

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
GEORGE WASHINGTON REGIONAL COMMISSION**

June 20, 2016
The Robert C. Gibbons Conference Room
406 Princess Anne Street, Fredericksburg Virginia

MEMBERS PRESENT AND VOTING: Chair – Jim Howard **King George County; City of Fredericksburg:** Matt Kelly & Billy Withers; **Caroline County:** Jeff Black & Nancy Long; **King George County:** Ruby Brabo; **Spotsylvania County:** Paul Trampe & **Stafford County:** Meg Bohmke & Laura Sellers

MEMBERS ABSENT: County of Spotsylvania – Greg Benton

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Stephen Haynes, VDOT; Rupert Farley, CTAG; & Curry Roberts, Fredericksburg Regional Alliance

STAFF: Tim Ware, Executive Director; Paul Agnello, Marti Donley, Daniel Reese & Nick Quint, FAMPO; Kate Gibson, CoC; Diana Utz, & JoAnna Roberson, GWRC

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Howard called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. with a quorum present; which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF GWRC MEETING AGENDA

Upon motion by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Ms. Brabo, with all in consensus, the agenda for the June 20th meeting was approved as submitted.

APPROVAL OF GWRC MEETING MINUTES (May 16, 2016) - (Action Item)

Upon motion by Ms. Brabo and seconded by Mr. Kelly, with Mr. Withers abstaining and all others in consensus, the minutes from the May 16th meeting were approved as submitted.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Mr. Farley advised that he was speaking as a citizen and not making comments or recommendations from the CTAG committee. Mr. Farley stated that his comments are in regard to agenda item #10C, the US 301/207 Corridor Study update.

Mr. Farley stated while he thought it was good to study the US 301/207 corridor as a potential roadway source for relieving congestion on I-95; however, the study is missing an important element. Mr. Farley stated that he felt the corridor study should also include a freight/rail component. Mr. Farley advised that on the Maryland side, a freight/rail component is in place and

he is strongly recommending that as this study moves forward that it also become a component of the study being done in this region.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. Ware advised that the Financial Report is included in tonight's agenda packet. Mr. Ware stated that the Commission continues to progress favorably in regard to its financial status. Mr. Ware stated that currently the agency's balance is a positive figure in the amount of \$90,514.71.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Ware advised that the members have received communication in regard to an upcoming meeting/field trip being held in Charlottesville on July 25th. Mr. Ware stated that this is a part of the barriers housing meeting focusing on affordable housing opportunities and the reduction in homelessness. Mr. Ware stated that all commission members are invited to participate and he has heard back from some members; however, still has some members who have not replied either yes or no. Mr. Ware asked that the committee members respond back to him at their earliest convenience.

OLD BUSINESS

a.) Paperless Board Packages – Mr. Tim Ware

Mr. Ware advised that included in tonight's agenda packet is a re-cap of monthly expenses incurred by the Commission for the xeroxing expenses, staff time, etc. for the preparation of meeting packet materials. Mr. Ware stated that GWRC incurs the least amount of the expenses and the three FAMPO committees comprise the bulk of the monthly xeroxing cost. Mr. Ware stated that this item was brought up by Ms. Brabo at the May meeting for staff to at least address. Mr. Ware stated that it was consensus that most commission members already had access to a tablet, etc. that was either provided by their locality and/or theirs personally. Mr. Ware advised that the Commission could purchase several tablets to be kept on hand for those members who do not have access to one much cheaper than the cost of xeroxing the packet materials.

Mr. Black stated that the representatives from Caroline County do not have electronic tablets that are for use outside of a Caroline County Board of Supervisors meeting. The other localities stated that they either have access to one through their locality or independently.

Mr. Ware stated that packet materials would be sent electronically to members prior to the meeting night. The night of the meeting presentations, etc. will be available as a power point presentation. It was committee consensus to at least try the "paperless" approach for six months. There was also a request made for Xeroxed copies of the agenda still remain available for distribution at the GWRC meetings.

Upon motion by Ms. Brabo and seconded by Ms. Bohmke, with all concurring, beginning with the upcoming July meeting, agenda packet materials will be provided electronically. This test will run until the end of the 2016 year and will be re-evaluated in January of 2017.

b.) **Other Old Business** - None

NEW BUSINESS:

a.) **Approval of Resolution No. 16-21, Approving the Slate of Officers to Serve in Fiscal Year 2017** – Mr. Tim Ware

Mr. Ware advised that the rotation of officers for the GWRC committee for the upcoming FY2017 year is as follows:

Chairman – Jeffery Black – Caroline County
First Vice Chairman – Matthew Kelly – City of Fredericksburg
Second Vice Chairperson – Laura Sellers – County of Stafford
Treasurer – Paul Trampe – County of Spotsylvania
Secretary – Ruby Brabo – King George County

Upon motion by Mr. Withers and seconded by Ms. Long, with all in consensus, Resolution No. 16-21 was adopted by the George Washington Regional Commission at its June 20th meeting.

b.) **Regional Landfill** – Mr. Matt Kelly

Mr. Kelly stated that as issues regarding waste management are continuing to escalate, that he feels it is time for the committee to focus on addressing this topic regionally for a long-term alternative. Mr. Kelly stated that currently the City of Fredericksburg and the County of Stafford share landfill locations, costs, etc.; Spotsylvania County and King George counties have their own facility. Mr. Kelly stated that he was not sure what Caroline County was doing. Mr. Black advised that currently they are using the King George facility as well.

Mr. Kelly stated that more space is needed. Mr. Kelly stated that the City does not have land available to accommodate building a new facility. Mr. Kelly relayed that the available land space in King George county is also limited for expansion. King George could possibly consider growing their current facility up but not out. Mr. Trampe stated that currently Spotsylvania County's facility is not at capacity.

Mr. Kelly stated that with floating loans, etc. that the City & Stafford have financing in place for the next 10-15 years; however, developing a more regional concept is needed. Mr. Kelly stated that regionally discussions should occur as to whether selling landfills and going with a private contractor is financially more feasible. Mr. Kelly stated that the issue is not just about waste management but also about the types of trash, recycling, etc.

Ms. Bohmke stated that by having to dip into the reserved funds to cover waste management services is what caused the City and Stafford to have on-going discussions on how much the City would be charged in order to utilize the facilities available in Stafford County. Ms. Bohmke stated that this is a concern that is expressed regularly from the citizens in her district. She stated that the citizens feel this issue is one that should fall under the umbrella of government services and that the citizens should not be charged and/or required to pay extra money for using the county's landfill.

Mr. Kelly concurred that the charges assessed to citizens has created concerns for the residents in the City as well and is also felt that the fee schedule is not fairly assessed. Mr. Kelly said that a person that goes to the landfill and drops off 4 bags of trash is charged the same as the citizen who goes to the landfill with a pick-up load full of trash.

Mr. Withers stated that another issue of concern for the citizens is the emission of the by-products from the landfill incinerators. Mr. Withers stated that even though the incinerators have produced cleaner emissions over the years that it still presents concerns.

Mr. Kelly stated that the recycling issues present other concerns. Mr. Kelly stated that the East Coast does not have the infrastructure needed to provide for a quality recycling facility and that overall we do a poor job in the recycling efforts.

Ms. Sellers asked if any coordination has been made with Southern Prince William County on what facilities they have in place; if shared resources could be feasible, etc. Ms. Long stated that for a study to be done properly it will take time and a lot of coordination and communication among many localities.

Mr. Kelly asked if there was concurrence from the committee that it is in fact time to focus on looking a new opportunities that have a regional component. The GWRC commission members agreed that it is an issue that is needed. Mr. Kelly stated that he will spear-head establishing a waste management committee. Membership of this advisory committee will come from the localities in Planning District 16 as well as neighboring counties and will include state representatives, public works directors, locality waste management staff, etc.

Mr. Ware was asked to coordinate committee contacts; to receive cost breakdowns currently being implemented within the region; to obtain comparisons of what other localities are doing; and to make available meeting room space at GWRC for advisory meetings to be held in one central location. Mr. Ware was asked to bring any information available to the July meeting for further discussion and at that point the committee could determine when the advisory committee should begin meeting on a consistent basis.

c.) US 301/207 Corridor Study Update – Mr. Stephen Haynes, VDOT

Mr. Haynes advised that VDOT is preparing to conduct a corridor study effort on I-95 at Exit 104 (Carmel Church) to the Maryland State line at the Harry Nice Bridge. Mr. Haynes stated that the purpose of the study is to determine if Routes 207/301 in Caroline and King George counties could be a viable alternative to off-setting traffic congestion from I-9 during times of incident. Mr. Haynes stated that the study will also determine the most effective ways of increasing efficiency, safety and additional utilization for both the short-term and long-term transportation alternatives for the region.

Mr. Haynes stated that initial data has shown that if there were ever congestion free opportunities within the region, that getting from point a to point b whether using the I-95 corridor or the Route 207/301 corridor equates to essentially the same amount of time and miles travelled. Mr. Haynes relayed that the study is focusing only on the Route 207/301 corridors in Caroline and King George;

however, the traffic generated actually begins in the Hampton Roads/Richmond areas and heads into Baltimore.

Mr. Haynes stated that as a result of the recent CTB allocations, that over the next six years, eighteen individual projects within the Fredericksburg VDOT district have been approved for funding. As these projects move to the construction phase, the region will experience even more congestion. Mr. Haynes advised that the eighteen projects approved do not include the new projects approved for both the Northern Virginia and Maryland areas which too will add more traffic congestion concerns.

Mr. Haynes stated that an additional short-term goal is for the potential of raising the current speed limit along the Route 207/301 corridor. Mr. Haynes advised that the study is going to look at determining if the existing highway as built would meet requirements of today for an increased speed limit to be imposed. Mr. Haynes stated that raising an existing posted speed limit does require legislative action; however, if the current road design would meet the safety requirements, be in compliance with the road specifications, etc. that legislative action would be pursued.

Mr. Haynes stated that the short-term goals for the study is to formulate strategies and to recommend alternative solutions to encouraging those utilizing I-95 to consider taking Route 207/301 as an alternative to I-95/Route 1 during times of incidents or congestion.

Mr. Haynes relayed that another short-term goal is to formulate strategies and solutions that would increase the efficiency and safety throughout the entire corridor, but especially at Route 207/Exit 104 at Carmel Church. Mr. Haynes advised that Carmel Church, Port Royal (Route 17), Office Hall (Route 3), Dahlgren & the Nice Bridge all go through towns and all currently experience congestion and all could possibly offer alternative routes for users to take advantage of.

For long-term goals, Mr. Haynes stated that access management strategies will be formulated that would recommend solutions to promoting corridor preservation, the anticipation of a higher level of usage, and the likelihood for the future that the Harry Nice Bridge replacement will occur which will provide the facility a greater capacity of handling additional traffic usage.

Mr. Haynes advised that the study schedule will be as follows: August 2016 – Project Scoping; Stakeholder and public involvement workshops and comment periods will be scheduled; and a project completion date of August 2017. Mr. Haynes stated that currently the Central VDOT office is determining whether the study will be completed internally by VDOT staff or will be given to a consulting firm.

Mr. Kelly stated that he understands the concept for the corridor study and agrees with moving forward with it; however, he thinks as our side of the Route 301 Harry Nice Bridge is a beautiful drive; however, once in Maryland you come to a complete stop. Mr. Kelly stated that if negotiations with Maryland do not occur and the State of Maryland does not concur, then he wonders how effective the corridor study would be.

Ms. Long asked as what point does VDOT consider the quality of life of the people in these areas and the additional safety issues that would occur as a result of a highway whereby additional traffic is encouraged to utilize. Ms. Long stated that many citizens in her district have purposely built homes where they are to avoid being in an area where roadways consistently stay congested.

Mr. Haynes stated that at this time he does not have any data or answers to these concerns; however, are in fact ones that the study will compile data for.

d.) **Smart Scale** (formerly HB2) **Update** – Mr. Paul Agnello

Mr. Agnello advised that the HB2 project classifications have now had a name change implemented by the State. Currently, HB2 is referred to as “Smart Scale.” Mr. Agnello stated that funding for Round 2 will likely be less than was allocated for Round 1. Mr. Agnello relayed that even though the funding to be allocated for Round 2 will likely be less; however, the actual amount allocated for Round 1 was higher than what was expected. Mr. Agnello relayed that initially there was to be \$800 million allocated and actually \$1,716 billion was approved. Mr. Agnello stated that currently \$297 million is allocated to FY-22; however, no estimates have been released yet as to funding for FY2018-2021 or for FY2023.

Mr. Agnello stated that lessons learned from Round 1 of the previous HB2 (Smart Scale) process were that regions who submitted a Regional Economic Development Plan, regions who had projects being requested were also included within their 2040 CLRP, and that projects considered were also included within an individual locality’s comprehensive plans all received higher points than the regions who did not submit these items. Mr. Agnello stated that for Round 2 of the Smart Scale application process that the FAMPO region will be submitting the three items mentioned above as well.

Mr. Agnello stated that the Smart Scale project submittal process goes from June to September of this year. Mr. Agnello advised that Smart Scale discussions will occur at all three of the FAMPO committee meetings in July. For the FAMPO Policy Committee meeting, a discussion of candidate Smart Scale projects will occur at tonight’s meeting. Mr. Agnello stated that at the July 18th FAMPO Policy Committee meeting, a concurrence will be asked for on the regional Smart Scale projects to be endorsed. On July 11th, from 6-8:00 p.m. a regional Smart Scale priority workshop meeting will be held at the Fredericksburg District VDOT office and this meeting is open to the committees at GWRC/FAMPO as well as to the public. Mr. Agnello stated that August 1st is the date that the application period for submission of Smart Scale projects begins. Mr. Agnello relayed that August 15th is the pre-application deadline date whereby applications submitted will be eligible to receive technical assistance from the State. Mr. Agnello advised that the Smart Scale application process period ends on September 30th.

Mr. Agnello advised that the following draft list of potential candidate regional projects will be submitted for Round 2 of the Smart Scale project considerations and these are as follows:

- 1 - Northbound Rappahannock River Crossing Project
- 2 - VRE Station Improvements at Brooke & Leland
- 3 - Potential new Park & Ride lot on the Route 3 (east) corridor

4 - Potential additional I-95 Study Projects

Mr. Kelly asked for members who serve on other regional boards – i.e. VRE, is there any better handle on how to approach projects in regard to who submits the application – i.e. – if it is a VRE project should it be submitted by VRE or should it be submitted by the region where the project is to occur? Mr. Agnello stated that previous discussions with VRE had indicated that their preference is for a specific locality, the State, GWRC, or FAMPO to submit a project. Mr. Kelly stated that unfortunately this still causes an issue of who is ultimately responsible for the project; when/where spending occurs; etc.

Mr. Agnello advised that the project highlights for the Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) for FY2017-2022 include 19 projects in VDOT's Fredericksburg District that are now fully funded through the construction phase and these projects are as follows:

- I-95 Rappahannock River Crossing Project – Southbound (Fredericksburg/Stafford)
- Route 639 widening project on Ladysmith Road (Caroline County)
- Route 606 widening project on Mudd Tavern Road (Spotsylvania County)
- Route 17 Overpass at I-95 (Spotsylvania County)
- New Park & Ride lot at Route 1/Commonwealth Drive (Spotsylvania County)
- Route 1 improvements at Stafford Courthouse (Stafford County)
- Route 3 passing lanes (Westmoreland County)
- Park & Ride lot expansions at Exit 140 (Stafford County)
- Route 1/Telegraph Road Improvements (Stafford County)
- Route 1/Potomac Creek Drive (Stafford County)
- Route 301/Dahlgren (King George County)
- VRE Trail Bridge (Fredericksburg)

Mr. Agnello stated that the other 7 HB2 funded projects awarded to the Fredericksburg District will be built in the Middle Peninsula region.

Mr. Agnello stated that the State of Good Repair program delivers dedicated money to rebuild and replace Virginia bridges and culverts and to improve pavement on interstates and primary roads. Mr. Agnello stated that the program sustains the State's transportation infrastructure by providing a higher quality ride for drivers and by reducing structurally deficient bridges by improving their conditions and extending the service life of the bridge.

Mr. Agnello relayed that the 14-county Fredericksburg VDOT District will receive an approximate \$127 million over the next 6 years for State of Good Repair projects. Mr. Agnello stated that 77% of the \$127 million will be used by VDOT for bridge maintenance and 18% for pavement maintenance. The remaining 5% will be allocated to the City of Fredericksburg for pavement maintenance and locally-owned bridge repairs.

Mr. Agnello advised that the following projects are to be fully funded under the State of Good Repair program:

Chatham Bridge (Fredericksburg/Stafford)
Route 207 westbound at Mattaponi River (Caroline County)
Route 606 Mudd Tavern Road (Spotsylvania County)
Route 658 Mount Olive Road (Spotsylvania County)
Route 1 over Chopawamsic Creek (Stafford County)

e.) **High Speed Rail** – Mr. Paul Agnello

Mr. Agnello stated that the Washington, DC to Richmond Southeast High Speed Rail project consists of environmental reviews and preliminary engineering for a series of improvements to the existing rail corridor between Washington, DC and Richmond. The goal is to increase rail capacity and speed within the corridor. However, Mr. Agnello stated that the higher speed is not comparable to the high speed rail systems in other places but would result in a “higher” rate of speed to increase to 70-90 miles per hour.

Mr. Agnello stated that this project is funded through a cooperative agreement between Department of Rail & Public Transit (DRPT) and the Federal Rail Administration (FRA) for the completion of preliminary engineering and Tier II environmental reviews on the corridor. Mr. Agnello relayed that DRPT is currently studying three build alternatives within the Fredericksburg area: one alternative would result in a new 2-track bypass going to the east of Fredericksburg; one alternative would add a third track through Fredericksburg beside the existing tracks; and the third alternative would not add any additional tracks through Fredericksburg but would include improvements to the crossings, to signals, and to the rail safety. Mr. Agnello stated that if any of the three alternatives materialize, that the Fredericksburg station and platforms would need to be expanded and improved on. Mr. Agnello stated that a letter has been mailed to adjacent property owners advising that field work will begin. Mr. Agnello stated that local officials have also been in receipt of the mailings. Mr. Agnello stated that citizens can check the property owner’s information page at the project website (www.DC2RVArail.com).

Mr. Withers asked what the cost of the study would be. Mr. Agnello stated that as of now no actual figures have been projected; however, it is expected to be approximately \$1-2 billion. Mr. Withers asked how much time would actually be saved. Mr. Agnello stated that it is projected that the savings time would result in 15 minutes. Mr. Withers stated that he felt this was an extremely expensive project for a time savings of only 15 minutes and he would rather see the money invested in the construction of a new fourth rail track. Ms. Long stated that the study also needed to include human and safety factors and there needs to be better communication given to the citizens. Both Ms. Bohmke and Ms. Sellers stated that the proposed rail improvements will go through large subdivisions in Stafford County and this has caused great concern for many citizens in Stafford County. Ms. Bohmke stated that for various reasons, the GWRC committee is not favorably in support of this project and she asked if the Commission could take an official position to express their concerns. Mr. Agnello stated that at this time there is no additional information available so this should be an item that is re-discussed again at a future meeting and at that time it may be more

appropriate for the committee to take a formal position.

f.) **Approval of Resolution No. 16-22, Recognizing the Dedicated Service of James B. Howard**

Mr. Ware advised that Resolution No. 16-22 is recognizing Mr. Howard's leadership as serving as Chairman of GWRC for the FY2015-2016 year. Upon motion by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Ms. Sellers, with all concurring, Resolution No. 16-22 was adopted by GWRC at the June 20th meeting.

g.) **Other New Business**

Ms. Brabo advised that there appeared to be good news as a recent ruling by the Governor which stated that they had agreed to have proceeds received from gambling venues in Colonial Beach to be applied towards the Harry Nice Bridge project. However, the caveat to this is that another legislative ruling denied the request for gambling establishments to be established.

CORRESPONDENCE – in packet and is self-explanatory

ADJOURN

The June 20th meeting was adjourned at 7:17 p.m. The next meeting will be held on July 18, 2016 at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Timothy Ware, Executive Director
(Draft minutes prepared by JoAnna Roberson)

