



**French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization**  
**Virtual Meeting via Zoom**  
Minutes from the Governing Board meeting on May 28, 2020

**Remote Attendance**

William Lapsley	Nick Kroncke	Emily Scott-Cruz	Matt Wechtel	Jennifer Hensley
Daniel Sellers	Bob Davy	Julie Mayfield	Tom Carpenter	Jerry Vehaun
George Banta	Stephen Sparks	Gwen Wisler	Rebecca McCall	Anne Coletta
Steve Williams	John Ridout	Jeff McKenna	Erica Anderson	Larry Harris
Troy Wilson`	Anthony Sutton	Amanda Edwards	Kevin Ensley	Mike Dawson
Brian Caskey				

**In-Person Attendance at the Land of Sky Office**

Tristan Winkler	Zia Rifkin
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## **WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS, APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Chairman Lapsley called the meeting to order, welcomed everyone to the meeting and requested (move approval to usual position in the minutes) approval of the agenda, which was presented for approval with no modification requested.

***Anthony Sutton moved to approve the agenda as modified to include an additional resolution for the Town of Weaverville's Planning Grant application on the consent agenda. Jeff McKenna seconded, and the motion carried unanimously upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.***

Chairman Lapsley read the Ethics Statement and inquired if there were any conflicts of interest to note for today's meeting. None was heard.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chairman Lapsley called for any public comments. Tristan Winkler shared that emails were received in support of the MTP regarding the Riverside Drive Multi-Use Path greenway project in Woodfin, which would receive additional funding through the TIP amendments on the agenda today.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

***Julie Mayfield moved to approve the consent agenda, as amended, consisting of the March 26, 2020 minutes and the April 28, 2020 minutes from the Special Joint Meeting the resolution for the Town of Weaverville Planning Grant application and the Resolution of Support for Mills River Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant application. Anne Coletta seconded, and the motion carried unanimously upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.***

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Amendments to the 2020-2029 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 proposed amendments and modifications for the 2020-2029 FBRMPO TIP requested, which are listed below:

- A-0010AA, Future I-26 section from Broadway to US 25, ROW delayed from FY 21 to FY 24 and CST from FY 24 to FY 27
- U-5781 and U-5782, Merrimon Avenue intersection improvements, CST delayed from FY 22 to FY 23
- U-5888, N. Main St. and Walnut intersection improvements, CST delayed from FY 20 to FY 23
- EB-5824, Hominy Creek Greenway, CST delayed from FY 20 to FY 21
- EB-5947, New Haw Creek Road sidewalks, CST delayed from FY 20 to FY 22

Discussion occurred about the Haw Creek project and Tristan Winkler shared that the City of Asheville did a contract for ROW and PE using local funding for that project. The federally funded portion of the project is being pushed out and will be dealt with later on.

***Larry Harris moved to approve the 2020-2029 TIP Amendments as presented. Bob Davy seconded and the motion carried unanimously upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.***

### **MTP 2045 Updates- Project List**

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) is a federally-required planning document that MPOs are required to update and maintain to reflect planned transportation investments in the region over the next twenty-five years. The MTP is required to be fiscally constrained, meaning that projects in the MTP have to be reasonably expected to work within projected revenues. The French Broad River MPO is required to update its MTP every five years with the next update due in September, 2020.

The Prioritization Subcommittee has recommended a financial plan and a fiscally constrained project list to be included in the MTP. These are major elements of the MTP 2045 that is planned to come back to the TCC and Board in Draft form in June with final approval in September. MPO staff plans for public comment on the draft plan from late June through August with a mandatory 45-day period of public review, per the MPO's Public Involvement Policy.

For the past several months the MPO Prioritization Subcommittee has been working on priority projects to be considered to make the MTP's 25-year fiscally-constrained project list (i.e. projects we think there will be funding for over the next 25 years.) As a review the following steps have been taken leading up to this:

- Approval of the MTP 2045 financial plan that is seen as "more optimistic" but still within FHWA guidelines for financial assumptions (revenues will keep up with inflation, STI will still govern transportation improvement decision-making, etc.);
- Approval of priority projects based on scores driven by data and the subcommittee's feedback on goals for each funding tier.

The draft list of projects is below. Projects have been divided based on funding tiers (think of it as a projection of 25 years of outcomes for the prioritization process.) As a summary, here are the funding "tiers" and how much funding was allocated from each "tier" for the MTP:

Tier	Eligible Projects	Funding Allocated in the MTP	Estimated Funding Available Over 25 Years
Statewide Mobility	Interstates & Strategic Highways	\$2,037,417,000	\$2,109,333,000
Regional Impact	US & NC Routes	\$689,654,000	\$691,606,000
Division 13 Needs	Secondary Roads (and anything from Regional Impact)	\$549,428,000	\$549,812,500
Division 14 Needs		\$530,164,000	\$530,812,500
Bike/Ped	Stand-Along Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects	\$178,722,000	\$200,000,000

Stand-Alone Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects

BUNCOMBE							
MTP ID	TIP ID	Route	From	To	Cost	Improvement	Current Status
BP134503	U-5019B	French Broad River West Greenway	Haywood Road	French Broad River Park	\$ 5,000,000	Multi-Use Path	Fully Funded
BP134504	U-5019A	Town Branch Greenway	US 25	Depot Street	\$ 4,275,000	Multi-Use Path	Fully Funded
BP134505	EB-5965	Deaverview Road	Patton Avenue	Westmore Drive	\$ 3,205,000	Sidewalks	Fully Funded
BP134506	EB-5822	North RAD Greenway	Hill Street	Broadway	\$ 3,179,000	Multi-Use Path	Fully Funded
BP134507	EB-5547	Riverwalk Greenway	Flat Creek Greenway	Into the Oaks Trail	\$ 6,009,000	Multi-Use Path	Fully Funded
BP134509	EB-5831	Coxe Avenue	Patton Avenue	Short Coxe Avenue	\$ 5,250,000	Complete Streets	Partially Funded
BP134510	EB-5830	Lexington Avenue	Patton Avenue	Southside Avenue	\$ 6,750,000	Complete Streets	Partially Funded
BP134511	EB-5774	NC 251/Beaverdam Creek Greenway	Broadway	US 25	\$ 7,530,000	Multi-Use Path	Fully Funded

BP134513	EB-5947	New Haw Creek Road	Beverly Road	Bell Road	\$ 2,375,000	Sidewalks	Fully Funded
BP134514	EB-5790	Asheville Greenway Connectors			\$ 1,146,000	Bike Improvements	Fully Funded
BP134515	EB-5944	Johnston Boulevard	Patton Avenue	Iona Circle	\$ 2,350,000	Sidewalks	Fully Funded
BP134516	EB-5948	Onteora Boulevard	Lincoln Avenue	Raleigh Road	\$ 1,140,000	Sidewalks	Fully Funded
BP134518	EB-5823	Bent Creek Greenway	Hominy Creek River Park	WNC Farmer's Market	\$ 4,000,000	Multi-Use Path	Partially Funded
BP134519	EB-5824	Enka Heritage Trail	Sand Hill School Road	Enka High School	\$ 6,400,000	Multi-Use Path	Fully Funded
BP134521	EB-5919	McDowell Street/Choctaw Street	Southside Avenue	Biltmore Avenue	\$ 446,000	Pedestrian Improvements	Fully Funded
BP134522	EB-5821	Reems Creek Greenway	Western Weaverville Town Limits	Karpen Soccer Fields	\$ 6,000,000	Multi-Use Path	Partially Funded
BP134523		Emma Road	North Louisiana Avenue	Boone Street	\$ 2,190,000	Sidewalks	SPOT
BP134524		Fonta Flora Greenway	Yates Avenue	Black Mountain Town Limits	\$ 6,945,000	Multi-Use Path	SPOT
BP134525		North Blue Ridge Road	US 70	Fortune Street	\$ 1,145,000	Sidewalks	SPOT
BP134526		Reed Creek Greenway Connector	Reed Creek Greenway	Clingman Avenue	\$ 3,910,000	Bike Improvements	SPOT
BP134527		Riverside Drive	Hill Street	I-240	\$ 905,000	Bike Improvements	SPOT
BP134528		Old Haywood Road	US 19/23 (Patton Avenue)	US 19/23 (Patton Avenue)	\$ 5,500,000	Sidewalks	SPOT
BP134540		West Asheville Rails to Trails - West Asheville Section	Old Haywood Rd	Emma Greenway	\$ 8,200,000	Multi-Use Path	MTP
BP134541		Depot St Connector	-	-	\$ 2,000,000	Multi-Use Path	MTP
BP134542		Montford Greenway	French Broad River	Montford Ave/Riverside	\$ 4,020,000	Multi-Use Path	MTP
BP134544		Sweeten Creek Road Sidewalks	I-40	Rock Hill Rd	\$ 1,865,000	Sidewalks	MTP
BP134546		Owen Spur Greenway Alternate - River	Brock Park	Owen HS	\$ 11,595,000	Multi-Use Path	MTP
BP134547		West Asheville Rails to Trails - Enka Section	Buncombe County Sports Park	Old Haywood Rd	\$ 6,245,000	Multi-Use Path	MTP

BP134549		Sweeten Creek Road Sidewalks	Fairview Rd	I-40	\$ 5,420,000	Sidewalks	MTP
BP134550		Lake Julian Greenway	I-26	Lake Julian Park	\$ 4,525,000	Multi-Use Path	MTP
BP134552		Smoky Park Highway - South of I-40	I-40	Sand Hill Rd	\$ 3,125,000	Sidewalks	MTP
BP134553		Smoky Park Highway Sidewalks - North of I-40	Old Haywood Rd	I-40	\$ 2,445,000	Sidewalks	MTP
BP134554		Caribou Rd Sidewalks	Sweeten Creek Rd	Shiloh Rd	\$ 1,405,000	Sidewalks	MTP
BP134555		Rock Hill Road Sidewalks	Ridgelawn Rd	Edgewood Dr	\$ 1,010,000	Sidewalks	MTP

#### HAYWOOD

MTP ID	TIP ID	Route	From	To	Cost	Improvement	Current Status
BP144502	EB-5945	Champion Drive	North Canton Road	Thickety Road	\$ 2,380,000	Sidewalks	Partially Funded
BP144512	EB-5926	US 19 (Soco Road)			\$ 1,975,000	Complete Streets	Fully Funded
BP144520	EB-5859	Hazelwood Avenue	Plott Creek Road	Will Hyatt Road	\$ 183,000	Sidewalks	Fully Funded
BP144529		Champion Drive	North Canton Road	Thickety Road	\$ 3,130,000	Bike Improvements	SPOT
BP144530		Richland Creek Greenway	Waynesville Rec Park	Haywood High-Tech Center	\$ 3,570,000	Multi-Use Path	SPOT
BP144531		Allen's Creek Road	Lickstone Road	Piney Mountain Road	\$ 590,000	Sidewalks	SPOT
BP144532		Old Clyde Highway	Blackwell Drive	Granberry Street	\$ 1,850,000	Sidewalks	SPOT
BP144545		Richland Creek Greenway	Rec Park	Hyatt Creek Rd	\$ 10,885,000	Multi-Use Path	MTP
BP144548		Vance St Sidewalks	W Marshall/Walnut St	Waynesville Rec Park	\$ 1,030,000	Sidewalks	MTP
BP144551		Balsam Drive Sidewalks	Browne Ave	S Main	\$ 1,425,000	Sidewalks	MTP
BP144556		Wall Street Sidewalks	US 276/Pigeon St	N Main St/Assembly St	\$ 870,000	Sidewalks	MTP

#### HENDERSON

MTP ID	TIP ID	Route	From	To	Cost	Improvement	County	Current Status
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BP144501	EB-5946	Mills River Valley Trail	French Broad River	NC 191	3,000,000	\$ Multi-Use Path	Henderson	Partially Funded
BP144508	EB-5963	Grove Street	US 176	Barnwell Street	904,000	\$ Sidewalks	Henderson	Fully Funded
BP144517	EB-5860	Blythe Street	US 64	NC 191	960,000	\$ Sidewalks	Henderson	Fully Funded
BP144533		Allen Branch Greenway	US 64	I-26	3,755,000	\$ Multi-Use Path	Henderson	SPOT
BP144534		Oklawaha Greenway (Southern Extension)	Jackson Park	Blue Ridge Community College	4,535,000	\$ Multi-Use Path	Henderson	SPOT
BP144535		Brooklyn Avenue	NC 225	US 176	2,665,000	\$ Sidewalks	Henderson	SPOT
BP144536		US 64	Orrs Camp Road	Howard Gap Road	2,675,000	\$ Sidewalks	Henderson	SPOT
BP144537		Ecusta Trail	Kanuga Road	Transylvania County Line	18,400,000	\$ Multi-Use Path	Henderson	SPOT
BP144543		Greenville Highway (NC 225) Sidewalks	Spartanburg Hwy	Brooklyn Ave	1,405,000	\$ Sidewalks	Henderson	MTP

MADISON								
MTP ID	TIP ID	Route	From	To	Cost	Improvement	County	Current Status
BP134538		Bailey Street	Bearwood Drive	Forest Street	955,000	\$ Sidewalks	Madison	SPOT
BP134539		Banjo Branch Greenway	Hickory Drive	Banjo Branch Road	2,625,000	\$ Multi-Use Path	Madison	SPOT

Discussion occurred regarding the list of projects and Tristan Winkler noted that these are the priority projects, which should be pursued or worked on at some level. Projects listed in the MTP, should have some design considerations. The last update to the CTP was in 2008 and the MTP was last updated in 2015. Chair Lapsley reiterated that projects on the list are the ones that should go through the prioritization process at some point. Should new projects arise that are not in the MTP, amendments could be made to the long-range plan as planning is a continuous process. This list represents the best guess list, now.

Discussion occurred about projects that are not on the list, including projects that the NCDOT Divisions might be planning. Tristan Winkler noted that the list is those projects considered a priority for the region. He noted that the I-40 widening is a good example of a Division priority, which was put on the list for consideration. In terms of the prioritization process, the submittal lists should be distributed in June. MPO staff anticipate more overlap than in the past, as there has been some disconnect in the past. The hope is for the MTP to reflect some of this. Outside of the MTP, there are projects that may emerge after the MTP process. Steve Williams shared that Division 14 has never submitted projects through prioritization without the Board's knowledge; some projects have come from the CTP, but even so, projects have always been in some type of plan. Division 13 shared that given that the division needs and regional needs are both the responsibility of the MPO to prioritize, it would be highly unlikely for the division to

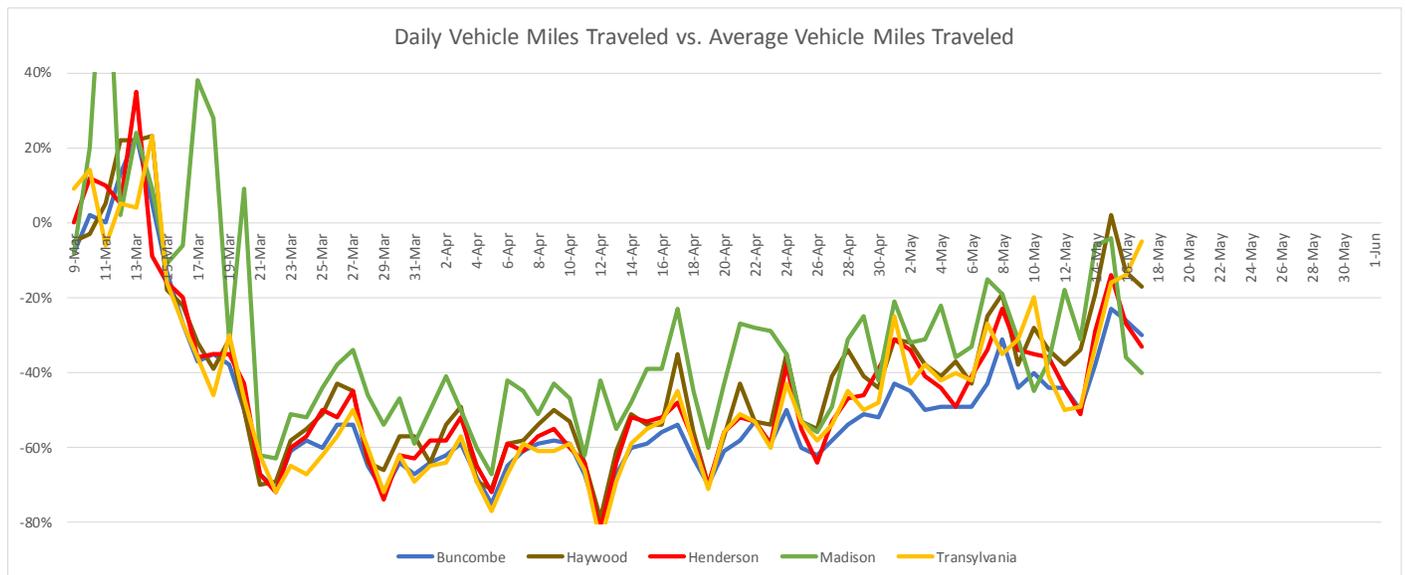
enter a project without the Board being aware. Buncombe County noted that the large projects come from the MTP or the CTP.

**No action required at this time.**

### NCDOT Financial Issues and NC First Commission Update

The MPO welcomed Amna Cameron, Deputy Director of NCDOT's Office of Strategic Initiatives and Program Support, to share about the on-going financial situation and to provide an update on efforts to provide more sustainable financial resources for the Department in the future.

Amna Cameron, Deputy Director of NCDOT's Office of Strategic Initiatives and Program Support communicated that NCDOT's cash-balance has recently dropped below the legislatively mandated "cash-floor," which means that NCDOT is not currently able to enter into new contracts, purchase new equipment, or acquire right-of-way on projects not already underway. This has also led the Department to develop drastic plans for departmental furloughs, cuts, a hiring freeze, and the cancellation of a contract for ferry services. NCDOT has been grappling with increased project costs, costs related to natural disasters, and payouts for lawsuits related to the MAP Act, but is now also dealing with major revenue declines due to the on-going pandemic and a correlated decrease in the level of driving that people are undertaking. For our region, the decline in driving has been dramatic (data from Street Light) which means that gas tax revenues have declined as well.



Amna Cameron provided an overview of the on-going financial situation and an update on efforts to provide more sustainable financial resources for the Department in the future. She noted that even without the pandemic, the "cash floor" would have been reached this coming summer. Immediate actions to address the shortfall include reducing programs (mowing, storm repairs, non-safety sign repairs, patching pavement, etc.) Next steps include developing plans for staff furloughs and/or reductions in force (RIF) and additional contractor and temporary layoffs. Active projects may stop if NCDOT expends all funds.

Amna Cameron shared about the economic impact of transportation construction, noting that it contributes over \$8 billion to the economy annually in the state. The big issue with transportation revenues is that motor fuel, highway use and DMV revenues all decline due to transportation disruptors (automation, connectivity, shared mobility, CAFÉ standards, demographics, Electric /Hybrids) and as safe, affordable, eco-friendly mobility, that is seamless increases. A big concern is that construction contractors, who receive NCDOT contracts, might be lost as projects are delayed. She noted that federal revenues are uncertain due to many factors, as is adequate financial assistance through COVID-19 stimulus packages. On the federal side of the funding equation, CARES Act funding cannot be used for NCDOT's current needs without a law change at the federal level. At the state level, the General Assembly is

committed to bringing forth a balanced budget by July 4, but it is unclear at this point, what funding reductions might be necessary to accomplish that.

Amna Cameron reviewed mobility changes (ride sharing, Electric/Hybrid, etc.) that could affect future NCDOT funding. She noted that COVID is going to change our way of life to continue higher levels of work-at-home patterns.

To address the shortfall, NCDOT has delayed projects (approximately 250 projects); however, the goal is to keep active construction projects going as long as possible. In addition, NCDOT is reducing staff through a hiring freeze and a 50% cost reduction in temporary and contract employees. Lastly, NCDOT is suspending programs including the Wildflower Program, Litter Sweet, Economic Development Projects, State Park maintenance, and reimbursement for school road improvements, among other programs. Amna Cameron also reviewed revenue options for NCDOT including fuel taxes, sales taxes on fuel, rental car sales tax, vehicle registration, weight fees and many other fees, taxes and potential revenue streams.

The NC First Commission is a public body that includes Henderson County Commissioner and MPO Board Chair, Bill Lapsley. The Commission is charged with evaluating transportation needs across the state and examining potential funding sources for NCDOT. The commission plans to review revenue options at their next meeting in August, which may be controversial. Website [ncdot.gov/ncfirst](http://ncdot.gov/ncfirst) (? Look up).

Discussion occurred regarding concerns about NCDOT holding federal pass-through funding and not letting it filter down to the local regions. Tristan Winkler noted that NCDOT receives federal pass-through funding for programming throughout the region for current projects. David Wassermann shared that these federal funds are being used to pay existing obligations on active projects. Due to the cash balance situation, some of that federal obligation authority is being used to replenish the state's coffers since the state has expended funding on local projects, which are reimbursed by the feds. Tristan Winkler shared that there have been conversations with the feds and the feds see the state as the obligating authority for these federal pass-through funds and cannot make a local authority the recipient. If a FAST Act extension passes, the issue could be re-visited; but the issue is still dependent on the cash balance situation. David Wasserman clarified that essentially, NCDOT receives about a billion dollars in obligation authority from the feds annually. These funds have an apportionment amount and an obligation amount. The obligation amount is currently being used to pay the bills as contractors submit those. Once the state pays the bills, a request is made to the feds for reimbursement. He offered to work with local governments to address issues; but noted that until the cash balance rises, there is not much that could be done.

***Informational item. No action requested.***

#### **REGULAR UPDATES**

- Updated were provided by Division 13 and Division 14.
- Daniel Sellers provided TPD updates.
- Mike Dawson provided FHWA updates
- FBRMPO Committee & Workgroup Updates:
  - Prioritization –Met May 5. Next meeting planned for June 2.
  - Transit Operators Workgroup – Met in April. Next meeting in June.
  - Citizens' Advisory Committee – Met April 15. Next meeting in July.
  - Hellbender Regional Trail is in draft form and going out to the MPO for comments soon.
- Legislative Updates – Tristan Winkler shared that NC Senate 704 extended a number of deadlines for licenses and fees, among other things, including that Emergency Management may utilize COGs for training, etc. NC House Bill 1043 provides \$300 million for NCDOT general maintenance, which is reliant upon a change to federal law to be enacted. A slew of bills introduced in the past few days HB 536 addresses temporary outdoor seating/services; HB 1225 provides \$3.1 billion in bonds (\$1.5 billion for transportation); HB 1178 aims to establish a Smart School Bus Pilot Program; HB 1122 authorizes NCDOT to construct conduits for broadband infrastructure and allows for NCDOT to pay for costs by leasing the conduit to

private companies. Tristan Winkler noted that these bills are currently in draft form, introduced to Senate and House committees over the past few days.

**Announcements**

VMT below 30% of normal but tracking upwards.

**ADJOURNMENT**

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