

POLICY COMMITTEE **DRAFT MEETING MINUTES**

October 16, 2023 – 6:00 p.m.

406 Princess Anne Street, Fredericksburg, VA 22401

www.fampo.gwregion.org

Committee Members Present: *(V) indicates voting member*

Ms. Meg Bohmke, Chair, Stafford County (V)
Ms. Crystal Vanuch, Stafford County (V)
Mr. Tom Coen, alternate Stafford County (V)
Ms. Lori Hayes, First Vice-Chair Spotsylvania County (V)
Mr. Jason Graham, Second Vice-Chair, City of Fredericksburg (V)
Mr. Timothy Baroody, City of Fredericksburg (V)
Ms. Marcie Parker, Representative from the Secretary of Transportation (V)
Dr. Robert Schneider, Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC) (V)
Ms. Susan Gardner, Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)
Mr. Stephen Haynes, alternate Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)
Ms. Melody Fowler, alternate Fredericksburg Go! (FXBGO!)
Mr. Jeffrey Black, alternate Caroline County
Mr. Nicolas Kwatnoski, Chair CTAC

Committee Members Present (remotely):

Mr. Jacob Lane, Spotsylvania County (V)
Ms. Cathy Binder, King George County

Committee Members Absent:

Ms. Monica Gary, Stafford County (V)
Mr. Matthew Kelly, City of Fredericksburg (V)
Mr. Darrell English, alternate Stafford County (V)
Mr. David Brown, alternate City of Fredericksburg (V)
Mr. Chris Yakabouski, Spotsylvania County (V)
Mr. David Ross, alternate Spotsylvania County (V)
Mr. Tim McLaughlin, alternate Spotsylvania County (V)
Mr. Kevin Marshall, alternate Spotsylvania County (V)
Ms. Deborah Frazier, alternate Spotsylvania County (V)
Mr. Joe Stainsby, alternate PRTC (V)
Ms. Michelle Shropshire, alternate Representative from the Secretary of Transportation (V)
Mr. Adam Lynch, Chair BPAC
Mr. Todd Horsley, Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)
Ms. Amy Garbarini, alternate Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)
Mr. Daniel Koenig, Federal Highway Administration (FTA)
Ms. Chelsea Beytas, alternate Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
Ms. Laura Sellers, Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB)
Mr. Jeffery Sili, Caroline County
Ms. Jamie Jackson, Fredericksburg Go! (FXBGO!)
Mr. Steven Minor, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

Others Present:

Al Watkins
Gavin Gardon
Brad Shelton (remote)

Staff Present:

Mr. Ian Ollis, FAMPO Administrator
Dr. John Ridout, Transportation Planner II
Mr. Becky Golden, Transportation Planning Manager
Mx. Colie Touzel, Public Involvement/Title VI Coordinator
Ms. Kari Eaves, Transportation Planner III (remote)

1. Call Policy Committee Meeting to Order

Chair Bohmke called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Bohmke led the pledge of allegiance.

3. Roll Call and Determination of Quorum

Mx. Touzel conducted roll call and determined a quorum present.

4. Approval of the October 16, 2023, Policy Committee Agenda (ACTION ITEM)

Motion was made to approve the October 16, 2023, Policy Committee agenda as amended (items 8 and 9 switched).

Motion: Ms. Vanuch; Second: Mr. Graham
Motion passed with unanimous consent.

5. Public Hearings

Amendments to the Community Engagement and Equity Plan (CEEP)

Mr. Ollis reminded members that during the last policy committee meetings, FAMPO staff presented the CEEP document outlining these changes. Two key amendments were put forward. The first pertains to allowing a shorter period for Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) amendments. The second proposal suggests that instead of reading public comments aloud during the Policy Committee meeting, staff will provide a summarized version of the content. Additionally, the public comment in its entirety will be printed and emailed to members of the Policy Committee as part of their meeting materials.

During the public hearing, no in-person comments were made, and subsequently, the public hearing was closed. No immediate action was taken.

6. Public Involvement

Alan Watkins emphasized the importance of including the new connector road between Courthouse Road and Centreport Parkway and between Centreport Parkway and Enon Road in the western connector portion of the River Crossing Consultant project. This addition would establish a genuine alternate north-south route, reducing the reliance on I-95.

He said it is crucial that we incorporate these elements into the consultant's scope of work, as failing to do so may result in increased traffic congestion on Plank Road and Route 17.

Although the Stafford comprehensive plan acknowledges this, it is among numerous projects, and further investigation is needed. Additionally, given VDOT's plan to install a roundabout at Banks Ford Parkway and Celebrate Virginia Parkway, this should be explored. He also mentioned assessing the potential impact of rezoning the acres between Sanford Drive and the commuter lot.

7. Consent Agenda

- a. **Approval of September 18, 2023, Policy Committee Minutes (ACTION ITEM)**
- b. Resolution 24-10 Directing a Public Comment Period for an Amendment to the Fiscal Year 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) (ACTION ITEM)
- c. STBG Project Selection Process Section 3.3 Project Screening Minor Revisions (ACTION ITEM)

Motion was made to approve consent agenda items A and C, removing item B for a separate vote.

Motion: Ms. Vanuch; Second: Ms. Hayes
Motion passed with unanimous consent.

Motion was made to approve consent agenda item B.

Motion: Mr. Graham; Second: Ms. Vanuch
Motion passed.

8. Action/Discussion Items

- a. Resolution 24-09 Authorizing Staff to Execute a Contract with Michael Baker International for the FAMPO River Crossing Parkway NEPA Alternatives Study to Inform Future NEPA Requirements (ACTION ITEM)

Mr. Ollis provided some clarification on the resolution regarding its place in the UPWP and budget. He stated that all three consultants were approached. Cambridge Systematics removed themselves from contention because the task did not fall within their area of expertise. Michael Baker was awarded the task, and the TAC endorsed this.

Motion was made to approve Resolution 24-09.

Motion: Mr. Graham; Second: Ms. Vanuch
Motion passed.

- b. Regional Transportation Authority Update – Mr. Ian Ollis

In his presentation, Mr. Ollis discussed several important considerations. These included the name of the authority, the composition of the board, weighted voting, taxes and fees, the distribution of funds, the prioritization of projects, and an initial set of project allocations.

During the presentation, discussions primarily revolved around tax-related matters. This included the estimation of a fuel tax option, with a focus on determining the tax rate in neighboring regions. The objective was to set a tax rate lower than that of neighboring areas, ensuring that living in the GWRC region remains economically attractive. Detailed fuel tax comparisons were explained and discussed.

The RTA discussion then shifted to the distribution of funds. Mr. Ollis explained the distribution methods employed by other regional transportation authorities (RTAs). Distribution methods that emphasized a fixed percentage for transit allocation should be avoided, as it might become difficult to amend in the future once enshrined in law. The idea was to fund transit using the regional pool of money, as allocating funds for transit projects was seen as crucial. A point-based system that provided a score for project basics was suggested to determine funding allocation. The question of whether the methodology needed to be included in the bill text was raised, and was clarified that methodology could be developed post-legislation approval.

Regarding the initial set of project allocations, forward-thinking was encouraged. An MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) between the five localities was proposed to ensure equitable project distribution in the beginning stages of the authority. However, determining the funding cap within the MOU remained a challenge. The MOU was seen as a suggestion for ensuring a level of comfort among the localities.

The option of fully funding projects if other funding sources fell through was discussed, with the understanding that other RTA funds could continue to support projects. The authority discussion then turned to determining the potential taxes. Various opinions were voiced during the meeting. Ms. Hayes expressed concerns about tax increases, and other board members shared similar sentiments. Mr. Coen highlighted the importance of the timeline, with legislative bills to be submitted soon. New elected officials could also influence the outcome, so the committee suggested to involve the delegates and hold meetings after the elections.

Dr. Schneider emphasized key dates for 2024, including legislation pre-filing (November 20 it begins and January 10 it closes), and suggested that the impact on constituents must be communicated to the legislation. He also noted that failing to have a transit set aside might result in zero funds being allocated to transit in practice. Mr. Lane inquired about the potential effects of taxes on agriculture producers. The fuel tax was explained that the proposed 2-cent increase in fuel tax was chosen to ensure that it remained lower than the rates in Richmond. The conversation shifted to understanding how tax increases would affect localities, with counties raising various taxes due to increased local funding needs. The use of local funds for local matches was considered, and it was mentioned that rural localities often found it challenging to provide local matches.

The discussion concluded with requests for a report on the funds that counties had put forward for local matches in transportation projects over the past few years, as well as the need for more information before conducting a straw poll on taxes. Ms. Hayes expressed concerns about legislators making decisions without consulting localities. The discussion about the regional authority concluded with the acknowledgment that the decision was not solely within the board's hands, but they needed to be proactive in influencing the decision-making process. Staff were requested to reach out to localities to get their current taxes on retail sales and

related taxes. VDOT offered to provide information on the amount of local match provided in the past on projects in the region.

c. **Vision 2075 – Draft Vision Statement – Mr. Ian Ollis**

Mr. Ollis gave a brief presentation on the FAMPO draft vision statement and asked for input from members of the Policy Committee. He mentioned that the TAC supported it completely. The Policy Committee also approved of the structure.

9. **FAMPO Administrator Report**

Mr. Ollis gave a presentation on an analysis of heavy-duty trucks traveling through the FAMPO region. There were three different maps showing truck origins for the trucks traveling into the FAMPO region using I-95, US 17, and Route 3. The top 10 origins for each map were shown, as well as the truck origins by state. He then gave a quick review on upcoming items including: the commencement of the SS4A study, CMAQ/STBG call for projects, Smart Scale Round 6 project identification, Virginia Governors Transportation conference, and the TAP applications awards.

10. **Correspondence**

There was a letter from Alan Watkins detailing the need for a solution to alleviate the congestion on Warrenton Road by diverting heavy truck traffic and warning of rezoning around the area.

There was also an FRA letter of support for the Virginia National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Formula Program Application: Global Montello Group Corporation.

11. **Staff and Agency Reports**

Mx. Touzel gave a report on the vacancies on the CTAC along with CTAC members' attendance.

12. **Board Member and Chair Comments**

There were no comments.

13. **Adjourn/Next Policy Committee Meeting November 20, 2023, at 6:00 pm.**

Chair Bohmke adjourned the meeting at 7:58 pm.