared Use Path (SUP) to Brooke Station.

Germanna to VRE /Route 2 avoiding constrains and connecting to a Rt17 Bridge if there could be rail with train on that bridge. Alignment will go along Eagle Drive and cross. 12-foot SUP with 7-foot swale buffer and areas need the rail line would require a 63-foot buffer. Segments along Route 17 alignment has 12-foot buffers with a swale feature.

5. Comments from TAC and responses:

- Nick Ruiz - did you assume a lighted path or was it unlit near the VRE stations for SUP? VRE users would want a lit pathway as it will be dependent on pre-dawn, post-dusk commuters.
- VHB - No, it would be a design consideration for future work at this time.
- Nick Ruiz - On the BRT service – expand the 15-minute service from opening to the mid-day drop off.
- VHB - focusing on “what are the peaks” and use the schedule as a starting point and when running identify what tweaks could be better for users.

- Mathew Lehane suggested to update the transit center design to add commuter lot direct access to HOV lanes on I95
 - Stephen Haynes asked to clarify the center dedicated lanes between Heatherstone Drive and Taskforce Drive on Rt3 –
 - VHB - it acts more as an extended queue jump through two intersections. It is limited and adds complexity.
 - Ian Ollis noted that this area is the most congested.
 - Michele Shropshire asked how the SUPs match with other projects such as the East Coast Greenway - are they proposing moving the path?
 - Nick Ruiz asked about the runtime for the Route 3 BRT route and if it would limit the usefulness for some users. He suggested a system where in the morning worked as an Express route to the VRE Station and then on the way back does the local route.
 - VHB - about 40-45 minutes one-way. Averaging speed is about the same as local bus service. Downtown service reduces the speed significantly. Main driver is the local traffic.
 - Chair Jackson noted the timing is good compared to GRTC Pulse.
 - Ian Ollis mentioned that the presentation is the agenda packet and to please send FAMPO your comments.
- b. VRC – Trail presentation of preferred Options (Paul Prideaux from Michael Baker International)

Goal is to look at the three locations (two have crossings but at grade with Rt3 and Rt1). No crossing at 95. Looking at grade separated crossings at the three crossings. The study is about 50% through and now need to pick one option to develop further. Further investigation recommends will be developed from this project.

Option 1.1 over 95 – three ideas. Interstate Fill – there is a triple box culvert. Culvert was built for water. However, uncommon but there are standards for trails and culvert is too small for pedestrian clearance and running water risks. Lack of safety/security needs, and regulatory hurdles.

Option 1.2 Bored tunnel under the interstate. Possible and it is done. Requires Geotech investigation, more engineering questions. Ground movement concerns.

Option 1.3 Aerial crossing (bridge) - more common. Significant height increase. Requires VDOT and FHWA coordination.

Rt 1 crossing. Currently, it is an at-grade crosswalk.

Option 2.1 Aerial crossing (bridge). Utilities issues/signal poles. Upgrade intersection. Restricting T intersections. Some movements might need to depend on other intersections. Signature structure.

Option 2.2 US crossing at Hazel Run bridge and cross under the bridge. Requires users to detour. Engineering challenges with the bridges.

Crossing Rt 3 at Lafayette Blvd.

3.1 aerial bridge – can do it, will need to get up to the elevated structure. Longer bridge due to the turn lanes. Utilities concerns.

3.2 Crossing west along undeveloped parcel with bridge over Rt3 to Alum Spring Road. Requires negotiation with private landowners.

3.3 Rerouting VRE along Hazel Mill and build a new trail to cross under the bridge. Major addition to the trail length to construction. NPS encroachment challenges.

Next steps - feedback, from TAC then TAC makes recommendations to PC

Comments from TAC and responses:

1. Bassam Amin – Was the graded separated decision made before the study started. Why did we look at non-at grade option? What volume of pedestrians would trigger the need for a grade separated?
Paul Prideaux - Don't have a volume trigger but can check. Looked at other alternatives of other crossings of 95. MBI suggested that Harrison Rd would be a good crossing.
 2. Nick Ruiz - Likes using grade to one's advantage.
 3. Mike Craig - staying in the same alignment is best. Some of the cost of the trail might be too low, double check, specifically when building under a bridge.
 4. Michele Shropshire has concerns of using the culvert.
 5. Ian Ollis– asked the TAC to make recommendations for options to be removed as to provide the policy committee preferred options.
 6. Mike Craig- Strike the box culverts. 1.1 and 2.2. Combine 3.1 and 3.2 options.
Rodney White likes the bored tunnel. Mike Craig– boring looks better.
Construction tunnel is preferred.
 7. 1.2, 2.1, and a combined 3.1/3.2 recommended moving forward.
- c. VRE System plan 2050 Phase I update from Nick Ruiz.
There is a fare free period right now until October, and because of some station construction, there will be an additional free fare for some riders. FXBG ridership is normally around 800-900 and currently ridership is up to 1700s. The System Plan's first phase (of 3) is to understand the market for VRE and service. Service market area goes from Hanover to Baltimore. VRE will kick-off coordination with local jurisdictions for questions and feedback. Phase II will focus on the service to be provided. Phase III will focus on the stations and future land use, etc. Also, VRE will set up a system plan website starting on Tuesday which will be limited at first, but the site will build as the plan progresses.
- d. Removed
- e. CMAQ/STBG Call for projects
1. FAMPO staff is seeking support from the Policy Committee for the opening of CMAQ/STBG projects through mid-November. Becky Golden will assist with crash statistics. FAMPO will score in December and into January and present to the TAC in January. VDOT will provide the funding schedule. FAMPO staff will finalize number and items by April.
 2. Parked the FY-28 funding and releasing funds for two years so expecting about 9.5-11 million available. Funding amounts will not be known until after scoring. Annual budgets are higher, but nothing confirmed.
 3. CMAQ – New submission form coming soon and will be available online once approved by the Policy Committee.

8. Correspondence

- a. Ian - Highest ridership record on Amtrak 19% higher than pre-covid.

9. Staff Reports

- a. FAMPO Staff report. Interviewing for a GIS technician.
- b. Expect 5 months of significant TAC activity.
- c. Freight Summit was significantly reduced in scope. Smaller meeting in person with online option later. Survey later.

10. Member Reports

- a. None

Meeting adjourned at 11:36 a.m.

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