



METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
A PROGRAM OF LAND OF SKY

French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization

Minutes from the TCC Meeting including Zoom on September 9, 2021

ATTENDANCE:

Remote via the Zoom Platform:

Chair Autumn Radcliff	Nick Kroncke	Emily Scott-Cruz	Pat Christie
John Ridout	Hannah Bagli	David White	Hannah Cook
Adrienne Isenhower	Brendan Merithew	Dan Baechtold	Daniel Cobb
Eric Rufa	Erica Anderson	Jared Merrill	Jessica Morriss
Jessica Trotman	John Ridout	Kim Roney	Marshall Williams
Peyton O’Conner	Stephen Sparks	Steve Williams	Troy Wilson
William High	Daniel Sellers		

In-Person at Land of Sky Regional Council:

Tristan Winkler Zia Rifkin (minutes)

WELCOME AND HOUSEKEEPING

Chair Radcliff called the meeting to order, welcomed everyone, and roll call followed. Quorum was established for conducting the business of the TCC.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Radcliff called for public comments. No public comments were made.

CONSENT AGENDA

Chair Radcliff indicated that the Consent Agenda included the August 2021 minutes, and the 5310 Letter of Support for Mountain Projects. She requested approval of the agenda, as well.

Janna Bianculli moved to approve the consent agenda and the TCC agenda as presented. William High seconded the motion, which was affirmed upon a roll call vote of the member governments present.

BUSINESS

Amendment to the FY 2022 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The MPO’s Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is federally required, and documents the MPO’s financial commitments including planning tasks, special studies funded through the MPO, FTA Section 5303 Metropolitan Planning tasks undertaken by the City of Asheville, as well as other federal funding used for planning purposes. This document is adopted annually by the MPO Board with the [original FY 2022 UPWP](#) adopted on April 22, 2021.

Amendment Details

- Funding has been redistributed through the MPO’s operations and work tasks to reflect:
 - Changes in staffing
 - New initiatives, such as the Regional Freight Stakeholders Group have been added under Private Sector Participation

- Delays to items due to changes in the US Census data release schedule, namely the UZA and potential impacts to doing a 5307 Suballocation Formula Study in full
- Increase in public participation and administration to reflect considerations and workload from remote and hybrid meeting adjustments
- Increase in regional planning to reflect MTP considerations, potential changes to the CTP, and updates to other regional documents
- Decreases in all categories of Data and Planning Support due to Existing Land Use (ELUSE) updates being ahead of schedule and more work expected to be carried out by a consultant as part of the next Socio-Economic Projections for the Region (“Land Use Study.”)
- Two studies from FY 21 have been added that will require payments to be claimed in FY 22. These include:
 - Richland Creek Greenway Study (Town of Waynesville)
 - Regional Transit Plan (MPO)
- Adding \$127 thousand in 5307 program support, which would require a match
- Overall, **no changes are being made to local dues and there is no increase in MPO funds beyond what has been previously programmed**

The information regarding the proposed amendment to the FY 2022 UPWP was included in the meeting packet and posted on the MPO’s website: http://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/2021_09_09_TCC-Agenda-Packet.pdf.

Peyton O’Conner moved to approve the FY 2022 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Amendments and to recommend that the MPO Board give consideration of approval. Janna Bianculli seconded, and the motion carried upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.

Prioritization Subcommittee- Replacement Member

The MPO Prioritization Subcommittee plays an important role in advising the MPO TCC and Board and is made up of four members of the TCC and three members of the MPO Board. One representative from the TCC, Dan Baechtold (City of Asheville), plans to step down at the end of the month. Jessica Morris (City of Asheville) has requested to replace his position on the subcommittee.

The MPO Prioritization Subcommittee was initially setup to advise the MPO TCC and Board on items related to the prioritization process but its role was expanded over the years to include the evaluation of the Locally Administered Projects Program (LAPP), being the steering committee for major MPO planning efforts including the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), and any other items that generally require preliminary, in-depth discussions before those items make it to the TCC and Board for consideration.

All TCC, Board, and NCDOT members are welcome to join subcommittee meetings, but there are only seven voting members: four TCC representatives and three Board representatives. The current voting members include:

Voting Member	Jurisdiction	TCC/Board
Anthony Sutton	Town of Waynesville	Board
Jerry Vehaun	Town of Woodfin	Board
Larry Harris	Town of Black Mountain	Board
Autumn Radcliff	Henderson County	TCC
<i>Dan Baechtold</i>	<i>City of Asheville</i>	<i>TCC</i>
Peyton O’Conner (Chair)	Buncombe County	TCC
Elizabeth Teague (Vice-Chair)	Town of Waynesville	TCC

Today, the FBRMPO TCC is requested to approve a new TCC representative for the Prioritization Subcommittee. Jessica Morriss, with the City of Asheville, has volunteered to serve in this role.

Peyton O’Conner moved to approve Jessica Morriss as the new TCC representative for the Prioritization Subcommittee and to recommend that the MPO Board affirm her for the open position, as well. Steve Williams seconded, and the motion carried upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.

5310 & JARC Calls for Projects Timeline & Overview

Emily Scott-Cruz provided a presentation regarding 5310 and JARC funding.

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 5310 Grant has two categories for funding:

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

Additional information about Section 5310 is available at: <http://frenchbroadrivermppo.org/5310-and-jarc/>

The Asheville UZA was awarded American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for Section 5310 as well. The funds are to be used for 5310 operations and payroll (if recipients have furloughed employees). The UZA received \$60,154 in additional Section 5310 funds. As we did with CRRSAA funding, ARPA funding, which totals \$54,139 after taking out 10% Admin costs for the City of Asheville, will be added to this Call for Projects. The distribution of ARPA funds will be contingent on the applications received. To note, when CRRSAA funds were added to the last Section 5310 Call for Projects, it was recommended that only one applicant receive that funding. This made the process easier to manage for the City of Asheville; however, the decision was made after receiving submitted applications.

Funding Available:

FY 2020’s Section 5310 Allocation	
FY 2021 FTA Section 5310 Funds Available to Asheville UZA	\$354,278
Section 5310 Admin at 10%	\$35,428
Available Section 5310 after Admin	\$318,850
American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Section 5310*	
ARPA 5310 (Total)	\$60,154
10% Admin	\$6,015
Available ARPA after Admin	\$54,139

Slight revisions were made to the 5310 Scorecard following the last Call for Projects and selection process. MPO Staff requests that the Prioritization Subcommittee reviews the Evaluation Criteria (below) and the application timeline for approval.

SCORECARD FOR 5310 PROJECTS		
	Possible Points	
Project Needs and Goals	35	0
Is the project consistent with 5310 program? (i.e. do goals and objectives align with 5310 program)	0-10	
To what degree will the project increase or enhance availability of transportation for the Asheville urbanized area's elderly and disabled populations?	0 – 5	
Does applicant include map of service area and requested demographic data and number of people served? Does the project address a need identified in the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan?	0 or 10	

To what degree does the project demonstrate the most appropriate match of service delivery to need? To what degree does project address unmet needs?	0-5	
Does the project align with organizational mission? To what degree?	0-5	
Project Budget and Organizational Preparedness	25	0
Did applicant submit a clearly defined project budget? Does applicant provide proof of local match?	0 or 5	
Does the budget accurately estimate project cost? Does it identify direct costs and other requested portions of the 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	
To what extent will project be affected if it does not receive funding?	0-10	
Project Implementation	25	0
Does the proposal outline an implementation and evaluation plan?	0 or 5	
Does the application identify key personnel?	0 or 5	
To what extent does the applicant demonstrate their institutional capability to carry out service delivery of project as described? Does applicant describe process of evaluating service?	0-5	
How experienced is the agency with financial responsibilities like quarterly reporting, annual audits, and/or other forms of financial reporting?	0-10	
Equity, Coordination, and Outreach	15	0
Does the project include coordination and/or partnerships with transportation providers or other relevant stakeholders?	0-5	
To what extent does the applicant include plans to market to target group and promote awareness of the project?	0-5	
Does applicant include their Title VI Plan or description of equity work/commitment to equity?	0 or 5	
Bonus for Alternative Fuels/Fuel Efficiency	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)	105	

JARC Call for Projects / Application / Evaluation

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.

In previous years, the FBRMPO has held two JARC Calls for Projects—one that was available to the region and one that was available only for Haywood County. However, on July 1, 2021, Haywood County became a direct subrecipient of Section 5307 Urbanized Area Transit Formula Funds. As such, there will only be a Regional JARC Call for Projects going forward. Additional information about the program is available at:

<http://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/5310-and-jarc/>

FBRMPO Fall 2021 Jobs Access Reverse Commute (JARC) Call for Projects Funding Available

Regional JARC – FY 2021 at 10% of FTA 5307 Amount allocated to the Asheville Urbanized Area	\$343,962*
---	-------------------

*This funding includes the annual allocation (\$311,281) as well as \$32,681 that was reprogrammed from Winter 2020’s JARC Call for Projects. It is also important to note that administrative costs will not be included in this Call for Projects. However, if an applicant has a capital project submitted, then the City of Asheville is entitled to collect 10% of the capital project’s cost for administration fees.

Slight revisions were made to the JARC Evaluation Criteria following the last Call for Projects and Selection. The revised criteria are below:

Project Evaluation Criteria for JARC	Possible Points
Project Needs/Goals and Objectives	30
Is the project consistent with JARC program? (i.e., do goals and objectives align with JARC program)	0-10
To what degree will the project increase or enhance service to low-income individuals? Does the project address unmet needs?	0 – 5
Does the project address a need identified in the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan? Does applicant include map of service area?	0 or 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	20
Does the proposal outline an implementation and evaluation plan? Does implementation plan identify key personnel?	0 or 5
To what extent does the applicant demonstrate their institutional capability to carry out service delivery of project as described?	0 – 5
How experienced is the agency with financial responsibilities like quarterly reporting, annual audits, and/or other forms of financial reporting?	0-5
Does the project appear to be the best way to meet the need identified? Does it align with the organizational mission?	0 – 5
Project Budget	20
Did applicant submit a clearly defined project budget? Did applicant provide proof of local match?	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
To what extent will project be affected if it does not receive funding?	0-10
Equity, Coordination, and Outreach	15
Does the project include coordination and/or partnerships with transportation providers or other relevant stakeholders?	0-5
To what extent does the applicant include plans to market to target group and promote awareness of the project?	0 – 5

Does applicant include their Title VI Plan or description of equity work/commitment to equity?	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)	105

The proposed timeline for Fall 2021's Call for Projects for both Section 5310 and JARC follows:

Fall 2021 Call for Projects Timeline	
September 27, 2021	5310 and JARC call for projects opens
October 29, 2021	5310 and JARC applications due to FBRMPO
November 2021	FBRMPO Prioritization Subcommittee meets to review the 5310 and JARC applications
November 2021	TCC approves 5310 and JARC project selection
November 2021	MPO Board votes on 5310 and JARC project selection
November 2021	MPO Board approves TIP Amendments for 5310 and JARC projects

Jessica Morriss moved to recommend that the Board approve the 5310 and JARC Calls for Projects' timeline and evaluation criteria. William High seconded and the motion carried upon a roll call vote and without further discussion.

NCDOT Value Engineering/Value Assessment Initiative

Below are the funding projections for every available tier in prioritization through 2033 (only "committed" projects included, current as of July 2021):

Statewide Mobility		Regional Impact			Division Needs		
Available Funding	Programming Status	Region	Available Funding	Programming Status	Division	Available Funding	Programming Status
\$9.4 B	\$2.22 B Over	A (D1 & D4)	\$588.8M	\$181.8M Over	1	\$506M	\$52.1M Over
		B (D2 & D3)	\$855.1M	\$348.2M Over	2	\$506M	\$113.7M Over
		C (D5 & D6)	\$1.56B	\$32.3M Over	3	\$506M	\$101.5M Under
		D (D7 & D9)	\$1.17B	\$392.4M Over	4	\$506M	\$192.0M Under
		E (D8 & D10)	\$1.46B	\$490.1M Over	5	\$506M	\$131.2M Over
		F (D11 & D12)	\$784M	\$268.5M Over	6	\$506M	\$121.7M Under

G (D13 & D 14)	\$609.2M	\$929.9M Over			
			7	\$506M	\$91.7M Under
			8	\$506M	\$22.1M Over
			9	\$506M	\$49.8M Under
			10	\$506M	\$38.6M Over
			11	\$506M	\$22.3M Under
			12	\$506M	\$207.7M Over
			13	\$506M	\$165.4M Over
			14	\$506M	\$80.1M Over

Hannah Cook, Division 13 Senior Engineer provided a presentation on an on-going Value Assessment initiative to assess and value-engineer projects to reduce costs. She explained the difference between a Value Engineering (VE) Study, which follows a 7-step process prescribed by FHWA, engages third-party firms, coordinated through the Value Management Office (VMO) and is required on projects meeting cost thresholds; and Value Assessment (VA), which has no prescribed process, but includes cost containment ideas and includes engaging third-party firms and is coordinated by PM/Leads on projects over \$5 million. The goal with the VA on the projects being reviewed is to reduce project costs by 10%.

Beginning in March 2021, the VA Phase I began with 14 projects. More complex projects or those with higher costs were assessed with VE. Phase II began in April with the assessment of additional projects across the state. Phase III began in May with additional projects. Phase IV includes 35 projects on the 16–24-month Let List. Third-party firms have completed VAs and Division Engineers are reviewing assessments. Projects in Buncombe County, including the I-40 interchange in Black Mountain (Blue Ridge Road Interchange), the Mills Gap Road projects and two bridge projects were assessed.

Hannah Cook reviewed the general VA process, once it is given to a third-party firm for review, which includes brainstorming general cost savings ideas, evaluating those ideas for feasibility, cost savings, etc., and if the project will still meet the purpose and need. Recommendations are then developed. While a third-party firm performs the VA, but it is the Division Engineers that review the recommendations to determine if the ideas should be rejected in the final project. Hannah reviewed functions, which includes what the project needs and what is the project’s purpose and are there ways to save money in that process.

Hannah Cook used the Blue Ridge Road Interchange project as an example of the VA procedure. *No audio.*

Hannah Cook shared next steps including VAs on projects on the 37-60 month Let List and that VAs would be included in PDN Version 2.1. Essentially, cost containment would become a part of the design process for NCDOT going forward.

Discussion occurred regarding how Division Engineers use the VA recommendations, while keeping in mind the purpose and needs of projects that are assessed.

Tristan Winkler wondered if there was a place in the process for local governments to provide feedback on project assessments, allowing input on what is valuable to the jurisdictions. Hannah Cook shared that there is a process (not well-defined in Division 13) to bring local officials into the process. Brendan Merithew noted that the VA is not meant to be a defined process, but generally, cost savings ideas are not meant to redefine projects. Generally, the TCC shared that the perceived value of conducting VAs on projects that have gone through a significant public input process and have progressed through early phases of design, might not benefit from this type of assessment. Hannah Cook noted that it is the project management team that brings recommendations to the local jurisdiction, where it may progress to additional public input. Tristan Winkler concurred that it might be a good idea to send out a list of those Division 13 projects that were being assessed, to allow local officials an opportunity to weigh in on any proposed cost containment measures. Hannah Cook noted that the process is still being developed, leading to a defined process, including local input. Chair Radcliff noted that it was important for everyone to realize that projects do change, and some factors may be unforeseen, leading to changes, even on well-developed projects.

Discussion occurred about the various stages that projects were in when they were selected for the VA process and it was noted that if a project was in ROW acquisition, cost containment considerations might only pertain to the construction process. Projects in preliminary engineering (PE) accounted for most of the projects that were chosen for VA. Projects in conceptual design, or those not well-developed, were not usually assessed.

Information item. No action required.

REGULAR UPDATES AND INFORMATION ITEMS

Regular updates from NCDOT Division 13 and 14 were provided by NCDOT staff and available on the <http://frenchbroadrivermpo.org> website.

Division 13 Updates: http://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Div13_Sept_Updates.pdf

Division 14 Updates: http://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/FBRMPO_Div14_092021_Comprehensive-ProjDev.pdf

A TPD update was provided. Additionally, committee and legislative updates were provided by MPO staff.

ANNOUNCEMENTS, NEWS, SPECIAL UPDATES

The MPO is planning to hold a workshop for autonomous and connected vehicles, in conjunction with the Clean Vehicles Coalition. More details will be shared soon.

TOPICS FOR NEXT MEETING

NCDOT storm response.

The MPO is tracking the budget and planning to bring the interchange item back on the agenda when more clarification is available regarding funding.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Radcliff opened the second public comment period. No public comments received.

ADJOURNMENT

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