

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Monday, June 5, 2023 – 9:30 a.m.

406 Princess Anne Street, Fredericksburg, VA 22401

www.fampo.gwregion.org Video URL: <https://youtu.be/BExcmxBmU4Y>

Committee Members Present:

First Vice Chair Matthew Lehane, Stafford County
Second Vice Chair Paul Agnello, Spotsylvania County
Khapel Akbari, Stafford County
Bassam Amin, City of Fredericksburg
Mohamed Benomar, Spotsylvania County
Mike Craig, City of Fredericksburg
Adam Derrick, Stafford County
Melody Fowler, FXBGO!
Susan Gardner, VDOT
Kate Gibson, GWRideConnect
Stephen Haynes, VDOT
Nick Minor, King George County
Jacob Pastwik, Spotsylvania County
Craig Pennington, Caroline County
Nick Ruiz, VRE
Michelle Shropshire, VDOT
Rodney White, Spotsylvania County

Committee Members Present (remotely):

Amy Garbarini, DRPT
Robert Schneider, PRTC

Committee Members Absent:

Chair Jamie Jackson, City of Fredericksburg
Leigh Anderson, GWRideConnect
Chelsea Beytas, FTA
Kimberly Cook, King George County
Bryon Counsell, Stafford County
Mike Finchum, Caroline County
Christine Hoeffner, VRE
Todd Horsley, DRPT
Daniel Koenig, FTA
Steven Minor, FHWA
Craig Reed, FXBGO!
Joe Stainsby, PRTC

Others Present

Leon Hughes, Caroline County
Siobhan Beckett, Stafford County Resident
William Scaife, Stafford County Greenbank Road Resident
Alan Watkins, Stafford County England Run Road Resident

Staff Present:

Ian Ollis, FAMPO Administrator
Becky Golden, Transportation Planning Manager
Kari Eaves, Transportation Planner II, Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator
John S. Ridout, Transportation Planner II
Colie Touzel, Public Involvement and Title VI Coordinator
Connor Anderson, GIS Technician/Transportation Planner

1. Call Technical Advisory Committee Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 am by Vice Chair Lehane.

2. Roll Call and Determination of Quorum

Connor Anderson conducted roll call and determined that a quorum was present.

3. Approval of the June 5, 2023, Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Agenda (ACTION ITEM)

Paul Agnello requested that items b., c., and d. be removed from the Consent Agenda and placed under Action / Discussion items.

Motion was made to amend the agenda by moving Consent Agenda items b., c., and d. to Action / Discussion.

Motion: Paul Agnello; Second: Bassam Amin

Abstentions: None

Motion passed with unanimous consent.

4. Review of the May Policy Committee Meeting

Ian Ollis provided a summary of the Policy Committee's May meeting to attendees. Appreciation was extended to VDOT for use of their Fredericksburg District Auditorium to allow for expanded public comment on the River Crossing report. There were over 70 attendees and many speakers: some in favor of a River Crossing, and others against specific potential options within the report. Public comments were invited for three other items: allocation of FY24-29 CMAQ / STBG / CRP / HIP funds, FY24 UPWP, and the FY24-27 TIP. A public comment period was opened for an FY21-24 TIP amendment to add funds to maintenance project groupings for FY23 and to add additional funds for the Shelton Shop Road improvement project. Allocations for FY24-29 CMAQ / STBG / CRP and HIP funds were approved, and correspondence from the Spotsylvania County Board of Supervisors in opposition to the advancement and funding of the River Crossing NEPA alternatives analysis was provided in the agenda materials.

5. Public Comment

Alan Watkins from the England Run Road community asked TAC to consider questions about statements in the River Crossing report and about timing of the steps in the NEPA alternatives analysis process. Staff responded directly to Mr. Watkins and his letter will be added to the final version of the River Crossing report.

6. Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of the May 1, 2023, TAC Meeting Minutes
- e. Endorse Resolution 23-30 Approving Amendments to the FY21-24 Transportation Improvement Program to Add Additional Funds to Maintenance Project Groupings for FY23 and to Add Additional Funds for UPC 117026, #SMART22 Shelton Shop Road Improvements with Reconstruction Without Added Capacity

Motion to Approve the June 5, 2023, Consent Agenda, as amended.

Motion: Paul Agnello; Second: Mike Craig

Abstentions: None

Motion passed with unanimous consent.

7. Action/Discussion Items

6.b. Endorse Resolution 23-24 Adopting the Fiscal Year 2024 Unified Planning Work Program

Mr. Agnello advised attendees that Spotsylvania County's Board of Supervisors opposes the funding in the FY24 UPWP for the River Crossing NEPA Alternatives Analysis. The cost for the analysis of \$685,000 comprises roughly 40% of the UPWP and lacks regional support. For this reason, Spotsylvania is not able to support the FY24 UPWP.

Motion to Endorse Resolution 23-24.

Motion: Michelle Shropshire; Second: Vice Chair Lehane

Abstentions: None

Motion passed.

6.c. Endorse Resolution 23-25 Adopting the FY24-27 Transportation Improvement Program

Mr. Agnello asked whether SMART SCALE Round 5 projects have been included in the TIP document. Mr. Ollis and Dr. Ridout replied that the document under consideration includes the LRTP constrained project list, along with all funded projects. Since the CTB has not yet approved the SMART SCALE Round 5 projects, there will be a significant TIP amendment in August to add those project awards.

Motion to Endorse Resolution 23-25.

Motion: Paul Agnello; Second: Mike Craig

Abstentions: None

Motion passed with unanimous consent.

6.d. Endorse Resolution 23-26 Adopting the River Crossing Study Report

Mr. Ollis advised attendees that staff made minor amendments to the version of the report that was presented at the May 15th Policy Committee meeting. Mr. Agnello reaffirmed Spotsylvania County's opposition to the report that was outlined in correspondence and a resolution.

Motion to Endorse Resolution 23-26.

Motion: Vice Chair Lehane; Second: Adam Derrick

Abstentions: None

Motion passed.

7.a Final VCR Trail Study Memorandum and Presentation

Paul Prideaux explained the scope of the project is to investigate grade separation options at the following locations of the VCR trail: two in Fredericksburg of Blue and Gray Pkwy (Primary Route 3) and Emancipation Hwy (US Route 1); and one in Spotsylvania of I-95. Earlier screening steps have resulted in the following options being discussed in detail with ideas / input from attendees:

- Blue and Gray Pkwy Bridge / Aerial Crossing
 - Route 3 Bridge Crossing A spans Route 3 about 500-feet west of the existing at grade crossing; Crossing B spans Route 3 about 115-feet west of the existing at grade crossing.
 - Both options avoid National Park Service land.
 - The free flow right turn lane for eastbound Route 3 to southbound Lafayette currently lacks a signal that stops traffic for pedestrians and cyclists; and is a safety concern that a Bridge / Aerial crossing will eliminate.
- Emancipation Hwy Bridge / Aerial Crossing
 - Route 1 Bridge Crossing spans Route 1 above the current at grade crossing of the VCR trail.
 - The bridge will negate the need for the existing traffic signal for Kings Mill Drive, and it is the intent to remove the signal structure but continue to maintain the median opening and turning lanes as an unsignalized "T" intersection.
 - Input regarding the location of the connection between the at grade sidewalk and trail along southbound US Route 1 to the new VCR bridge approach fill, resulted in the north side of the bridge fill being the best location for a future connection.
- I-95 Tunnel South of the Existing Hazel Run box culvert
 - Tunnel follows the skew of the original VCR alignment.
 - Ideas that were discussed include: consideration of broad band utility through the tunnel, and additional "tubes" for a future high-capacity transit system.

7.b Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

Kari Eaves provided the following dates for TAP applications: Portal opened May 15th; Pre-applications are due by June 30th; TAC, PC and GWRC Board presentations will be in August and September; final applications are due by October 2nd and must be accompanied by a FAMPO or GWRC Resolution of support.

7.c SMART SCALE Round 5 Report

Ms. Eaves provided a summary of the CTB's May 23rd presentation "SMART SCALE Round 5 Consensus Scenario". The following changes were made for the region from the January staff-recommended scenario: two projects were unfunded (Express Commuter Transit Service to Dahlgren and SR-610 Widening SR-648 to SR-751 & Multimodal Improvements); and two additional projects will be funded (US 301 Port Conway-Salem Church Roadway Improvements RCUT and Leeland Road Widening with Multimodal Improvements).

7.c.1. SMART SCALE Process Review Update

Mr. Ollis and Vice Chair Lehane opened the discussion sharing the outcome of a CTB SMART SCALE applicant survey, VDOT staff-recommended changes to the current process, as well as the schedule to provide input. Appreciation was extended to Mr. Agnello for alerting FAMPO staff to this important issue.

TAC comments on the presentation given to the CTB at their May 23rd Workshop, agenda item 8, SMART SCALE Program Updates:

- FAMPO and GWRC are challenged with "Big City" congestion since I-95, US 301, US Route 1, US Route 17, Primary Route 3, and Primary Route 208 all converge through a low tier MPO and PDC. We allocate our CMAQ, STBG, HIP, and CRP funds to these high-volume routes at the sacrifice of our Secondary Roads and high-volume arterials in the Secondary program. If VDOT reduces the number of SMART SCALE applications, FAMPO will be severely limited in finding funding for local priorities.
- The slide that is titled "Potential Solutions Identified – Application Quality; Reduce application cap limits to 2 and 5 using Round 5 data" states "...The overall success rate rose from 39% to 53%..." In the scenario modelled, VDOT staff decided what applications would have been submitted with the reduced maximum, and it is presumed that VDOT staff selected the highest scoring projects to achieve the 53% success rate. If the total number of applications is reduced, applicants will have to predict beforehand which will be their top scoring projects. If they don't choose the top scoring project, funding will go to other jurisdictions, sometimes in the same district, sometimes elsewhere in the Commonwealth.
- Mr. Agnello stated, in his experience, a 39% overall statewide success rate for Round 5 applications is very good when considering Federal programs that are extremely competitive; and that the success rate for the FAMPO and GWRC applications was about 50% or even better.
- If the number of applications is reduced by any amount, projects that rise from VDOT Pipeline studies will be in competition with projects promulgated based on constituent demands and expectations. Nick Ruiz observed that this situation could lead to zero projects being funded for an entity that would use their reduced "slot" for locally promulgated projects that may score poorly. Mr. Agnello responded that with such a scenario, along with the strict rules against "bundling", it will take generations for Pipeline projects to be completed, if at all.

Consensus was reached that instead of reducing the allowable number of project applications to address staff shortages, a more sustainable solution is to increase qualified staff in both the Transportation Planning and Location and Design Divisions, with increased funding on the horizon and now available.

After valuable discussion, TAC directed staff to prepare a draft letter and resolution to not only describe the above opposition to the recommended reduction in SMART SCALE applications, but also reassert the recommendation provided to the Secretary of Transportation in February for a proposed 3-tier application system to add a middle tier to the current 2-tier system:

Tier	Localities	MPOs/PDCs/Transit Agencies	Max # of Pre-Applications	Max # of Applications
1	Less than 100,000	Less than 250,000	5	4
2	100,000 to 200,000	250,000 to 500,000	8	7
3	Greater than 200,000	Greater than 500,000	12	10

The CTB will be meeting in Fredericksburg for their July meetings and July 19th at 8:30 will be the opportunity to provide public comments at the Action Meeting.

7.d. Election of Officers

The TAC bylaws reflect the Policy Committee cycle of leadership with the FY24 nominees as follows: Chair, Stafford County, Matthew Lehane; Vice Chair, Spotsylvania County, Paul Agnello; and Second Vice Chair, Fredericksburg, Jamie Jackson.

Motion made to elect the slate of TAC officers listed above.

Motion: Nick Minor; Second: Paul Agnello

Abstentions: None

Motion passed with unanimous consent.

7.e. Vote of Thanks Recognizing Outgoing Chair

Vice Chair Lehane recognized the service of Jamie Jackson as the FY23 TAC Chair, whose Certificate of Recognition will be presented to them at the August meeting.

Motion made to recognize and thank Jamie Jackson for serving as TAC Chair from July 2022 to June 2023.

Motion: Matthew Lehane; Second: Mike Craig

Abstentions: None

Motion passed with unanimous consent.

8. Correspondence

Maps were received from VDOT that show VDOT's Urban Areas and the 2020 Census tracts for jurisdictions' input to "smooth" the VDOT Urban Areas. Stephen Haynes and Mr. Ollis described the informational differences and purposes of each of the map boundaries, and comments were requested to be received by Tuesday June 6th.

9. Staff Reports

No Staff Reports were presented.

10. Member Reports

a. Notification of changes to cost estimates on FAMPO projects

Ms. Shropshire advised attendees that increases to active projects were presented to the CTB in May, and the staff recommended funding adjustments should be approved at their June meeting. Susan Gardner advised that the recent increase of the debt ceiling necessitated obligating all Covid funding or the Commonwealth would lose unspent Covid money. One project in Hampton Roads was identified with unobligated Covid funds, and a transfer between Spotsylvania's Market Street project and the Hampton Roads project allowed all Covid funds to be spent. A TIP Amendment will be forthcoming, and there is zero net effect on either project.

b. Notification of new transportation projects by localities

No new transportation projects were identified by localities.

11. Meeting Adjourned 11:10 a.m.