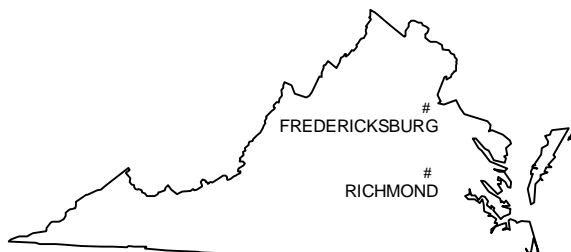


Fredericksburg Case Study

1990 Census Population	56,718
Central City	Fredericksburg, Virginia
Air Quality Status (1990)	Stafford County: nonattainment, serious (ozone). Part of the DC nonattainment area.
Governor Designation Date	November 18, 1992
Voting Policy Board Members	City of Fredericksburg (two elected officials and the chief administrator) Spotsylvania County (two elected officials and the chief administrator) Stafford County (two elected officials and the chief administrator) Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC) Designee of Secretary of Transportation (VDOT)
Non Voting Policy Board Members	Caroline County King George County FHWA FTA Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation Virginia Department of Aviation
PL and 5303 Funding (Year of Designation)	\$105,989 in FY 94 ¹
Initial Staff Size	Two
Initial Staff Location	Rappahannock Area Development Commission (RADCO)
Modeling Responsibility	VDOT
GIS Responsibility	RADCO
AQ Conformity Responsibility	Northern Virginia MPO
Contacts	Bill Shelley, RADCO (540) 373-2890 Frank Hancock, VDOT (804) 786-7735
Website	www.fampo.state.va.us/



¹ Due to time constraints, VDOT produced the first TIP and UPWP. FAMPO received no PL/5303 funds.

The Fredericksburg urbanized area was designated after the 1990 Census and included the City of Fredericksburg and portions of the counties of Stafford and Spotsylvania. The Fredericksburg Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (FAMPO) was created in 1992 and has a planning area that includes the city, as well as all of the two partially urbanized counties. The policy board has eleven members:

- Two elected officials from City of Fredericksburg
- The city manager from the City of Fredericksburg
- Two elected officials from Stafford County
- The Stafford County administrator
- Two elected officials from Spotsylvania County
- The Spotsylvania County administrator
- Representative of the Secretary of Transportation (VDOT headquarters staff)
- Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC)

Non-voting members of FAMPO include the Federal Transit and Federal Highway Administrations, the two other counties that comprise the planning district (Caroline and King George), and two other state transportation agencies (rail and aviation). FAMPO has two standing committees—the technical committee and the transportation advisory committee (a public advisory committee).

Initial Steps to Formation

The City of Fredericksburg had been aware roughly a year in advance that it would be designated an urbanized area. Once this designation became official, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) sent a letter to the local governments informing them of the designation and announcing that VDOT would hold informational meetings in Fredericksburg. At the first of these meetings, VDOT officials drew on their experience with the eight other MPOs in the state to explain the different options available to Fredericksburg in the areas of policy board membership, memoranda of understanding, and staffing. They also provided a broad overview of the duties and responsibilities of an MPO under the newly legislated ISTEA.

One unique feature of the Fredericksburg urbanized area that affected the membership of the policy board and the study area boundary was that a portion of Stafford County was included in the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board's (TPB) non-attainment area. TPB is the MPO for the Washington, D.C. area. Stafford County had the option of becoming a member of TPB or FAMPO, or being split so that the part of the county in the non-attainment area became part of TPB while the rest became part of FAMPO. With a recommendation from VDOT, Stafford elected to make the entire county part of the new MPO. Stafford's success in having the entire county included resulted in Spotsylvania County making a similar request, although it is very unlikely that the entire county would become urbanized over the following twenty years. The inclusion of Spotsylvania in its entirety avoided a situation of asymmetry in FAMPO, both geographically (the counties lie on opposite ends of the city) and in terms of policy board representation among the local governments.

The overall process of going from Fredericksburg's designation as an urbanized area to the creation of FAMPO took about four months. The MPO staff identified the leadership from VDOT as contributing to the non-confrontational atmosphere that surrounded the MPO's formation. The head of VDOT's planning department came in and said, "here are the different ways you can do this" and followed with examples from the state's other MPOs (particularly the two formed after the 1980 Census). The VDOT planning director was a strong believer in technical committees and the inclusion of member government chief elected officials on the policy board. As a result the creation of the Technical Committee occurred at that first meeting, and the policy board was created so that local elected officials would have a prominent role (three representatives from each county and the city, two of which were elected officials). The Technical Committee consists of technical personnel from the FAMPO localities and regional, state and federal transportation agencies. The Committee is responsible for developing recommendations for the policy board. The VDOT official indicated that policy board composition was a big issue at the first meetings. Although there was some initial concern on the part of some local officials about the creation of another layer of bureaucracy, most attendees at that meeting responded to the VDOT presentations by saying "this is the law, so let's do it."

Although an initial lag between the time VDOT and local officials were notified of the urbanized area designation and the date of the release of the urbanized boundary map delayed the start of MPO discussions somewhat, the process of going from the first meeting in Fredericksburg to MPO designation lasted only about four months. The package sent to the Secretary of Transportation and the Governor included a cover letter and a copy of the MOU. Planning area boundary maps were not included, since FAMPO included the three jurisdictions (Fredericksburg, Stafford and Spotsylvania) in their entirety. Local approval for the MPO was demonstrated by the signature of the chief elected officials of each local government on the cover letter. The official designation was made on November 18, 1992.

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

Funding Issues

One significant funding issue at the outset dealt with funding for transportation projects rather than planning funds. Based on VDOT's recommendation, Stafford County had elected to join FAMPO although a portion of the county was in the North Virginia non-attainment area. TPB (Washington, D.C.'s MPO) initially told them that their share of CMAQ funding would remain with TPB since they were the organization overseeing air quality conformity work. The Secretary of Transportation decided that Stafford County was in fact able to take their CMAQ funds with them to the new MPO.

FAMPO did not receive any federal planning funds from VDOT for the first fiscal year. Since there was insufficient time after formation before the start of the new fiscal year, VDOT produced the TIP for the FAMPO area as part of its statewide programming process. FAMPO members agreed to this arrangement and voted to approve the state's TIP for the area. Since the TIP was created within the statewide process, VDOT and

FAMPO agreed that there would be no allocation of federal planning funds to the MPO for the first partial year. In the first full fiscal year, FAMPO received \$105,989 in federal planning funds, with an additional \$26,500 in state and local match.

Administrative and Technical Support

Another area of consensus at the initial meeting organized by VDOT was that the Rappahannock Area Development Commission (RADCO) should house and staff the MPO. RADCO is an organization that predates FAMPO by several years and served as the planning district commission (PDC) for Fredericksburg, the two FAMPO counties, in addition to two other rural counties not included in the MPO study area (Caroline and King George). There are 21 PDCs in the state of Virginia. PDCs are creations of local governments with encouragement from the state. The role of a PDC is to provide technical assistance in the form of land use planning, mapping, and transportation planning to member governments.

The existence of RADCO helped in two ways. First, it had provided a tradition of regional cooperation on planning issues that does not always exist in other urbanized areas. Second, RADCO staff already possessed some of the skills needed to undertake the responsibilities of the MPO. In other MPOs in Virginia, PDCs had tended to serve as MPO staff as well. This tradition created a situation where RADCO “had its foot in the door” when early discussions turned toward staff composition. There was unanimous agreement among the local officials. The initial staff consisted of a director and a planner. To this day there remain two RADCO employees that do work exclusively for FAMPO. A RADCO secretary has provided part-time administrative assistance to the MPO as well.

RADCO has historically been responsible for GIS work in three of the five localities in their district, and they have continued to provide that service for the MPO. Prior to the creation of the MPO, RADCO had also hired a consultant to develop a travel demand model. Once the MPO was formed, VDOT purchased the model from RADCO and the state provided modeling assistance to FAMPO. Having a model already in place at the time of startup was a great help for the MPO because there was a lot of work that had to be done right away.

Air Quality

Since the only non-attainment area in FAMPO was Stafford County, and the county was part of the Northern Virginia non-attainment area, FAMPO signed an agreement with the TPB designating them as the agency responsible for air quality conformity work. This arrangement was reached very quickly over the course of one day at the annual meeting of Virginia MPOs during the formation of FAMPO. Representatives from FAMPO talked with the chief transportation planner at TPB about them conducting air quality conformity analyses. They drafted a formal agreement and submitted it to the TPB executive director who was in attendance at the annual meeting. After some minor changes, both directors were able to approve the agreement on the spot. This Virginia MPO meeting occurred approximately one year after FAMPO was designated. The

agreement did not feature any financial compensation for TPB's conducting of the analysis.

MPO Products and Transit Involvement

One of the first acts of FAMPO after policy board membership and staffing decisions had been made was the approval of an initial TIP. The MPO was officially created in November, leaving only a partial fiscal year for the first TIP. Realizing that they could not produce a TIP based on a fiscally constrained long-range plan given the timing of the MPO's formation, FAMPO voted to approve VDOT's six-year programming document to serve as their TIP. The federal agencies approved this decision. Because of this arrangement, FAMPO received no federal planning funds during their first year.

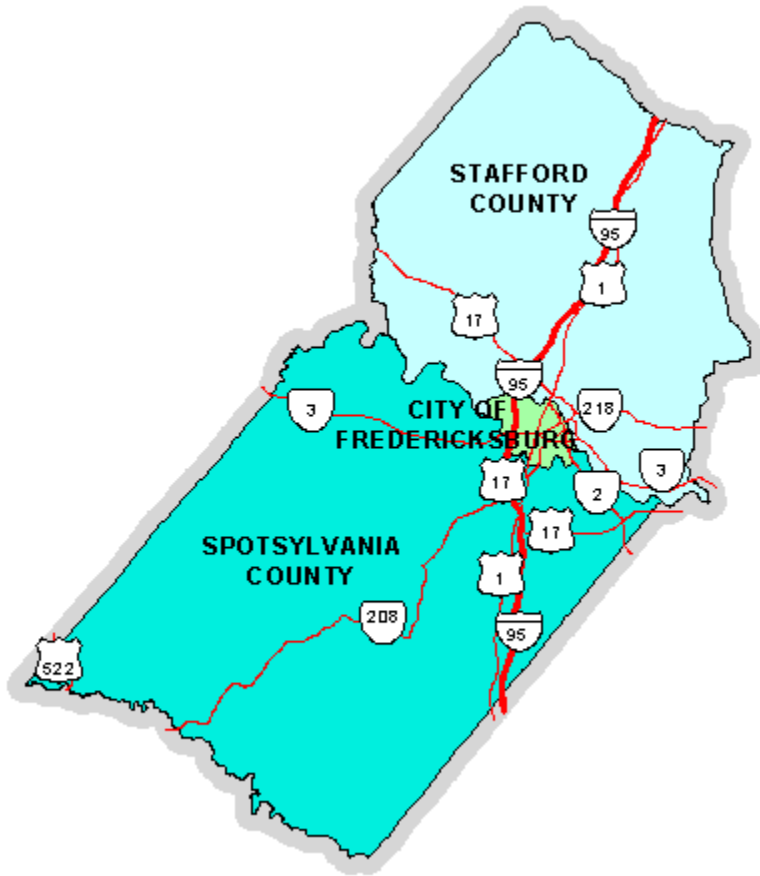
The process for conducting conformity analyses has remained unchanged from the first year. FAMPO submits its Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) or long-range plan projects located in Stafford County to TPB. Then TPB conducts the conformity analysis. The addition of Stafford County projects has not been seen as a problem by TPB, as including the small number of extra projects requires minimal effort.

Although Fredericksburg Regional Transit (FRED) provides local transit service on six routes in the city, the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC) has the highest transit ridership in the area and is a voting member of the FAMPO board. According to the VDOT official, PRTC has played an active role on the board and they "really bring a transit vote to the table." He attributes their involvement in TIP development and other MPO processes to the fact that they are interested in the competition their trains get from the roadway network (PRTC operates the Fredericksburg to Washington commuter rail line). On a recent HOV analysis, PRTC was very active in ensuring that the scope was changed to evaluate the amount of increased HOV ridership that could be attributed to a loss in transit ridership.

Conclusion

The formation of FAMPO, when compared with that of several other smaller MPOs studied, was noteworthy for its consensus and a seamless transition. This easy transition to an MPO structure can be attributed to the pre-existence of regional planning entities in Virginia, as well as the leadership exhibited by state transportation officials, both before and after the urbanized area designation was announced. Preparation of local officials in the Fredericksburg area before completion of the Census made it easier for VDOT to focus those officials on the important decisions they had to make once the designation was announced. And although the federal agencies were not involved directly during these early meetings, the number and variety of MPOs that already existed in Virginia provided VDOT officials with sufficient experience with the pros and cons of different organizational structures, in addition to familiarity with federal transportation laws and regulations.

Note: Two individuals involved in the early years of the Fredericksburg Area MPO were contacted for this study. One is an employee of the Virginia Department of Transportation and they other is an MPO staff person who worked in the Stafford County planning department at the time the MPO was formed.



Source: FAMPO website: <http://www.fampo.state.va.us/>