



METROPOLITAN PLANNING
ORGANIZATION
A PROGRAM OF LAND OF SKY

French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization
Minutes from the Governing Board meeting on November 21, 2019

Attendance

William Lapsley

Emily Scott-Cruz

Tom Carpenter

Larry harris

Hannah Cook

LeRoy Roberson

Amanda Edwards

Mike Dawson

Jessica Trotman

Daniel Sellers

Tristan Winkler

Gwen Wisler

John Dockendorf

Stephen Sparks

Matt Wechtel

Colby Brown

John Agar

Jodie Ferguson

Anne Coletta

Anthony Sutton

Zia Rifkin

Julie Mayfield

Jeff McKenna

Troy Wilson

Steve Williams

Tom Widmer

Chris Lee

Anna Sexton

Dan Baechtold

Nick Kroncke

George Banta

Mariate Echeverry

Bob Davy

David White

Brian Caskey

Chris Medlin

Joel Setzer

Emmce Lovi

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.

REGULAR UPDATES

- Hannah Cook provided Division 13 updates and Steve Williams provided Division 14 updates.
- Daniel Sellers provided Transportation Planning Branch updates.
- Mike Dawson provided FHWA updates.
- FBRMPO Committee & Workgroup Updates:
 - Prioritization – The group met on November 5; next meeting on December 3.
 - Regional Trail Working Group – Met in August, next meeting TBD.
 - Transit Operators Workgroup – Met on November 20; next meeting TBD.
 - Citizens' Advisory Committee – Met on October 16; next meeting in January 2020.
- Legislative Updates – Tristan Winkler shared that the US Senate has passed a Second Continuing Resolution, funding the federal government through December 20, 2019. An additional \$200 million and other funding was approved by the NC General Assembly through HB 966.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The MPO and LOSRC Clean Cities Campaign and Waste Reduction Partners (WRP) are planning a workshop on autonomous vehicles, scheduled for January 24 at the NC Arboretum. More details to follow.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were made.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was presented for approval with no modification requested.

Julie Mayfield moved to approve the agenda with a modification to add an additional business item. John Dockendorf seconded and the motion carried as all were in favor.

CONSENT AGENDA

Julie Mayfield moved to approve the consent agenda consisting of the October 2019 minutes; the 2020 Meeting Calendar; and the 2018-2027 TIP Modifications. Matt Wechtel seconded and the motion carried without further discussion.

NEW BUSINESS

Oklawaha Greenway Feasibility Studies Presentation

Henderson County recently completed two feasibility studies, funded in-part by the MPO. The feasibility studies looked at extending the Oklawaha Greenway: one to the north to Westfeldt

Park and the other to the south to Blue Ridge Community College and the Park at Flat Rock. Henderson County staff presented information on the two studies.

Janna Peterson with Henderson County Planning shared about the feasibility studies conducted for the Oklawaha Greenway. The STBG-DA funding for the studies was overseen through the FBRMPO. The Oklawaha Greenway is identified in the County's Greenway Master Plan. The feasibility studies focus on extending the current 4-mile trail to the north and south and included estimates for fixing current Oklawaha flooding issues in Jackson Park. The study proposes 14 miles of new greenways in the county. The purpose of the Oklawaha Greenway is to help get cars off the roadways and provide an alternative for commuters.

Autumn Radcliff, Planning Director for Henderson County Planning, shared about the public and stakeholder engagement that was conducted as part of the feasibility study. Many stakeholders were identified including BRCC, the hospitals, the public school system, Ingles, Duke Energy, Blue Ridge Southern Railroad, and Super Sod, among others. A landowner workshop was also offered as part of the public input component of the study. Feedback from stakeholders included comments about the flooding issue in Jackson Park. Generally, feedback included many positive comments. Landowner willingness is a big component of the greenway, as the County has not planned to take any land as part of the greenway's development. Henderson County partnered with Conserving Carolina, who was instrumental in individual landowner outreach. In addition, the county was in direct conversation with BRCC, Blue Ridge Southern Railroad and Duke Energy. Next steps include looking at potential stakeholder alignments and working with Conserving Carolina to achieve the easements. Developers see the greenway as a prerequisite for homeowners in the area.

Discussion occurred about greenways that would need to interact with the I-26 (or another highway) project and how NCDOT needs to be involved in that conversation very early in the process. Discussion also occurred about how to work with the railroad to achieve a positive outcome. Chairman Lapsley shared that the community in HC has evolved over the past five years to see the greenway as a transportation option rather than a recreational component. He noted that the greenway master plan for the county has been completed and the community sees the value of greenways as a transportation option. Brian Caskey shared that industry finds greenways an amenity they could offer to their employees.

Information only. No action requested.

Prioritization Subcommittee Vacancy

The MPO's Prioritization Subcommittee is made up of seven members- four TCC members and three Board members. The subcommittee meets once a month on the first Tuesday at 9:00am. The subcommittee was initially formed to deal with the prioritization process but has evolved into the general steering committee for all MPO efforts, including updating the MPO, land use projections, and any other regional plan underway. The seat currently held by Councilmember John Dockendorf (Village of Flat Rock) will be vacated in December and would need to be replaced by an MPO Board member.

Chairman Lapsley directed Board members, interested in serving on the subcommittee to let Tristan Winkler know by January.

No action requested at this time.

2045 Population & Employment Projections (Land Use Study Update)

The purpose of the study is to primarily provide projected employment data for the MPO's 2045 Travel Demand Model. Between 2015 and 2045 the five-county region is expected to grow by almost 190,000 additional residents. The study primarily looks at where that growth is expected to occur and assigns population and employment projections to Transportation Analysis Zones (TAZs). The consultant has been tasked with developing two growth scenarios: (1) Baseline and (2) Alternative Growth. These scenarios are based on growth scenarios developed as part of the GroWNC planning initiative in 2012. Manhan and Associated presented on the projections from each growth scenario, along with additional data. The MPO Board will be tasked with determining a preferred growth scenario that would be used for the 2045 Travel Demand Model for the region.

Initial projections from each of the growth scenarios can be seen here:

The following are different links with the Alternative Growth Scenario outputs, based on GroWNC's "Efficient Growth" Scenario:

Household change: <https://arcg.is/01Ou1q>

Household population change: <https://arcg.is/bqrnz>

Total employment change: <https://arcg.is/0j9z1O>

Employment change by type: <https://arcg.is/1aiyH9>

The following are different links with the Business as Usual Scenario outputs.

Household change: <https://arcg.is/nSiyb>

Household population change: <https://arcg.is/mnyik>

Total employment change: <https://arcg.is/qG1fk>

Employment change by type: <https://arcg.is/0OGXXX>

Colby Brown with Manhan Group shared about the work being done on the 2045 FBRMPO Socio-Economic Land Use Forecast. He provided an overview of the study, which looks at households, population and jobs within the region and includes major employment sectors, all rooms by lodging type with everything allocated to "transportation analysis zones" (TAZs). Since this is a very tourism-driven region, interviews were conducted with the TDA. He reviewed the base year (2010-2015) update and noted that the region grew faster than anticipated during the time interval. In addition, updated information from available sources on where this growth occurred at various resolutions included IMPLAN and Moody's (county-level), Census ACS and LEHD data (block group, FBRMPO ELUSE layer (parcel), etc. A thorough development pipeline was gathered, too, and a forecast for hotel rooms and other lodging was conducted. He noted that "other" lodging was expected to grow faster than hotels in the region. Employment growth in the FRMPO region expected to occur at a rate of .78%, population at 1.14%. Colby Brown provided an overview of employment growth by sector and he noted that retail growth is overtaking manufacturing.

Household income is expected to rise, which drives decisions made by developers. He provided a high-level summary of forecast scenarios that included the baseline 2045 forecast considerations. The EG (Efficient Growth) update is based upon GroWNC 2040 efficient growth scenarios.

Tristan Winkler noted that the efficient growth model puts a lot of growth in East Asheville area. Colby Brown reviewed the maps (provided as a handout) for employment pipeline changes, household population changes, etc. He also provided a comparison of transportation impacts and noted that the EG model showed mixed results including a slight reduction in total VMT but potentially higher speeds on highways. Colby Brown opined that the walkup scenario deserves further study and that disaggregation of results to block/parcel level may help to fill in missing understanding of development at the local level. An alternate version of the model could be used for disaggregation of results.

Tristan Winkler encouraged the Board to consider making a preferred growth scenario recommendation in January.

Discussion occurred about the Walkup Scenario and whether there was anyplace that used that and what their transportation outcome was with it. Tw noted that walkups were almost always developed in those areas that have alternate modes of transportation readily available. All three scenarios have the same amount of growth, the difference is where that growth happens. Chairman Lapsley commented that once a preferred growth scenario is selected, local governments could commit to that or not. From a road/transportation planning standpoint, smarter growth could be encouraged through zoning changes, etc. However, selecting the business as usual model (worst-case scenario) could show more needs for MPO

Information only. No action requested.

MPO Leadership Team

Chairman Lapsley shared that two issues have been discussed with the Leadership Team: staff compensation and staffing levels. With regards to the compensation levels, those are very low compared to other planning regions, which leads leadership to be concerned about the compensation levels for the staff. With regards to staffing levels, leadership is recommending that another position be added to the MPO. An estimated total for both recommendations would be an additional \$33k to the MPO budget. The impact would be to the member governments that supply a local contribution. Those members would receive information in the near future about what the impact would be to their contribution. Chair Lapsley communicated that this would come before the Board in January.

Information only. No action requested at this time.

Chairman Lapsley recognized the MPO members who would not be returning after December: John Dockendorf, Leroy Roberson and Steve Caraker.

ADJOURNMENT

Matt Wechtel moved to adjourn the meeting, which received a second and the meeting adjourned as there was no further business.

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