



METROPOLITAN PLANNING
ORGANIZATION
A PROGRAM OF LAND OF SKY

French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization
Virtual Meeting via Zoom
Minutes from the Governing Board meeting on March 26, 2020

Attendance

William Lapsley	Tristan Winkler	Nick Kroncke	Zia Rifkin
Gwen Wisler	Daniel Sellers	Troy Wilson	Emily Scott-Cruz
Jeff McKenna	John Ridout	George Banta	Janna Peterson
Nick Kroncke	Anne Coletta	James Upchurch	Bob Davy
Brownie Newman	Julie Mayfield	Hannah Cook	Mike Dawson
Rebecca McCall	Matt Wechtel	Brian Caskey	Josh O'Conner
Steve Williams	Autumn Radcliff	Josh Dayton	Stephen Sparks
Mark Gibbs	Amanda Edwards		

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS, APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairman Lapsley called the meeting to order, 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. No public comments made.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was presented for approval with no modification requested.

Gwen Wisler moved to approve the agenda as presented. Jeff McKenna seconded, and the motion carried unanimously without further discussion.

CONSENT AGENDA

Anne Coletta moved to approve the consent agenda consisting of the February 27, 2020 minutes. George Banta seconded, and the motion carried unanimously without further discussion.

NEW BUSINESS

Final FY 2021 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The French Broad River MPO is required to develop a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) by March 2020. A draft was previously brought before the TCC and Board in January. The MPO is also required to consider a self-certification resolution that reflects that the MPO is following federal requirements.

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. Tristan Winkler reminded everyone that the 5303 funding is administered by the City of Asheville and required to be listed in the UPWP in order for the City to receive the funding.

- The 2045 MTP is expected to be completed early in the fiscal year so less funding will be put towards developing the MTP
- More funding is being put towards TIP Development/Prioritization to go along with P 6.0
- More funding is being put towards Special Study Coordination with the Regional Transit Study and Corridor Studies expected to be on-going.
- More funding is being put towards Statewide Coordination with MPO Staff on the Statewide Resiliency Workgroup, SPOT Workgroup, Non-Motorized Planning Workgroup, and Data Users Workgroup.
- Less funding is being put towards "Regional Planning" with the 2045 MTP expected to be adopted in August 2020.
- The Regional Transit Study, Richland Creek Greenway Study, and Asheville Bike/Ped Count Equipment have all been moved to FY 2021

Julie Mayfield moved to approve the FY 2021 UPWP resolution and the MPO Self-Certification resolution. Gwen Wisler seconded and the motion carried unanimously without further discussion.

Amendments to the FBRMPO CTP

The Comprehensive Transportation Plan (MTP) is a state-required planning document that is created by NCDOT Transportation Planning Division in cooperation with the MPO and NCDOT Divisions. The CTP primarily lists areas with deficiencies or needs and gives preliminary purpose and needs to prospective projects.

The FBRMPO's CTP has not been updated since 2008 but several projects not listed in the CTP have been requested by local governments. These include modernization of Blue Ridge Road in Buncombe County; improving the intersection of North Main Street and US 25B (Asheville Highway) in Hendersonville; and upgrading Woodfin Street from College Street to Lexington Avenue in Asheville. MPO staff noted that the public involvement policy has been fulfilled and no public comments have been received.

Bob Davy moved to approve the CTP amendments. Jeff McKenna seconded and the motion carried unanimously without further discussion.

Final Project Submittal List for Prioritization

The Prioritization Process (aka, SPOT) is the process in which most funding decisions are made for transportation improvement projects. North Carolina has a relatively unique process for prioritizing projects that is data-driven and transparent, as mandated by the Strategic Transportation Investments law. MPOs, RPOs, and NCDOT Division work together to develop and prioritize projects across the state with the goal of efficiently using transportation funds to enhance infrastructure while supporting economic growth and local needs.

MPO staff assembled a Draft SPOT Project list from meetings with local government staff as well as the Henderson TAC. Projects that are submitted in the SPOT process would be under consideration for funding for the 2023-2032 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). This list of projects went before the TCC and Board in February, went out for public comment in February (through March 25), and has come back to the TCC and Board for final approval in March. Submittals are due to the SPOT office by the end of April. This is the first major step in the prioritization process to determine which projects would get funded.

General SPOT Schedule

Date	Action
February, 2020	MPO Board Considers Draft Project Submittal List
February 28-March 25	Public Comment on Draft Project Submittal List
March, 2020	Final Project Submittal List Approved
Fall/Winter, 2020	Public Survey on Projects
February, 2021	Project Scores Released, Statewide Mobility Projects Programmed, MPO Local Input
April-May, 2021	Local Input Points Considered for Regional Impact Points
September-October, 2021	Local Input Points Considered for Division Needs Points
February, 2022	Draft STIP Released

New Submittals- Highway

Buncombe County			
Route	From	To	Improvement
US 25 (Hendersonville Road)	I-40	Overlook Road	Access Management
US 25 (Hendersonville Road)	NC 146 (Long Shoals Road)	NC 280 (Airport Road)	Access Management
US 25 (Merrimon Avenue)	Wembley Road	I-240	Road Diet
Blue Ridge Road	I-40	NC 9	Modernization
US 70	Blue Ridge Road	NC 9	Road Diet
US 25A (Biltmore Avenue) & US 25 (McDowell Street)	Hilliard Avenue	All Souls Crescent	Roadway Upgrade
US 70 (Tunnel Road)/US 74A (South Tunnel Road)	The Tunnel	NC 81 (Swannanoa River Road)	Access Management
US 23A (Haywood Road)	State Street, N Louisiana Avenue		Multiple Intersection Improvements
Woodfin Street	Central Avenue	Lexington Avenue	Roadway Upgrade
US 25A (Sweeten Creek Road)	I-40	US 25 (Biltmore Avenue)	Roadway Upgrade
US 70 (Tunnel Road)/US 74A (South Tunnel Road)	I-240	Blue Ridge Parkway	Access Management
US 25/US 19/23B (Weaverville Highway)	Elkwood Avenue	Reems Creek Road	Access Management
US 19/23 (Smokey Park Highway)	I-40	NC 151	Access Management

Haywood County			
Route	From	To	Improvement
US 19/23	Chestnut Mountain Road	NC 215	Roadway Upgrade

New Clyde Highway	NC 215	Midway Crossings Drive	Access Management
Brown Avenue	Hazelview Drive	Boyd Avenue	Modernization
US 19 (Dellwood Road)	US 276 (Russ Avenue)	US 276 (Jonathan Creek Road)	Access Management

Henderson County			
Route	From	To	Improvement
White Pine Drive & Hebron Road	US 64	Kanuga Road	Modernization
US 25B (Asheville Highway)	North Main Street	-	Intersection Improvement
Fanning Bridge Road	US 25	NC 280	Modernization
Blythe Street	US 64	NC 191	Modernization
Butler Bridge Road	US 25	NC 280	Modernization
Thompson St/Signal Hill Rd/Berkley Rd	US 64 (Four Seasons Blvd)	US 25B (Asheville Highway)	Modernization
Duncan Hill Road	US 64 (Four Seasons Blvd)	North Main Street	Modernization

Madison County			
Route	From	To	Improvement
Bruce Road	North Main Street	Bailey Street	Modernization

New Submittals- Bike/Ped

Buncombe County			
Route	From	To	Improvement
Bent Creek Greenway	Hominy Creek Greenway	French Broad River Greenway	Multi-Use Path
Bent Creek Greenway	WNC Farmer's Market	Asheville Outlets	Multi-Use Path
Bent Creek Greenway	French Broad River	Lake Julian	Multi-Use Path
Reems Creek Greenway Connector	Quarry Road	Mill Park	Multi-Use Path
Fonta Flora Trail	Yates Avenue	Black Mountain Town Limits	Multi-Use Path
North Blue Ridge Road	US 70	Fortune Street	Sidewalks
Coxe Avenue	Patton Avenue	Short Coxe	Pedestrian Improvements
Lexington Avenue	Patton Avenue	Southside Avenue	Pedestrian Improvements
Reed Creek Greenway Connector	Reed Creek Greenway @ Elizabeth Street (future connection)	Clingman Avenue	On and Off-Street Bicycle Improvements
Riverside Drive	Hill Street	I-240	Improve Rail Crossing for Bicyclists
Old Haywood Road	US 19/23 (Patton Avenue)	US 19/23 (Patton Avenue)	Sidewalks
Emma Road	North Louisiana Avenue	Boone Street	Sidewalks

Haywood County			
Route	From	To	Improvement
Champion Drive	North Canton Road	Thickety Road	Bike Lanes
Richland Creek Greenway	Recreation Park	Haywood High-Tech Center	Multi-Use Path
Allen's Creek Road	Lickstone Road	Piney Mountain Road	Sidewalks
Old Clyde Highway	Blackwell Drive	Greenberry Street	Sidewalks

Henderson County

Route	From	To	Improvement
Allen Branch Greenway	US 64	I-26	Multi-Use Path
NC 280	French Broad River	NC 191	Multi-Use Path
Fanning Bridge Road	US 25	Underwood Road	Sidewalks
Oklawaha Greenway Extension	Jackson Park	Blue Ridge Community College	Multi-Use Path
Brooklyn Avenue	NC 225	US 176	Sidewalks
US 64	Orrs Camp Road	Howard Gap Road	Sidewalks
Ecusta Trail	Kanuga Road	Transylvania County Line	Rail-to-Trail

Madison County

Route	From	To	Improvement
Bailey Street	Bearwood Drive	Forest Street	Sidewalks
Banjo Branch Greenway	Hickory Drive	Banjo Branch Road	Multi-Use Path

New Submittals- Transit

Transit Agencies

Project	Sponsor
One expansion vehicle, Transit Station Upgrade, and Four Transit Shelters	Haywood Transit (Mountain Projects)
New Maintenance Facility, Transit Station Upgrade, Expansion Vehicles	City of Asheville

Carryover projects that are either in the Developmental portion of the TIP (funded for right-of-way in FY 2026 or later) or are considered a “Sibling” of a project in the TIP are automatically resubmitted into the next round of prioritization, unless requested otherwise. Carryover projects do not count towards the MPO’s 25 submittals for each mode.

Carryover Projects in the FBRMPO for P 6.0 Include:

P 6.0 Carryover Projects				
Route	From	To	Improvement	County
I-40	I-240	US 74A	Interchange Improvement	Buncombe
I-40	Porter’s Cove Road	-	Interchange Improvement	Buncombe
I-26	US 25	US 64	Widening	Henderson
I-40	Wiggins Road	Monte Vista Road	Widening	Buncombe
I-40	US 74	NC 215	Widening	Haywood
I-40	NC 215	Exit 37 (Wiggins Road)	Widening	Haywood
Future I-26	US 25	SR 2207	Modernization	Buncombe
Future I-26	SR 2207	South of SR 2148	Modernization	Buncombe
US 19	Fie Top Road	Blue Ridge Parkway	Modernization	Haywood
NC 191	US 25	Mountain Road	Widening	Henderson
NC 191	NC 280	Ledbetter Road	Widening	Buncombe, Henderson

NOTE: Changes Made Since the February Board Meeting:

- Emma Road sidewalks was added as the MPO’s 25th bike/ped project
- Reed Creek Greenway was changed to Reed Creek Greenway Connector, at the request of the City.

Discussion occurred about the two access management projects on US 25 (Hendersonville Road). Tristan Winkler noted that there are many, many driveways along that section of the roadway. Hannah Cook noted that there may be much less funding in this round of prioritization and the importance of geographic equity is of the utmost consideration. She noted it might be beneficial to change the termini for these two projects. Tristan Winkler

suggested a motion of proceeding with the current list and MPO staff would work with City/County staff on the Hendersonville Road projects to bring a final submittal.

Discussion occurred regarding the Ecusta Trail project in Henderson County and MPO staff shared that there is not a final cost estimate available for the project yet; but MPO and NCDOT staff and Henderson County staff would work together to determine cost.

Gwen Wisler moved to approve the SPOT Project Submittal List with the modification to charge the MPO staff, NCDOT staff to work with the City of Asheville and Buncombe County staff to adjust the termini for the two access management projects on the Hendersonville Road (US 25) project by the end of April. Brian Caskey seconded and the motion carried unanimously without further discussion.

Access Management Presentation

Over the next several months, the MPO plans to have several presentations to go through the meanings and benefits of specific improvement types (SIT) that are submitted to SPOT for prioritization.

The first SIT for discussion is Access Management. The MPO and NCDOT Divisions are planning to submit several Access Management projects across the region for SPOT 6.0. Access Management projects largely involve the addition of a median to a roadway to improve safety and can help to alleviate congestion in some circumstances. NCDOT Division 13 staff, Hannah Cook, presented on the topic.

Hannah Cook provided an overview of Access Management. Conceptually, the relationship between mobility and access is examined for the different types of roadways. Arterial roads have high mobility, which could decline as more access points are added. Issues include conflict points with uncontrolled access. The numbers and types of conflicts points influence the safety of a roadway. Access Management is the design and control of entry and exit points along a roadway. Hannah Cook reviewed access management strategies along corridors and at intersections. Benefits of access management include increasing safety and capacity and are intended to lead to travel-time savings. Different benefits are seen on rural arterials from urban arterials. Benefits are realized by motorists and other users (bicyclists/pedestrians). It was noted that safe access is good for business as it helps to protect commercial property values and allows customers to access businesses safely.

Informational item. No action requested.

REGULAR UPDATES

- Hannah Cook provided Division 13 updates and Steve Williams provided Division 14 updates.
- Daniel Sellers provided TPD updates.
- Mike Dawson provided FHWA updates
- FBRMPO Committee & Workgroup Updates:
 - Prioritization –Met March 3. Next meeting planned for April 7
 - Transit Operators Workgroup – Met February 14. Next meeting TBD.
 - Citizens’ Advisory Committee – Met January 26. Next meeting in April.
- Legislative Updates – Tristan Winkler shared that the stimulus bill at the federal level has passed the Senate and the House plans to take it up on Friday, March 27. He noted the bill provides \$25 billion for transit agencies. In addition, there’s been a number of changes made to matching requirements for some types of funding. The General Assembly (sub committees) have been meeting and there may be potential changes coming.

Announcements

No FBRMPO Meeting cycle in April. Next TCC and TAC meetings in May.

MPO Orientation rescheduled tentatively for May. Look for an update from MPO staff.

NCAMPO Conference rescheduled for July (tentatively).

ADJOURNMENT

Matt Wechtel moved to adjourn the meeting, as there was no further business. Bob Davy seconded and the meeting adjourned.