



METROPOLITAN PLANNING
ORGANIZATION
A PROGRAM OF LAND OF SKY

French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization
Minutes from the Governing Board meeting on October 24, 2019

Attendance

William Lapsley

Emily Scott-Cruz

Steve Caraker

LeRoy Roberson

John Dockendorf

Autumn Radcliff

Brownie Newman

LeRoy Roberson

Tristan Winkler

Daniel Sellers

Mike Dawson

Brian Caskey

Jeff McKenna

Janna Peterson

Hannah Cook

Julie Mayfield

Nick Kroncke

George Banta

Ritchie Rozzelle

Bob Davy

Amanda Edwards

Anne Coletta

Steve Williams

Zia Rifkin

Brian Burch

Larry Harris

Kevin Ensley

Erica Anderson

Gwen Wisler

Brian Burch

DRAFT

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS, APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairman Lapsley called the meeting to order, requested that everyone introduce himself or herself, 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. None were received.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was presented for approval with no modification requested.

Larry Harris moved to approve the agenda as presented. John Dockendorf seconded and the motion carried without further discussion.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

MTP 2040 Amendments

No comments received at the FBRMPO Board meeting.

FBRMPO 2020-2029 TIP Adoption

No comments received at the FBRMPO Board meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA

Bob Davy moved to approve the consent agenda consisting of the September 26, 2019 minutes, the Letter of Support- Apple Country Transportation 5310 Application, and the 2018-2027 TIP Modifications. Steve Caraker seconded and the motion carried without further discussion.

NEW BUSINESS

MTP 2040 Amendments

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) forecasts changes in the region and seeks to identify transportation priorities for the region of the next 25 years. The MTP 2040 was adopted in September 2015 and most recently amended in May 2018 to reflect FAST Act requirements. This round of amendments includes updating the MTP with projects that were funded as part of SPOT/P5.0 and programmed in the 2020-2029 STIP. Projects in the TIP must be consistent with the currently adopted MTP, hence these amendments to reflect those changes in the new TIP.

The MTP is broken into five-year Horizons that cover from 2019-2040. These amendments are programmed in Horizon 2, covering 2021-2025 and Horizon 3, 2026-2030. A public comment period is being held from September 24-October 24 with the amendments posted on the MPO website at <http://www.fbrmpo.org/metropolitan-transportation-plan-mtp/>. Nick Kroncke summarized the amendments during the meeting.

A "Project Expectations Report" has been developed as part of these amendments, which covers funded projects in SPOT/P5.0. The goal of this report is to communicate context-sensitive goals of the project based on local municipality and MPO input. The project sheet contains primary goals, secondary goals, a SPOT cross-section, previous planning efforts, a map and multi-modal expectations (if applicable).

Nick Kroncke noted that the Project Expectation Report does not contain environmental information. He also shared that the MTP amendments have received no comments during the public comment period.

Discussion occurred regarding the process for modification of projects that are already underway. Tristan Winkler shared that in that type of situation, the project would need to come before the Board. Additionally, the project may have to be re-prioritized. He communicated that due to cost increases or for projects that have changed scope; anything in prioritization, triggered by the criteria, would need to go before the prioritization committee and through the prioritization process again. Tristan Winkler shared that the Board would be made aware if a project were to go before the committee (again). Daniel Sellers shared that if projects grow and change, as part of P6.0, projects would need to be submitted with a vision statement, which would be provided to the design team. Underlying context of projects is necessary information for the design team to have. Tristan Winkler communicated that this is meant to strengthen the process.

Discussion occurred about maintenance of Complete Streets elements and it was noted that the first request for maintenance would go to the local government.

Julie Mayfield moved to adopt the MTP 2040 Amendments. Gwen Wisler seconded and the motion carried without further discussion.

2020-2029 Transportation Improvement Program Adoption

The 2020-2029 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) was developed between 2017-2019 through NCDOT's prioritization process, SPOT 5 or P5.0. The MPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a subset document of the STIP, listing transportation projects in the MPO planning area that are scheduled to have funding for engineering, right-of-way, and/or construction over the next ten years.

The 2020-2029 TIP consists of highway and non-highway projects that use state or federal transportation funds in the MPO planning area as well as some projects that have a local government cost-share agreement. These projects originate from the previous TIP (e.g. I-26 Connector, Liberty Road Interchange, Russ Avenue, etc.), from SPOT 5.- (e.g. N. Louisiana, Swannanoa River Road, NC 251 MUP), and projects selected with Direct Allocation (STBG) funds.

The draft 2020-2029 TIP has been posted from September 23-October 24 for public review and comments at the FBRMPO website at http://fbrmpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/FBRMPO_2020_2029_Draft_TIP-4.pdf. A web map of TIP projects is also available at http://fbrmpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/FBRMPO_2020_2029_Draft_TIP-4.pdf.

The draft TIP was discussed at the September 2019 TCC and Board meetings. Nick Kroncke shared that the TIP also includes compliance language and he updated the Board with public comments received including two comments that were received, covering a wide range of topics. The TIP specific feedback was forwarded to the relevant NCDOT division. Tristan Winkler shared that 'Coffee with a Transportation Planner' events are held at various coffee houses in the planning region.

Discussion also occurred about folks providing their personal contact information with public comments and MPO staff noted that the public involvement policy has been reviewed, since at this time, names/contact information is redacted. MPO staff were directed to check on the perceived need to redact personal information.

Further discussion occurred regarding the STIP, which has not been approved by FHA yet. Tristan Winkler noted that come March/April 2020, there would be a large swath of amendments to the document. MPO staff noted that the TIP is a fluid document, that is always being updated. The newest version is always posted on the MPO website. NCDOT staff noted that projects are likely to change and those that change in the same fiscal year are not reflected in the document; should a project change in a subsequent fiscal year, it would be reflected in the document. Tristan Winkler communicated that when committed projects have a cost increase of more than 50%, a cost/benefit analysis is undertaken. Projects in that type of situation must go before the Sticker Committee. NCDOT staff noted this process forestalls projects that lose relevance. Tristan Winkler noted that any delay that has come up since the first week of September 2019, is not reflected in the current document.

Larry Harris moved to adopt the 2020-2029 Transportation Improvement Program. Bob Davy seconded and the motion carried without further discussion.

Regional Transit Study Update and Request for Resolutions of Support

The French Broad River MPO currently has a Regional Transit Study in the FY2020 UPWP, with plans for it to be carried out over two fiscal years. The study would look at the feasibility of cross-county routes in the region (Hendersonville to Asheville, Waynesville to Asheville, etc.), the projected amount of funding that could be made available, and what type of agency/governance structure would be required in order to implement regional transit service (potentially a Regional Transit Authority).

Currently, no public transit routes cross county lines. Some services coordinate on meeting for a transfer (between Buncombe/Henderson and Buncombe/Haywood) and some demand-response services go from one county to another; but there is no fixed-route service that currently operates in more than one county. The lack of a regional transit option is an increasing gap for transportation as well as employment. Every county in the region has seen an increase in cross-county commuting and census data indicates that low-income populations- populations that may be more reliant on public transportation- are moving away from employment centers in the region.

Recently, a request was made to add another component to the scope of this study: to study what a regional transit provider could do to assist other transit agencies in the region and to examine the feasibility of consolidating transit agencies in the region. This addition to the scope would involve the Land of Sky RPO, which would seek additional funding from NCDOT as well as local cost share.

Additionally, MPO leadership has requested a resolution of support for the study from local governments (City of Asheville, Buncombe County, Haywood County, Henderson County, and Madison County) that provide transit services in the region. This resolution does not intend to reflect support for recommendations coming from the study but is intended to reflect a greater awareness and support that a regional study be undertaken.

Discussion occurred regarding what should be included in the scope of the study.

Input was provided on resolutions of support, meant to move the study forward, being requested from local governments. The MPO would manage the study. The process would begin with a Request for Quotes (RFQ) to determine consultants who may be interested in undertaking the study. Tristan Winkler noted that consolidating transit services between counties would require a memorandum of understanding among the counties. He also shared that a regional transit authority is a very different thing, which requires legislative authority from the state. The study is intended to cover the MPO region.

Larry Harris moved to amend the scope of the study and to include the provision of resolutions from local governments. Gwen Wisler seconded and the motion carried upon a vote.

2045 Population & Employment Projects (Land Use Study Update)

MPO staff provided an update on the MPO's Land Use Study, being carried out by a team led by Manhan and Associates. The study primarily provides projected population and employment data for the MPO's 2045 Travel Demand Model. Between 2015 and 2045 the five-county region is expected to grow by almost 190,000 additional residents. The study primarily looks at where that growth is expected to occur and assigns population and employment projections to Transportation Analysis Zones (TAZs). The consultant has been tasked with developing two growth scenarios: (1) Business as Usual and (2) Efficient Growth. These scenarios are based on growth scenarios developed as part of Land of Sky Regional Council's GroWNC planning initiative in 2012. What the Board adopts would become the preferred growth scenario.

Tristan Winkler noted that the TCC wanted to pass along the business as usual scenario as the one to use for the study. Additionally, the Prioritization Subcommittee has discussed the growth scenario issue. He noted that legally speaking, the Board determines the preferred growth scenario. Daniel Sellers noted that when projects go into design, the MPO's growth model is utilized. Tristan Winkler communicated that most likely, the travel demand model would be run with both growth scenarios.

Tristan Winkler shared that traffic forecasting plays a large role in determining the types of projects that are needed in an area. Current conditions may not show the need for additional lanes on roadways; however, traffic forecasts may determine that growth is likely to occur in the area, which would necessitate the need to upgrade roadways, so those are not deficient.

Discussion occurred regarding the different types of trips people are taking and whether those are reflected in the travel demand model. Daniel Sellers shared that while the model makes a consideration of pedestrian trips, it does not make a robust model of pedestrian trips; rather it considers various considerations, but ignores the very worst scenarios.

Tristan Winkler communicated, that in terms of the planning process, determining the preferred scenario is legally required of the MPO Board and must be made by August 2020. He noted, too, that this is a five-year forecast, which would be reviewed within that timeframe. Chairman Lapsley shared that the adoption of one of the scenarios by the MPO Board is a recommendation, not intended to tell other local governments what they must do.

Information only. No action required

REGULAR UPDATES

- Hannah Cook provided Division 13 updates and Steve Williams provided Division 14 updates.
- Daniel Sellers provided an update on the TPB.
- Mike Dawson provided FHWA/FTA updates.
- FBRMPO Committee & Workgroup Updates:
 - Prioritization – Met on October 1. Next meeting on November 5.
 - Regional Trail Working Group – Met in August. Next meeting TBD.
 - Transit Operators Workgroup – Met in September. Next meeting TBD.
 - Citizens' Advisory Committee – Met on October 16. Next meeting in January 2020.
- Legislative Updates – Tristan Winkler shared that HB 158 is a bill intended to reduce the reporting requirements of NCDOT to the legislature.

Announcements

ADJOURNMENT

Bob Davy moved to adjourn the meeting. Larry Harris seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned.