



**French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization
Virtual Meeting via the Zoom Platform**
Minutes from the Governing Board meeting on January 27, 2021

January 27, 2021: Remote Attendance via Zoom

Chair Larry Haris (Town of Black Mountain)
Tristan Winkler (FBRMPO)
Nick Kroncke (FBRMPO)
Daniel Sellers (NCDOT/TPD)
Rebecca McCall (Henderson County Commission)
Stephen Sparks (NCDOT Division 14)
Jessica Trotman (Town of Black Mountain)
Emily Scott-Cruz (FBRMPO)
Chuck McGrady (NCBOT Division 14)
Jennifer Hensely (City of Hendersonville)
Steve Williams (NCDOT Division 14)
Anne Coletta (Village of Flat Rock)
Mike Eveland (Town of Maggie Valley)
Brendan Merithew (NCDOT Division 13)
Matt Wechtel (Madison County Commission)
Bob Davy (Town of Fletcher)
Gwen Wisler (City of Asheville)
Tom Widmer (Town of Montreat)
Paul Hansen (Town of Laurel Park)

Jeff McKenna (Town of Weaverville)
Brian Burch (NCDOT Division 14)
Kevin Ensley (Haywood County Commission)
Daniel Metcalf (Rural Transit Representative)
Brownie Newman (Buncombe County Commission)
Kim Roney (City of Asheville)
David White (WCCA- Urban Transit Representative)
Michael Dawson (FHWA)
Mark Gibbs (NCDOT Division 13)
John Ridout (LOSRC-TDM)
Anthony Sutton (Town of Waynesville)
Matthew Manley (City of Hendersonville)
John Fargher
Victoria Flanagan
Mariate Echeverrie
Kenny Bussey
James Voso

January 27, 2021: In-Person Attendance at the Land of Sky Office

Zia Rifkin (Minutes)

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS, ROLL CALL, APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Larry Harris called the meeting to order at approximately 1:00pm and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Chair Harris provided background on what constitutes a conflict of interest for voting members of the MPO Board and he read the Ethics Statement and inquired if there were any conflicts of interest to note for today's meeting. No conflicts were noted.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments received.

CONSENT AGENDA

Chuck McGrady moved to approve the consent agenda consisting of the November 19, 2020 meeting minutes. Bob Davy seconded, and the motion carried unanimously upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.

NEW BUSINESS

Amendments to the 2020-2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is our region's document that reflects planned transportation investments over a ten-year period and is required to be in conformity with North Carolina's State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The TIP describes each project, a schedule for implementation, funding sources, and estimated costs. The 2020 – 2029 TIP was adopted by the MPO Board on October 24, 2019.

This round of amendments was provided for informational purposes at the November 2020 meeting. The amendments have been amended since then to exclude proposed NCDOT project delays. The proposed amendments reflect the programming of Locally Administered Projects Program (LAPP) funding and the deletion of U-5781 and U-5782 from the TIP (US 25/Merrimon Avenue intersection improvement projects).

Bob Davy moved to approve the Amendments to the 2020-2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which includes the Locally Administered Projects Program (LAPP funding and the deletion of U-5781 and U-5782 from the TIP. Anne Coletta seconded and the motion carried upon a roll call vote and without further discussion.

Amendments to the Public Involvement Policy

Public involvement is an integral part of the planning process and involves a diversity of techniques to be effective. The Public Involvement Policy (PIP) provides guidance and outlines federal requirements for how the MPO involves the public in developing transportation plans and related policy documents. The current PIP was adopted in 2014 and most recently amended in 2019. In order to keep up with evolving engagement strategies and federal requirements, it is important to periodically update the PIP.

In summary, the proposed amendments to the PIP reflect:

- ❖ FHWA and the North Carolina Open Meetings Law guidance on the holding of public meetings electronically and accepting of public comments held online
- ❖ Added language referencing the FAST Act
- ❖ Clarifying language for public comment during meetings. Adds language stating that the Chair may limit public comment to three (3) minutes (default) per speaker, but with a modification to allow the Chair latitude for the length of public comments per person/group.
- ❖ Clarification on what constitutes a TIP amendment versus a modification. Modifications (minor changes to TIP) do not require public involvement and Board approval, this aligns the PIP with FHWA/FTA/NCDOT guidance regarding modifications.
- ❖ Adds requirement for public involvement during CMP development (as required per the FAST Act)
- ❖ Updates to Appendix A – Timelines and Public Hearing Requirements. For amendments to the MTP, TIP, Prioritization List and PIP, public comment is accepted prior to approval but a public hearing is not required.
- ❖ Adds online participation guidelines for social media and release of liability.

- ❖ Includes revisions to the format to be more user-friendly and better organized.

Per the 45-day minimum public comment requirements, the PIP was published for advertisement on 10/28/20 and discussed with the Citizens Advisory Committee on 10/14/20.

Council Member Roney commented favorably on the PIP and expressed appreciation to the MPO staff for their work on the policy and the accessibility of the meetings and other public events.

Kim Roney moved to approve the Amendments to the Public Involvement Policy. Anthony Sutton seconded and the motion carried upon a roll call vote and without further discussion.

Presentation on the Black Mountain Parking Study

In FY 2019, the French Broad River MPO provided funding to the Town of Black Mountain for a study looking at parking and circulation throughout Black Mountain's central business district. The study evaluated current parking and traffic patterns while identifying areas for improvement. Town of Black Mountain staff will present on the study and its findings.

Jessica Trotman, Planning Director for the Town of Black Mountain shared a presentation on the Parking and Circulation Study, which evaluated the current parking and traffic patterns in Black Mountain and included data collection, community engagement and analysis and recommendations. Goals included improving safety, improving parking opportunities and ensuring connected and safe movement by foot and bicycle. The Town learned that there is sufficient parking supply; there's perceived lack of convenient parking. On-street parking has the greatest demand. High pedestrian demand on Cherry and State Streets. Congestion peaks during lunch and late afternoon. Intersection operations acceptable but not in the system. The Town plans to maximize the use of existing parking supply by making it safer, more attractive and easier to find. To achieve the goal of improving access to downtown parking for bicyclists and pedestrians. Considering other strategies to encourage walking and biking. The Town plans to interconnect and coordinate traffic signals and to improve the function and comfort of intersections. Parking Management and enforcement measures include implementing time restrictions for on-street parking on Cherry and State Streets. The Town understands that on-going programming, monitoring, master planning, meeting many needs, etc. are part of the continuing effort to improve the parking and traffic in the downtown area.

Discussion occurred regarding the support that the Town and its citizens had for the study as it moved through the process. Discussion occurred regarding how to encourage business owners and employees to use the long-term parking area. Jessica Trotman shared that it may be difficult to encourage business owners and employees to use the long-term parking areas without having further enforcement measures. She noted that that change alone would be a great benefit to Cherry Street for the parking turnover rate.

Additional studies like the Black Mountain Parking Study are eligible for funding with the MPO's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) which provides 80% of the cost of the project from federal funds that are passed-through the MPO; the other 20% is required to come from local or other non-federal sources. Other similar studies that have been funded this way recently include: the Hendersonville Oklawaha Greenway Extension Study, the Asheville Transit Master Plan, Buncombe County's Bent Creek Greenway Feasibility Study, and on-going studies on Hendersonville Road, Tunnel Road, the Mud Creek Greenway (Henderson), and the Richland Creek Greenway (Waynesville.)

Information item. No action required.

REGULAR UPDATES

- Divisions 13 and 14 provided updates.
- A Transportation Planning Division Update was provided.
- An FHWA/FTA Update was provided
- FBRMPO Committee & Workgroup Updates:

- Prioritization – Met January 5; next meeting on February 2.
- Transit Operators Workgroup – Met January 27, next meeting TBD.
- Citizens’ Advisory Committee – Next meeting TBD (April?).
- Regional Transit Study – Public meetings and survey made available in December. Second round of public engagement in the spring.
- Corridor Studies – Hendersonville Road Public Meetings planned for February 10. Tunnel Road moving towards public meetings phase.
- LAPP training planned for February 18.
- Legislative Updates – Stimulus funding towards transportation- impacts to MPO region mean no additional public transit funding due to CARES Act funding previously received. An additional \$60,000 for public transit options for seniors and the disabled. A local match would be 0% for these funds. Recommendations in February/March to the TCC and Board. The highway funds are going to STBG-DA. These funds may be utilized for highways, bike/ped and transit capital projects. These funds flow from federal to state DOT, who distribute based on the population of large MPOs. Anticipating around \$1-1.5 million as part of the stimulus to be available for LAPP. Generally, the LAPP is very beneficial to the MPO and empowers local governments. Lastly, over \$60 Million has been programmed through LAPP. Around \$57 Million are programmed through standalone bike/ped projects. MPO working with NCDOT to make the best use of the funds under their discretion.

ANNOUNCEMENTS, NEWS, FUTURE TOPICS AND SPECIAL UPDATES

Next month, representative from NC First Commission to report on transportation funding.

Additional training on conflicts of interest for MPO Board members

Anticipating the programming of additional transit funds.

Q & A on delays from NCDOT

Tristan Winkler gave a shout out to Emily Scott-Cruz for going the extra mile to assist Haywood County with their procurement needs as an urban transit provider.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments received.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Harris adjourned the meeting, as there was no further business.