



French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization
Minutes from the TCC meeting on May 9, 2019

ATTENDANCE:

Josh O’Conner	Tristan Winkler	Zia Rifkin	Nick Kroncke
Matt Cable	Janna Peterson	Autumn Radcliff	Eric Rufa
Wanda Austin	Jessica Morriss	Dan Baechtold	Vicki Eastland
Steve Williams	Troy Wilson	Brian Burgess	Mike Dawson
Jodie Ferguson	Daniel Heyman	Chris Webb	Lonnie Watkins
Chris Lee	Jeff Moore	Dana Bolden	William High
Jonathan Kanipe	Lori Boyer-Davenport	Elizabeth Teague	Chuck Norris

WELCOME AND HOUSEKEEPING

Josh O’Conner opened the meeting and introductions followed.

CONSENT AGENDA

Josh O’Conner indicated that the Consent Agenda included March minutes and an Appointment to the Regional Trail Workgroup. He requested approval for the Agenda at this time, as well.

Matt Cable moved to approve the Consent Agenda and the Agenda as presented. Ben Dannemiller seconded and the motion carried as all were in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No one made any public comments.

BUSINESS

5310 and JARC Project Selection

JARC (Jobs Access Reverse Commute) and 5310 (Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities) are two different transit and human services transportation funding categories allocated to the Asheville Urbanized Area. The French Broad River MPO holds a call for projects once a year, and the City of Asheville is the Designated Recipient for these funds. The application process for Spring 2019 ran from January 31 to March 29. Information about these programs available here:

<http://www.fbrmpo.org/jarc/>.

JARC had one category due to lack of regional JARC specific funding, which was dedicated funding for Haywood County.

5310 had two categories of funding: 1- Traditional/capital projects: at least 55% of the total funding amount has to go towards “traditional” projects; and, 2- Other/operations type projects: no more than 45% of the total funding amount can go to those projects.

The Prioritization Subcommittee is the designated selection committee for these grants and MPO staff presented preliminary recommendations to the Prioritization Subcommittee on April 9. The subcommittee recommended approval of the funding amounts for TCC and Board consideration. JARC/5310 Selection Committee members along with applicants were notified of preliminary results and provided with an opportunity to comment before MPO Board approval, planned for May 23.

Nick Kroncke reviewed the applications submitted, which included submissions from the City of Asheville, Mountain Mobility, the Council on Aging-Buncombe County, Land of Sky Senior Companion Program, and, Vocational Solutions-Henderson County, and Mountain Mobility/RIDE, and, Madison County Senior transportation to meal sites. He communicated that the Prioritization Subcommittee determined that all projects would be funded at the same percentage, as more applications were received than funding available. The proposed funding percentage for each project is 66% of the requested amount. The upside to this is that all projects could be funded; however, future rounds of funding may utilize a funding model that looks at project impact.

Discussion occurred about the number of applicants and whether it was the same programs requesting funding. Nick shared that Vocational Solutions-Henderson County under both capital and operating, was a new applicant. He also noted that applicants have indicated that the proposed funding level would allow them to continue operating their programs. Autumn Radcliff shared that smaller entities may be very dependent on this funding to operate their programs, while larger entities may have the ability to offset funding shortfalls. Nick noted that the application requires a local match.

Discussion also occurred about the traditional projects, which were funded at 90% each during the last round of funding; however, Nick noted that less funding was requested in the prior round by applicants. Jessica Morriss shared that for the City of Asheville, the potential \$36 thousand reduction is not significant and she noted the total cost of the program is about \$800 thousand annually. However, 5307 funding has reduced as well, which also plays into how reduced funding affects the Paratransit program, which the City is required to operate as part of the transit system. Jessica noted that continual funding decreases makes it more challenging to operate the programs. Matt Cable noted that more funding is always requested than exists and he noted his communication with MPO staff about the Vocational Solutions application, regarding whether this was truly an operational project. He noted that some of the projects have a longer period of performance than other projects submitted for funding and he suggested that applicants provide information about performance periods that the funding would impact. He also provided background on the City’s application for paratransit funding, as they came with that request in the recent past. He noted that the City’s receipt of these grant funds purchases services from Mountain Mobility. Matt also commented that the funding proposed for Mountain Mobility’s RIDE program would cause it to sunset its services or terminate the program entirely without additional funding. He encouraged MPO staff to discuss the viability of programs with the reduced level of funding with the applicants. Tristan Winkler reiterated

Matt's request to table this business item until additional information could be gathered from applicant agencies. Matt concurred and noted the importance of having scoring criteria for applications. Tristan noted that the main delay would be in the contracting process.

Matt cable moved to table this business item until more information was gathered from applicants. Jessica Morriss seconded and the motion carried without further discussion.

Nick reviewed the JARC applications received including 2 from Mountain Projects (Haywood County) and the City of Asheville's request for administrative oversight of Mountain Projects JARC project (10% of total request for Mountain Projects). Funding for proposed JARC projects were recommended to be funded at 100% of the amount requested.

Jessica Morriss moved to recommend sending the JARC applications to the MPO Board for approval. Matt Cable seconded and the motion carried without further discussion.

Amendments to the 2018-2027 TIP

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is our region's document that reflects planned transportation investments over a ten-year period and is required to be in conformity with North Carolina's State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The TIP describes each project, a schedule for implementation, funding sources, and estimated cost. The proposed amendments for the 2018-2027 TIP required for May 2019 include R-5779, Crossroads Parkway- CST delayed from FY 18 to FY 20; U-3403B, Brevard Road, project limits modified from Ledbetter Road to North of Blue Ridge Parkway; U-5091E, Craven Street Bridge Improvements, CST delayed from FY 18 to FY 19; EB-5547, Town of Black Mountain Multi-Use Path, reconsolidated sections A and B; and, JARC and 5310 Projects added for FY 2020 and FY 2021, respectively. In addition, TIP Amendment language updated to more descriptively to reflect performance management targets for highway safety and that the TIP will meet these targets. FBRMPO has previously adopted NCDOT's safety targets.

Dan Baechtold moved to recommend the TIP Amendments go to the MPO Board for consideration of approval. Vicki Eastland seconded and the motion carried without further discussion.

Presentation on the 2020-2029 STIP

NCDOT staff presented on funding distributions in the Draft 2020-2029 State Transportation Improvement Program, scheduled to be adopted by the Board of Transportation in September 2019.

Troy Wilson shared the presentation and noted that the STI Act was signed into law in 2013 and provides for three categories of transportation funding. Sources for the funding include the highway trust fund, revenue from the gas tax, and DMV fees. The highway fund is allocated by legislative appropriations and funds the DMV and NCDOT administrations, among other things. Debt service on the highway trust fund is the largest slice of funding. He noted that the FAST Act expires in 2020 and federal funding is expected to be flat until that happens. STIP revenues are realized from gas taxes, new vehicle tax, etc. The state expends these funds on CMAQ, MPO and RPO funding, NC environmental mitigation, cost

overruns/inflation, debt retirement, etc. The remaining funds are expended on the Statewide Mobility tier projects, Regional Impact and Division Needs projects.

Troy also reviewed STIP expenditures, which includes allocating equal funding to each of the NCDOT divisions. Remaining funds are utilized on the prioritization process. He reviewed processes for project scoring and the funding process. Statewide Mobility projects are funded first, followed by Division Need and then Regional Impact. Projects funded become part of the draft STIP. The types of projects in the draft STIP include exempt programs (CMAQ, bridges, interstate maintenance, alternate criteria projects, etc.). The draft 2020-2029 STIP has well over 1000 projects at a cost of over \$28 billion. He also reviewed the number of projects selected through SPOT5.0, which includes highway, aviation, freight, bike/ped, etc. he noted that there are many interstate projects in the STIP from SPOT5.0. Troy next reviewed schedule adjustments to the draft 2020-2029 STIP, which includes projects affected due to funding availability and cost increases on many projects. NCDOT has a cost estimation tool that could help to provide adequate cost estimates. The goal of NCDOT is also to have express design to assist with cost estimations and project scoring. Each NCDOT division has a corridor development engineer.

Discussion occurred about the draft STIP and whether there would be a final version before adoption. Troy noted that the draft STIP would be distributed with any changes in August. The online version of the draft STIP is updated with changes monthly.

Informational only- no action requested.

SPOT 6.0 Updates and Changes

Tristan presented proposed changes to the process for SPOT 6.0 and reviewed the calendar of milestones/deadlines throughout the process. he explained the process for producing the draft submittal list including that the MPO may submit 25 projects of each mode into the prioritization process. The general process to determine this list is to go through existing plans with local government staff to determine what projects would be most appropriate to submit at this time. The number of projects submitted are divided by County (not including carryover projects) and apply to each mode: Buncombe County- 13 new projects (in each mode); Haywood County- 4 new projects; Henderson County- 7 new projects; and, Madison County- 1 new project. Tristan shared that MPO staff sit down with local planning staff (Henderson TAC for Henderson County) to gather recommendations from these groups, after which, projects are manually submitted to the SPOT online tool. Local meetings would begin in June and a draft list would be presented in August, followed by a public comment period and a final list in September. A few changes include modernization projects would now get their own scoring criteria. Additionally, mobility projects would be scored mainly on congestion and safety. He noted that increased costs of projects could lead to a round or prioritization where there is less funding available for the region. He noted that transit projects would now be eligible for 90% of project funding; changes have been made to the way aviation, and bike/ped projects are scored.

Informational Only- No Action Required

Urban Transit Funding Allocation Formula Amendments

FTA 5307 Urban Transit Formula funds are funds for transit capital and operations that are distributed to large urbanized areas to be administered by eligible transit operators. The FBRMPO is required to develop and maintain a formula and agreement for the use of funds in the region by all eligible parties. In other words, the MPO works to determine how these funds are distributed. The FBRMPO previously completed a study in 2017 that provided a formula allowing Buncombe and Haywood counties to officially become subrecipients. The change being requested today is a change to the resolution that determines the sub-allocation of funds, which has been requested by multiple subrecipients in order to encourage more collaboration and coordination between subrecipients. The change being proposed would allow a subrecipient to rescind part or all of their allocation directly to another subrecipient. Without the proposed change, any subrecipient that rescinds part of all of their allocation would have that funding redistributed based on the formula throughout the region.

Matt Cable commented that the county might want to rescind funds that extend service beyond the city limits, for example. He noted that this could allow transit agencies to reduce their administrative burden and could allow for collaboration on extending route services. For agencies that have a critical need, this agreement could also allow for more collaboration to address those needs. Jessica Morriss noted that the administrative burden could be minimal and concurred that additional collaborative efforts could be beneficial. Autumn Radcliff wondered if it would be best to set a cap on the level of funds that a transit operator could rescind. She noted that subrecipients may need to know when funding has been changed through rescission; however, the additional level of collaboration should be beneficial. Brian Burgess suggested letting all subrecipients know about funding changes through rescission. Janna Peterson shared that if subrecipients have more funding than they need, that speaks to the need to adjust the formula used to allocate funds. Tristan Winkler noted that the funding formula is up for review in 2020. Matt emphasized that the change would allow for better administrative management of the 5307 funds allocated to subrecipients. He also noted that it would not be that the county has more funding that it could use, rather, not rescinding funds could allow the county's public transportation service to realize additional customers. However, he noted that the goal with the change to the agreement is to reduce administrative burden. Autumn wondered if rescinding funds would require FTA approval and Tristan said there has been minimal involvement of FTA in the past with regards to 5307 funds. He noted that FTA would need to be assured that the entire region is satisfied with the ways funds are distributed. The biggest concern noted was notification in advance of requested rescission(s). Tristan noted that this is something that the MPO wants to discuss more with the 5307 subrecipients group and he explained that if an entity was not satisfied, it could possibly be the City of Asheville as there would be additional administrative burden on them.

Jessica Morriss moved to recommend that the MPO Board approve the resolution adopting the 5307 urban transit funding allocation formula for use in the French Broad River MPO region, with the change requested to provide notification to all subrecipients of 5307 funding rescissions in the region. Autumn Radcliff seconded and the motion carried without further discussion.

REGULAR UPDATES AND INFORMATION ITEMS

Regular updates included NCDOT Division 13 and 14 updates and FHWA/FTA updates. MPO Subcommittees, Legislative, and Staff updates were also presented.

ANNOUNCEMENTS, NEWS, SPECIAL UPDATES

Upcoming NCDOT Complete Streets workshops- more information is available on the NCDOT website. Strive Not to Drive events around the region were announced including the Strive Summit planned for May 31 at Sierra Nevada Brewery.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments received.

ADJOURNMENT

Josh O’Conner adjourned the meeting, as there was no further business.