



French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization
Virtual Meeting via Zoom
 Minutes from the Special Joint TCC and Board meeting on April 28, 2020

Attendance:

Board Members	TCC Members	Staff/Other/Non-Voting
David White	William High	Tristan Winkler
Anthony Sutton	Jonathan Kanipe	Troy Wilson
George Banta	Autumn Radcliff	Nick Kroncke
Gwen Wisler	Eric Rufa	Daniel Sellers
Bill Lapsley	Jodie Ferguson	Emily Scott Cruz
Anne Coletta	Ken Putnam	Stephen Sparks
Rebecca McCall	Matt Cable	John Ridout
Amanda Edwards	Daniel Heyman	Julia Davis
Julie Mayfield	Elizabeth Teague	Joe Sanders
Bob Davy	Nathan Bennett	Joel Setzer
Brian Caskey	Janna Peterson	Calvin Clifton
Larry Harris	Jessica Morriss	Lonnie Watkins
Jennifer Hensley	Pat Christie	Erica Anderson
Jeff McKenna	Alex Carmichael	Mark Gibbs
	Brian Burgess	Steve Williams
	Dan Baechtold	Hannah Cook
	Daniel Cobb	Michael Dawson
		Steve Cannon
		Wanda Austin
		Brian Burch
		Chris Lee
		Vicki Meath

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS, APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairman Lapsley called the Special Joint meeting of the FBRMPO TCC and Board meeting to order, read the Ethics Statement and inquired if there were any conflicts of interest to note for today's meeting.

David White noted a conflict of interest with the business item and stated he would abstain from discussion or voting on the business item.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Lapsley called for any public comments. No public comments made.

NEW BUSINESS

CARES ACT TRANSIT FUNDING SUB-ALLOCATION

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was signed into law on March 27, 2020, and included roughly \$2 trillion in aid to be spread across the economy. Of that \$2 trillion, \$25 billion is going to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to help transit agencies, prevent, prepare for, and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

FTA is applying these funds through two existing transit programs: the Section 5307 Urban Transit Formula Funds and Section 5311 Rural Transit Formula Funds. \$22.7 billion is being allocated to Section 5307 for large and small urbanized areas and \$2.2 billion for rural areas. Expenses incurred on or after January 20, 2020 under the Urbanized Area Formula Program (5307) are eligible to be covered by CARES funding. Funds can be used for all operating activities, including administrative leave for transit workers. Based on apportionments, the Asheville Urbanized Area would receive an addition \$8,605,369 in additional Sectional 5307 funds.

Section 5307 Urban Transit Formula Funds make federal resources available to urbanized areas for transit capital and operating assistance. An urbanized area is an incorporated area with a population of 50,000 or more.

Emily Scott-Cruz shared that in 2017, the French Broad River MPO 5307 Sub-Allocation Study was completed in order to add Buncombe and Haywood Counties as 5307 sub-recipients. The TCC recommended MPO Board approval for the adoption of the City of Asheville as Designated Recipient for 5307 funds, a continuation of the 10% Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) set-aside following its consolidation into Section 5307, and a three-year formula phase-in period for regional 5307 funds. On February 23, 2020, the MPO Board voted to utilize the new apportionment formula, shown below:

Year of FTA Funding Apportionment	Total 5307 Allocation after JARC Set-Aside*	Asheville % of Total	Buncombe County % of Total	Haywood County % of Total	Henderson County % of Total
FY 2015	\$2,332,251	82.8%	0%	0%	17.2%
FY 2016	\$2,342,141	66.6%	9.76%	5.4%	18.2%
FY 2017	\$2,402,992	54.6%	19.2%	6.9%	19.3%
FY 2018	\$2,499,584	42.6%	28.6%	8.3%	20.4%
FY 2019	\$2,666,434	42.6%	28.6%	8.3%	20.4%

Because CARES funding is essentially supplemental 5307 funding and is being apportioned with the same formula, there arose a question about whether it should be allocated in the same way that the region allocates 5307 funding (i.e. with a 10% JARC set-aside). On 4/13/2020, representatives from the transit agencies in the region discussed the

options regarding CARES funding distribution, agreeing that there should not be a 10% JARC set aside from CARES funding.

The 10% JARC set-aside was adopted with the intention of providing a pot of funds that would be competitive across the region and could help spur more regional transit connectivity. However, in order to program these funds, MPO staff holds a call for projects, evaluates projects, and takes recommendations to the TCC and Board before the designated recipient (City of Asheville) can begin contracting with recipients- a process that works in non-emergency situations but takes a considerable amount of time. CARES Act funding is intended to be programmed in a short time frame. By programming CARES Act funds to 5307 sub-recipients (and Haywood County), these funds may be utilized in a more timely fashion. The 10% JARC Set-Aside would still be applied to non-emergency allocations of 5307 transit funds.

Staff recommends the following funding allocations:

	Proposed Distribution	Estimated Distribution
JARC	0.0%	\$0
Asheville	42.63%	\$3,668,469
Buncombe	28.62%	\$2,462,856
Henderson	20.41%	\$1,756,356
Haywood	8.34%	\$717,688

TCC Chair Josh O’Conner opened the floor up for discussion of the TCC to the matter being considered.

Discussion occurred regarding the purpose of the funds and it was shared that the funding may only be used for transit expenses that occurred after 1/20/20.

Jessica Morriss moved to recommend the Board approve a modification of the 5307 Suballocation Formula for the distribution of \$8,605,369 in CARES Act Funds to exclude the 10% Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) Set-Aside. Elizabeth Teague seconded and the motion carried unanimously upon a vote.

FBRMPO Board Chair Lapsley called for discussion about the matter being considered.

Discussion occurred regarding whether the jurisdictions would be able to expend all of their allocations and it was shared that there is no expiration date on these funds, however, it is recommended that transit agencies should state that they are unable to expend all of their CARES Act funding and elect to return the funding to the regional pot for re-allocation in the region.

Discussion occurred regarding the purpose of this funding and the expenses that might be covered by it. MPO staff shared that the purpose of 5307 funding is to support transit capital investment and operational expense. Tristan Winkler shared that the current pot of 5307 funding for the entire region is about \$3.5 million. Jessica Morriss shared that the City of Asheville plans to expend this new 5307 funding on expenses directly related to COVID-19, which have been incurred and would be incurred moving forward. The City is planning to partner with other local agencies to maintain transit services.

Chair Lapsley shared that the 5307 CARES Act funding increases the allocation by nearly three times and should be a boost for the region. Autumn Radcliff shared that the CARES Act funding may be expensed 100% for operational support. It was clarified that this funding would be allocated to the transit agencies in the MPO region.

Discussion occurred regarding the \$8.6 million allocated to the urbanized area, it was noted that this funding could be rescinded to the federal government and there is a need to spend the funding expeditiously. Transit agencies have gone fare-free during the COVID-19 crisis to decrease contact with transit drivers. Social distancing has also

been instituted, which has caused challenges with maintaining levels of service. Tristan Winkler noted that while this is potentially a large influx of funding, it is not expected that future allocations would be as large.

Julie Mayfield moved to approve a modification of the 5307 Suballocation Formula for the distribution of \$8,605,369 in CARES Act Funds to exclude the 10% Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) Set-Aside. Gwen Wisler seconded and the motion carried unanimously upon a vote and without further discussion. David White abstained from the vote as his agency (Western Carolina Community Action) could potentially receive a portion of this funding

Announcements

Meeting dates for the May meeting cycle include the TCC on May 14 and the Board on May 28.

ADJOURNMENT

Gwen Wisler moved to adjourn the meeting as there was no further business, which was seconded, and the meeting adjourned.