

Prioritization Subcommittee

Meeting Agenda

February 2, 2021

9:00 AM

Meeting to be held via Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/91373453789>

Voting Members on the Committee: Dan Baechtold (City of Asheville), Larry Harris (Black Mountain), Peyton O’Conner (Buncombe County, Chair), Autumn Radcliff (Henderson County), Anthony Sutton (Town of Waynesville), Elizabeth Teague (Town of Waynesville, Vice-Chair), Jerry Vehaun (Town of Woodfin)

1. Welcome and Introductions	Peyton O’Conner
2. Public Comment	Peyton O’Conner
3. Approval of January, 2021 Meeting Minutes	Peyton O’Conner
4. Business	
Call for Planning Projects- Project Selection	MPO Staff
Call for JARC Projects- Project Selection	MPO Staff
Call for 5310 Projects- Project Selection	MPO Staff
NCDOT Project Delays	MPO Staff
Prioritization/ P 6.0 Updates	MPO Staff
5. News, Events, Updates	Peyton O’Conner
6. Public Comment	Peyton O’Conner
7. Adjournment	Peyton O’Conner

Item 3

January, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Prioritization Subcommittee Meeting Minutes* January 5, 2021

*Meeting held virtually via Zoom. All votes held by roll-call.

ATTENDING

Voting Members

- Peyton O'Conner, Buncombe County
- Dan Baechtold, City of Asheville
- Autumn Radcliff, Henderson County
- Larry Harris, Town of Black Mountain
- Anthony Sutton, Town of Waynesville
- Elizabeth Teague, Town of Waynesville
- Jerry Vehaun, Town of Woodfin

Non-Voting

- Tristan Winkler, FBRMPO
- Nick Kroncke, FBRMPO
- Emily Scott Cruz, FBRMPO
- John Ridout, FBRMPO
- William High, Buncombe County
- Brian Burch, NCDOT
- Janna Peterson, Henderson County
- Steve Williams, NCDOT
- Michael Dawson, FHWA
- Troy Wilson, NCDOT
- Vicki Eastland, Land of Sky RPO
- Stephen Sparks, NCDOT
- Mark Gibbs, NCDOT
- Brendan Merithew, NCDOT
- Brian Burch, NCDOT
- David Wasserman, NCDOT
- Daniel Sellers, NCDOT
- George Webb, CAC

I. Welcome and Introductions

Prioritization Chair, Peyton O’Conner, presided calling meeting to order at 9:00 am. Members gave their introduction. The Agenda was approved.

II. Public Comment

None at this time.

III. Approval of December 1, 2020 Minutes

The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed. Anthony Sutton made a motion to approve. Larry Harris seconded the motion. All approved.

IV. Business

IV-A // STIP Reprogramming Discussion

Tristan Winkler introduced this item as a follow up from the last Prioritization meeting. He reminded the group of the financial crisis that NCDOT is going through and the implications of project delays that result from that. Currently proposed are amendments by NCDOT that the TCC and Board will vote on in their January meetings. A list of projects broken out by funding tier was provided to the group for consideration. Also mentioned and highlighted was the projects that were cascaded from one tier to another. Elizabeth Teague mentioned wanting to hear from the group of how the cascaded projects impact locally-important projects. Elizabeth mentioned the Blue Ridge Road interchange project and how that project has gone back and forth through the Alderman at the Town of Black Mountain. The cost of doing this was cascading an expensive highway project into the Division tier that has a lot of smaller, local, priorities. She asked if the group had thought about how to accelerate more local projects by “cascading up” the Blue Ridge Road project. Larry Harris mentioned it was a close vote, nearly 15 years ago, to reject the project but since that time it has had near unanimous support by the Town Board and the Mayor. Larry mentioned the project is very important to the Town given development including freight impacts and Avadim expansion near the proposed interchange. Both the Town and County Commissioners in recent years voted in support of the project. David Wasserman with NCDOT stated

that the project was funded in P3.0, likely at the Division category. He mentioned the process of pushing this project further out and stated that this is a unique case where it could shift back to the statewide category, but the timeline would still be pushed back given the funding crunch at all tiers. Tristan reminded the group that the focus is to see what the priority projects are able to move up, while dealing with the ramifications of pushing other projects further back. He reminded the group there is not a hard deadline for approving these project delays, as the Prioritization group in December asked for more time. Tristan stated staff can delay bringing these amendments to TCC and Board to at least February, as no other MPO directors Tristan has spoken with are planning on moving forward with these amendments at this time. Elizabeth expressed interest in seeing the Swannanoa River Road and Amboy/Meadow projects moving up. Tristan mentioned the likelihood of more delays in the future given the financial picture. David Wasserman mentioned the potential of allocating future STBGDA funding as well to accelerate projects. Elizabeth asked about the safety costs of not replacing bridges on US 19/23, or other older bridge projects, back. David Wasserman mentioned NCDOT would not let a bridge fail or collapse. Mark Gibbs with NCDOT mentioned there are additional funds available for bridges as well. A challenge with the Amboy/Meadow Road project is the expensive cost of replacing that bridge. Future discussion took place about options for that bridge and the project including utilizing smaller NCDOT funding pots. Tristan mentioned talking with NCDOT Board of Transportation members to see what they consider, as well as with local governments, and bring back in February for more discussion. Brian Burch commented on the US 19/23 bridge projects and that they are about to let in one year. Tristan mentioned comments from the public including a lack of transparency, and from a MPO staff point of view, it is challenging because we do not play a role in project schedules because NCDOT does that within their divisions. The challenge here is that these are more than normal amendments, so this should warrant further discussion in the future with NCDOT Board members. Elizabeth asked about other tools to bring new sources of funding to the table. Tristan mentioned STBGDA funding but it is not a large pot of funding, given that it would take 12 years of that funding to fund Amboy/Meadow. There are options within the safety unit, but they also have very limited funding with

a small maximum per each project. Elizabeth echoed support for bringing in discussion with NCDOT Board members to look at strategic funding, such as larger federal funding sources such as TIGER/BUILD funds.

Informational item, further discussion at future meetings.

IV -B // LAPP Restarts

John Ridout provided an overview of the LAPP restarts. Back in December, NCDOT was working on additional spending plan and worked with Divisions and the MPO to determine a schedule for projects. John mentioned MPO staff working with local municipalities to see how ready they were to restart local projects, depending what stage the project was in. Projects ready for restart on the MPOs behalf included NC 251/Beaverdam Creek Greenway, Town Branch Greenway, Enka Heritage Trail, FBR West Greenway, and Reems Creek Greenway. All the projects are listed in the agenda packet.

Informational item.

IV -C //CMP Update

Tristan Winkler provided a quick overview of the Congestion Management Process, which was updated and passed in November 2018. One of the recommendations of the document and from FHWA review was providing a data-based update with follow up. This is something MPO staff will be working on and bringing back in coming months. The initial aim was to report on 2020, but due to the pandemic, the data will be heavily skewed. Data from 2019 will be used in its place. The question that arises is, what constitutes "bad traffic". There is different expectations and tolerances for congestion with different corridors, so the plan developed freight, mobility and destination corridors. Safety, transit usage, bike/ped, context metrics will be used in addition to congestion data. There are a total of 53 corridors in the region, which will involve a lot of data. To measure congestion, travel-time data is used for this report instead of Volume/Capacity metrics. This highlights peaks of congestion, which is what roadway users experience versus the "static" volume/capacity metric. Tristan highlighted a few key initial takeaways from the data, including barely noticeable A.M. peaks in the region but more problematic commuters when things "get bad".

Informational item.

V. Announcement, News, Special Updates -
None at this time.

Next Meeting **February 2 at 9am.**

VI. Public Comment – None at this time.

VII. Adjournment - The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 A.M.

Item 4A

Call for Planning Projects

The MPO held a Call for Planning Projects from October 26th through December 31st, 2020. For this call for projects, funding would be made available in FY2022 (to be incorporated as part of the MPO's Planning Work Program), a local match of 20% is required, and \$200,000 in federal funds were made available.

Planning (PL) funds from the MPO can be used towards a number of eligible projects including: Corridor Studies, Bike/Ped Planning, Small Area Studies, Feasibility/Conceptual Studies, Traffic Studies, Future Population/Employment Studies, and more.

The MPO received three applications from member governments. These projects have been preliminarily scored based on the number of active and planned projects within the MPO.

Number of Active Planning Projects (Funded Through the MPO)		
Two or More Active Planning Projects	One Active Planning Project	No Active Planning Projects
0 Points	10 Points	20 Points

Previous Planning		
No Previous Plans	CTP or Local Plan	MTP, CMP, or SPOT
0 Points	10 Points	20 Points

The applications received are as follows:

Local Government	Project Requested	Funding Requested	# of Active	Previous Planning	Preliminary Points
------------------	-------------------	-------------------	-------------	-------------------	--------------------

FRENCH BROAD RIVER

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

			Planning Projects		
City of Asheville	Reed Creek Greenway Feasibility Study	\$40,000	2+ (0 points)	Local Plan (10 points)	10
Haywood County	Hellbender Greenway Feasibility Study	\$90,000	0 (20 points)	Local Plan (10 points)	30
Buncombe County	Multimodal Master Plan	\$100,000	1 (10 points)	Local Plan (10 points)	20

Funding Available: \$200,000

Total Requested: \$230,000

Prioritization Subcommittee will discuss projects and voting members will rank projects based on need being addressed and the perceived efficacy of the project to address the need.

	City of Asheville	Haywood County	Buncombe County
Applicant / Project	Reed Creek Greenway Feasibility Study	Haywood County Hellbender Greenway Feasibility Study	Buncombe County Multimodal Master Plan
Funding Requested	\$40,000	\$90,000	\$100,000
2+ Active Planning Projects (0)	0		
1 Active Planning Project (10)			10

FRENCH BROAD RIVER

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

0 Active Planning Projects (20)		20	
No Prior Planning Work (0)			
CTP or Local Plan (10)	10	10	10
MTP, CMP, SPOT (20)			
Total (first score)	10	30	20
How important is this need? (1-5)			
Comments:			
How effective is this project in addressing the need? (1-5)			
Comments:			
Total (out of 50)	10	30	20

Action Required: Select projects to be recommended to the MPO TCC and Board.

Item 4B

JARC Call for Projects – Selection

JARC (Jobs Access Reverse Commute) is a competitive pot of funds set aside from Section 5307 Urban Transit Formula funds to encourage regional connectivity, *to fund the development and maintenance of transportation services designed to transport welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals to and from jobs and activities related to their employment.* The FBRMPO holds a call for projects for federal funding, and the City of Asheville is the Designated Recipient for these funds. The application process for JARC (Winter 2020) ran from November 20th to December 31st, 2020. Additional information about the program is available at: <http://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/5310-and-jarc/> .

FBRMPO Winter 2020 Jobs Access Reverse Commute (JARC) Call for Projects Funding Available	
Regional JARC Allocation utilizing FY 2020 at 10% of FTA 5307 Amount allocated to the Asheville Urbanized Area	\$324,069*
Regional JARC-10% Administration	\$29,627
Total Regional Jobs Access Reverse Commute (JARC) – FY2020 funding, after subtracting administration costs	\$290,514

*This funding includes \$23,019 leftover funds from the Spring 2020 JARC Call for Projects. 10% of that \$23,019 was added to administrative costs and the remainder was added to the total FY2020 available competitive funding.

The MPO received 2 applications for JARC funding during the Winter 2020 Call for Projects:

Applicant	Project Title	Project Description	Funding requested
------------------	----------------------	----------------------------	--------------------------

a program of Land of Sky

FRENCH BROAD RIVER

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

City of Asheville	Route 170 Transit Operations	Fixed route service for route 170 to Black Mountain (8 trips per day, Monday through Saturday from 5:30am to 9:30pm)	\$231,558
Buncombe County	Black Mountain Trailblazer	Fixed-deviated route to Black Mountain and Swannanoa (M-Sat; 5:30am-7:30pm)	\$81,704

FRENCH BROAD RIVER

Project Evaluation Criteria for JARC POLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION	Possible Points
Project Needs/Goals and Objectives	30
Is the project consistent with JARC program?	0 or 5
To what degree will the project increase or enhance service to low-income individuals??	0 – 5
Does the project address a need identified in the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan?	0 or 5
To what extent does the project align with the FBRMPO’s CTP?	0 -- 5
To what extent will the project be affected if it does not receive JARC funds? 0=unaffected, 10=unable to exist	0 – 10
Implementation Plan and Evaluation	25
Does the proposal outline an implementation and evaluation plan?	0 or 5
Does implementation plan identify key personnel assigned to project and their qualifications?	0 or 5
To what extent does the applicant demonstrate their institutional capability to carry out service delivery of project as described?	0 – 5
<i>How experienced is the agency with financial responsibilities like quarterly reporting, annual audits, and/or other forms of financial reporting?</i>	0 – 10
Project Budget	15
Did applicant submit a clearly defined project budget?	0 or 5
To what extent does the proposal address long-term efforts and identify potential funding sources for sustaining service beyond grant period?	0 – 5
Does applicant provide documentation of funds for local match?	0 or 5
Equity, Partnerships, and Outreach	15

FRENCH BROAD RIVER

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Does applicant include their Title VI Plan or description of equity work/commitment to equity?	0 or 5
To what extent does the applicant include plans to market to target group and promote awareness of the project?	0 – 5
Does the project include coordination and/or partnerships with transportation providers or other relevant stakeholders?	0 or 5
Program Effectiveness and Performance Indicators	10
To what extent does applicant demonstrate that proposal is most appropriate method of service delivery and is a cost-effective approach?	0 – 5
Does applicant provide description of the process of monitoring and evaluation of service? Is there a description of steps that will be taken to measure effectiveness and impact of project on targets?	0 – 5
Innovation	5
Does project contain new or innovative concepts with potential for improving access and mobility for target population and potential for future application elsewhere in the region?	0 or 5
Alternative Fuels/Fuel Efficiency (BONUS POINTS)	5
Does the project demonstrate use of high-efficiency or alternative fueled vehicles/transportation methods?	0 or 5
TOTAL (out of 100, with 5 additional bonus points)	

Action Required: Select projects to be recommended to the MPO TCC and Board.

Item 4C

5310 Project Selection

Section 5310 (Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities) funds are allocated to the Asheville Urbanized Area, with the City of Asheville serving as the designated recipient for these funds. The application process for Section 5310 ran from November 20th, 2020 through December 31st, 2020. Additional information about Section 5310 is available at: <http://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/5310-and-jarc/>.

The 5310 Grant has two categories for funding:

- Traditional/Capital projects: at least 55% of the total funding amount has to go to “traditional” projects.
- Other/Operations type projects: no more than 45% of the total funding amount can go to these projects

FY2020 5310 Available Funding	\$346,676	55% of Funds (Traditional)*	\$190,672
Admin	\$34,668	35% of Funds (Other)*	\$121,336
After 10% Admin	\$312,008	<i>*Note: percentage divisions were calculated before 10% Admin</i>	

*It is important to note that 10% of the original allocation is set aside for Administrative funds for the City of Asheville, so “Other” projects only receive up to 35% of total funding as a result since Traditional projects are required to receive a minimum of 55% of the allocation before administrative costs are considered.

MPO Staff and the Prioritization Subcommittee reviewed the 5310 applications, rating them based on a scorecard (out of 100 points). The following pages show recommendations for awarding 5310 funds based on scores. The quantitative scoring methodology was simplified for this round of funding. The blank scorecard is included in this agenda as well as a summary of the scored projects.

Prioritization Subcommittee will review the 5310 applications as a group and assign a score to each project.

Project Evaluation:

Project Evaluation Criteria	Possible Points
Project Needs and Goals	40
Is the project consistent with the 5310 grant program's objectives?	0 or 5
To what degree will the project increase or enhance the availability of transportation for the Asheville Urbanized area's elderly and disabled populations?	0 – 5
Does the project address a need identified in the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan?	0 or 5
Does the project provide a service that would not otherwise be available?	0 or 5
To what extent will the project be affected if it does not receive 5310 funds? 0=unaffected, 10=unable to exist	0 – 10
Project Budget and Organizational Preparedness	30
Were the necessary budgets completed and submitted?	0 or 5
Are the certified local match sources for the project listed in the budget as matching funds?	0 or 5
Does the agency propose to continue commitment to the life of the project beyond the availability of the requested grant resources?	0 – 5

FRENCH BROAD RIVER

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

How experienced is the agency with financial responsibilities like quarterly reporting, annual audits, and/or other forms of financial reporting?	0 – 10
Does the project demonstrate efficiency in its proposal?	0 or 5
Project Implementation	15
Does the proposal outlines implementation and evaluation plan?	0 or 5
How closely does the project align with organization’s mission and objectives?	0 – 5
How experienced is the applicant staff in managing transportation projects and/or operating passenger transportation?	0 – 5
Equity, Outreach, and Partnerships	15
Does applicant include their Title VI Plan or description of equity work/commitment to equity?	0 or 5
To what extent does the applicant include plans to market to target group and promote awareness of the project?	0 – 5
Does the project include coordination and/or partnerships with transportation providers or other relevant stakeholders?	0 or 5

Action Required: Select projects to be recommended to the MPO TCC and Board.

Item 4D

NCDOT Project Delays (Continued from January, 2021)

MPO staff will provide updates on the continued project delays as well as proposed amendments to the TIP. MPO staff will also provide an update on Locally Administered Projects “Restarts.”

Item 4E

Prioritization/P 6.0 Updates

MPO staff will provide an update on recent Prioritization Workgroup meetings at the state-level. Most notably:

- the Prioritization Workgroup will meet again in March to consider financial ramifications to P 6.0 and any further changes that may be warranted to the process and timeline
- local input point methodologies are due in July (MPO Board approval would be needed in June), i.e., expect that as a future item
- including resiliency has been discussed for P 6.0 and now P 7.0 but lots of additional study and other considerations would be required