



METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
A PROGRAM OF LAND OF SKY

## French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting Minutes from the Governing Board Meeting on September 23, 2021

### **Attendance:**

Chair Larry Harris (Town of Black Mountain)  
Tristan Winkler (FBRMPO)  
Emily Scott-Cruz (FBRMPO)  
John Ridout (FBRMPO)  
Nick Kronke (FBRMPO)  
Hannah Bagli (FBRMPO)  
Zia Rifkin (Minutes)  
Jane Pies (LOSRC)  
Bill Lapsley (Henderson County Commission)  
Bob Davy (Town of Fletcher)  
George Banta (Town of Laurel Park)  
Anne Coletta (Village of Flat Rock)  
Brian Caskey (Town of Mills River)  
Brendan Merithew (NCDOT Division 13)  
David Wasserman (NCDOT SPOT Unit)  
Gwen Wisler (City of Asheville)  
Jeff McKenna (Town of Weaverville)  
Kevin Ensley (Haywood County Commission)  
Matt Wechtel \*Madison County Commission)

Michael Dawson (FHWA)  
Mike Eveland (Town of Maggie Valley)  
Steve Williams (NCDOT Division 14)  
Rebecca McCall (Henderson County Commission)  
Tom Widmer (Town of Montreat)  
Troy Wilson (NCDOT Division 14)  
Jenn Hensley (City of Hendersonville)  
Kim Roney (City of Asheville)  
Brownie Newman (Buncombe County Commission)  
Daniel Metcalf (Rural Transit Representative)  
Daniel Cobb (Town of Mills River-Staff)  
Daniel Sellers (NCDOT TPD)  
Erica Anderson (LOSRC)  
Janna Bianculli (Apple Country Transit)  
Khoa Gritson (NCDOT TPD)  
Lucy Crown (City of Asheville)  
Stephen Sparks (NCDOT Division 14)

### **WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS & ROLL CALL**

Chair Larry Harris called the meeting to order at approximately 1:00pm and welcomed everyone to the meeting. He read the Ethics Statement and inquired if there were any conflicts of interest to note for today's meeting. No conflicts were noted with the business before the body. Quorum was announced to conduct the business of the Board.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chair Harris called for public comments. None were heard.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

***Matt Wechtel moved to approve the consent agenda consisting of the August 2021 meeting minutes, and the resolutions supporting the 5310 Grant Applications for Mountain Projects and WCCA (Henderson County Transportation), and the Board agenda as presented. Gwen Wisler seconded the motion, which carried unanimously, upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.***

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Amendments 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 planning tasks, special studies funded through the MPO, and FTA Section 5303 Metropolitan Planning Tasks undertaken by the City of Asheville, as well as other federal funds being used for planning purposes. This document is adopted annually by the MPO Board with the [original FY 2022 UPWP](#) adopted on March 26, 2020.

## 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, including the UZA (expected spring/summer 2022) 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 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.")
  - Addition of \$120,000 in 5307 program support for Henderson County (with 20% local match)
- 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)
- Overall, no changes are being made to local dues and there is no increase in MPO funds beyond what has been previously programmed

***Kim Roney moved to approve the Amendments to the FY 2022 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), as proposed. Bob Davy 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), acting as 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 the Board representatives. The current voting members include:

<b>Voting Member</b>	<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>TCC/Board</b>
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

**Bob Davy moved to approve TCC member Jessica Morriss (City of Asheville) as the new Prioritization Subcommittee member, replacing Dan Baechtold. Gwen Wisler seconded and the motion carried, upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.**

**5310 & JARC Calls for Projects Timeline & Overview**

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://frenchbroadrivermpo.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 was done 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
Remaining Section 5310 after Admin	\$318,850
American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Section 5310*	
ARPA 5310 (Total)	\$60,154
10% Admin	\$6,015
Remaining ARPA after Admin	\$54,139

Slight revisions were made to the 5310 Scorecard following the last Call for Projects and selection process. Please review the criteria below:

SCORECARD FOR 5310 PROJECTS		
	Possible Points	
<b>Project Needs and Goals</b>	35	0
Is the project consistent with the 5310 program? (i.e., do goals and objectives align with the 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	
<b>Project Budget and Organizational Preparedness</b>	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	
<b>Project Implementation</b>	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	
<b>Equity, Coordination, and Outreach</b>	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	
<b>Bonus for Alternative Fuels/Fuel Efficiency</b>	5	
Does the project demonstrate use of high-efficiency or alternative fueled vehicles/transportation methods?	0 or 5	
<b>TOTAL (Out of 100, with 5 additional bonus points)</b>	<b>105</b>	

### 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	<b>\$343,962*</b>

\*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. Please review the Criteria below:

<b>Project Evaluation Criteria for JARC</b>	<b>Possible Points</b>
<b>Project Needs/Goals and Objectives</b>	<b>30</b>
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
<b>Implementation Plan and Evaluation</b>	<b>20</b>
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
<b>Project Budget</b>	<b>20</b>
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
<b>Equity, Coordination, and Outreach</b>	<b>15</b>
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
<b>Program Effectiveness and Performance Indicators</b>	<b>10</b>

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
<b>Innovation</b>	<b>5</b>
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
<b>Alternative Fuels/Fuel Efficiency (BONUS POINTS)</b>	<b>5</b>
Does the project demonstrate use of high-efficiency or alternative fueled vehicles/transportation methods?	0 or 5
<b>TOTAL (out of 100, with 5 additional bonus points)</b>	<b>105</b>

The proposed timeline for Fall 2021’s Call for Projects for both Section 5310 and JARC is below:

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
January 2022	FBRMPO Prioritization Subcommittee meets to review the 5310 and JARC applications
January 2022	TCC approves 5310 and JARC project selection
January 2022	MPO Board votes on 5310 and JARC project selection
January 2022	MPO Board approves TIP Amendments for 5310 and JARC projects

**Anne Coletta moved to approve the TCC’s recommendation of the Call for Projects’ timeline and evaluation criteria for JARC and Section 5310. Matt Wechtel seconded, and the motion carried, upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.**

**NCDOT Value Engineering/Value Assessment Initiative**

Brendan Merithew, Division Project Team Lead with NCDOT Division 13, provided a presentation on an on-going initiative to assess and value engineering projects to reduce costs.

As a reminder, 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
<b>G (D13 &amp; D 14)</b>	<b>\$609.2M</b>	<b>\$929.9M Over</b>	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
			<b>13</b>	<b>\$506M</b>	<b>\$165.4M Over</b>
			<b>14</b>	<b>\$506M</b>	<b>\$80.1M Over</b>

An overview of the Value Engineering (VE)/Value Assessment (VA) processes was provided and it was noted that part of the process includes the engagement of a third-party firm to provide an objective assessment and to brainstorm cost saving ideas.

Discussion occurred regarding the objectiveness of the third-party firms and Brendan Merithew shared that only firms that have not been involved in the planning or preliminary engineering of projects under review are utilized. The goal is to provide another pair of eyes on projects in order to develop recommendations for cost containment.

Phase I of VE/VA began March 2021 with 14 committed projects reviewed from across the state. Phase II of the process began in early April and Phase III began in mid-May. Brendan Merithew noted that from Phase I to II, the Department identified trends and updated the guidance used moving forward. Third-party firms were employed for the projects reviewed, providing a third-party perspective. Phase IV included thirty-five projects on the 16-24 month Let List with VA by third-party firms completed July 23 and reviews by PMs and DEs completed August 23. It was shared that the I-40 interchange project in Black Mountain was a Phase I project reviewed. Additional projects have been reviewed in the region including bridge projects.

Brendan Merithew shared that depending on the stage of development the project under review is in, cost saving measures may only pertain to construction. Review of projects includes project information, identification of the purpose and need, completing a project breakdown to identify the project functions, attributes, stakeholders, commitments, etc. The third-party firm is used to brainstorm potential cost savings measures. Brendan Merithew used project I-4409, Blue Ridge Road Interchange as an example of the VE procedure that was followed by the Value Assessment Team, which included reviewing information on the project, conducting speculation/functional analysis, evaluation and recommendation development for cost saving measures. He clarified that NCDOT staff are not working in a bubble, and they realize what commitments have been made and local stakeholders are brought into the conversations in cases where any major design change might be proposed.

Brendan Merithew concluded his presentation by noting the next steps, including VAs on projects on the 37-60 month Let List and that going forward, VAs would be included in PDN Version 2.1.

Discussion occurred regarding the importance of post-project assessment (original dates for projects, original estimated costs, cost changes, why costs changed, etc.). NCDOT staff noted that a post-project assessment process is in place and NCDOT can follow up with more information.

Discussion occurred regarding NCDOT's core ideas and how conducting VE/VAs on committed projects furthers those core ideas (i.e., innovation) and it was shared by NCDOT staff that maintaining purpose and need of projects is the uppermost consideration. It was also noted that NCDOT is planning other efforts to address post-

project assessments and whether the purpose and need of projects was met for completed projects. Tristan Winkler shared that the prioritization process involves MPO staff, local government staff and elected officials, along with NCDOT staff. He noted that NCDOT has been a great partner, open to new ideas and innovation. However, the most pressing issue now is the serious cost overruns in the region. He noted that discussions are continuing at the SPOT Workgroup regarding how to bring the STIP back to under-budget and there are going to be some hard conversations undertaken about prioritizing and re-prioritizing projects. Additionally, potential rescoping of projects with NCDOT may allow for some benefit from committed projects, rather than receiving no benefit. He noted that a lot of work would be done over the next few months.

***Informational Item. No action requested.***

#### **REGULAR UPDATES**

- Divisions 13 and 14 updates available on website: [http://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/D13\\_June2021.pdf](http://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/D13_June2021.pdf) and [http://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/D14\\_June2021.pdf](http://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/D14_June2021.pdf).
- The Transportation Planning Division newsletter is also available on the website: [http://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/FBRMPO\\_Newletter\\_2021\\_5\\_June.pdf](http://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/FBRMPO_Newletter_2021_5_June.pdf).
- FBRMPO Committee & Workgroup Updates:
  - Prioritization – Met September 7. Next meeting October 5.
  - Transit Operators Workgroup – Met September 16.
  - 5307 Subrecipient Workgroup – Next meeting December 6.
  - Citizens’ Advisory Committee – last meeting July 14; next meeting October 13.
  - Hellbender Trail Stakeholder Group – Last meeting July 29. Next meeting October 27.
  - Corridor Studies - Recommended for approval by City Bike/Ped Task Force, Planning and Zoning Commission, and Multimodal Transportation Commission; Economic Development Committee, and City Council presentations planned for October.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comments received.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

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