

**Fredericksburg Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
Interagency Consultation group (ICG) Meeting
June 4, 2018**

Committee Members Present:

Mr. Erik Nelson, City of Fredericksburg
Mr. Dan Cole, Spotsylvania County
Mr. Joey Hess, Stafford County
Ms. Sonya Lewis-Cheatham, DEQ
Ms. Ciara Williams, DRPT
Mr. Paul Agnello, FAMPO
Mr. Ivan Rucker, FHWA (on-line call-in)
Mr. Rodney White, FRED
Ms. Diana Utz, GWRC
Mr. Chuck Steigerwald, PRTC/VDEQ (on-line call-in)
Mr. Jim Ponticello, VDOT Central Office
Mr. Stephen Haynes, VDOT District Office
Ms. Sonali Soneji, VRE

Members Absent:

Mr. Gregory Becoat, EPA
Ms. Melissa McGill, FTA

Others in Attendance:

Ms. Doris McLeod, DEQ
Mr. Doug Morgan, Spotsylvania County
Mr. Dan Grinnell, VDOT Central Office
Ms. Susan Gardner, VDOT District Office
Ms. Michelle Shropshire, VDOT District Office
Mr. Reinaldo Germano, VRE
Mr. Chris Salzahc, VRE

George Washington Regional Commission (GWRC) Staff:

Ms. Marti Donley, FAMPO
Ms. Briana Hairfield, FAMPO
Mr. Nick Quint, FAMPO
Ms. Kari Barber, FAMPO
Mr. John Bentley, FAMPO
Mr. Colin Cate, FAMPO

Welcome

Mr. Agnello thanked everyone for attending today's meeting. Mr. Agnello introduced Ms. Briana Hairfield as a new FAMPO employee. Mr. Agnello advised this is Ms. Hairfield's first day and she will be replacing Ms. Donley who will be retiring from FAMPO on June 30th. Mr. Agnello stated FAMPO is pleased to have Ms. Hairfield on board.

Introduction & Overview

Mr. Ponticello, with the VDOT Environmental Division provided the presentation at today's ICG meeting. Mr. Ponticello stated the purpose of the meeting is to initiate a regional conformity analysis on the FY2018-2021 TIP & 2045 LRTP.

Mr. Ponticello advised that on February 16, 2018, the US Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit ruled that "the revocation of the 1997 NAAQS does not waive the unambiguous mandate that conformity requirements apply to orphan maintenance areas," and the Fredericksburg region is considered an "orphan maintenance area" as defined in the ruling. Mr. Ponticello stated that EPA filed a petition for rehearing on April 23rd, and in conjunction with that petition, FHWA/FTA issued interim guidance on conformity that essentially placed TIP/STIP/LRTP updates/amendments/revisions for non-exempt projects "on hold" until conformity has been demonstrated, at least until EPA provides further clarification.

Mr. Ponticello said that FAMPO approved the Interagency Consultation Group (ICG) procedures in August of 2004, and advised that consultation is required for the models, methods, and planning assumptions used in the analysis, and that they be consistent with the Fredericksburg region's 8-hour ozone maintenance plan that was approved by EPA on January 23, 2006.

ICG Membership Update

Mr. Ponticello presented a slide of the current ICG membership roster, and asked if any membership representatives need to be updated. No comments or updates to ICG membership were noted. Mr. Ponticello stated the Fredericksburg 8-hour ozone maintenance area consists of the City of Fredericksburg and the Counties of Spotsylvania and Stafford.

Consultation Items

i. Models, Methodology & Assumptions

Mr. Ponticello advised that it has been a number of years since a regional conformity analysis had been completed in this region. The Fredericksburg region was previously in maintenance with the 1997 8-hour ozone standard. When EPA finalized a new more stringent ozone standard in 2008, and for areas such as Fredericksburg that were found to be in attainment with the new standard, conformity requirements pertaining to 1997 8-hour ozone standard were revoked. Mr. Ponticello advised the last time a regional conformity analysis was completed in this region was in 2013, at which time the FAMPO region remained in compliance.

Mr. Ponticello stated that the purpose of today's meeting is to initiate a regional conformity determination in an expedited manner so we can avoid having delays to major transportation projects throughout the region. Mr. Ponticello stated the transportation conformity regulation requires that we consult on the models/methodologies/assumptions and project list used in the upcoming analysis, which are the main topics of discussion today.

Mr. Ponticello stated on September 26, 2011, DEQ submitted an 8-hour ozone maintenance plan revision to EPA that updated the 2015 NOx motor vehicle emissions budget by using the MOVES2010 model. On December 20, 2012, EPA published an approval of the NOx motor vehicle emissions budget (MVEB) in the Federal Register. Mr. Ponticello stated that no transportation control measures (TCMs) were included in the maintenance plan.

Mr. Ponticello advised that transportation conformity requires the region to demonstrate that the total motor vehicle emissions for all analysis years remain below the level of the MVEBs included in the 1997 8-hour ozone maintenance plan that was developed for this region and adopted in the 2004 time frame.

Mr. Ponticello then provided a general overview of the methodology and assumptions to be applied in the analysis. The traffic forecasts would be developed based on the approved project lists, using the 2045 socioeconomic data provided by GWRC and approved by FAMPO. EPA's latest emissions model, MOVES2014a, would be used to generate motor vehicle emissions estimates. Gasoline inputs will be consistent with those used by VDEQ in the development of the 2014 National Emissions Inventory (NEI). Reformulated gasoline (RFG) will be used in Stafford County and conventional gasoline will be used in the City of Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania County. An inspection and maintenance program would be included in the modeling for Stafford County, which dates back to their days as part of the Northern Virginia 1-hour ozone nonattainment area. Mr. Agnello asked if this requirement applies to only northern Stafford County or the entire county, and Mr. Ponticello confirmed it applies to the entire county.

Hourly temperature and relative humidity values would be consistent with those used in the 1997 8-Hour Ozone Maintenance Plan. Local traffic inputs needed for MOVES2014a were discussed during the presentation (attached) and include age distributions, source type populations, road type distributions, speed distributions, annual vehicle miles traveled, and monthly and daily adjustment factors to account for ozone season weekday vehicle activity. Local inputs will be based on 2014 vehicle registration data provided by the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles, 2014 HPMS data provided by the VDOT Traffic Engineering Division and documented in "Traffic Data for the 2014 Periodic Emissions Inventory," as well as the latest TDM outputs for each analysis year that will be provided by GWRC staff.

Transportation conformity budget tests will be applied for the forecast years 2021, 2025, 2035 and 2045. These years were selected to meet specific conformity rule requirements; 2021 is a year in the timeframe of the TIP, and 2045 is the horizon year of the long range transportation plan (LRTP). The years 2025 and 2035 were selected as interim years to meet federal transportation conformity rule requirements for the years selected to be no more than ten years apart.

No comments were received on the conformity analysis methodology and assumptions.

ii. Conformity Analysis Schedule

Mr. Ponticello reviewed the Conformity Analysis schedule which is as follows:

June 15th – FAMPO staff will electronically deliver TDM output files to VDOT Environmental

June 18th – FAMPO will authorize TAC to approve Conformity Report that will be submitted to FHWA

July 31st – VDOT Environmental will complete emissions modeling and a draft of the Conformity Report

August 1st-6th – Internal review of the draft Conformity Report by VDEQ, VDOT & FAMPO staff

August 8th – Special called TAC meeting to approve draft Conformity Report for public comment period to begin

August 9th – start of 14-day public comment period

August 23rd – public comment period ends

August 24th – VDOT/FAMPO staff will review and address public comments received from August 9th through August 23rd, if necessary

August 27th – Special called TAC meeting (only if necessary) if adverse public comments were received prior to draft Conformity Report being submitted to FHWA

August 28th – VDOT will submit an e-copy of the Conformity Analysis Report to FHWA which will then result in a 45-day federal review period to begin

September 11th – VDOT will submit printed copies of Conformity Report to FHWA for their records

October 12th – Federal Conformity determination to be received to VDOT from FHWA.

iii. Project List for Conformity Analysis

The conformity project list for the FY 18-21 TIP and 2045 LRTP and were emailed to the ICG prior to the meeting, and they were also included with the agenda package and distributed at the ICG meeting. The project list includes the fiscally constrained FY 18-21 TIP and 2045 LRTP projects as approved by FAMPO, and also notes whether each project is considered to be regionally significant and, if so, it's first conformity analysis year.

Mr. Ponticello advised the conformity project list focuses on projects that are regionally significant that would normally be included within the regional travel demand model. Mr. Ponticello stated that projects that are not regionally significant may not typically be modeled and would not impact the conformity analysis. Mr. Ponticello asked that the ICG members review the projects to see if any amendments/additions need to be made.

Mr. Morgan advised that UPC #13558 which is an I-95 interchange relocation and widening project is listed as being a project in Spotsylvania County. Mr. Morgan relayed this project is actually a Stafford County project so the jurisdiction needs to be updated.

Ms. Soneji asked Mr. Agnello if the model would also include VRE projects. Mr. Agnello stated the current FAMPO TDM being utilized does not have transit capabilities; however, future models will include transit projects. Mr. Agnello stated the plan now will just include highway and bike/ped projects.

Ms. Utz asked Mr. Ponticello if the region would need to utilize VRE and Vanpool/Bus emissions credits in the analysis. Mr. Ponticello stated that he did not think the analysis would need to use these credits in order to demonstrate conformity.

Mr. Haynes stated VDOT has 2 secondary projects in Stafford County that are being considered and he is not sure whether these would need to be added to the existing project list. The 2 projects are UPC #100622 – Poplar Road improvements & UPC #107194 – Berea Church Road.

Mr. Agnello asked if the Berea Church Road project is adding additional capacity. Mr. Hess stated the project is listed as an improvement project that will take out existing curves, widen shoulders and make the road safer; however, is not going to be adding any additional lanes and is considered as a rehab/re-construction project. Mr. Ponticello stated that if the project is not adding capacity, then it would not typically be considered regionally significant.

Mr. Agnello asked if the Poplar Road project is adding additional lane capacity or just improving existing roadway with additional turn lanes. Mr. Ponticello stated he would refer to the modeling experts in the room; however, in the past additional turn lanes are also projects that are not typically included in the model. Mr. Agnello concurred that if lanes are not being added, this is not something that can be modeled by FAMPO staff.

Mr. Haynes stated that it is concurrence from the committee that the 2 projects mentioned do not need to be added to the existing project list. Mr. Ponticello stated they should still be added to the list to document that they were considered for conformity and are fiscally constrained, however they would not be noted as being regionally significant.

Mr. Haynes asked Mr. Ponticello if he was in receipt of an I-95 ramp improvement project at Exit 136 that VDOT District Office submitted last Friday afternoon. Mr. Ponticello stated the current project list in today's packet has not been updated, and he hadn't had a chance to review the email in question. Mr. Haynes asked Mr. Ponticello to follow-up as this is a Stafford County Smart Scale application that will add 2 additional turn lanes at Centreport Parkway so if not available for updating, then the project would need to be added. Mr. Agnello stated there could be Smart Scale projects selected that are not currently constrained so this project could be one of them. Until the Smart Scale application process is completed, it is not necessary for FAMPO to do anything right now regarding updates to any plans, etc. In further correspondence after the meeting, Mr. Haynes agreed the project does not need to be added at this time.

Mr. Agnello stated that after the Round 3 of the Smart Scale process is completed, a new conformity analysis may need to be completed for the next 6-year plan for FY2025. Mr. Ponticello stated that projects can be added to the TIP/LRTP for "PE only" without triggering conformity, and this could be a viable way get projects started prior to completing a subsequent conformity determination.

Mr. Agnello advised that adding new projects would also require the LRTP be updated which requires a 2-month process. Mr. Agnello stated that staff is planning to complete an update in the spring of 2019 anyway so the updates could be made at that time.

Mr. Agnello asked Mr. Ponticello if there is any chance that both Caroline & King George counties will be subject to Air Quality conformity regulations. Mr. Ponticello stated the only way this could happen is if the region monitored ozone levels in violation of the 2015 8-hour ozone standards. Mr. Ponticello stated this happening appears very unlikely as the current ozone design values are in the low 60 ppb range, whereas the 2015 8-hour ozone standard is set at 70 ppb.

Subsequent to the meeting, Ms. Michelle Shropshire submitted two comments. First, the estimate of project costs for the I-95 Express Lanes Fredericksburg Extension Project was modified to \$595 million, and this includes Design-Build costs, oversight (VDOT and concessionaire), and financing costs. Second, the project description for the I-95 Northbound Rappahannock River Crossing project was changed to read "Construct 3 CD lanes from Exit 130 to Exit 133, construct a 4th auxiliary lane from Exit 133 to Exit 136, and improve Exit 133 interchange."

Public Comment Period – No public comments were received and the Public Comment period was closed.

Approvals & Next Steps

Mr. Ponticello made a motion that the ICG committee approve the conformity methodologies and assumptions as presented at today's meeting. Mr. Ponticello also added that motion to approve project list for conformity analysis, with corrections to be made as noted from committee members, also be approved.

Upon motion by Mr. Ponticello and seconded by Mr. Nelson, with all concurring, conformity methodologies/assumptions and project list was endorsed. Mr. Ponticello advised a special TAC meeting will be held on August 8th to approve final conformity assumptions and project list that would also initiate the public comment period.

Adjourn

The June 4th, 2018 ICG meeting adjourned at 9:40 a.m.