



METROPOLITAN PLANNING  
ORGANIZATION  
A PROGRAM OF LAND OF SKY

## French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization

Minutes from the Governing Board meeting on January 23, 2020

**ADOPTED 2/27/20**

### **Attendance**

William Lapsley  
Emily Scott-Cruz  
Brian Burch  
David White  
Kevin Ensley  
Brian Caskey  
Jennifer Hensley  
Wanda Austin  
Matt Wechtel

Tristan Winkler  
Mike Dawson  
George Banta  
Bob Davy  
Gwen Wisler  
Autumn Radcliff  
Amanda Edwards  
Larry Harris  
Lonnie Watkins

Nick Kroncke  
Steve Williams  
Rebecca McCall  
Matt Wechtel  
Julie Mayfield  
Hannah Cook  
Jeff McKenna  
Paul Hansen  
Jacob Williams

Zia Rifkin  
Anne Coletta  
Daniel Sellers  
Joel Setzer  
Steve Cannon  
Brownie Newman  
Anthony Sutton  
Troy Wilson

## **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. Chairman Lapsley welcomed new members to the MPO Board.

## **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The agenda was presented for approval with a modification to move business item 4E (U-5887 Highland Lake Road-Request to Remove from TIP) to the beginning of the business items.

***Matt Wechtel moved to approve the agenda with the modification requested. Bob Davy seconded and the motion carried without further discussion.***

## **PUBLIC COMMENT (Including Public Hearing for all TIP Amendments Being Considered)**

Chairman Lapsley called for any public comments.

Victor Behoriam, a resident of the Village Of Flat Rock commented against the Highland Lake Road project.

Bay Chamberlain, a resident of the Village of Flat Rock commented against the Highland Lake Road project.

Tom Carpenter, a resident and current council member of the Village of Flat Rock commented against the Highland Lake Road project.

Rich Ehlers, a resident the Village of Flat Rock commented against the Highland Lake Road project.

Darlene Miller, a resident of the Village of Flat Rock commented against the Highland Lake Road project.

Bill Rushton, a resident of the Village of Flat Rock commented against the Highland Lake Road project.

Martin Potter, a resident of the Village of Flat Rock commented against the Highland Lake Road project.

Sheryl Jamerson, a resident of the Village of Flat Rock and current council member commented in support of the Highland Lake Road project.

Malisia Wilkins, a resident of the Village of Flat Rock commented in support of the Highland Lake Road project.

Georgia Bonesteel, a resident of the Village of Flat Rock commented against the Highland Lake Road project.

Jan Egolf, a resident of the Village of Flat Rock commented against the Highland Lake Road project.

Victoria Flannagan, a resident of the Village of Flat Rock commented against the Highland Lake Road project.

Dennis Flannagan, a resident of the Village of Flat Rock commented against the Highland Lake Road project.

Susan Gregory, a resident of the Village of Flat Rock commented against the Highland Lake Road project.

Albert Gooch, a resident of the Village of Flat Rock and a current member of the Village Council commented in support of the Highland Lake Road project.

Amanda Fox-McGlashan, a resident of the Village of Flat Rock commented in support of the Highland Lake Road project.

Lynn Huffman (as proxy for KenShelton), a resident of the Village of Flat Rock commented in support of the Highland Lake Road project.

Lynn Huffman, a resident of the Village of Flat Rock commented in support of the Highland Lake Road project.

John Dockendorf, a resident of the Village of Flat Rock commented in support of the Highland Lake Road project.

Sue Brogi, a member of Pine Crest Presbyterian Church commented against the Highland Lake Road project.

Bill Stanley, a member of Pine Crest Presbyterian Church commented against the Highland Lake Road project.

Ginger Brown, a resident of the Village of Flat Rock commented in support of the Highland Lake Road project.

Nick Weedman, a resident of the Village of Flat Rock and Mayor commented against the Highland Lake Road project.

Rhett Carson, Pastor of Pine Crest Presbyterian Church commented against the Highland Lake Road project.

Stephanie Dunn (speaking for Tom Dunn, too), a resident of the Village of Flat Rock commented against the Highland Lake Road project.

Matt Toner, a resident of the Village of Flat Rock commented against the Highland Lake Road project.

Bob Helpman, a Deacon of Pine Crest Presbyterian Church commented against the Highland Lake Road project.

Kerry Hensley, a resident of the Village of Flat Rock commented in support of the Highland Lake Road project.

Carolyn Blackburn, a resident of the Village of Flat Rock commented in support of the Highland Lake Road project.

Steven Studebaker, a resident of the Village of Flat Rock commented in support of the Highland Lake Road project.

Debra Wager, with Vaya Health/Livable Communities, commented in support of the Highland Lake Road project.

Gary Lectchward, a member of the Social Reformed Church (Associated with Pine Crest Presbyterian Church), commented against the Highland Lake Road project.

Pam Tiles, a resident of the Village of Flat Rock commented against the Highland Lake Road project.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

***Bob Davy moved to approve the consent agenda consisting of the November 21, 2019 minutes, the 5310 Call for Projects, the JARC Call for Projects, the STBGDA and TAPDA Call for Projects, and the 2018-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendments. David White seconded and the motion carried without further discussion.***

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### U-5887 (Highland Lake Road)- TIP Removal Request (move item to 4a)

On Thursday, December 12, 2019, the Village of Flat Rock passed a resolution requesting that project U-5887 be removed from the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The project is for the modernization of North Highland Lake Road from US 176 (Spartanburg Highway) to NC 225 (Greenville Highway) in Henderson County and directly impacts the jurisdictions of the City of Hendersonville, the Village of Flat Rock, and Henderson County. For some background, here is a brief history of the project, up to the present:

**2011-** North Highland Lake Road was initially submitted to SPOT 2.0 by Division 14 but was not successfully funded in the process.

**2013-** The project was automatically resubmitted to SPOT 3.0.

**2014-** The MPO put local input points on the project, Division 14 did not.

**2015-** The Draft TIP initially did not include U-5887 as a funded project

**September, 2015-** Governor McCrory signed HB 97, which added funding to the transportation program. Additional funded projects were determined by the outcomes of SPOT 3.0, which allowed U-5887, among other projects, to become funded.

**January, 2016-** the MPO approved adding U-5887 to the TIP, officially funding the project

**June, 2018-** Village of Flat Rock Council voted to approve NCDOT's revised roadway plan

**2019-** Right of Way Acquisition for U-5887 begins

**December, 2019-** Village of Flat Rock Council voted to request the U-5887 be removed from the TIP

**December 30, 2019-** the Village of Flat Rock passed a resolution for the Village to decline to enter any agreement to sell or convey any village-owned property to NCDOT

**January, 2020-** Henderson County and the City of Hendersonville vote to keep U-5887 moving forward

**FY 2021-** Construction Expected to Begin

If the MPO Board were to vote in favor of removing the project, the NC Board of Transportation would likely take up the request in March. If the MPO Board does not vote in favor of removing the project, work would continue as currently scheduled.

Anne Coletta, MPO Board member representing the Village of Flat Rock shared background from the Village's decision to oppose the Highland Lake Road project. She encouraged the MPO Board to vote to remove the project from the TIP.

Brian Burch, NCDOT Division14 provided information regarding the development of the Highland Lake Road project. He noted that the purpose of the project was to improve the width of the lanes, add a bike lane, sidewalks and other improvements. He noted that this project has been reduced to the point where any further reduction would negate the purpose and need for the project. The project has had \$1.1 million spent to date on ROW. The schedule currently is to let the project to construction in July of 2020. The estimated cost of the project is \$2.89 million, supported with NC Bond monies, which is one of the reasons that the project was accelerated. He noted the safety scores for the project, which are higher now than a few years ago. NCDOT has worked to meet the context of the community, which also includes landscaping to meet the context of the community. Brian Burch noted that the ADT has only gone up in the four-year stretch.

Anne Coletta countered that the traffic data shows that most of the accidents happen at the Spartanburg highway end Of Highland Lake Road, which is not in the jurisdiction of Village of Flat Rock. Brian Burch shared that the project

was submitted in 2011 and resubmitted in 2013 and 2014, when the MPO put points on the project. It was in the draft STIP in 2015 and approved in 2016. This was a Division Needs project due to the purpose and need. Lane widths remain 11 feet, NCDOT did a context-sensitive design. Brian Burch informed the Board that the Greenville Highway end of the road is part of the historic district and NCDOT worked with the State Historic Preservation Office. Anne Coletta noted that over 80 mature trees would be taken down from the church property and supplanted with retaining walls and would hinder planned growth by the church. Three new Village council members were elected in November in response to the community's desire to stop this road project.

Chairman Lapsley noted that this project has also gone before the Henderson County TAC, where the vote was 8 to 1 to continue the project. The Henderson County Board of Commissioners discussed and reviewed the project and voted to continue the project. Anne Coletta noted that Henderson County has a greenway planned that would not take houses/property; but this project would have NCDOT use ROW to take property. She also shared an overview of the accidents that have taken place over five years within the confines of the Village Of Flat Rock. Discussion also occurred regarding the perceived need to relocate the entrance to the park to the west and to include a left-turn lane, which would allow for better sight-distance. Anne Coletta noted that the curb cut would be the responsibility of the Village to connect to their parking lot and that is not budgeted for.

Discussion occurred regarding the sidewalks, which is connected as part of the purpose and need. Accommodation for the sidewalk/multi-use path would continue to meet the purpose and need; but would still affect the Church- the impact would remain the same.

***Anne Coletta moved to remove project U-5887 (Highland Lake Road) from the TIP. Brownie Newman seconded the motion.***

Discussion occurred about the ability of jurisdictions to have elections, the results of which, could overturn a project and where would that leave the MPO Board members regarding their responsibilities as board members. Anne Coletta noted that when she was previously a council member in 2016 and the project was in development, the Village of Flat Rock did not fully understand the implications of the project, as the project design was not available until 2017. She noted that the election was not a whim or an overnight thought. Tristan Winkler clarified that should the motion to squash the project pass, it would go before the NCBOT, who would need to decide to eliminate the project or not.

Discussion occurred about the implications for the larger community of Henderson County for this project. Jennifer Hensley, the City of Hendersonville's representative to the MPO Board shared that the City voted to support the project and she noted that as elected officials, decisions need to be made to support the needs of the entire community, even as one community in the county was highly opposed. Anne Coletta added that the City of Hendersonville does have part of the road, which is planned to stay at two-lanes- not increasing capacity. Additional discussion occurred about safety improvements the project would provide to the road and Brian Burch noted the safety improvements Information was shared with the prior Village Council, which voted in June of 2018, 5 to 1 in favor of the project. After the November 2018 election, the Council voted again on the project with a split result of 3-3, a tie broken by the Mayor, against the project.

MPO members were cognizant of the disappointment citizens would feel if the project was not removed from the TIP. Anne Coletta noted that the majority of the project is within the boundaries of the Village of Flat Rock, which does not have the finances or infrastructure to support the project and she expressed the concerns of citizens about the park being accessible 24/7, as the Village does not have law enforcement. Rebecca McCall, Henderson County Commissioner and MPO member, shared that she must represent all of the citizens of the County, not just a small group. While the project is mainly within the boundaries of the Village of Flat Rock, the roadway is used by everyone who comes through that part of the County (to Laurel Park, Mud Creek and beyond). She expressed her biggest concern was about the church and encouraged impacts to that be mitigated, if possible.

MPO members also noted their experiences with road projects that highly impacted their communities and how decisions were made by the body to support the best interests of the region. It was also noted that the fact that

NCDOT was willing to create a context-sensitive design was not lost on MPO members who had not received the accommodations they felt were necessary for projects that had a big impact on their communities.

***Upon a hand-vote, the motion failed to carry.***

#### **FY 2020 PWP Amendment and TIP Amendment**

At the November 2019 MPO Board meeting, MPO Board Chair, Commissioner Lapsley introduced a proposal to increase funding at the MPO to increase staffing levels by one senior planner and to adjust compensation. In order to do this, the MPO would be able to pay for 80% of this effort through federal Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds, the other 20% would be required to come from local dues. The total level of local dues for the increase would be \$9,597. The total level of STBG funding for the increase would be \$47,984. The local portion of the increase would be borne by the Counties of Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, and Madison and the Cities/Towns of Asheville, Hendersonville, and Waynesville. The change would be implemented February 1, 2020, if approved, and would be budgeted in the FY 2021 Planning Work Program. To make this amendment, a TIP Amendment would also have to be made to flex more STBG funds to be used for planning. If approved, this change would be implemented and would be budgeted in the FY 2021 Planning Work Program (PWP)

***Chair Lapsley moved to amend the FY 2020 PWP and the 2018-2027 TIP in order to increase MPO staff compensation beginning February 1, 2020. Julie Mayfield seconded and the motion carried without further discussion.***

#### **Draft FY 2021 UPWP**

The French Broad River MPO is required to develop a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and present a draft in January with the final approval in March. The UPWP is a federally mandated document for MPO's to produce that is, essentially, the MPO's budget. This includes line items of work for MPO staff as well as studies being carried out using federal planning funds. Major changes between the FY 20 and FY 21 UPWP include that the MTP 2045 is expected to be completed early in the fiscal year so less funding would be allocated for developing that; more funding allocated towards TIP Development/Prioritization to go along with P6.0; more funding allocated to Special Study Coordination with the Regional Transit Study and Corridor Studies expected to be on-going; more funding allocated to Statewide Coordination with MPO Staff on the Statewide Resiliency Workgroup, SPOT Workgroup, Non-Motorized Planning Workgroup, and Data Users Workgroup.

***Bob Davy moved to adopt the draft FY 21 UPWP, which would come before the MPO again in March for final approval. Julie Mayfield seconded and the motion carried without further discussion.***

#### **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 9:00 AM. The subcommittee formed initially to deal with the prioritization process but has evolved into the general steering committee for all MPO efforts, including updating the MPO's land use projections, Metropolitan Transportation Plan, and any other regional plan underway.

***Anthony Sutton, Alderman for the Town of Waynesville volunteered to fill the Board's vacancy on the Prioritization Subcommittee. Chair Lapsley moved to approve the Alderman filling the vacancy on the Prioritization Subcommittee. Larry Harris seconded and the motions carried as all were in favor.***

#### **Land Use Study- Preferred Growth Scenario**

In November 2019, the Land Use Study consultant presented on the population and employment data projections for the 2045 Travel Demand Model. In summary, the study looks at where growth in the region is expected to occur and assigns population and employment projections to geographic Transportation Analysis Zones (TAZs). Census data, local development and employment data were compiled for the 2015 base year and used to project out to 2045.

The consultant developed and presented three growth scenarios: (1) Baseline, (2) Alternative Growth and, (3) WalkUps. The consultant's presentation and links to the outputs of each scenario are on the MTP page on the FBRMPO website at: <http://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/mtp/> and linked below. The MPO Board made the recommendation that in order to allow time to review the outputs, this item should be reconsidered in January.

2045 Land Use Study Presentation: <http://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wpcontent/uploads/2019/11/TCC-and-Board-Meetings-November-21.pdf>

The following are different links with the WalkUp Scenario outputs, based on FBRMPOs Congestion Management Plan:

Household change: <https://arcg.is/0Civju>

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

Total employment change: <https://arcg.is/WO0vy>

Employment change by type: <https://arcg.is/9454K>

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/bqnrz>

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/mnyi>

Total employment change: <https://arcg.is/qG1fK>

Employment change by type: <https://arcg.is/00GXXX>

The Prioritization Subcommittee recommends the Business as Usual or WalkUp growth Scenarios. The TCC recommends the WalkUp Growth Scenario. Neither the Prioritization Subcommittee, TCC nor MPO staff recommends the Efficient Growth scenario.

Discussion occurred regarding what the difference is between the Business-as-Usual and the WalkUP. Tristan Winkler shared that all three scenarios are basically the same, the differences between the three models is where growth is allocated. The WalkUP scenario allocates growth to the already developed/more urban areas. He also noted that the MPO does not make requirements around land-use; it does look at land-use studies to consider where road improvements may be needed in the future. He also communicated that the scenarios do not show a lot of change between the scenarios; rather these could be a slight nudge to a preferred growth scenario, which could encourage the use of bike/ped and transit.

Chairman Lapsley shared his perspective: down the road, when priorities are put on road projects, by doing this study and selecting a preferred growth scenario, allows more justification for projects, when those come up. It allows potential focus on "hot spots". The scenario that allows for the broadest growth was encouraged by MPO members from more rural areas. Local jurisdictions would consider growth projections from the MPO when local plans are updated. Additionally, MPO members expressed a preference for the growth scenario that would provide the most dispersed growth. TW noted that one growth scenario has to be the "official" one, but there would be a secondary choice available, as well. Daniel Sellers noted that it is not a directive for any community to develop as the growth scenario selected by the MPO envisions. MPO members were conscious of the natural beauty of the area, as well as the tightening of funding for infrastructure needs. Accommodate people where they are by selecting the walkup growth scenario. Growth should be steered, as it cannot be stopped; this could lead to zoning changes in the jurisdictions that make up the MPO to allow for denser growth. Daniel Sellers noted that while all models are wrong, some models are useful; these are guesses about where growth could occur.

***Brownie Newman moved to approve the WalkUP growth scenario. Amanda Edwards seconded and the motion carried without further discussion.***

#### **REGULAR UPDATES**

- Hannah Cook and Steve Cannon provided Division 13 updates and Steve Williams and Brian Burch provided Division 14 updates.
- Daniel Sellers provided an update on the TPB.
- Mike Dawson provided FHWA/FTA updates.
- FBRMPO Committee & Workgroup Updates:
  - Prioritization – Met on January 7. Next meeting on February 4.
  - Transit Operators Workgroup – Met in September. Next meeting TBD.
  - Citizens’ Advisory Committee – Met on October 16. Next meeting January 29.
- Legislative Updates – Tristan Winkler shared that everyone is talking about the state budget, which is not available yet. At the federal level, the FAST Act expires at the end of September of this year.

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

***Kevin Ensley moved to adjourn the meeting. Matt Wechtel seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned.***