



French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization
Minutes from the Governing Board meeting on June 27, 2019

Attendance

William Lapsley
Gwen Wisler
Larry Harris
Steve Williams
Bob Davy
Daniel Sellers
Erica Anderson

Tristan Winkler
Julie Mayfield
Brian Caskey
Jeff McKenna
Brownie Newman
Paige Posey
Wanda Austin

Nick Kroncke
Matt Wechtel
Stephen Sparks
George Webb
Brian Burgess
David Luciano
David Uchiyama

Zia Rifkin
Steve Caraker
Steve Cannon
Ann Coletta
Ritchie Rozzelle
Vicki Eastland

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WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS, APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairman Lapsley called the meeting to order, requested that everyone introduce himself or herself, read the Ethics Statement and inquired if there were any conflicts of interest to note for today's meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Lapsley called for any public comments. None were received.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was presented for approval with no modification requested.

Gwen Wisler moved to approve the agenda as presented. Julie Mayfield seconded and the motion carried without further discussion.

CONSENT AGENDA

Bob Davy moved to approve the consent agenda consisting of the May 23, 2019 minutes. Matt Wechtel seconded and the motion carried without further discussion.

NEW BUSINESS

FY 2020 UPWP Amendments

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is essentially the budget for the MPO. All major activities conducted by MPO staff, as well as Special Studies funded through the MPO are required to be entered into the UPWP for the current and/or upcoming fiscal year. The UPWP, primarily funded through FHWA Planning (PL) funds (\$371k) with a required 20% local match, which is funded by member governments in the FBRMPO region. Dues for the MPO are calculated based on each jurisdiction's population within the MPO Planning Area. The UPWP may also be supplemented by Surface Transportation Block Grants- Directly Attributable (STBG-DA) funds that are "flexed" to fund planning activities. The MPO receives approximately \$3.5 million a year in STBG-DA funding and has been flexing an average of \$250k per year to fund special studies. Any change in the amount of funding flexed requires a change to the TIP ID U-5616, which tracks STBG-DA funding in the FBRMPO planning area that is used in this fashion.

The purpose of the request to amend the UPWP for FY 2020 is predicated on the previously approved version of the documents, which programmed more funding toward PL than what is available. In order to alleviate this, MPO operations and the Regional Transit Feasibility Study would be shifted from PL to STBG-DA flex funding. This decreases the PL programmed to what is available and increases the amount of STBG-DA funding available for planning activities.

Tristan Winkler shared that with the recent change in federal requirements; unspent funds would not carryover, but would revert to NCDOT for redistribution. This is the first year that unspent funds would not be available due to the change. The FBRMPO is therefore supplementing with STBG-DA, as noted previously. The funding shift requested today would cover Special Studies, Corridor

Studies, etc. This change would also change some things internally for the MPO as there are many studies coming up. Going forward, due to these changes, the MPO must spend its funds as planned or risk losing the funding. FHWA is responsible for approving the funding, as well as NCDOT and the MPO.

Discussion occurred regarding spending the STBG-DA going forward to avoid rescission. Tristan Winkler noted that contracts could be changed to have a firm start date for the activities under the contract. He also noted the need for MPO staff to be flexible.

William Lapsley moved to approve the resolution adopting the amendments to the FY 2020 UPWP. Brian Caskey seconded and the motion carried without further discussion.

Modification 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, requested for June 2019 include U-5616 programs STBG-DA funding to be flexed to planning activities and matches the amount programmed in the FY 2020 UPWP.

Nick Kroncke shared that today's modification to the TIP is to show the carryover of STBG-DA funding for studies. An additional modification is to shift STBG-DA with Federal Highways funding for part of the I-26 project and to fund an additional project with STBG-DA funding. Tristan Winkler noted that NCDOT controls STBG (MPO controls STBG-DA). State departments of transportation receive bonuses when they spend down their funding. A portion of those funds could come to the FBRMPO, which would keep funding in the region rather than losing it through rescission.

Gwen Wisler moved to approve the modification to the 2018-2027 TIP. Bob Davy seconded and the motion carried without further discussion.

A-0010A Discussion

MPO staff previously brought concerns about the A-0010A project preliminary designs to the MPO TCC and Board. As currently designed, the A-0010A project would widen the section of Future I-26 from Broadway to New Stock Road from four to eight lanes and from four to six lanes between New Stock Road and Weaver Boulevard. The 2040 MTP and the cross-section submitted to SPOT both recommended six lanes for the entire project. NCDOT recently provided more information concerning potential impacts from a six-versus-eight lane cross-section, as the MPO Board requested. NCDOT staff provided a presentation on information requested to illustrate potential differences in impacts of a six-versus-eight lane cross-section.

Steve Cannon communicated that discussions regarding purpose and need for this project determined that eight lanes would be needed, as six lanes would not be adequate to meet the purpose and need. The NCDOT consultant has been tasked with looking at the environmental impacts of eight over six lanes. Steve Cannon noted that the existing ROW is about four acres

short of what would be required for an eight lane. He shared that since the six lanes would not meet purpose and need, it was used for comparison purposes only. Steve Cannon noted that NCDOT's recommendation was to move forward with eight lanes and use mitigations, as appropriate.

Discussion occurred regarding impacts from the difference between six or eight lanes. It was noted by City of Asheville members that the difference in ROW is minimal and not an issue. Tristan Winkler noted that some concerns have been brought up during the meeting with local elected officials; however, for the time being, the decision is to let the project proceed. MPO members requested that NCDOT provide a link to the study regarding the project so that community members could review the information and provide input, as appropriate. Steve Cannon shared that ROW is scheduled for FY 2020.

Information only. No action required.

I-26 Communication Plan Presentation

Currently, more than \$1.3 billion is programmed to widen I-26 from Hendersonville to Weaverville and disruptions from construction are to be expected. NCDOT staff explained the plan to communicate upcoming construction activities on the I-26 corridor and efforts to mitigate traffic disruptions.

David Luciano, NCDOT Chief Communications Officer for the western region of the state, shared that there would be specific outreach to agencies, which could be impacted by the I-26 construction. In the next couple of weeks, another NCDOT staff will come onboard to determine the type of outreach needed and the scope of that activity. David Luciano shared the communication goals that would allow communities to understand what is going on, acquire necessary safety knowledge, etc. He noted that some work has already been done with the Blue Ridge Parkway staff about potential impacts from the project(s) and how they could do something new to assist with the mitigation. Part of the communication plan would be specific stories about whom is collaborating to disseminate information.

Discussion occurred about making information on the NCDOT website easier for the layperson to find and having it in simple language. Chair Lapsley remarked about the need for elected officials in the affected areas having a one-pager to provide the relevant information to citizens.

Information only. No action required

REGULAR UPDATES

- Steve Cannon provided Division 13 updates and Steve Williams provided Division 14 updates.
- Daniel Sellers provided an update on NC Moves 2050 Plan.
- FBRMPO Committee & Workgroup Updates:
 - Prioritization – June meeting canceled; next meeting planned for Tuesday, July 9.
 - Regional Trail Working Group – Met on July 19. Next meeting TBD.

- Transit Operators Workgroup –Next meeting date TBD; the workgroup plans to review the Regional Transit Feasibility Study scope.
- Citizens’ Advisory Committee – Next meeting date scheduled for July 10.
- Legislative Updates – Tristan Winkler shared that the NC Senate version of the proposed budget did not have the language for smaller local match for bike/ped.

Tristan Winkler shared that the public survey tool has been distributed. He noted that this is the first survey where Buncombe County is under-represented on the survey. Madison County had the most responses to the survey.

Announcements

No MPO meeting cycle in July. Next meeting cycle planned for August.

ADJOURNMENT

Matt Wechtel moved to adjourn the meeting. Jeff McKenna seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned.

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