

POLICY COMMITTEE **DRAFT MEETING MINUTES**

February 26, 2024 – 7:30 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. Lori Hayes, First Vice-Chair Spotsylvania County (V)
Ms. Jannan Holmes, City of Fredericksburg (V)
Mr. Will Mackintosh, City of Fredericksburg (V)
Mr. Drew Mullins, Spotsylvania County (V)
Ms. Monica Gary, Stafford County (V)
Ms. Marcie Parker, Representative from the Secretary of Transportation (V)
Dr. Robert Schneider, Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC) (V)
Ms. Crystal Vanuch, Stafford County (V)
Mr. Chris Yakabouski, Spotsylvania County (V)
Dr. Pamela Yeung, alternate Stafford County (V)
Ms. Catherine Coffey, PE alternate Representative from the Secretary of Transportation (V)
Ms. Laura Sellers, Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB)
Ms. Melody Fowler, alternate Fredericksburg Go! (FXBGO!)
Ms. Cathy Binder, King George County
Ms. Susan Gardner, Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)
Ms. Casandra Lord, alternate Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)
Mr. Chris Clarke, Vice Chair BPAC (online)

Committee Members Absent:

Mr. Jason Graham, Second Vice-Chair, City of Fredericksburg (V)
Mr. David Brown, alternate City of Fredericksburg (V)
Mr. Deuntay Diggs, alternate Stafford County (V)
Mr. Jacob Lane, alternate Spotsylvania County (V)
Mr. Gerald Childress, alternate Spotsylvania County (V)
Mr. Joe Stainsby, alternate PRTC (V)
Mr. Matthew Lehane, Chair BPAC
Mr. Jeffrey Black, alternate Caroline County
Ms. Nancy Long, alternate Caroline County
Mr. Timothy Welsh, Vice Chair CTAC
Ms. Amy Garbarini, Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)
Mr. Todd Horsley, alternate Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)
Mr. Steven Minor, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Mr. Ivan Rucker, alternate Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Ms. Chelsea Beytas, alternate Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
Mr. Daniel Koenig, Federal Highway Administration (FTA)
Ms. Jamie Jackson, Fredericksburg Go! (FXBGO!)
Mr. David “Sully” Sullins, alternate King George County

Others Present:

Roslyn Reeder, Stafford County Resident
Alan Watkins, Stafford County Resident
Gavin Gardon, Spotsylvania County Resident
Paul Agnello (online)
Rodney White (online)
Leigh Anderson (online)
Kathy Knotts, Fredericksburg Free Press (online)
Steven Gorski (online)

Staff Present:

Mr. Ian Ollis, FAMPO Administrator
Dr. John Ridout, Transportation Planner II (online)
Mr. Becky Golden, Transportation Planning Manager
Ms. Kari Eaves, Transportation Planner III
Mr. Connor Anderson, Transportation Planner/GIS Technician

1. Call Policy Committee Meeting to Order

Chair Bohmke called the meeting to order at 7:30 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 February 26, 2024, Policy Committee Agenda (ACTION ITEM)

Motion was made to approve the Policy Committee agenda.

Motion: Crystal Vanuch; Second: Lori Hayes

Motion passed with unanimous consent.

5. Public Involvement

Mr. Alan Watkins shared his Facebook page: the Stafford Southern Gateway. The page hosts information about the Route 17 corridor. Hosted on the page are different bridge options generated in the River Crossing Study. Mr. Watkins commented on river crossing options B and D, pointing out their proximity to Commerce Parkway and the Silver Collection development. He shared how this proximity may interfere with the viability of those crossing options.

FAMPO staff read two written public comments. In a comment received on February 5th, Joe Jarski expressed his frustration with travel time on Route 3 West. In a comment received on February 9th, Linda Thornton expressed her concern about reckless cyclists, skaters, and pedestrians. She asked the committee to identify a way to address the lack of respect or knowledge of traffic laws.

6. Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of January 22, 2024, Policy Committee Minutes (ACTION ITEM)
- b. GWRC/FAMPO Memorandum of Understanding (ACTION ITEM)
- c. Endorse Resolution 24-21 Adopt an Amendment to the FY24-27 Transportation Improvement Program to add UPC FRT0002 FXBGO! Rolling Stock Replacement (ACTION ITEM)
- d. Endorse Resolution 24-23 Directing a Public Comment Period for an Amendment to the FY24-27 Transportation Improvement Program to Adjust Funding Allocations for 2 Projects: UPC 117026 #SMART22 – Rt 648 Shelton Shop Road Improvements; UPC 103085 #HB2.FY17 Rt 1/630 Area Corridor Improvements (ACTION ITEM)

Motion was made to approve the consent agenda.

Motion: Crystal Vanuch; Second: Will Mackintosh

Motion passed with unanimous consent.

7. FAMPO Administrator Report

Mr. Ollis welcomed Councilor Jannan Holmes to the FAMPO Policy Committee and provided an overview of FAMPO's roles and responsibilities. He also provided an update on Covid's impacts on traffic. Mr. Ollis pointed out the increase in truck traffic while car traffic has just returned to pre-Covid volumes. Sharing a graph of nationwide data on annual vehicle miles traveled, Mr. Ollis identifies a plateau that has resulted from Covid and gas prices. He concluded that the impact of Covid has delayed traffic growth nationwide.

Presenting a graph on OmniRide monthly ridership from 2019 to 2023, Mr. Ollis further illustrates the impact Covid has had. Monthly ridership has not yet returned to pre pandemic levels. Dr. Robert Schneider adds that the commuter buses are serving more people, but those people are making fewer trips. This supported Mr. Ollis's point that the rise of teleworking in response to Covid has continued and continues to impact traffic and transit volumes. However, Mr. Ollis emphasizes the growth that is still occurring and likely has only been delayed.

Ms. Vanuch asked whether there was any coordination or communication with federal agencies to determine how many of their positions have become remote. She asserted that these figures would help the Policy Committee predict transportation trends. She asked for a report on federal jobs that, post-pandemic, have become remote positions that are no longer geographically restricted. Mr. Mullins also asked what resources or data could be available and presented to the Policy Committee for predicting future transit trends accounting for the rise of teleworking and remote work.

Mr. Ollis addressed both questions by commenting on the "use it or lose it" conditions DC office spaces are setting for their federal operations. Addressing Mr. Mullins' inquiries on transit data, Mr. Ollis shared that local transit ridership numbers have increased while long distance ridership has been slower to recover to pre-pandemic levels. Chair Bohmke asked Dr. Schneider whether he had any insight to the future of federal job classifications. He commented on the rise of super commuters traveling further distances to DC. Ms. Hayes asked whether these remote/semi-remote positions would be helpful at alleviating traffic volumes. Dr. Schneider answered that while people are working from home, they are still travelling during the day. Additionally, the workday is more variable. Some commuters need to make later trips

to and from DC, and transit is not available during those later times. Mr. Ollis shared the plans to redo the Transportation Demand Model while expressing the possibility that local congestion will have greater consideration.

Mr. Ollis also presented VRE ridership levels, which has grown in the past four years but remains considerably below pre-pandemic levels. He remarked that VRE is in the process of budgeting for additional trains, weekend trips, and reverse commuting change. He predicts that the added options will increase net ridership. Amtrak ridership has surpassed pre-pandemic levels, which Mr. Ollis credited in part to an added daily trip. FXBGO ridership has also increased. Ms. Hayes asked for FXBGO ridership data on specific lines and times of day.

Mr. Ollis also presented a map of population change in Virginia cities and counties since 2020. The GWRC region displays high population growth, which Mr. Ollis indicates will contribute to congestion along the I-95 corridor.

Finally, Mr. Ollis shared updates on what is to come for the Policy Committee. These updates included a reminder about the next RTA subcommittee meeting, an update on the public comment period closing for the FXBGO (Fred Regional Transit) strategic plan, and the announcement that OmniRide, FXBGO, and FAMPO will prepare a presentation on future transit options for the Policy Committee.

8. Action/Discussion Items

a. SMART SCALE Technical Guide Review & Regional Project Selection – Ms. Kari Eaves

Ms. Eaves provided an update on the changes to the SMART SCALE Technical Guide for Round 6. These changes include the Land Use factor becoming a multiplier, the removal of Step 2 funding, reduced VDOT assistance capability, and restricting HPP funding eligibility to large, regionally-significant projects, primarily roadway-centered. Ms. Eaves also presented the final list of regional candidate projects. Ms. Laura Sellers provided insight into CTB's project selection. Staff announced that the final list for pre-application will be voted on by the Policy Committee at next month's meeting. Ms. Eaves clarified that the pre-application deadline will be a few days after this meeting, on April 1st, so any amendments to the project list, or objections, should be made sooner rather than later. In May or June, the Policy Committee will vote to remove two of the ten candidate projects for the final project list submission.

b. FAMPO River Crossing Parkway NEPA Alternatives Study Update – Dr. John Ridout & Mr. Ian Ollis

Mr. Ollis announced the monthly stakeholder meeting planned to take place later that week. The meeting will provide updates on study progress and solicit stakeholder input. He also reminded the Policy Committee of the first public meeting planned for March 20th, 2024. He reviewed the meeting goals and format.

Mr. Mullins asked how Fredericksburg development projects would impact river crossing options. The committee agreed that relevant development projects could have been more prominently shared with the committee in earlier discussions. Mr. Ollis reminded the committee that the consultant will have river crossing options prepared for feedback next month. He advised that the committee wait to see the prepared option list to determine how the development impacted these options.

c. CMAQ/STBG Update – Dr. John Ridout & Mr. Connor Anderson

Dr. Ridout provided an overview of the development of the methodology and selection process for CMAQ/CR and STBG scoring, presenting the changes in the scoring methodology for CMAQ and STBG across roadway, active transportation, and transit projects. After reviewing the methodology changes to the scoring process, Dr. Ridout showed the Policy Committee the draft scoring for projects under the new methodology. He ended his presentation sharing next steps which included finalizing scoring and allocating funds. He clarified that the top two projects in each category typically receive funding. Mr. Ollis reminded the Policy Committee that CMAQ/CR and STBG scoring will shift to a two year rather than one year cycle. This shift will also have two years' worth of funding available for submitted projects. He also advised how projects could score better with this methodology, highlighting the cost effectiveness scoring metric.

d. Endorse Resolution 24-22 Directing a Public Comment Period for the Draft GWRC Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Safety Action Plan (ACTION ITEM) – Ms. Becky Golden

1. GWRC Draft Safety Action Plan Key Infrastructure Projects & Next Steps

Motion: Crystal Vanuch; Second: Lori Hayes
Motion passed with unanimous consent.

Mr. Ollis noted the staff's recommendation that FAMPO and the rural counties in GWRC submit two separate applications to receive funding for SS4A projects.

9. **Correspondence**

Mr. Ollis shared an email from Daniel Grinnell of VDOT noting the termination of the air quality conformity monitoring process for FAMPO set to take place on the 23rd of January 2026.

10. **Staff and Agency Reports**

- Reminder: RTA Subcommittee – 29 February at 6pm

Chair Bohmke noted that Monica Backmon from the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) will be present at the next RTA subcommittee meeting on the 29th of February 2024.

- VCR Trail Tunnel Under I-95 FHWA / VDOT / FAMPO Communication

Reviewing correspondence from the FHWA, Mr. Ollis shared that a proposed VCR trail tunnel did not receive the legal or planning pushback that was expected, leaving it a viable project option for the region. He added that the FHWA encouraged its submission for a RAISE grant, claiming it was a well-suited project.

- 2024 Safety Performance Target Letter

Mr. Ollis also noted that FAMPO agreed with VDOT's statewide safety targets.

- MPO Transportation Planning Process Self Certification Statement

11. Board Member and Chair Comments

Ms. Hayes thanked VDOT for the open house for Route 2 expansion.

Dr. Schneider thanked FAMPO staff for conducting outreach for the new OmniRide routes.

12. Adjourn/Next Policy Committee Meeting March 18, 2024, at 6:00pm.

Chair Bohmke adjourned the meeting at 9:21 pm.

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