



## **BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (BPAC)**

### **Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, January 20<sup>th</sup> – 6:00 p.m.

<https://www.fampo.gwregion.org/> ♦ 406 Princess Anne Street, Fredericksburg VA 22401

#### **Committee Members Present:**

Brian Geouge, Chair, Stafford County

Jacob Pastwik, Spotsylvania County

Adam Lynch, Friends of the Rappahannock (FOR)

Leigh Anderson, GWRideConnect

Rob Maple, Fredericksburg Trails Alliance (FredTrails)

Jim Lynch, Potomac Heritage Trail Association (PHTA) and Friends of the Dahlgren Railroad Heritage Trail (DRHT)

Jamie Jackson, City of Fredericksburg

Chris Clarke, King George County

John Summer, Fredericksburg Cyclist Club (FCC)

Yamina Jordan, Stafford County Alternate

#### **Committee Members Present (remotely, with virtual participation request):**

Debra Fults, disAbility Resource Center (DRC)

Deborah Lately, DRC

Leigh Anderson, GWRideConnect

Aaron Frank, City of Fredericksburg Citizen Representative

#### **Committee Members Not Present:**

Joy Himes, Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC)

Ben Matters, PRTC

Kirsten Talken-Spaulding, National Park Service (NPS)

Stan Huie, FCC, Virginia Bicycle Federation (VBF), and Spotsylvania Greenways Initiative

John Lysher, At-Large Citizen Representative

Brantley Tyndall, Virginia Bicycle Federation (VBF), Alternate

Linda LaSut, Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)

Stephen Littlewood, Stafford County Citizen Representative

Heather LaBelle, Caroline County Citizen Representative

#### **Others Present:**

Mr. Brandon Brown, Stafford County

#### **Staff Present:**

Mr. Ian Ollis, FAMPO Administrator

Ms. Kari Barber, Transportation Planner/ Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator

Mr. Matthew Lehane, Transportation Planner

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1. **Call BPAC Meeting to Order**

Chair Geouge called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

2. **Roll Call**

Ms. Barber called the roll.

3. **Approval of January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022, BPAC Meeting Agenda (ACTION ITEM)**

Motion was made to approve the January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022 BPAC agenda.

Motion: Mr. Jim Lynch; Second: Mr. Pastwik

Motion passed with unanimous consent.

4. **Approval of November 4th, 2021, BPAC Meeting Minutes**

Motion was made to approve the November 4th, 2021, BPAC meeting minutes, as amended.

Motion: Mr. Maple; Second: Mr. Clarke

Motion passed with unanimous consent.

5. **FAMPO Administrator Report-Mr. Ian Ollis**

Mr. Ollis reviewed his presentation to the FAMPO Policy Committee, sharing his vision prompt “What would a good outcome be, 50 years from now?” and encouraging committee members to visualize the steps toward a good transportation future for the region. Mr. Ollis also gave an overview of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill recently passed in Congress and what it would mean for state transportation funding, as well as covering updates to the FAMPO-administered East-West Mobility Study. He then went on to highlight the Fredericksburg Chamber of Commerce’s Legislative Priority for 2022, to create a Regional Transportation Authority (RTA). Mr. Ollis explained that an RTA allows localities and regions to levy taxes to create funding for local transportation improvements. Mr. Ollis concluded by introducing new staff member, Becky Golden.

Mr. Lynch asked if the RTA would cover the whole GWRC Region.

Mr. Ollis answered that it would depend on how the RTA was set up.

Mr. Pastwik asked if the new authority would be a competitor for SMART SCALE dollars. Mr. Lehane and Mr. Ollis explained that the purpose of the RTA was to raise funds to be used by the localities, not to apply for funding itself.

Ms. Jordan asked about attending the FRED Transit meetings. Ms. Jackson gave information about the meetings and said that all are welcome to attend.

6. **Public Comment**

No public comments were received. No member of the public spoke.

7. **Discussion/Action Items**

a. **Presenting the 2050 Active Transportation Plan Draft -Ms. Kari Barber**



Ms. Barber reminded the committee that they had seen the plan and would have until February 17<sup>th</sup> to submit comments. She then went through each chapter briefly so that committee members could ask questions or make any comments they had ready about that chapter.

Mr. Adam Lynch asked if the plan was incorporating localities' planned paths and trails into the Active Transportation Plan. Ms. Barber affirmed that they were.

Mr. Jim Lynch had a question about the surfacing on the Belmont to Ferry Farm Trail. Mr. Geouge confirmed that the trail is completely paved.

Mr. Geouge asked if there would be needs maps. Ms. Barber responded that there had not been staff time for the maps for this release, but that they would be added at a future date. Mr. Geouge responded that maps would be a good addition and offered to facilitate that data for Stafford County.

Mr. Pastwik commented that the Comprehensive Plan for Spotsylvania County had been approved in December so the date for the adoption of the Trailways Master Plan could be updated. He asked about a project potentially missing from the table for the Constrained Long-Range Plan Projects. Ms. Barber and Mr. Lehane explained that if an active transportation project was combined with a roadway project it would be in the main document CLRP rather than in the Active Transportation Plan.

Ms. Barber concluded with next steps, saying that Active Transportation Plan comments must be received by February 17<sup>th</sup>. She also noted that the entire Long Range Transportation Plan is up for public comment and showed the committee where they could access the document. She explained that the Active Transportation Plan will be submitted for their approval March 3 and the entire LRTP will be presented to the Policy Committee on March 21<sup>st</sup>.

**b. FAMPO Bike and Pedestrian Counter Program 2021 Yearly Report-** Mr. Matthew Lehane

Mr. Lehane presented a year's worth of data on the bike/ped count program site, currently on the Rappahannock River Canal Path at the Fredericksburg Dog Park. He showed how weather, day of the week, time of day, and time of year affects trail usage, giving the committee an idea of what types of information they can get from a count of users. Mr. Lehane asked what the program should look like for the rest of 2022, asking the group where the counter would best be placed.

Mr. Adam Lynch asked the price of the counter. Mr. Lehane explained that the counters come from a company called Eco-Counter and cost about \$4,000 to \$5,000, as well as a monthly fee to use their data dashboard.

Mr. Jim Lynch asked about double counting people who turn around on the trails. Mr. Lehane agreed that it was a possibility. The committee also discussed the use of City trails for transportation/commuting to work as well as recreation.

Mr. John Summer asked if there was a desire for more counters and if so, where would they be placed? Mr. Lehane answered that yes, there is, but it is a decision for BPAC and the local jurisdictions. He explained that in 2018 the two counters FAMPO had at the



time were placed at 21 different locations (moving every two weeks) and it allowed usage comparisons. That is something that could be done again if there were more counters.

Ms. Jordan talked about safety and surveillance on the trails. She stated that it's helpful to have something in case of emergencies or criminal activities. Ms. Barber stated that there have been many studies nationwide over the last 30 years that the presence of trails in a community does not increase crime; it decreases it. The group mentioned that emergency blue light call boxes, like those on the University of Mary Washington campus, might be useful in some cases.

Mr. Geouge concluded the discussion, saying that the committee would make decisions about the count program at a future meeting.

**c. Review of State Multi-Use Trails Policy Work Group recommendations to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB)- Ms. Kari Barber**

Ms. Barber reviewed a Cambridge Systematics presentation from a recent Commonwealth Transportation Board meeting highlighting the recommendations of a Multi-Use Trails Working Group. The group found that there are substantial obstacles to building trails throughout Virginia and recommended that a new State Office develop a State Trail Plan with dedicated funding in Fiscal Year 23.

Mr. Ollis questioned whether the working group defined "Multi-Use Trails" and whether they had worked out a funding process. Ms. Barber reviewed two slides with this information.

Mr. Summer asked if there was a process through which these projects were rated for success after completion. Mr. Lehane answered that for SMART SCALE, they are monitoring the success of prior round projects and that the state is in general ramping up evaluation efforts.

Mr. Adam Lynch asked if this program would fall under VDOT. There was some discussion; Ms. Barber and Mr. Lehane responded that it looked like a collaboration between VDOT and DCR. Ms. Barber added that it would be great to have more DCR involvement, citing the difficulty for localities to fund trails that are offroad--not part of a roadway project.

Mr. Maple said that this program would be a good complement to Virginia Trails Alliance, an advocacy organization which meets quarterly.

Mr. Adam Lynch asked if this program was in the budget that Gov. Northam proposed. Mr. Lehane responded that he believed that the funding was available and that the CTB just needed to approve it.

**d. Elections for Vice Chair-Chair Brian Geouge (ACTION ITEM)**

There was some discussion as to whether to postpone the election due to a relatively low turnout, but the committee agreed to move forward with it as planned.



Ms. Barber reminded everyone that the Vice-Chair position was essentially a training position for Chair.

Chair Geouge called for nominations.

Mr. Jim Lynch put forth Mr. Pastwik; Mr. Pastwik said that although he was willing, he had just served and would rather give someone else a chance.

Ms. Jordan asked if there was time to read bios in order to make an informed decision. Mr. Ollis responded that the group is small and works closely together, and as such everyone knows everyone for the most part.

There was some discussion. Ms. Barber confirmed to the members that the position was relatively light duty.

Ms. Jordan volunteered; Chair Geouge recommended that the Chair and Vice Chair not be from the same jurisdiction, and the committee agreed. Mr. Ollis called for volunteers from the other jurisdictions. Ms. Barber added that agencies are also eligible and reported the online attendees to the group for its consideration.

Mr. Adam Lynch asked the term of the office; Ms. Barber responded two years total- one as Vice Chair and the second as Chair. Mr. Lynch responded that he would be willing.

Mr. Jim Lynch nominated Mr. Adam Lynch; Second, Mr. Maple

Motion passed with unanimous consent

## 8. Correspondence

Ms. Barber reviewed correspondence received from State Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator John Bolecek: the agenda for the Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee Winter meeting, occurring Tuesday, January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

## 9. Staff Reports

Mr. Lehane showed the calendar for committee meetings for the rest of the year.

## 10. Member Reports

Mr. Adam Lynch, speaking for himself and not as a member of FOR, introduced his new Advocacy Organization, Fifteen Minute Fredericksburg, which seeks a “more livable and connected city.” The website is fred15.org. He advised that they would be doing a traffic calming tour on Saturday, starting at Riverfront Park. He encouraged everyone to sign up for the newsletter.

Mr. John Summer gave an update on Fredericksburg Cyclists Club’s Cannonball Century Ride, with the largest number of riders ever. They are considering moving the cannonball ride next year. Mr. Lehane showed the organization’s website, cannonballcentury.com

Ms. Jordan asked what a “cannonball” is. Mr. Summer explained that it was a bike ride fundraiser.

Mr. Jim Lynch gave an update on the Dahlgren Railroad Heritage Trail. State Senator Richard Stuart has introduced a budget amendment to purchase a 400-acre piece of



property that the trail runs through known as Lake Caledon. It would be an addition to Caledon State Park. Delegate Luke Torian has introduced an amendment to evaluate the feasibility of the DRHT becoming part of Caledon State Park. He is hopeful for the future of these amendments.

Mr. Lynch also reminded the group that the state of MD had removed long-promised plans for bike/ped facilities on the Governor Harry Nice bridge and reported that it's been recently discovered that an FHWA loan on the project for \$200 million will not be awarded without those facilities. A grassroots group is advocating that the current bridge be left in place and converted for bicycle and pedestrian use as a replacement. Mr. Lynch described the history of the project and the state of Maryland's plans to replace bicycle and pedestrian facilities on the bridge with a "cyclist on bridge" signal. Lastly, Mr. Lynch reported that the Dahlgren Railroad Heritage Trail still needs help clearing downed trees from the storm.

Mr. Maple reported that there are several miles of new trails being added between the quarry trail and the Mott's Run Reservoir Trail areas. He said that the recent storms had "devastated" much of the 30 miles of trails that Fred Trails maintains, however, over the last two weekends volunteers have spent over 300 collective hours clearing trails, and 16 miles have been cleared of over 200 hundred trees. He was very happy with the volunteer turnout.

Mr. Lehane asked if Smith Run Trail was one of the trails maintained by the group. Mr. Maple responded that currently, although they are responsible for that parcel, that trail is not one that they maintain. He would be meeting with the Fredericksburg Parks and Recreation Director about bringing all natural surface trails under maintenance by the group.

He stated that are many natural surface trails in Fredericksburg that are not manned by anyone.

Mr. Pastwik reported that the Comprehensive Plan and the Trailways Master Plan had been adopted by the County Board of Supervisors in December. He said that the County was actively pursuing physical trail infrastructure improvements; a focus at this time was extending the VCR Trail eastward into Fredericksburg from Salem Church Road. He said they had TAP funding on it and were moving forward to close the gap. Another focus is Tidewater Trail widening with a SMART SCALE application, and another SMART SCALE application to bring the East Coast Greenway route out past Shannon Airport and down Benchmark Road in order to connect to the Spotsylvania VRE Station. He reported that they are also trying to pursue recreational trail easements to get the space for the County's planned trail systems in order. He reviewed recent trail easement sections acquired by the County. Currently the easement plat for the S Power solar energy property is under review. Those easements will mean many miles of trails easements for the County out west involving a small portion of the VCR Trail and large sections of the Lake Anna Connector Trail, the Todd's Tavern Spur, and the Ni River Trail systems.

Chair Geouge asked if there was anyone online who wished to report.

Mr. Frank reported from online that the pedestrian reflective signs have been removed for snowplows, but the City is reevaluating that policy in order to make safer crossings in the lengthy evening hours. He asked for recommendations on how other localities deal with this issue.

He reported that Fredericksburg hired an environmental sustainability coordinator. He





hoped there was an opportunity for transportation/ bike and pedestrian work with that position.

Mr. Adam Lynch pointed out that the new Coordinator works in the Public Works Division.

Lastly Mr. Frank reported on bills in the General Assembly- one that did not pass was to impound bicycles and fine cyclists who rolled through a stop sign. The second one was to prohibit cyclists from riding two abreast, which is still moving through the Assembly.

Chair Geouge reported that the Stafford County Comprehensive Plan Update was adopted in November and included a minor change to the Bike/Ped Facilities Plan regarding the Shared-Use Path along Celebrate Virginia Parkway and its connection to the area along the Rappahannock River owned by Fredericksburg. The County Transportation Division is currently working with consultants on several projects including a Rt. 17 Multimodal study. Recommendations from that study would be coming out in a week. They will also be working with a consultant on a Transportation Master Plan for the County, which will include comprehensive demand modeling which he expects to leverage for looking at bike/ped improvements. Lastly, they will be working with a consultant to revisit their Transportation Impact Fees. He explained that Stafford is the only county in Virginia to charge impact fees- \$3000 per unit.

Mr. Lehane stated that there were technical problems and those online could not be heard if there were any more who wished to give report.

*[Added later, via email due to the technical problems]* Ms. Fults reported that the disAbility Resource Center and Healthy Generations are coordinating a Coalition of concerned community members, agencies and people with disabilities including vulnerable seniors, to discuss the need for affordable, accessible transportation in the region. They are looking for folks to join a monthly meeting to provide information and assist in the development of a regional plan. They are currently developing an invitation, including a first meeting date.

11. Adjourn Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee Meeting / Next meeting **March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022 at 6:00 pm**

Chair Geouge called for a motion to adjourn at 7:55.

Motion: Mr. Jim Lynch; Second: Mr. Summer

Motion passed with unanimous consent.