

## **POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

November 20, 2023 – 6:00 p.m.

406 Princess Anne Street, Fredericksburg, VA 22401

[www.fampo.gwregion.org](http://www.fampo.gwregion.org) Video URL: <https://youtu.be/QcRLvXkjxqg>

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

Ms. Meg Bohmke, Chair, Stafford County (V)  
Ms. Crystal Vanuch, Stafford County (V)  
Ms. Monica Gary, Stafford County (V)  
Ms. Lori Hayes, First Vice-Chair Spotsylvania County (V)  
Mr. Chris Yakabouski, Spotsylvania County (V)  
Mr. Jason Graham, Second Vice-Chair, City of Fredericksburg (V)  
Mr. Matthew Kelly, City of Fredericksburg (V)  
Mr. Timothy Baroody, City of Fredericksburg (V)  
Ms. Marcie Parker, Representative from the Secretary of Transportation (V)  
Ms. Cathy Coffey, alternate Representative from the Secretary of Transportation (V)  
Ms. Susan Gardner, Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)  
Mr. Stephen Haynes, alternate Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)  
Ms. Jamie Jackson, Fredericksburg Go! (FXBGO!)  
Ms. Melody Fowler, alternate Fredericksburg Go! (FXBGO!)  
Ms. Cathy Binder, King George County  
Mr. Jeffery Sili, Caroline County  
Mr. Nicolas Kwatnoski, Chair CTAC

### **Committee Members Present (remotely):**

Dr. Robert Schneider, Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC) (V)  
Mr. Steven Minor, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)  
Mr. Matthew Lehane, Chair BPAC

### **Committee Members Absent:**

Mr. Tom Coen, alternate Stafford County (V)  
Mr. Darrell English, alternate Stafford County (V)  
Mr. David Brown, alternate City of Fredericksburg (V)  
Mr. Jacob Lane, 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)  
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. Jeffrey Black, alternate Caroline County

**Others Present:**

Al Watkins  
Gavin Gardon  
TaMara Banks  
Timothy Welsh  
Kevin Stephens  
Deuntay Diggs  
Tara Durant  
Jeremy McPike  
Joshua Cole  
Eunice Hangler  
Matthew Shilts  
Chip Boyles  
Casandra Lord (remote)  
Paul Agnello (remote)  
Steven Minor (remote)  
Rodney White (remote)

**Staff Present:**

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

**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**

Mr. Anderson conducted roll call and determined a quorum present.

**4. Approval of the November 20, 2023, Policy Committee Agenda (ACTION ITEM)**

Motion was made to approve the November 20, 2023, Policy Committee agenda as amended (move item 7c to 9c and move item 9c up after item 7).

Motion: Mr. Kelly; Second: Ms. Vanuch

Motion passed with unanimous consent.

**5. Public Hearings**

*Amendments to the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)*

No comments were received or made, and subsequently, the public hearing was closed. No immediate action was taken.

## 6. Public Involvement

Comments received prior to the meeting were read aloud and included the following:

- John Bryant noted his opposition to a Regional Authority and proposed to tax the home builders and the people who drive through the region, and not residents themselves.
- Max Steinbaum noted necessary improvements to Fredericksburg trails and relayed hopes for better trail connectivity.
- Molly Bowes relayed hopes to restore a section of the original cobblestone street in downtown Fredericksburg and asked what role FAMPO can play in making this a reality. She also noted efforts to work with law enforcement to better enforce drivers who are speeding through Darbytown.

In-person comments included the following:

- Alan Watkins made remarks on the proposed amendments to the CEEP. He stated the importance of receiving public comments and that, although it is good to attach comments received prior to the meeting to the agenda for member convenience, he emphasized the importance of reading aloud the public comments for the allotted three-minute timeframe. He pointed out the lack of assurance that board members would read comments and stressed the imperative for FAMPO staff not to merely summarize but to read aloud public comments. Additionally, Mr. Watkins expressed his endorsement of an RTA and commended the efforts of staff and board members for engaging with officials in Richmond. Lastly, he made a request for FAMPO to provide monthly updates to the public regarding the substantial River Crossing Study.
- Nicolas Kwatnoski, CTAC Chair, reported that CTAC voted on endorsing the CEEP amendments and RTA legislation. He emphasized that the CEEP amendments were not endorsed due to concerns related to accessibility including access to the meeting location and meeting time, while the RTA received endorsement.
- Timothy Welsh, CTAC Vice Chair, voiced his support for an RTA, citing his family's long history in Virginia and their recent acceptance of a farm subsidy. Despite expressing a dislike for taxes, he acknowledged the benefits of an RTA for the region.

## 7. Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of October 16, 2023, Policy Committee Minutes (**ACTION ITEM**)
- b. Resolution 24-11 Approving Amendments to the Community Engagement and Equity Plan (CEEP) (**ACTION ITEM**)
- c. Resolution 24-12 Approving the Fiscal Year 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Amendment 1 (**ACTION ITEM**)
- d. Resolution 24-13 Approving a Rollover from the FY21-24 Transportation Improvement Program to the FY24-27 Transportation Improvement Program for 2 Projects: Route 1 and Exit 126 Southbound Improvements; #SMART 22 - I95 Exit 126 STARS Study Improvements (**ACTION ITEM**)
- e. Resolution 24-14 Directing a Public Comment Period for an Amendment to the FY24-27 Transportation Improvement Program to Adjust Funding Allocations for 2 Projects: Route 1

and Exit 126 Southbound Improvements; #SMART 22 - I95 Exit 126 STARS Study Improvements (**ACTION ITEM**)

Motion was made to approve consent agenda, moving item B and C for a separate discussion and vote.

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

7b. Discussion:

Chair Bohmke clarified the proposed amendment aimed to streamline meetings, citing the lengthier duration of recent sessions and the time-consuming nature of reading public comment.

Mr. Kelly drew on his extensive experience on the FAMPO Policy Committee, emphasizing the tradition of reading aloud public letters submitted to the board. He noted with large projects in the works, it will be important to have a robust public engagement and, thus, reading letters aloud will be important. He suggested that a time limit of forty-five minutes be utilized for reading aloud public comments.

Ms. Vanuch shared the practices of the Stafford County Board of Supervisors, where they receive an email with all public comments attached on the Monday of their board meeting. She suggested that FAMPO consider implementing a similar practice.

Mr. Graham shared his opposition to summarizing comments, expressing concern about potential bias in a summary. While acknowledging the succinct practice of summarizing copy/pasted comments with a brief statement, he argued that individual, thoughtful letters should be read verbatim to avoid any misrepresentation and allow for inclusion.

Mr. Yakabouski opposed the proposed amendment, asserting that letters written by the public deserve to be read in full into the record, as summaries may not capture their essence adequately. While supporting the idea of a time limit for reading letters, he suggested a thirty-minute timeframe to read all submitted letters.

Ms. Hayes noted that reading letters aloud could be constrained by the three-minute time limit for public comments. She proposed that a summary might be more suitable for public consumption, recognizing potential challenges posed by time constraints.

A motion was made to update the language to the amendment as follows: Allow community members to submit comments in advance of the meeting which will be read by staff with a time limit of three minutes per comment and a total time limit of 30 minutes per all written comments. Written comments will be read after in-person comments.

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

8. **Regional Transportation Authority Update** – Mr. Ian Ollis  
(Originally item 9c on the agenda.)

Chair Bohmke recognized and expressed appreciation for the presence of the elected officials who attended the meeting.

Mr. Ollis provided a brief update on the RTA. He noted that an RTA is needed because the region has all the congestion problems, but none of the funding of other regions in Virginia that do have an RTA. His presentation included considerations about 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. Mr. Ollis provided clarification, stating that FAMPO staff has communicated with the localities in the region regarding their tax collections. He pointed out that currently, localities do not have a grantor's tax in place. Mr. Ollis observed that the recordation tax bill occasionally uses the term 'grantor.' He further highlighted that the General Assembly's financial statement notes the nature of the recordation tax and that the proposed RTA bill aims to redirect funds back to the region.

Mr. Sili pointed out that Caroline and King George Counties are non-voting members of FAMPO and that they do not benefit from FAMPO funding. He stated that more pavement is not a viable solution and can result in higher maintenance costs. He expressed concerns about 301.

Ms. Binder raised the concern that rural localities may not receive significant benefits from an RTA.

Ms. Vanuch referred to previously proposed legislation for an RTA, noting its unfavorable reception due to inadequate communication from the state and senate. She expressed optimism that the region can come together and agree on a mechanism to get money from Hampton Roads' RTA. Ms. Vanuch questioned the feasibility of an RTA, the potential for reclaiming recordation taxes, and sought support from local and state legislators. emphasizing a preference for avoiding tax increases.

Mr. Kelly highlighted the region's growth and the challenges of securing funding for large-scale projects along I-95. He emphasized the historical nature of the conversation, expressing concerns about the "what's in it for me" mentality potentially hindering progress. Mr. Kelly acknowledged collective responsibility for the current transportation shortcomings, stressing the need to level the playing field for funding significant regional projects. He referred to a shift in focus from traditional asphalt-based solutions to alternative transportation options. Additionally, he highlighted VDOT's acknowledgment two years ago that the application of asphalt alone is insufficient to address the region's transportation needs.

Senator McPike contributed insights on the grantors tax definition and urged the region to identify leverage points for addressing transportation issues. He advocated for a thoughtful approach, emphasizing the importance of selecting the right tools for regional progress. He highlighted the impact of the board's decisions extending beyond the region to those who utilize its roads. He pointed out the significance of establishing a mechanism, such as an RTA, to prevent the diversion of recordation tax money to Hampton Roads.

Mr. Graham emphasized the collective responsibility of the board to align with localities' comprehensive plans and underscored the positive impact of transit on reducing road congestion, even if transit riders do not originate in the locality they are heading to.

Mr. Yakabouski proposed streamlining legislative language for clarity and raised questions about the objectives of an RTA. He stated that citizens do not believe that taxes are not fixing any transportation issues. He noted that Exit 126 was voted on in 2017 and the project is just now getting started. He stressed the need for a prioritized regional project list, adherence to

plans, and the formation of a working committee to avoid hasty decisions. He requested regular updates from the working group to the Policy Committee.

Chair Bohmke, while expressing support for an RTA, stated her intention to vote against the motion to move forward with an RTA because she wants all jurisdictions to be a player in a regional effort. She stated that if a more thorough examination was not to take place, she would vote in favor of an RTA.

Ms. Parker shared that there is still time to vote on legislation, and therefore she is going to vote in favor of an RTA.

A motion was made to form an RTA with FAMPO Alternative Model 1b parameters.

Motion: Mr. Graham; Second: Ms. Gary

Motion was withdrawn after further discussion and in its place, it was decided that a subcommittee would be formed with representation from each of the five GWRC localities. The subcommittee's work would wrap up in May and report results during the June Policy Committee meeting.

Mr. Ollis proposed January 29th for the first meeting and to include the following Policy Committee members: Mr. Yakabouski, Mr. Graham, Ms. Hayes, Ms. Vanuch, Ms. Binder, and Mr Sili as permitted by their respective Boards. Committee members agreed to meet on Monday, January 29 at the FAMPO / GWRC office.

9. Resolution 24-12 Approving the Fiscal Year 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Amendment 1 (ACTION ITEM)  
(Originally item 7c on the agenda.)

Motion was made to approve Resolution 24-12.

Motion: Ms. Vanuch; Second: Mr. Graham

Motion passed unanimously.

## 10. Action/Discussion Items

- a. SMART SCALE Round 6 CTB Update – Ms. Kari Eaves

Ms. Eaves provided an update on SMART SCALE Round 6. The final staff recommendations to the CTB include three tiers for the proposed application caps (with a middle tier for entities above 200,000) and FAMPO is the only MPO in the state who qualifies for this. This proposal would mean that FAMPO will have the same number of applications available as in previous rounds. Proposed project qualifications under the High Priority Project funding stream have strictly defined, however, and therefore, many of FAMPO's past projects would not have been funded because they would not be eligible under the proposed definition. Only large projects included in the new HPP eligibility list can be submitted by MPOs. These projects will now compete statewide on a cost-benefit basis with well-funded areas and Ms. Eaves stressed that leveraged funding will thus be much more important than in previous rounds.

- b. Route 3 Proposal: Corridor of Statewide Significance – Ms. Kari Eaves

1. Memorandum to the Secretary of Transportation
2. Resolution of Support

Mr. Ollis observed that funding from the High Priority Projects (HPP) program necessitates the designation of Corridors of Statewide Significance (CoSS) or Regional Networks (RN) to be eligible for funding. FAMPO staff has crafted a memorandum formally requesting the recognition of Route 3 as a CoSS. This designation, if approved, is anticipated to enhance funding opportunities for projects.

Motion was made to endorse the memorandum to the Secretary of Transportation to be signed and transmitted.

Motion: Mr. Graham; Second: Ms. Vanuch

Motion passed unanimously.

c. Future of Transit in the FAMPO Region – Mr. Ian Ollis

Mr. Ollis reminded members of their request for more cooperation between FAMPO and regional transit agencies. He posed questions to members including exploring alternative models of different operators of the local buses, cost/benefit analysis of multiple models or options, and investigating other modes like on-demand micro transit.

Members supported investigating more data about transit. Ms. Hayes asked clarifying questions about how many buses are full and how many buses only have one person riding.

Mr. Ollis noted that ridership numbers will be available at the January meeting.

d. 2024 Policy Committee Meeting Schedule – Mr. Ian Ollis

Mr. Ollis noted that January and February meetings will be held after the GWRC board meeting, and that the Policy Committee meeting will begin at 7:30pm.

## 11. Correspondence

Notice of environmental scoping of Stafford County Olde Forge Drive Park and Ride lot.

## 12. Staff and Agency Reports

FAMPO staff noted an update on the Congestion Management Program webpage and shared Public Involvement efforts in 2023.

Ms. Gardner provided an overview of the historical trends of local contributions to transportation projects from FAMPO jurisdictions. It was pointed out that the City of Fredericksburg owns and maintains their own roads with these costs not being added to the trend charts presented. Policy Committee members requested a footnote to be added to funding trend slides to clarify this information.

## 13. Board Member and Chair Comments

Chair Bohmke recognized the service of board members Mr. Kelly, Mr. McLaughlin, and Mr. Ross.

Mr. Ollis recognized the service of VDOT's Stephen Haynes.

## 14. Adjourn/Next Policy Committee Meeting January 22, 2024, at 7:30 pm.

Chair Bohmke adjourned the meeting at 8:58 pm.