

**French Broad River MPO
Prioritization Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes
February 25, 2020**

ATTENDING

Voting Members

- Julie Mayfield, City of Asheville
- Autumn Radcliff, Henderson County
- Brian Burgess, Town of Mills River
- Elizabeth Teague, Town of Waynesville
- Anthony Sutton, Town of Waynesville
- Jerry Vehaun, Town of Woodfin

Non-Voting

- Tristan Winkler, FBRMPO
- Nick Kroncke, FBRMPO
- Emily Scott Cruz, FBRMPO
- John Ridout, FBRMPO
- Janna Peterson, Henderson County
- Troy Wilson, NCDOT
- Hannah Cook, NCDOT
- Steve Williams, NCDOT
- Stephen Sparks, NCDOT
- Dan Baechtold, City of Asheville
- Mark Gibbs, NCDOT
- George Webb, Citizens Advisory Committee
- Steve Cannon, NCDOT

I. Welcome and Housekeeping

I-A // Welcome and Introductions, Approval of Agenda

Prioritization Vice-Chair, Elizabeth Teague, presided calling meeting to order at 9:00am. Members gave their introduction. The Agenda was approved.

I-B // February 4, 2020 Minutes

The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed. Anthony Sutton made a motion to pass the minutes as presented. Jerry Vehaun seconded. All approved.

II. Public Comment

None at this time.

III. Business

III-A // EB-5774 Request for Additional STBGDA

Tristan Winkler mentioned the request from the Town of Woodfin and Buncombe County seeking an additional \$1,000,000 of additional funding that is needed for PE for the Woodfin/Reems Creek section of greenway. There is local commitment for the project and this is due to the increase in project cost. Elizabeth asked if there were any other projects in waiting that this project could potentially be using funding for.

Julie made a motion to approve as presented. Brian Burgess seconded. All approved.

III-B // MTP Presentations – Safety and Transit

Tristan Winkler made mention that staff have been working on chapters on the MTP. Emily Scott-Cruz started a presentation on transit by giving an overview of the benefits of transit, and looking at the goals for transit in the region including increasing all purpose riders, improving equity and increasing the amount of services offered. Emily gave an overview of the current transportation systems. Regional ridership numbers were shown to the group showing the general trend of ridership decreasing. Challenges include population growth, financial constraints, geographical limitations, congestion and service frequency not reaching everyone. Julie Mayfield asked for where the goals from the MTP . Janna Peterson asked about looking at a study on the impacts of fare-free transit. Elizabeth Teague made mention of having further inclusion of cross-jurisdictional trips looked at it, and Tristan clarified that is what the new study will be looking at. Julie stated there could be an aspirational goal of working towards regional transit system. The group concluded that transit is a challenging section to forecast future funding and considerations for.

Nick Kroncke gave an overview of the safety initiatives going on in the region. Recommendations were given to look at forming a safety task force, looking at the number of crashes based on type and presented challenges given the number of constrained corridors across the region. Other ideas given were to address the most problematic corridors, look into the issues of maintenance of our roadways, consider funding of safety specific projects on major corridors. The group also mentioned looking at specific segments of the population such as measures for senior drivers.

III-C // MTP Statewide Mobility Draft Project List

Tristan Winkler provided a brief overview of the MTP process. Projects are being programmed in the MTP similar to how the SPOT process is programmed. An overview of projects currently committed and uncommitted in the TIP was shown. Discussion over a few specific projects took place. It is expected there is around \$2 billion statewide available for the statewide tier. It was asked what the group wants to do with some of the projects put in the “parking lot” for consideration of funding in the MTP or not. Some of the projects in the “parking lot” discussion as follows:
I-40 Widening: It was voiced that on I-40, near Patton Cove area and further east, there is congestion and concerns about not looking at widening these sections. There are multiple interchange projects planned for I-40.
I-240 from Charlotte to I-40: There was discussion if this project would free up land that could be given to the City of Asheville as there is a lot of room in the median. Stephen Sparks mentioned making better use of the existing right-of-way and fixing the Chunns Cove interchange. Mark Gibbs made mention of putting this project into the MTP in order to accommodate future growth.

Elizabeth Teague made mention of looking at a future interchange between Long Shoals Road and Brevard Road. Mark Gibbs made mention of tabling that discussion until future growth numbers are known.

Elizabeth Teague made mention of keeping the list as presented. Julie Mayfield objected to including the I-40 section. Anthony Sutton and Elizabeth Teague both wanted to include both sections of US 23/74 in Haywood County. Steve Williams mentioned it is more of a access management project, with some small stretches of it including a climbing lane. Elizabeth made mention of leaving the intersections of I-40 . Hannah Cook made mention of a preliminary-study going on for the section of I-40 from Brevard Road to Swannanoa. It was mentioned that a project that isn't in the MTP can still be eligible to be submitted into SPOT. Further discussion took place about currently programmed and future MTP projects that focus on the interchanges and if those will fix the current issues on these corridors.

It was mentioned to table the discussion for the I-40 section given unknown future traffic volumes. Tristan clarified that MPOs should not just be representing the local input, but it should also consider DOT and Federal Highways perspective.

A draft project list is needed after the April prioritization to keep the MTP on schedule for September adoption.

In summary: Remove I-240 modernization from the parking lot, include US 23/74 Widening in the plan, I-40 to be discussed later.

III-D // MTP Regional Impact Priorities

Hannah Cook made mention of projects that NCDOT is considering submitting into SPOT. Tristan mentioned consideration of cascading projects from the Regional tier to the Division tier given that more funding is available in the Division needs pot.

Priorities mentioned by the group:

Janna Peterson mentioned wanting to ask Henderson TAC to prioritize these projects. Brian Burgess wanted the group to keep in mind to save money in the regional tier versus cascading all the funding to the division needs tier. Autumn Radcliff asked if there are priorities in the regional tier that should be cascaded to the division needs tier.

Brian Burgess mentioned trying to understand the scoring better and Tristan mentioned it was generally done using readily available data.

Steve Williams made mention of not looking at NC 25 from NC 191 to I-26 since the Henderson County TAC requested that.

III-E // MTP Division Needs Priorities

Brief discussion took place around the Division Needs projects and it was requested that the subcommittee wanted more time to review the projects. Hannah Cook requested an electronic copy of the 2045 Volume/Capacity issues.

Tristan made mention of requesting priorities by March 20th and bringing a draft of fiscally constrained projects by the April 7th meeting. Josh O'Conner wanted to have a meeting on March 24th to discuss priorities. Holding that meeting was the next step.

III-F // MTP Bike/Ped Project Selection

Tristan mentioned sending a poll to the group about how we should evaluate bike/ped projects. And asking for follow up from the group for the next meeting.

IV. Announcement, News, Special Updates - None.

V. Topics for Next Meeting – Next Meeting: *Special MTP meeting on March 24th at 9am.*

VI. Public Comment 2 - No public comment at this time.

VII. Adjournment - The meeting was adjourned at 11:02 A.M.