BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
STAFFORD, VIRGINIA
MINUTES
TRANSPORTATION WORK SESSION
OCTOBER 26, 2023

CALL TO ORDER – A work session of the Stafford County Board of Supervisors was called to order by Pamela Yeung, Chairman, at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, October 26, 2023, in the Board Chambers, George L. Gordon, Jr. Government Center, 1300 Courthouse Road, Stafford VA.

ROLL CALL – The following members were present: Dr. Pamela Yeung, Chairman; Thomas C. Coen, Vice Chairman; Crystal Vanuch; Tinesha O. Allen; Meg Bohmke; Darrell English; Monica Gary.

Also in attendance were Randal Vosburg, County Administrator; Rysheda McClendon, County Attorney; Julia Homes, Assistant Deputy Clerk; various staff members; and other interested parties.

Dr. Yeung called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

WORK SESSION

CAPITAL PROJECTS TRANSPORTATION; TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN
Mr. Matt Lehane, Transportation Funding Strategist and Manager, said that he would present the current CIP along with the transportation master plan, the vision plan, and the next steps. He said that their focus was on phase one of the transportation program, which included existing projects that had been ongoing for several years and new projects just starting. He said that they anticipated completing most of these projects by FY28 or FY29, after which they would transition into their vision plan and a set of short-term and longer-term projects.

Mr. Lehane said that with that vision plan, they had two scenarios, and there was a short-term one, which they were calling phase two. He said that the scenario covered FY28, FY29, FY30, through about FY40, aligning with the FY40 strategic plan. He said that they had a longer-term scenario focusing on larger scale projects that reflected the Board's vision for projects. He said that this was one of the main topics for discussion at today's Infrastructure Committee meeting, addressing the direction the Board wanted for the transportation program. He said that the scenario had a similar general timeline, and there was some overlap and a couple of projects shared between the phase two short-term scenario and the longer-term one. He said that FY35, FY40, FY45, and FY50 would require time to fund and construct. He said that this was a long-term plan of potential projects.

Mr. Lehane said that the current CIP had a good list of projects, which he had categorized into five groups. He said that projects near construction were projects they had talked about for some time and were underway. He said that the projects included Berea Church Road safety improvements, Route 1 Telegraph Woodstock safety improvements, and Route 1 Courthouse Road safety improvements. He said they were close to final approval for the Berea Church Road project and expected a bid soon. He said Telegraph Road was about a month behind. He said they could start both projects in spring, hopefully.

Mr. Lehane said that they had Staffordboro sidewalk, a small TAP project, which was 60% designed but had submitted final plans, so it was nearly 90% complete for the right-of-way phase. He said that there were several projects at 30% design, including some from the 2019 transportation bond. He said some of those projects included Enon Road and Route 1, Onville Road, and Shelton Shop Road.

Mr. Lehane said other projects were the Brook Road realignment project and the U.S. 17 Business STARS RV Parker realignment project. He said that Shelton Shop Road and the U.S. 17 Business project were led by VDOT rather than the County for project management. He said that Stefaniga and Mountain View looked like it would be approved at the November Board meeting for an engineering contract, and two other bond projects had been approved in the last round of VDOT's SmartScale program for additional funding: Route 1 and Layhill Road, as well as Leeland Road, which would also be led by VDOT.

Mr. Lehane said that they had projects that were not started, including one with a fully funded bond project and another with a funding shortfall. He said their Garrison Road widening project, which was a bond project, had a funding shortfall. He said that they planned to move forward by phasing the project into two separate phases and applying for future VDOT funding. He said that two other projects, Route 1 and American Legion/Eskimo Hill turn lanes, was fully funded by SmartScale, and they were looking at starting in FY26. He said that the U.S. 17 Business sidewalk project had a shortfall but was a good candidate for some of the funding programs.

Mr. English said that he had a question about the Route 17 sidewalk project. He said he thought it would include a cash proffer from the building across the street. He asked if the project would use cash proffer funds.

Mr. Lehane said he was not aware of any proffers. He said that they currently had approximately $486,000 on the project, which came from FAMPO's Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Funding (CMAQ funding). He said that each project in the table consisted of three phases: preliminary engineering, right-of-way acquisition, and construction. He said it outlined a general start and end time for projects based on fiscal years.

Mr. Lehane said that in more detail, they had the cost of those projects and their current status in terms of cost and potential funding shortfalls. He said they had several projects with funding shortfalls, and they were exploring methods to address these shortfalls through the CIP process. He said they were considering future funding programs such as SmartScale or FAMPO, CMAQ, CR, and SDBG call for projects, which would be discussed at the November 14 Infrastructure Committee meeting.

Ms. Allen asked Mr. Lehane to explain why engineering for road improvement projects had long timelines.

Mr. Counsell said that the VDOT LAP process, known as locally assisted projects, was a lengthy procedure. He said it began with exhaustive field investigations before the project commenced. He said that one must go through the proposal and scoping phase to determine what exactly would be done, such as widening the road or softening a horizontal or vertical curve. He said that communication with VDOT was essential during this process to ensure they understood the planned work and confirmed it still qualified for the awarded funding. He said it was the first part of preliminary engineering.

Mr. Counsell said then there was a proposal and acceptance phase for the engineer, which may involve negotiation and can take some time. He said that just the fieldwork when engineering started took a long time. He said the design had to go through a several different reviews between the locality and VDOT. He said that once they reached about 60% plans, they could start the right-of-way phase. He said that VDOT had a specific process that they required them to follow. He said it followed state code for property acquisition, and it could be very lengthy at times and very complicated. He said that sometimes that could take two to three years, and then construction was the easy part.

Ms. Bohmke asked how many years it had been since [Keith Dayton] was there.

Mr. Counsell said that he believed it was in 2019.

Ms. Bohmke said that she was passionate about the Enon Road area. She said that staff demonstrated that preliminary engineering had commenced in fiscal years 2022 and 2023. She said that Keith Dayton worked on the project for two years before leaving. She said that last week, she was at the Governor's Transportation Conference in Northern Virginia, and Steven Birch, the head of VDOT, mentioned three times to a room full of people that he was tired of hearing that it took seven years to complete a VDOT project. She said Mr. Birch emphasized that the statement was not accurate. She said he shared his thoughts on how to expedite these projects.

Ms. Bohmke said that when she looked at FY22 for Enon Road, where Keith worked for at least two years before departing, it was part of the transportation study. She said she had to determine the reason for why the high school was unable to exit now due to the unfinished road improvements. She said that she was considering alternative exits for buses south of the school and possibly requiring a deputy to be present on site to facilitate this.

Ms. Bohmke said she needed to understand why. She said that when Berea Church was moved in front of Enon Road, and using the VDOT dashboard, she saw that Stefaniga and Mountain View Road were being considered for engineering work. She said she was in favor of starting the engineering process, but they had told the people in the bond measure that Route 1 and Enon would be improved, and they were not where they needed to be.

Ms. Bohmke said that the project had been at least four years ahead of Enon. She said that she did not understand, but she did know inflation had caused prices to go up. She said she felt that the project kept getting pushed back on the burner. She said that they had given some money from Layhill to Shelton Shop, but they had not gotten anything in South Stafford since the intersection at Route 1 and Butler Road had been fixed.

Ms. Allen asked what VDOT had done to relay that information to localities about a process to speed up their process. She asked if he had shared with his people and his groups how to do that so that they were not sitting there having projects delayed and allowing the cost of construction to impact their projects, which then further pushed the projects down in the pipeline because they did not have the funding when they were supposed to.

Ms. Bohmke said that she had a conversation with their CTB member who was present, and she concurred with his statement.

Ms. Vanuch said that the Stefaniga and Mountain View project actually began in 2019; and it was prioritized at that time. She said that finding the necessary funding had been challenging, which was why it was only now progressing. She said that Stefaniga and Mountain View roads were listed on the bond referendum as well. She said she wanted to make this clear for anyone who might be listening, so they did not think they just started discussing it last week and suddenly it was moving forward.

Mr. Counsell said that they had received considerable feedback over the years. He said that there had always been a red indicator on the VDOT dashboard since it was created prior to SmartScale round one. He said that almost everyone had experienced this, as it was a complex process with numerous challenges. He said he did not feel the need to discuss the process or whether seven years was good or bad. He said their experience showed that there were different ways to view it. He said that from the time they applied for funding and were awarded funding until the project was completed, it typically took seven years. He said that during that period, there may be times when no active work was being done. He said they often waited for funding to become available before starting work on the project. He said that from one perspective, a SmartScale project took seven years because of the SmartScale timeline.

Mr. Lehane said that in Round 6, funding would be available in FY30 and FY31. He said that this meant it was six years before they could even begin to receive some funding to commence the project if they did not have other funding earlier.

Mr. Counsell said that he thought the disconnect with some of the terminology and some of the descriptions was once it started engineering, if it took seven years to get through construction, that was a problem. He said that he was not aware of any project that should take that long. He said that a lot of times delays were due to COVID and reduction in a lot of finances, revenue for different localities, and scope changes to try to redesign the project to try to fit into the original budget and qualify for the funding.

Mr. Counsell said that a lot of time was taken to go through the scope changes, renegotiate with the engineer, and then get a presentable project to VDOT that met the requirements. He said that a lot of the projects that were coming out of these funding challenges had to go back and forth with VDOT and the locality many times to ensure that the project met the goals for which it was awarded funding. He said that those were very challenging because sometimes they were right on the edge.

Mr. Counsell said that there were a number of reasons why these projects got delayed during the course of action, such as staffing issues, mistakes, lack of funding, and putting projects on hold. He said that to explain all of these and give an accurate status with a chronological history would require another work session or meeting with Board members. He said he was willing to do that and discuss the topic as much as desired tonight. He said the primary reason for all of the red X's on the slide was usually right-of-way acquisition, which was the primary driver in cases like Route 1/Courthouse. He said that they were in condemnation for at least five or six properties.

Mr. Counsell said they could negotiate for 30 days before going straight to condemnation. He said that they had started doing this because they had seen how right-of-way acquisition so negatively affected the project when they tried to do as much as possible upfront in negotiation in good faith. He said that what they were learning was that this was turning out to be a lot of wasted effort, and the project suffered for it. He said they did not really gain anything financially from it, so he suggested going straight to whatever powers the County had to keep the project on schedule.

Mr. Counsell said that was what they had adapted to over the last couple of years because they thought that would be better for the project, better for the funding, and better for the public as well. He said another primary reason for the red X's was because they were just barely red. He said they often were because they started out in preliminary engineering a little behind schedule

Mr. Lehane said that it stayed red depending on the phase. He said that there were two different parts of the project where one could change the scoping for the project, and one of them was 90 percent. He said that one could change the schedule of the project and have the project go back to green on the dashboard.

Mr. Counsell said that some of the projects were not really behind schedule. He said that they appeared red on the dashboard, but they were not delayed.

Dr. Yeung said she wanted to discuss it further because they needed to resolve these issues. She said that she received an email from a CTB representative who criticized the dashboard and stated that they needed to improve it. She said that when discussing the projects that should be green in November or assuming full funding, she asked what "assuming fully funded" meant and how they can achieve it. She said that while getting the projects green, staff should keep VDOT representatives informed about their progress and improvement. She asked for more information on the assumptions of full funding. She asked if they were discussing funds that needed to be created or were already in place, and what the current status of the funds were.

Mr. Counsell said that in the past, they had informed the Board about the need for prioritization decisions for CIP projects. He said that they had several meetings and initially reprioritized Courthouse Road, Berea, and Route 1 North as the top priorities for funding. He said they moved forward with those projects, while others still lacked sufficient funding. He said that they required more time in front of the Board to prioritize the remaining CIP projects. He said that regarding Dr. Yeung's question about Onville Road and Route 1/Enon, for the project to proceed, VDOT must approve it through an agreement called Appendix A. He said that Appendix A outlined all the criteria. He said that it asked if it met the project scope, had been awarded funding, what the funding was, and if it was complete.

Mr. Counsell said that they could not move forward until they had funding equal to what VDOT stated as the estimate. He said that VDOT would not sign the Appendix A, and signing meant it was good to go. He said that there could be a variety of reasons why VDOT would not sign it, such as disbelief in meeting the scope or intent of the scope, not meeting the funding requirement, or something else. He said that once the Appendix A was signed, it would start. He said that if they were past the date for starting on the original schedule, it would go red and would not turn green again until they met the next major milestone.

Mr. Lehane said that he wanted to add that for instance, on those two projects, Route 1/Enon Road and Onville Road, assuming full funding by March meant that March was the next deadline. He said that on the VDOT dashboard, the next deadline was the 60% deadline where they would be doing a public hearing and moving forward with a final design for the project. He said that at that point in time, they could sit down and update everything, have the project fully funded, and the project could then be green. He said that if they assumed that the project would be fully funded with the shortfalls by March, then it should go green on the dashboard. He said that it did not mean that they were not working on the project. He said both projects were still moving ahead as planned, but they were technically red on the dashboard. He said they remained on schedule.

Ms. Bohmke noted that Route 1 and Enon mentioned a requested double left at Stafford Indians for additional design. She said she thought that it was in the original design from the get-go.

Mr. Counsell said no. He said that this was quite a controversial change. He said that he would not say that both parties, VDOT and the County, agreed with what was going on, but this was a surprise to them when they started the initial scoping. He said that they were not aware that they were going to request this or require this, so they took some time to adapt to it.

Ms. Bohmke said that she was aware, but that had never been communicated to the staff.

Mr. Counsell said that it was not just about the double left turn, but it was also about coordinating how traffic would be signed and operated through the new design, as there still needed to be a through lane and two turn lanes, but only two lanes were available. He said that one of the issues caused by the double turn lane was that there were not two lanes to go all the way to the school. He said that once two lanes of traffic turned off of Enon and went into Stafford High School, they had to start making a decision on whether to get in the right lane to go through the traffic circle or the left lane. He said that if they were not in the correct lane, the backup would simply transfer from Enon at the intersection to Stafford Indians Lane and then to the traffic circle. He said that there was no real benefit until it became clear how all of that dynamic would work. He said that it took some time to understand what VDOT required and why, as well as to communicate to them the challenges that the school would face.

Ms. Allen asked about the three projects listed for her district. She asked, regarding the Telegraph project, if it was separate from the bats or an additional component.

Mr. Lehane said that it was done the previous year.

Ms. Allen asked if there was a current issue with the environmental design and whether it was related to the storm drain they had discussed earlier.

Mr. Counsell said that they had alluded to it in the last session with the Board. He said that there was a difference in interpretation between their staff and VDOT regarding the environmental regulations they were supposed to follow. He said that once they understood what specific rules applied, there was still a difference in understanding of their meaning. He said that they decided not to argue further and instead added extensive environmental design elements to their project. He said it required the purchase of the entire parcel on Route 1.

Ms. Allen asked how long the delay would be according to the plan.

Mr. Counsell said that he believed was three to four months.

Ms. Allen said that for the Staffordboro sidewalk project, even though it was slightly behind, they would be able to catch up with the right-of-way, which would put the project back on track. She said that the funding should still be okay.

Mr. English asked about the progress of Berea Church's utility relocation.

Mr. Counsell said that this project was the one closest to construction. He said that they had received approval from VDOT for their final plan, and they were working through procurement to put together the package to advertise it. He said that it would be on the street for construction advertisement within the next two weeks.

Mr. English said that his question was about the process of tearing down all these structures and making the Courthouse area look unappealing. He said that it took years to complete any work, and now they were saying that they needed to negotiate for land and other matters. He asked what was happening with that and why they did this. He said he did not understand why they tore down so many trees and buildings, only for them to sit there and look abandoned. He said that if they were going to undertake a project, he would prefer to see it completed all at once. He said that once everything was done, people would think that progress was imminent, and the area would not look as awful when entering the Courthouse area or passing by Brea Church, which was also in a similar state.

Mr. Counsell said that for the three projects nearing construction, they took advantage of a window in time when they could remove trees that did not violate the northern long-eared bat restriction. He said that they had to do this only three months out of the year. He said that they chose to proceed with the clearing so that the project would remain on schedule. He said that if the project was approved and went to construction at the beginning of the ban on clearing, they would have lost nine months in construction. He said that the buildings had been torn down in anticipation of construction at the time before they realized some of the delays they had experienced on that project. He said that he understood how frustrating it could be.

Ms. Gary clarified that the trees were cleared then there were delays in the right-of-way acquisitions.

Mr. Counsell said that the delays for Route 1 Courthouse were not primarily due to right-of-way acquisition but rather issues with the design. He said that instead of proceeding with a design that they believed would not work effectively, they decided to go back to the drawing board for a few months to develop a better and more efficient design. He said that this was around the time when they experienced some staff changes, which led them to identify problems with the design in collaboration with VDOT at the beginning of the year.

Ms. Gary asked how far the redesign had set them back, both in terms of financials and project timeline.

Mr. Counsell said that financially, it cost them between $2 million to $3 million, and an estimated year of their time.

Ms. Gary asked if they could prevent such incidents in the future. She asked for the reason behind it happening and whether it was due to changeovers or if she could receive a specific explanation.

Mr. Counsell said that he believed they were going to correct many mistakes and overcome challenges now that they had gone through a significant change in their team. He said that they were a young team with no member having more than two years of experience in transportation. He said that there had been a complete changeover in the last year or year and a half. He said that previously, the team was limited to three people, but there were now to more positions. He said that there were two open positions that were difficult to fill, but they believed with more experience and growth within the team, they would continue to improve.

Ms. Gary said that later they would need to have some follow-up conversations regarding how they could support them better.

Dr. Yeung asked what the team required aside from money, to assist them in advancing some of these projects. She said that they did not need to answer now but should inform Mr. Vosburg about this because they must provide the necessary assistance so that they could move these projects forward without constantly asking the same questions. She said that she thought she would hear something about bats, but she did not. She said that on Courthouse Road and I-95, her trees were removed. She said she was disappointed about this because she was accustomed to driving down that corner. She asked if there were any problems with that.

Mr. Counsell said that it was a private development, and they assumed, without talking to them, that they were taking advantage of the bat season as well. He said that they were not delayed once their plan was approved, but that was speculation. He said that he did not know the details on that, but there had not been much happening since the clearing occurred.

Ms. Bohmke said that she believed they were short on staff even before Mr. Lehane joined and during Mr. Counsel's transition. She asked how many bonds had been issued from the 2019 bonds, thinking it was zero.

Mr. Counsell said that it was zero.

Ms. Bohmke asked when they should consider issuing a bond, which could be done at any time they wanted.

Mr. Counsell said that they had been discussing this matter. He said that they met with Ms. Light and the Office of Finance and Budget regularly. He said that they anticipated a spring bond drawdown, probably between $15 and $30 million, and then another one the following year.

Ms. Bohmke asked if the funds had been allocated, as the range of $15 to $30 million was quite wide but likely depended on revenue sharing and SmartScale, among other variables. She asked whether specific projects had been identified for inclusion in that particular bond issuance, as they needed to inform the bondholders about the projects.

Mr. Counsell said that they were still determining how many projects they would be prepared to allocate funds for. He said that it was likely that there would be at least four or five.

Ms. Bohmke asked if they were at a point where they could share that information with the Board.

Mr. Counsell said that it was not currently on the top of his head, and he did not know if they could pull that together during the meeting. He said that if they could access the CIP, they could provide a fairly good idea by simply looking at it because it would be the ones with bond funding that were closest in time to schedule for starting or going to construction.

Mr. Lehane said that with some of those projects, it would be a mixture of six projects. He said that on three of those projects, they had started engineering and design on those. He said that on two of them, they would be starting that in the coming six months to a year. He said that the last one, Garrisonville Road, was up for interpretation on when they started that based on how much funding they received in the next SmartScale program. He said it would be based on the project schedule, where they were at with engineering, what they needed for right-of-way, and then where their schedule was at for construction. He said that once they took down bonds, they had to consider how long they had until they needed to have that bond money spent.

Ms. Bohmke said that typically, they had three years for IRS purposes unless they had changed that.

Mr. Counsell said that he understood that once the bond was approved, they had eight years to spend the money, take it down, and spend it, with the potential for an extension of two years. He said that because SmartScale and some of the other funding they were using the bond money to leverage were so far out in the future. He said they had not pulled any money from the bonds because the projects they were spending on were just awarded projects. He said that a couple years ago, they had to wait for the funding to come in and then spend the bulk of the money during right-of-way acquisition and construction, which was at the back end of the project.

Mr. Counsell said an idea that staff had been discussing involved emulating some of their larger peers in how they conducted business. He said that those peers handled engineering and right-of-way upfront using their own funds before applying for SmartScale and other construction funding. He said that they had not been able to do this, but they had ideas and plans that they believed would work. He said that they needed to present these to the Board to ensure agreement.

Ms. Bohmke said that it was very frustrating. She noted the overage on Enon Road. She said that the public had approved the bonds in 2019, and she did not think they were premature in asking for voters to vote on those because there was not inflation back then. She said they had very low interest rates, and it was painful that they had to issue bonds now at high rates. She said that life was not always fair, and the voters wanted road improvements. She said that some of the numbers were ugly and would probably get worse. She said she supported a bond issuance and hoped that Enon Road would be included in it.

Mr. Lehane said that they had discussed current projects, which were included in their existing CIP, which was the FY24 approved CIP. He said that the next step was their transportation master plan and the study that supported it. He said they initially presented a short-term list of projects, which could be completed through conventional funding programs such as VDOT Smart Share

Program, VDOT Revenue Sharing Program, FAMPA CMAQ/CR/STBG programs. He said that there was additional information on all these programs provided in the packet.

Mr. Lehane said their focus was on applying for funding for some of those initial projects by the November 14 Board meeting and infrastructure committee on that day. He said they would also look at CMAQ/CR/STBG, and then later on for SmartScale as well. He said they would consider inclusion of these projects in their impact fees. He said that one of the major points of the master plan was to set up a blueprint, which included projects and how they could fund those projects. He said that they could set up a blueprint and say how much they wanted to put into local projects and how much they could apply for. He said they would update it based on the funding they received through those programs.

Mr. Lehane said that the CIP was worth just under $250 million. He said that they could complete many of these projects based on the existing revenue stream, including SmartScale, local revenue, and VDOT's revenue sharing program through 2040. He said these were shorter-term projects that could be completed if they performed well in funding programs. He said that nearly all of them could be completed by 2040 based on revenue trends and their continued grant success. He said there was a blueprint for roadway projects specifically in the packet, but he had not detailed the bicycle and pedestrian projects, which were discussed briefly at the September infrastructure committee meeting.

Mr. Lehane said that one question to consider was when they wanted to take a more detailed look into their bicycle and pedestrian projects, as well as their bicycle and pedestrian blueprint. He said that they would also need to fund those, along with transit and travel management. He said that these were all parts of their master plan that had not been discussed in detail yet. He said there were parts of the master plan situated for those sets of projects.

Mr. Lehane said the next set of items they would be looking at and discussing was those initial projects for an initial set of funding applications. He said that one of the things the master plan identified was there were some sections of roadway where additional study, specifically detailed study, was required. He said they were looking to do a study on a specific segment of roadway through VDOT's STARS program. He said that this program looked at cost-beneficial types of improvements on a segment of roadway.

Mr. Lehane said they could do a study of exit 143, Garrisonville Road and Route 1 intersection. He said that VDOT had done an I-95 study a couple years ago, and one of their main recommendations in Stafford County at this exit was to do a study of the intersection to identify a set of improvements. He said that it would improve safety and congestion, which were among the worst in the County. He said that these issues would only get worse. He said that other studies on US 17, Route 218, and Route 1 were considered.

Mr. Lehane said on Route 1, there were five or six projects in the master plan projects list and another four or five in the existing CIP project. He said they could unify all of that by looking at how much delay was reduced, how much safety was improved, and what additional work needed to be done on Route 1. He said that since it was their major north-south corridor for local travel in the County, they would prioritize these through the CIP process as well.

Ms. Bohmke said that in addition to the items being discussed, she believed that studying Enon Road to Centerport Parkway and Centerport all the way up to Mine Road was of paramount importance while discussing the river crossing. She said that if their Board would support the Enon to Centerport Parkway study, FAMPO may have money to pay for that study if the Board were interested. She said she did not believe they had money to pay for both studies, but at least the first one. She said there was no reason to talk about a river crossing unless these two studies were prepared. She said they needed another north-south viability in the County for everyone.

Ms. Vanuch said that they were going to come through Mountain View. She said that right now, if she were to leave her district, which is where most of the people will be coming to not go onto I-95. She said this would be crucial for managing traffic flow in the project. She said that Mountain View Road was slated to be widened as it was already an interstate. She said that she needed to ensure that the width of those roads could handle the increased traffic from a river crossing.

Ms. Bohmke said that under Mr. Vosburg's leadership, she requested staff to coordinate and discuss the matter with FAMPO.

Dr. Yeung said that it should be brought back for discussion since they had not yet approved it.

Ms. Gary said that she was just about to suggest the same thing. She said that if they could obtain more information and direction from existing resources, it would be very helpful.

Mr. Coen said that he was just curious about the information presented in the discussion, particularly from Slide 17 onwards.

Mr. Lehane said that in terms of the long-term scenarios, yes, that was correct.

Mr. Lehane said that they had a list of the top 15 roadway projects, which had been studied in various past studies. He said that many of these projects were considered for CMAQ,CR, congestion mitigation and air quality, carbon reduction, and service transportation blocking programs through FAMPO's call for projects. He said they would discuss this at the November infrastructure and Board meetings. He said that they would be looking at this list of projects to prioritize as short-term projects to move forward with.

Mr. Lehane said that one of the questions asked was: what is the funding eligibility for these projects? He said he had added information based on VDOT inflation guidance regarding potential costs. He said that these were not exact cost estimates; they only provided a magnitude of the project. He said it may take a day or two, sometimes more, to build a cost estimate and sketch for these projects. He said that in the past few years, several studies had been conducted that served as a basis for this analysis. He said he developed a per lane mile cost estimate based on previous SmartScale rounds.

Mr. Lehane said that the list included some of the options they could apply for: SmartScale, CMAQ, STBG, revenue sharing. He said he had discussed the SSYP, which allowed them to allocate funds from SSYP to projects on secondary roads. He said he had mentioned the TAP for bicycle and pedestrian projects was an option if they wished to focus solely on the bicycle and pedestrian aspects of these projects without pursuing roadway construction. He said that Community Choice was another program they had, essentially reinvesting toll revenues into projects that would need to benefit the toll lanes.

Mr. Lehane said there were some questions about project eligibility, which could be discussed with the funding grantor as well. He said that there was HSIP, the Highway Safety Improvement Program, led by VDOT, and they did not have an opportunity to apply for it but VDOT did. He said that there were various federal grants when considering projects, and there were different scopes in their grant application. He said that CMAQ and STBG required a one-pager, making them relatively easy to complete. He said that SmartScale took more time to develop, while federal grants could bring significant amounts of money but required considerable effort and possibly the assistance of a consultant to create a successful grant application.

Mr. Lehane said an opportunity coming up was called the RAISE grant, which should open up in the next couple of months. He said there were other opportunities, such as Safe Streets for All, which would close next summer, and FAMPO was currently working on a study for that as well. He said they had recently applied for the Protect Grant, protecting operations transportation for the Brook Road project, which required consultant time to help support the grant application. He said they wanted to start bringing these opportunities forward to the Board. He said these cost money, but it cost money to make money for a grant application.

Ms. Allen asked if they had managed to determine about engaging DOD funds to help with areas such as Griffiths-Widewater and portions of Rock Hill, where some of the projects could potentially align with DOD funding for certain initiatives.

Mr. Lehane said that they had met with Senator Kaine's office with Mr. Toigo and himself. He said that Mr. Toigo had met with several representatives from the DOD. He said that their primary thought was that congressionally directed spending may be the best option moving forward. He said that there were a couple of other programs that they were still exploring with them. He said that there were opportunities available, but they were quite limited.

Mr. Coen said that when Keith Dayton conducted his study, the primary concern was Butler Road, but they did not have a plan for it at that time. He said that now, it had moved down toward the bottom of the list, so he wanted to know why it shifted in position. He said the answer could be provided as a follow-up.

Mr. Lehane said that one of the items in the packet was a full project sheet for all 15 projects. He said that this included information such as the type of project, its district location, the project sketch, description, existing conditions, potential eligibility for funding programs, VDOT planning factors that determine SmartScale eligibility, and data analysis on housing units within a mile, EPDO (existing property damage only), weighted score based on fatality versus property damage accidents. He said that these factors were used to select projects, and some of these data points also influenced the selection process for SmartScale, FEMPO, CMAQ, and SDBG programs.

Mr. Lehane said that he had outlined this information for all 15 projects in the PowerPoint presentation as well. He said that those projects were generally able to be funded through conventional funding streams. He said that the next set of projects were more expensive but provided significant benefits. He said their strategic plan for transportation entailed a vision for building transportation infrastructure, enhancing their level of service, and providing many alternatives with a lot of access. He said this plan would guide their CIP and be dictated by the Board's decisions on how they moved forward. He said it would look at geographical restrictions in Stafford County and serve those areas.

Mr. Lehane said that in terms of the County, there were numerous travel restrictions, including Quantico to the north, Potomac River to the east, Rappahannock River to the south, and I-95 running straight through the middle. He said that these factors imposed, whether good or bad, a set of restrictions on their community, how they traveled, and how their transportation infrastructure and development had been built. He said that between Quantico and across the Rappahannock River, there were over 400,000 vehicles per day. He said that in reality, if they wanted to function more efficiently, they needed more local options for travel.

Mr. Lehane said he wanted to address what happened when I-95 backed up. He said that when there was an accident on I-95, there was potential for significant issues for Stafford County residents when trying to get around. He said that as a result of accidents, people took a considerable amount of time to reach their destinations. He said that when I-95 experiences backups, one of the things they wanted to look at was how they can improve their conditions in the County during such situations.

Mr. Lehane said that they examined two types of mitigation: regional mitigation for their geographical challenges and localized options that cater to more localized travel while addressing the broader needs throughout the County. He said that in the past, several studies had been conducted, such as the Washington Bypass study in the 1990s, which proposed a bypass out to I-66, and the Western Transportation Corridor in 2004, which involved VDOT's request for information. He said that none of these proposals advanced.

Mr. Lehane said that these regional corridors required collaboration with statewide and local partners to fund and implement them effectively. He said that while they may not be fully funded by the County, they met a significant need and contributed to their long-term scenarios. He said that localized mitigation for geographical challenges was discussed. He said that they modeled nine scenarios through their travel demand model, which examined the impact of building a road, changing its design, or widening it on traffic congestion, volume to capacity ratio, or lane miles over capacity.

Mr. Lehane said this was how they generally assessed congestion on a County-wide scale. He said these were projects that were of significant size but had considerable impact on congestion. He said many of these had been discussed before and were part of the comprehensive plan. He said that they were projects that may be better suited to be funded outside of conventional funding streams, as they might not qualify for SmartScale funding without significant local or regional funding support. He said they could potentially be built through land use changes by developers or via legislative actions.

Ms. Bohmke said that regarding legislative changes, they had been discussing a regional transportation authority at FAMPO. She said that she had always been against this but had changed her mind after seeing the slides from Northern Virginia and Richmond Transportation Authority, which had only been around for a year or two, and all the funds that Hampton Roads had collected. She said that it was clear they would never fund themselves with SmartScale, as it was just a drop in the bucket. She said that they were not doing their constituents in this County any favor. She said that the only way to leverage their money, was by having a regional transportation authority. She said she had emailed Mr. Vosburg and told him they were having a conversation at FAMPO.

She said that they only needed two jurisdictions to start it. She said that Fredericksburg was definitely on board.

Ms. Bohmke said that the slides that she believed were sent out to all of them, she also had Ian Olis send those out to all of their localities in Planning District 16. She said that FAMPO would be taking action on it just as a body, not saying who was going to be in it. She said that they had created legislation, which was available on the FAMPO and GWRC website. She asked how much that would help them if they had an RTA and the ability to collect. She said that when considering high priority projects in Hampton Roads, none of their money went back to localities; it all stayed in the high priority projects. She said that in Northern Virginia, there was a 70-30 split, so 30% of the money went back to the localities.

Dr. Yeung said that she appreciated the update and had some questions about it. She said that she did not want to bring them up there, but since they mentioned the RTA, she knew that some of them were on FAMPO, and some of them also attended meetings. She said that she believed they had not received all the information; they had been sent slides, and they had talked about what was discussed in the meeting on the dais, but she thought another work session was needed. She said that they had brought it back up, but as a Board, they had not discussed it yet.

Dr. Yeung said that she believed everyone needed to be well-versed in the matter as they were, so that they could all make an informed decision. She said that Senator McPike mentioned RTA, and they decided to try to obtain one for their region, which aligned with their goals. She said that however, she considered that even by the time they had the RTA established, their constituents would still require roads, and they remained congested.

Dr. Yeung said that in discussing this with their County Administrator, she thought they could do something similar to what they did with fire and rescue and allocate some taxes or funds specifically for transportation within Stafford County. She said that they would not necessarily need to address the region until they reached that point, as they were entering a new year with possibly a new Board. She said everyone should be well-versed in this matter, and they should proceed cautiously until they had reached a conclusion.

Ms. Gary said that since FAMPO was working on legislation, their legislative committee should consider looking at and working on this with staff, and then they could come back to it after that opportunity.

Ms. Allen said that she was pretty sure that in 2020, she said they should have an RTA and was told no. She said that it was actually on her campaign flyer from 2019, so she was just saying that four years ago she had said that.

Ms. Bohmke said that she understood that they needed four votes to move things forward. She said that she appreciated Ms. Allen's perspective on this matter. She said that she did not have enough information to proceed further, so she was sharing the information with their Board now. She said that Ian Olis, the executive director, had agreed to make a presentation in November.

Dr. Yeung said that she did not want presentations and preferred to meet with him to discuss the matter. She said that she had one incomplete meeting, which lasted an hour. She said that she would like to meet with him again due to numerous questions arising during their previous conversation. She said that he should come to them rather than just giving a presentation. She said that there was much information she was still unfamiliar with but was working diligently to catch up as quickly as possible.

Ms. Bohmke said that she was bringing this up because the timing was crucial.

Dr. Yeung said that when things were put out there and decided to be voted on, it was like they were being voted on without the necessary information. She said that she wanted to obtain that information as soon as possible. She asked if Mr. Lehane could finish his presentation, and they could have questions afterwards.

Ms. Vanuch said that they were against the original RTA proposal because Josh Cole implemented it as an unfunded mandate on the County and taxpayers. She said that there were many issues with that legislation, including the high tax and areas affected, similar to Senator McPike's bill from last year. She said that she would encourage her peers to review the information presented at the FAMPO committee meeting and suggested that staff could pull those slides and the recorded presentation for the Board members to have access to the same information they received during the meeting. She said that the RTA may be favorable, but its effectiveness depended on where the funding comes from and which area was being taxed with the RTA in place. She said that one of the proposals was a sales tax increase.

Ms. Vanuch said that this Board had unanimously supported their legislative agenda item to have a 1% sales tax opportunity with the state delegation to send to referendum for next year, dedicated and earmarked for school funding. She said that if they then added another percent for transportation, that would put them at New York State sales tax rates, and nobody would shop in Stafford County. She said that one had to be really mindful and thoughtful about this. She said that it was great to say they wanted an RTA, but where would the money come from, where were they taxing, and how would that impact their other legislative priorities like schools were questions that must be addressed. She requested Mr. Vosburg to send those presentations to the Board.

Ms. Allen said that she had never said for them to support Josh Cole's legislation at that time. She said that she had only asked them to entertain the idea of what it took to get an RTA and to look into it on their own, separate from whatever Richmond was doing.

Mr. Lehane said that the next three slides presented three examples of the scenarios modeled as part of the modeling exercise in the master plan. He said that there was more information available in the packet. He said that displayed on the slide was a similar project sheet displaying some of the impacts and a map of these proposed potential scenarios. He said that he wanted to draw attention to the middle-bottom of the screen, where there were data points they wanted to focus on. He said that they looked at lane miles, which was calculated as the number of lanes multiplied by the length of the road segment. He said that for example, if there was a six-lane road over a one-mile segment, that was six-lane miles.

Mr. Lehane said that they examined how many lane miles were over capacity. He said that if there was a 10,000 vehicle capacity and had 11,000 vehicles, it was considered over capacity. He said they analyzed the changes based on each scenario at a regional level, specifically for Stafford County, in terms of the number of over-capacity lane miles. He said that there were three scenarios; for example, scenario six originated from FAMPO's east-west mobility study in part, but had been in their comprehensive plan for probably decades in portions.

Mr. Lehane said that while there was a line for the river crossing depicted, it was not a determination of the exact location, but was just a potential general area of where the river crossing could go, and that was part of FAMPO's study they were looking at. He said that the other one was scenario eight, localized widening. He said that this was the cheapest of the scenarios, with some localized widening in North Stafford, Garrisonville, Rock Hill districts on Shelton Shop, Mountain View, and Courthouse Road.

Mr. Lehane said that provided was a summary of all nine of the scenarios that were modeled. He said that further information on what each of these scenarios are was in the packet. He said that scenario six, which included the western network plus crossing, did have a significant impact. He said that when they worked with their consultant, anything over 3% to 4% on a regional level was considered significant. He said that one of the items included in the packet as the final attachment was an understanding by roadway segments such as US 17, west of I-95 out to Geico. He said that they wanted to know the impacts on each specific roadway segment due to these scenarios. He said that this information was in the packet.

Mr. Lehane said that for scenario six, for example, when they examined US 17, east of I-95 between I-95 and Route 1, scenario six appeared to have a 30% to 40% reduction in congestion on US 17 on that segment. He said that while it showed that scenario two only had a 1% reduction in congestion on US 17, he believed that was closer to 10% to 20%. He said that there were also a few additional details to consider in each of the scenarios. Mr. Lehane said that again, cost estimates were of magnitude. He said that they were calculated per lane mile in 2023 dollars and should not be considered exact figures. He said that there were numerous funding options available for such projects. He said that SmartScale could potentially qualify for some federal grants, while developers and the RTA or legislative actions may also serve as eligible funding sources.

Mr. Lehane said that concluded the presentation on the three sets of phases mentioned earlier. He said that as they moved forward, one of their primary concerns was determining the next steps in shaping this plan. He said that this involved addressing both short-term projects and longer-term initiatives. He said that they were seeking direction on how to shape this portion of the plan, which would involve exploring various scenarios, blueprints, and their impact on the development of impact fees and additional work sessions focused on funding shortfalls and strategies for the master plan.

Mr. Lehane said that before taking questions, he wanted to provide some insight into their schedule moving forward. He said that as previously discussed, FAMPO, CMACQCR, and STBG applications must be submitted to the FAMPO by the end of November. He said that they had discussed these projects in September and October briefly. He said that they would further deliberate on them in November when a decision was required. Additional discussions about some of these projects, including the transportation master plan, could take place in November, December, and January.

Mr. Lehane said that by February, they would be focusing on SmartScale and determining which subset of projects would proceed for the SmartScale program. He said that VDOT required additional information if project support was desired within the next few months. He said that by February, with pre-applications due by the end of March, decisions on SmartScale projects must be made. He said that it would be FAMPO's and SmartScale's initial funding programs to initiate funding for all these projects. He said that the funding was not available next year, as previously mentioned. He said that FAMPO was prioritizing funding for FY30, and SmartScale was prioritizing funding for both FY30 and FY31.

Mr. Lehane said that these projects would not begin until additional local funding was secured beforehand. He said that they were scheduled to start in the next five to six years. He said that moving forward after that, discussions and approval of a master plan and potentially a new impact fee would continue during March, April, May, June. He said as well that they would return with a schedule in January or February, along with drafts of their master plan and impact fee. He said that they would take these projects based on Board direction and calculate an impact fee. He said that this information would be presented to the Board and infrastructure community at the February meeting, depending on the available time.

Ms. Vanuch asked if Mr. Lehane could provide a brief explanation of the impact fee.

Mr. Lehane said that Stafford County was one of the few, if not the only, locality in the state that had implemented impact fees. He said that they had them since 2002 or 2003. He said that the current fee was set at $2,999 per residential unit, and developers paid this fee for each unit they developed. He said that these fees were then allocated toward a subset of projects on the impact fee list. He said that moving forward, staff sought a clear direction and shape for this plan. He said that he had not updated the slide as he should have, resulting in incorrect slide numbers due to changes made.

Mr. Lehane said that staff was asking what scenarios from Slide 21 the County should consider moving forward with. He said that further information on these scenarios mentioned in the summary on Slide 21 could be found in the packet. He said that staff sought feedback, direction, and guidance for shaping their vision plan based on some of the scenarios. He said that the scenarios included those from their comprehensive plan that were part of previous studies and incorporated into the master plan.

Ms. Bohmke said that she would like to return to the conversation regarding RTAs. She said that there had been a very robust conversation at FAMPO about this topic. She said that two entities could initiate an RTA, but it was inevitable that a legislator in Richmond would create a regional transportation authority for them this year. She said that the question was whether they wanted one they liked or one created by someone else. She said that they should create their own. She said that FAMPO would be voting on this on November 20th, so it was important for the Board to have this on their agenda for the November 14th meeting, which she had already informed Mr. Vosburg about. She said that she did not believe a formal vote was necessary but wanted people to express their opinions on the matter.

Ms. Bohmke said that the primary reason for presenting it to them as FAMPO Chair was that she valued their input. She said that as elected officials, they needed to contribute to the discussion. She said that if it proceeded to the General Assembly and moved forward, the Supervisors needed to have a say in what the final legislation entailed. She said that at some point, they needed to determine which tax they wanted to impose, such as TOT or diesel. She said that she would like numbers from Ms. Light regarding their fuel tax contributions to PRTC, and they also provided a subsidy for VRE riders and that the VRE ridership had significantly decreased. She said that they had reached around 6,200 people.

Ms. Bohmke said that although President Biden had requested people to return to work, it was not a mandatory requirement. She said that she did not think this would significantly impact their numbers at the moment. She said that they needed to determine how much of their local jurisdiction funds would go toward VRE and how much of their fuel tax was being paid by PRTC for VRE's operating expenses. She said that she would like to know that. She said that Mr. Lehane's report was truly exceptional and that he did an outstanding job along with Mr. Counsell. She said that this was the most comprehensive information they had ever seen. She said that in one of the graphs, they demonstrated where all the accidents occurred.

Ms. Bohmke said that focusing on the larger problem, they must address accidents on I-95 that affected their secondary roads. She said that she would like to inquire if they could obtain information from their own deputies or the state police regarding these incidents, as they seem to occur in the same location. She said that if this was true, then there may be an underlying issue that required the state's attention to improve the safety of that area of road, similar to what was done south of Spotsylvania with the speed reduction zones. She requested that any additional information be gathered.

Ms. Allen said that she had always mentioned when meeting with Mr. Lehane and Mr. Counsell that they had completed a transportation master plan and were starting to implement its different components. She said that however, by the time they get anything meaningfully done, they would probably be in need of another one, and they would have even more needs. She said that her question has always been, in order to start tangibly addressing issues that were not on the smaller scale, which they obviously need to do, but clearly the middle to larger projects were what was really going to move the transportation needle to where their residents want it to be.

Ms. Allen asked how much do they really need to be funding transportation to be able to be competitive for larger grants or whatever other funds that were out there, separate from an RTA, just in general as a Board. She asked what numbers they really needed to be at so that when projects were about to come online or projects hit a little hiccup because of environmental design delays or VDOT saying something at the last minute that forced them to delay construction a year or two, resulting in rising costs. She said that those two years cost them $5M when their project needed to get done, and they no longer had the $5M, so they could not do the project anymore, which went from being able to do it at 90% to now being pushed to the bottom of the pile.

Ms. Allen said that they were playing the revolving door game consistently with their projects, which was why Supervisor English was frustrated when he said they did not get anything done meaningfully. She said that this was because they did not adequately fund transportation to a certain degree that it needed to be funded so that they were not constantly chasing their tail and playing the game of robbing Peter to pay Paul, except that Paul never got paid or ever saw a dime of it. She said that she did not want this effort to be in vain where 10 years from now they were still facing the same challenges, and different people may be sitting in their seats because they as the current Board had not adequately addressed the funding aspect.

Ms. Allen said that it was great to have an RTA to supplement, but when there had massive infrastructure needs and the transportation level they had, multiple sources of funding were necessary to address and pivot to the needs. She said that from the Board perspective, which was something they could do as a Board. She said that they needed to fix the RTA, get legislation, and gain their partners' agreement. She said that at the Board level, they must identify the realistic numbers should they aim for, including escalating costs going forward, to fund transportation so that some of these projects did not consistently fall behind.

Dr. Yeung asked if they could consider implementing an internal tax while they waited for the RTA.

Ms. Allen said that there had to be a number they needed to mirror along, so that they were within the delta range that allowed them to stay ahead slightly above the curve and not fall behind. She said that no offense was intended, but anything on the $20 million would not get anything done when one project alone could take up $20 million.

Mr. English asked Ms. Light how much money they currently had in the fund that could be spent on transportation. He asked if they had to go today and complete a project, how much money did they have available for a project right now. He said that if Ms. Light could not provide it today, he requested to be informed. He asked if that money was there, were they investing it since they were not using it. He said that regarding impact fees, he asked how they went about obtaining those raised. He said that he agreed they were too low and needed to be increased. He said that furthermore, they also completed federal grants, and someone must be paid to conduct a study.

Mr. English said that that was more money going out that could be going toward roads. He said that he wanted to know if there was an aid or somebody they could talk to and say they could not afford the studies, or if they were going to do the studies and they applied for this federal grant, they had to put the money back in for the cost of the study. He said that this was throwing good money out because if they had to turn around and do a study again, it would be a waste of money and time. He said that it was not staff’s fault, but asked who they should talk to get the process streamlined so they didn't have to. He said that those were the issues concerning him right now.

Mr. Coen said that he had lots of questions that he would send to staff. He said that on Slide 9, it was mentioned that they would do more studies. He asked when those would be occurring since there were multiple projects. He said that he appreciated the comprehensive report provided by staff. He asked Mr. Vosburg if it was correct that at the last meeting, the Board said they wanted to send all of the Board members information about RTAs and taxes for the discussion on November 14th. He requested an updated slide, number 24, where it was mentioned that the direction should be on a portion of the plan and some page numbers.

Mr. Lehane said that some of the information had been rearranged in the packet.

Mr. Coen said that he was anxious to see the information on sidewalks. He said that scenario on 18 onward, at some point in time, they needed to have some type of meaningful discussion if that was what they wanted to do. He said that if they were looking at those big loops and little loops. He said that he believed that was a holistic discussion that the community needed to express their thoughts about. He said that he urged anyone in the audience to view these loops online. He said that lastly, on impact fees, he knew that they had been seeking that information for quite a while. He said that the impact fees were only implemented when land was rezoned and was not applicable to by-right developments.

Dr. Yeung said that it sounded like everyone was in favor of increasing the impact fees.

Mr. Coen said that he would like to receive more information about the subject.

Ms. Vanuch said that she understood Mr. English's frustration but emphasized the importance of remembering that having transportation funding did not mean they could simply allocate it to any project. She said that if they had $50 million in the bank, they could not just throw it on a $50 million project or spend it on numerous smaller projects without a strategic plan. She said that in her own district, there were projects in the queue that were strategically lined up with various funding sources such as bond funding, matching funds, and local funds. She said that this ensured that when federal or state funds became available, they could maximize their dollars. She said that if they spent $50M on a project, it may fund $50M project, but they would lose $100M in matching funds.

Ms. Vanuch said that the second issue she would raise was around impact fees. She said that this was something the Board brought forward to Mike Smith back in 2020. She said that they wanted to increase transportation impact fees and collect more revenue from developers and builders, whether it was for rezoning or buy-write lots. She said that they were informed that they could not increase the transportation impact fees unless they completed a master plan, specifically a transportation master plan. She said that then, they had to align certain projects to it, which was what staff was asking them to do, and then they developed the fees based on that.

Ms. Allen asked when they would discuss with the County Attorney to ensure that they were within the correct parameters to be able to proceed with impact fee, as it was evident that the County Attorney must approve this matter.

Mr. Counsell said that they were in the project development phase with the master plan approval. He said that projects to be included and impact fees were being developed and discussed starting tonight. He said that once they identified the projects responding to growth and increasing in capacity, they could identify those and estimate those. He said that a lot of that had already been done. He said that it was not ready for prime time yet, as were still looking at projects and costs.

Mr. Counsell said that as soon as they got that, they would bring a presentation to show where the projects were, how they factored into the growth, which met the requirements of the impact fee legislation, and then the cost. He said that they then would divide that out by flow that each project would generate or each house would generate, and then it would be assigned a cost. He said that process was being worked on tonight. He said that it would probably be early spring or late winter before they had anything ready to give for consideration.

Ms. Allen said that considering the impact fee, she would like to know if they had the ability to expand their nexus radius with the new master plan for examining impacts. She said that she had argued that it was not just the immediate vicinity or on each end, especially in areas where there were multiple avenues to exit. She said that in such cases, the impact was much broader than their immediate surroundings, particularly as the County grew and developed. She asked if they would be able to consider expanding the radius, or if it was set in legislation and they could not even think about extending the impact beyond what was written in the law.

Mr. Counsell said that the code required projects to meet specific criteria, and if they did not, they would not be eligible for the impact fee. He said that as projects were developed, staff would scrutinize them all. He said that the reason they had developed this for the impact fee was to compare it with the code and ensure that the County Attorney agreed that it qualified for the impact fee program. He said that they would then move it forward for their consideration.

Mr. Lehane said that they would incorporate the projects discussed or a subset of them into their impact fee study. He said that from there, they would use this information to calculate the impact fee projects that have supported or will support future growth. He said that their next step was to integrate these projects into their blueprint, funding stream, CMAQ and STBG, and SmartScale, which they would discuss further. He said that staff requested guidance on whether to proceed with the scenarios.

Mr. Counsell said that regarding the decision points, staff was not requesting specific projects to proceed with. He said that they were seeking guidance and direction on how to proceed with formulating this plan, which would be brought back for their consideration in finalizing it.

Dr. Yeung asked what Mr. Counsell's thoughts on the matter were.

Mr. Counsell said that the plan or the analysis and modeling had yielded these 15 projects as projects that were extremely beneficial and were within the cost capabilities of their current funding streams.

Dr. Yeung asked if the score cost was ranked from highest to lowest.

Mr. Counsell said that the scoring method was based on a magnitude that considered the cost-benefit relationship.

Dr. Yeung asked if the score cost itself in the last column was 8.02.

Mr. Lehane said that it was a score as developed with the partitioning tool in the master plan, and the estimated cost. He said that the formula for this calculation was the score divided by the cost.

Dr. Yeung asked if, based on the scores, cost, and funding they were receiving, did they still need to grapple with these funding sources. She asked if they were certain that they had the project aligned and planned out so that they would not arrive at the table and say, no, it was incorrect.

Mr. Lehane said that most of these projects had been through various studies in the past few years. He said that before coming to this meeting, they had discussions with VDOT about all these projects as well. He said that they had been talked about and generally, yes, these were projects that they could move forward with for the funding stream.

Dr. Yeung said that Garrisonville was not on the list. She said that it went to SmartScale and had a high score similar to VDOT. She said that it then proceeded to CTB, where it was chopped. She said that her point was that they should work with their transportation representative to ensure they were heading in the right direction so that when the time came, she would not be arguing about the scores and saying that it was high for others but not for them.

Mr. Lehane said that they had already held preliminary conversations with VDOT regarding the upcoming round of SmartScale. He said that Garrisonville Road had been discussed, and they were considering phasing the project into two phases and applying for the first phase of the project. He said that it was a widening project consisting of four to six lanes between Eustis Road and Shelton

Shop Road. He said that they would divide the project into two phases. He said that the first phase, which they would consider for the next round of SmartScale, would be phase one between Eustis Road and Parkway Boulevard as a four- to six-lane widening. He said that they had had preliminary discussions with VDOT on this project and could look at it for the next round of SmartScale.

Dr. Yeung said that it was important for everyone on the team and all consultants had what they needed and that they had the backing and support. She said that they did not have the funds but appreciated the work being done.

Ms. Bohmke asked if the roadway project scenarios were not a part of the dashboard.

Mr. Lehane said that was correct, none of these projects were a part of that.

Ms. Bohmke said that she did not see Layhill Road on the slide.

Mr. Lehane said that Layhill Road was one of the projects currently fully funded through their CIP, thanks to additional SmartScale funding. He said that they were collaborating with VDOT to determine when they could commence engineering work on this project. He said that it appeared that it would likely begin in the spring.

Ms. Bohmke asked if Leland Road was a VDOT-administered project.

Mr. Lehane said yes. He said that it should start around the same timeframe, possibly later. He said that it was fully funded due to additional SmartScale funding.

Ms. Allen said that she had a question about the Garrisonville Route 1. She said that she had come to him many times about this issue due to, besides the accidents, the blocking the box causing an enormous amount of traffic in that area. She said that she curious to see and understand the engineering component of it because it would be a massive project. She said that $90 million was probably what would end up being based on what Mr. Lehane had said on the previous slide. She said that from an engineering standpoint, she asked how they could even fix that intersection just because I-95 was sitting right there and then they had Aquia Harbor sitting there, so there was no land to make that intersection.

Ms. Allen said that projects like that, although of course she would want to see it on the list as their priority to get done because it was a major thorn for the area, from a practicality standpoint, she would have to see the engineering on some of these projects. She said that she did not want them to go down roads and invest in fixing certain transportation needs if it may not make any sense objectively because they would just be wasting time and funds. She said that specific project she definitely wanted to see engineering-wise whether it even made sense to do, as she did not know where they could get land to make the area wider, and there was a whole bridge that prevented them from doing much in that intersection.

Mr. Lehane said that the project was very unique and could be discussed in more detail if desired. He said that it was essentially a quadrant roadway, which VDOT referred to as an innovative intersection where they were realigning the turning movements to improve traffic flow.

Mr. English asked about the project at Stafford Avenue and Courthouse Road, where a roundabout had been proposed near a school and a funeral home. He said that he had concern that this might cause more issues than benefits with the increased traffic. He requested more information on this proposal.

Mr. Lehane said that staff could research the issue further.

Mr. Counsell said that generally, what a roundabout does is that it keeps traffic moving through there in all directions. He said that currently, Stafford Avenue backed up all the way to Hope Road in both directions.

Mr. English said that he understood. He said that his concern about the roundabout was regarding the school buses and other traffic near the business on the corner. He said that the presence of tractor-trailers would likely cause more issues, which is why he wanted to see a more detailed analysis of this situation.

Mr. Coen said that he appreciated Supervisor English's input because one thing that struck him was the presence of another roundabout at the hospital. He said that there were two roundabouts, and he understood the business's reluctance to have a light so close to another light. He said that in looking at this, he needed more information before he could say which, because he thought Butler Road ranked the highest. He said that he did not know whether they had actually come forward with some type of plan to fix it. He said that if they had, then it made sense to try to put it as a priority for funding, and if not, then it made sense to continue with their previous approach.

Mr. Coen said that there were a couple of other things that he did not have clarity on, including the ever-popular funding that Mr. Dudenhefer discovered was supposed to be going to North Stafford. He said that it was being used for things in the City and Spotsylvania County. He asked if that money went to offset the Garrisonville Route 1. He said that those were the type of things he needed to know before he could say definitively whether the five items should go up or down. He said that with the Butler Road thing, which scored roughly 64, it dropped down to 1.41 when divided out. He said that he could not make a decision until more information regarding these issues was provided.

Mr. Lehane said that last year, the Board had funded a Butler Road corridor study in the CIP. He said that this study was now complete, and they had a draft available. He said that the study was the basis for the project listed. He said for any projects in SmartScale, it needed to be based on a study. He said that the study would help them determine whether to proceed with the SmartScale project or not, as it provided evidence in support of this initiative. He said that they needed to consider funding and the score, among other factors. He said that one of the questions was how to address the numerous studies available, such as the Butler Corridor study. He said that while there may not be enough time to discuss all of them in detail, they could continue these conversations offline and bring them back to the Board if necessary.

Ms. Gary that one point regarding the roundabout, she lived close by and understood the traffic flow in the area. She said that there was an issue with connectivity and believed that the roundabout might not be the best solution for that particular location. She said that the neighborhood adjacent to it might receive another elementary school soon. She said that with all of this information in mind, she suggested revisiting Courthouse Manor and noted her previous discussion with some members of the HOA when they were considering turning over their streets for public use instead of private.

Ms. Gary said that they knew it was slated for extension if it was turned over, and now it had been. She said that she had discussed this with all of them, and their HOA decided to move forward anyhow. She said that connecting Courthouse Manor might be a better alternative to the roundabout, but they could follow up on that conversation later. She said that it seemed like it might be a better alternative to have a better grid system.

Ms. Allen said that because the budget season was coming up, last year she advocated for staffing, and she would like to know how much of a lack of staff had impacted the transportation decisions. She said that she had spoken to the same four staff members about all transportation projects. She said that she felt that there were so many projects, so many nuances, and so many things that had to get done. She said that clearly, lack of staffing had been a hindrance to some degree, but she would like to know just how much so that they knew when going into the budget season. She said that if they needed additional staff to get the projects moving at a faster pace, she would like to know exactly what they needed.

Mr. Counsell said that he wanted to make clear that the Board had supported them in the past, and they were given two project manager positions, one in 2022 and one in 2023, so there were four project manager positions in total. He said that only two of them were currently filled. He said that they recently filled the other two, however, those individuals chose not to start working at the County and instead went to another entity. He said that this morning, they had a conversation with County administration about coming up with ideas on how to make working in Stafford more attractive compared to some of their localities. He said that they had not come up with anything definitive yet, but it was on their minds.

Mr. Counsell said that they were looking at all the things that they could possibly come up with to try to fill those positions. He said that however, they were not alone. He said that all of their peers were going through the same thing. He said that they were competing with everybody in their area for the same positions. He said that there was a real deficit in that skill in this area that they were just not filling. He said that they believed they had the positions to do what they were currently trying to do. He said that they just did not have them filled at the moment due to a lack of applicants.

Dr. Yeung asked what the Board was deciding on.

Mr. Counsell said that he would like to clarify a little bit about what staff were asking and what they needed from the Board. He said that he saw a lot of concentration on specific projects. He said that what they really wanted to know was whether the Board generally agreed with how they had formulated the presentation. He said that there were things currently on their CIP that they wanted to accomplish within the time frame up until 28. He said that what they looked for was whether the Board generally concurred that these projects, the top 15 projects on the list, which were those generated through the master plan. He said that they represented the lowest hanging fruit and the most immediate need that could be funded through conventional means.

Mr. Counsell said that the most crucial aspect, which could not be decided tonight or perhaps not even desired to be decided tonight, was the vision. He said that the decision was multifaceted. He said that they must determine whether they wished to pursue a corridor to the west as an ultimate goal, along with some of the larger loop projects and scenarios presented, as well as the RTA as a factor for funding. He said that staff was asking whether the Board generally followed along and concurred with what had been presented to them as options without committing to any particular projects tonight.

Ms. Bohmke said that she agreed wholly with the methodology presented, however, she would like to focus on the western corridor as a priority for the County. She said that it was overdue, and it would impact all of their districts, as well as everyone in Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania.

Dr. Yeung said that when she sent her representatives to FAMPO, she expected them to come back with information not only for her own district if they were fighting for something in her district or if there was money there for her district that she was aware of it. She said that it had taken her a year and a half to directly speak to Supervisor Coen and her past Supervisor Dudenhefer, and then to have a meeting with Mr. Ian Olis and the staff to find out that they did not use the money for North Stafford last year and there was money sitting this year. She said that she did not want to have to find out on her own if the information was there. She requested that it be brought back to them and for staff to present options. She said that she would like to have these conversations with the rest of the Board before decisions and votes were made, either one-on-one or during another work session.

Ms. Vanuch said that she was uncertain about the FAMPO funding situation in North Stafford. She said that the allocated funds were part of the total amount, and they had received them. She said that this was made possible due to their efforts, along with Cindy Shelton and Supervisor Dudenhefer, who stood firm to secure a FAMPO majority for changing the bylaws so that Stafford County could access Northern Virginia funds. She said that she believed there were a few projects mentioned at the last infrastructure meeting to utilize this funding.

Dr. Yeung said that it was discussed at the last infrastructure meeting because she had brought it to their attention.

Ms. Vanuch said that the money was not very much, so they were trying to let it build up so that it did not only get allocated to Garrisonville. She said that the money did not go through FAMPO to get voted on, it went to Stafford and the Board voted on where to spend the money. She said that the only decision that FAMPO had previously made was whether or not to include in the bylaws that Stafford County would be dedicated that funding because, before, it was dedicated to other localities, not just Stafford County. She said that the money had always been there and that the Stafford County staff received it. It had nothing to do with Dr. Yeung's FAMPO appointees.

Ms. Vanuch said that to reiterate what Ms. Bohmke said regarding the western network and the crossing, it was the only project that touched every single district in Stafford County, either through traffic mitigation or providing access to the south end of the County. She said that staff had consistently stated that the only way they could promote economic development and job growth off Route 17 was by improving traffic and transportation flow. She said that ID number 4 on the list was Truslow Road, a two to four lane widening upgrade. She said that given the new elementary and high school being constructed there, it would be crucial to find ways to fund this project by incorporating this into the master plan and scenario plan so they allocate developer transportation impact fees, which would be one of the primary methods for funding these roads.

Ms. Bohmke said that she kindly disagreed with the comments that they did not bring transportation information to the Board. She said that there were many Board meetings where people did not report on their committees, and it was not appropriate to say something like that to those of us who sat on FAMPO. She said that she had brought this to the Board at the last meeting and communicated with Mr. Vosburg and the entire GWRC about the RTA. She said that she asked the Board at the last meeting if anyone would be offended if this did not come to the Board on November 14th, and everyone agreed. She said that it was odd that Dr. Yeung was making that statement. She said that they moved on this very quickly, and it was not like the RTA had not been hanging out there for six or eight months. She said that she felt she was owed an apology because it was not appropriate.

Dr. Yeung said that she was not referring to the RTA but the money sitting for North Stafford.

Ms. Bohmke said that was staff's responsibility and was not theirs.

Ms. Gary asked if staff had received adequate direction from the Board and if any further steps should be addressed.

Mr. Counsell said that staff had received clear direction on what must be brought to the Board next for their consideration. He said that they would provide a variation of tonight's report with additional information and elaboration on the content presented tonight.

Dr. Yeung asked if staff could discuss the three areas and how much money could be spent specifically for North Stafford and what they could do with the funds from last year that were not spent.

ADJOURNMENT

At 6:55 p.m., Chairman Yeung adjourned the October 26, 2023 Stafford County Board of Supervisor's Transportation work session.

Randy Vosburg

Randal E. Vosburg
County Administrator

Dr. R. Pamela Yeung
Chairman