



METROPOLITAN PLANNING  
ORGANIZATION  
A PROGRAM OF LAND OF SKY

**French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization**  
**Virtual Meeting via the Zoom Platform**  
Minutes from the Governing Board meeting on August 27, 2020

**Remote Attendance**

|                  |                   |                |                  |                 |
|------------------|-------------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| William Lapsley  | Anthony Sutton    | Nick Kroncke   | Emily Scott-Cruz | Daniel Sellers  |
| Jennifer Hensley | Jerry Vehaun      | Rebecca McCall | Anne Coletta     | Autumn Radcliff |
| Vicki Eastland   | Steve Cannon      | Gwen Wisler    | Matt Wechtel     | Brian Caskey    |
| George Banta     | Stephen Sparks    | Janna Peterson | John Mitchell    | Troy Wilson     |
| Tom Carpenter    | Wanda Austin      | Joel Setzer    | Kevin Ensley     | John Ridout     |
| Amanda Edwards   | Marshall Williams | Tom Widmer     | Julie Mayfield   | Larry Harris    |
| David White      | Bob Davy          | Brownie Newman | Marcela Moreno   | Matt Hayes      |
| Bill Moss        | Brent Detwiler    | Erica Anderson | Michael Dawson   | Beth Newman     |

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

Tristan Winkler      Zia Rifkin

## **WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS, APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Chairman Lapsley called the meeting to order at approximately 1:00pm and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Tristan Winkler announced the meeting had quorum to conduct business.

Chairman Lapsley read the Ethics Statement and inquired if there were any conflicts of interest to note for today's meeting. No conflicts were noted.

## **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The agenda was presented for approval with no modification requested.

***Larry Harris moved to approve the agenda as presented. Anne Coletta seconded and the motion carried upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.***

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

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

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

***Jerry Vehaun moved to approve the consent agenda consisting of the June 2020 minutes. Bob Davy seconded, and the motion carried unanimously upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.***

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **STBGDA/TAPDA Project Selection**

FHWA has several funding programs, including Surface Transportation Block Grant- Direct Allotment (STBGDA) and Transportation Alternatives Program- Direct Allotment (TAPDA.) These are funding programs that are distributed to states with the requirement that funds be distributed to large urban areas (like the FBRMPO), small urban areas, rural areas, and some funds that may be used anywhere in the state. For large urban areas, MPOs are in charge of programming the funds (the MPO's "Direct Allotment.") Member governments and NCDOT are eligible to apply as long as the projects meet the program's eligible activities. The MPO receives approximately \$4,500,000 of these funds annually; the vast majority (\$4,250,000) comes in the form of STBGDA.

Tristan Winkler clarified that the 20% local match was required once the project is approved for funding. He also explained that these are federal funds that come to the states (in North Carolina- NCDOT), and then the local transportation planning regions, including large urban areas (i.e. FBRMPO). There are many other urban transportation planning regions in the state, which receive this type of funding, too. It was also noted that these are future funds, based on projections and estimates. This round of projects are being programmed for FYs 2021-2026. The next call for projects is not planned until January of 2022 (for FYs 27 and 28).

Tristan Winkler review the types of projects eligible for these types of funding. STBGDA funding is much more flexible than the TAPDA funding. He noted that in the bike/ped realm, the funding is primarily meant for transportation rather than recreational projects. NCDOT is the obligating authority for these funds. The agency can give the green light or suspend these projects. Currently, due to the NCDOT issue (cash flow), many projects have been suspended. Tristan Winkler clarified that since this is a reimbursement program, normally jurisdictions pay invoices and then request an 80% reimbursement from NCDOT. During this current environment of cash flow issues, that 80% reimbursement may not be available, hence, projects may be suspended.

Tristan Winkler reviewed the scoring methodology, which allows highway, bike/ped, and transit to compete; provides geographic equity (large vs. small jurisdictions); applies local priority points, requires local match, examines planning background, and which project phase is requested, mode effectiveness and cost effectiveness are also reviewed

More information on these funding programs as well as specific information on the most recent call for projects is available here: <http://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/local-administered-projects/>

The MPO held a call for projects from January 31st – April 17th for STBGDA and TAPDA funds. Utilizing both sources of funds would enable \$27,200,000 over five years. NOTE: the call was initially for \$28,200,000 but \$1,000,000 was programmed by the MPO Board to supplement the NC 251/Beaverdam Creek Greenway in June 2020

For this call for projects, the MPO received the following applications:

| Local Government  | Project                         | Mode    | Funding Requested | Previously DA Funded |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|---------|-------------------|----------------------|
| City of Asheville | Biltmore Ave @ White Fawn Drive | Highway | \$352,000         | No                   |
| City of Asheville | Coxe Avenue Improvements        | BikePed | \$9,040,000       | Yes                  |
| City of Asheville | Page/Haywood/Flint Intersection | Highway | \$6,800,000       | No                   |
| City of Asheville | Hazel Mill Sidewalks            | BikePed | \$1,600,000       | No                   |
| City of Asheville | School Zone Safety              | BikePed | \$660,000         | No                   |
| City of Asheville | NorthRAD Greenway               | BikePed | \$1,000,000*      | Yes                  |
| Black Mountain    | Bridge Replacement              | Highway | \$544,000†        | No                   |
| Black Mountain    | Riverwalk Greenway              | BikePed | \$960,000         | Yes                  |
| Division 13       | Broadway Sidewalks              | BikePed | \$310,000         | No                   |
| Division 13       | Bruce Road                      | Highway | \$5,000,000       | No                   |
| Division 13       | Charlotte Street Ramp           | Highway | \$668,250         | No                   |
| Division 13       | Haywood Road Resurfacing        | Highway | \$5,014,000       | No                   |
| Division 13       | Sand Hill/Sardis Intersection   | Highway | \$296,000         | No                   |
| Hendersonville    | Clear Creek Greenway            | BikePed | \$1,960,380       | No                   |
| Henderson County  | Ecusta Trail Ph I               | BikePed | \$1,142,038       | No                   |
| Henderson County  | Ecusta Trail Ph II              | BikePed | \$1,518,476       | No                   |
| Henderson County  | Ecusta Trail Ph III             | BikePed | \$2,414,705       | No                   |
| Henderson County  | Ecusta Trail Ph IV              | BikePed | \$5,779,538       | No                   |
| Henderson County  | Ecusta Trail Ph V               | BikePed | \$3,791,429       | No                   |

\*Initial request was \$2,000,000- MPO staff worked with NCDOT programming staff to request an additional \$1,000,000 from NCDOT for potential cost overruns.

†Initial request of \$365,600 increased based on NCDOT recommendations

Utilizing the [MPO's scoring methodology](#), projects received the following scores:

| Local Government  | Project                         | Mode    | Total | Rank |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|---------|-------|------|
| Division 13       | Broadway Sidewalks              | BikePed | 63    | 1    |
| Black Mountain    | Riverwalk Greenway              | BikePed | 61    | 2    |
| Hendersonville    | Clear Creek Greenway            | Highway | 54    | 3    |
| Black Mountain    | Bridge Replacement              | Highway | 49    | 4    |
| Division 13       | Charlotte Street Ramp           | Highway | 48    | 5    |
| Henderson County  | Ecusta Trail Ph I               | BikePed | 47    | 6    |
| City of Asheville | Coxe Avenue Improvements        | BikePed | 45    | 7    |
| City of Asheville | Biltmore Ave @ White Fawn Drive | Highway | 43    | 8    |
| City of Asheville | NorthRAD Greenway               | BikePed | 43    | 8    |
| Henderson County  | Ecusta Trail Ph II              | BikePed | 38    | 10   |

|                   |                                 |         |    |    |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|---------|----|----|
| Division 13       | Haywood Road Resurfacing        | Highway | 38 | 10 |
| Henderson County  | Ecusta Trail Ph III             | BikePed | 35 | 12 |
| City of Asheville | School Zone Safety              | BikePed | 35 | 12 |
| City of Asheville | Hazel Mill Sidewalks            | BikePed | 33 | 14 |
| Henderson County  | Ecusta Trail Ph IV              | BikePed | 32 | 15 |
| Henderson County  | Ecusta Trail Ph V               | BikePed | 32 | 15 |
| Division 13       | Sand Hill/Sardis Intersection   | Highway | 30 | 17 |
| Division 13       | Bruce Road                      | Highway | 25 | 18 |
| City of Asheville | Page/Haywood/Flint Intersection | Highway | 23 | 19 |

The Prioritization Subcommittee recommended the following projects to be programmed:

**Fund Top 13 Projects, Remaining Funds for Cost Overruns**

| Local Government  | Project                         | Mode    | Score | Federal Funding |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|---------|-------|-----------------|
| Division 13       | Broadway Sidewalks              | BikePed | 63    | \$310,000       |
| Black Mountain    | Riverwalk Greenway              | BikePed | 61    | \$960,000       |
| Hendersonville    | Clear Creek Greenway            | Highway | 54    | \$1,960,380     |
| Black Mountain    | Bridge Replacement              | Highway | 49    | \$544,000       |
| Division 13       | Charlotte Street Ramp           | Highway | 48    | \$668,250       |
| Henderson County  | Ecusta Trail Ph I               | BikePed | 47    | \$1,142,038     |
| City of Asheville | Coxe Avenue Improvements        | BikePed | 45    | \$9,040,000     |
| City of Asheville | Biltmore Ave @ White Fawn Drive | Highway | 43    | \$352,000       |
| City of Asheville | NorthRAD Greenway               | BikePed | 43    | \$1,000,000     |
| Henderson County  | Ecusta Trail Ph II              | BikePed | 38    | \$1,518,476     |
| Division 13       | Haywood Road Resurfacing        | Highway | 38    | \$5,014,000     |
| City of Asheville | School Zone Safety              | BikePed | 35    | \$660,000       |
| Henderson County  | Ecusta Trail Ph III             | BikePed | 35    | \$2,414,705     |

Total Cost (Federal Funds): **\$25,583,849**

Remaining Funds: **\$1,616,151**

More information on the scoring of each project is available in the presentation for this month's agenda ([www.frenchbroadrivermpo.org/agendas-minutes](http://www.frenchbroadrivermpo.org/agendas-minutes)).

The TCC recommended these 13 projects for approval at their August 13 meeting.

Chairman Lapsley reviewed how projects are funded, once the funding becomes available; Initially, jurisdictions are contacted to see if their projects are ready to go (including availability of local match). Tristan Winkler explained that the projects on the list are funded with several considerations in mind, including that some projects are already in development (funding expended), so those projects may receive funding first. Some projects may drop off the list entirely, if the jurisdictions does not have its local match. The MPO staff and NCDOT work together to determine the order in which projects receive funding. Jurisdictions also weigh in on the order in which their projects are funded.

Discussion occurred regarding how long jurisdictions have the funding available for their approved project(s), once funding becomes available and Tristan Winkler shared that the MPO works extensively with jurisdictions to provide accommodations, when necessary, to ensure that the funding is available to the jurisdiction, when it is needed. He noted, that at some point, funding could be pulled, when waiting affects the availability of the funds. It was also clarified that the total amount of funding is \$27 million(total cost + remaining funds), provided at a level of about \$4 million per year. He communicated that there is a balance of nearly \$11 million, that has built up from past rounds of funding, so the first year of funding would have those funds available, thereafter, \$4 million per year.

***George Banta moved to approve the top 13 projects plus \$1,600,000 for cost overruns. Larry Harris seconded and the motion carried upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.***

### **Prioritization Subcommittee Vacancy**

The MPO's Prioritization Subcommittee has seven members- four TCC members and three Board members. The subcommittee meets once a month on the first Tuesday at 9:00 AM. The subcommittee was initially formed to deal with the prioritization process but has evolved into the general steering committee for all MPO efforts, including updating the MPO's land use projections, and any other regional plan underway.

The current roster is:

| <b>MPO TCC Representatives</b>         | <b>MPO Board Representatives</b>     |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Autumn Radcliff (Henderson County)     | Jerry Vehaun (Town of Woodfin)       |
| <b>VACANT</b>                          | Anthony Sutton (Town of Waynesville) |
| Elizabeth Teague (Town of Waynesville) | Julie Mayfield (City of Asheville)   |
| Josh O'Conner (Buncombe County)        |                                      |

The seat formerly held by Brian Burgess (Town of Mills River) is currently open. A TCC member is required to fill the vacancy.

The TCC provided a recommendation, in the form of a motion for Dan Baechtold with the City of Asheville to fill the vacancy.

***Larry Harris seconded the motion from the TCC to approve Dan Baechtold with the City of Asheville to fill the vacancy on the Prioritization Subcommittee. The motion carried upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.***

### **Know Your SIT- Modernization/Roadway Upgrade projects Presentation**

Back in March, a presentation on the meaning and potential benefits of access management was given to the TCC and Board. In an on-going effort to provide more information about specific improvement types (SIT) that are submitted to SPOT for prioritization, this presentation continues the series looking at modernization and roadway upgrades.

Troy Wilson shared that modernization often involves bringing the roadway up to current design standards, which may include increasing the lane or shoulder width, improving the roadway geometry, and/or adding turn lanes at intersections. Roadway Upgrades is a similar SIT that involves a collection of roadway improvements such as modernizing a section, adding Complete Streets elements, and/or incorporating access management such as restricting turn movements.

In the most recent round of Prioritization, P6.0, a number of roadway corridors were submitted for modernization or roadway upgrades. Blue Ridge Road, Sweeten Creek Road, Brown Avenue, and Duncan Hill Road are a few examples from around the region.

Discussion occurred regarding whether there were sub-categories to the standard design for modernization projects and it was shared that there are mitigation measures available for roadways that do not conform to the standard design elements.

***Information topic. No action required.***

### **Asheville Transit Master Plan Presentation**

Marcela Moreno provided a brief presentation on the Transit Master Plan.

The Transit Master Plan (TMP) serves as the guiding document for the City of Asheville's transit system, providing specific routing recommendation to improve service in the short term while serving as a long-term vision plan for future expansion and improvements. The study was funded by the FBRMPO and the City of Asheville. In 2018, the TMP was updated to provide guidance on the operation and growth of the transit network after extensive public input, coordination with committees, and input from operators, and interest group discussions. The plan outlines the current operating environment, ART transit service, review of local plans, public involvement, routing recommendations, evaluation and recommendations for county extensions, transit facility infrastructure, and a 10-year phased implementation and financial plan.

The TMP reflects public input, proposed strategic extensions of service, supported crosstown routes, and devised a TMP timeline. The plan includes the following:

- 2020 Service Change—
  - New service with three new routes, extended service down New Leicester Highway, redesigned maps, updated schedule, and improved frequency on high volume routes.
- Extended Service Hours
- ART Station Renovation
- Service Extension Evaluation and Recommendations (including to Weaverville, Woodfin, Erwin, Reynolds, Shiloh, Enka and Candler, Fairview, and Beaverdam)
- Transit Maintenance Facility
- 10 Year Phased Implementation Plan

The goals of system redesign were to (1) minimize impacts to existing ridership, while increasing system operational efficiencies, (2) reduce the need for all routes to meet at the Downtown Station, and facilitate more transfers on-street, where appropriate, to promote faster travel times through the Downtown, and (3) preserve coverage, even if reducing frequencies, to lower ridership route segments and destinations that negatively impact travel times and on-time performance on existing routes.

Discussion occurred regarding the provision of transit services farther south down NC 25 in order to appeal to potential riders who live in the many apartments in Fletcher. It was noted that jurisdictions interested in contributing to the transit system, in order to provide extended service beyond the city limits of Asheville, would certainly be considered by the City. It was also shared that a feasibility study would be necessary, before any changes might be considered to the current TMP. Additionally, it was shared that a regional approach to transit could provide those additional options for people needing to travel in and out of the county.

***Informational topic. No action required.***

#### **REGULAR UPDATES**

- Updates were provided by Division 13 and Division 14.
- TPD Updates were provided.
- FHWA/FTA Updates were provided
- FBRMPO Committee & Workgroup Updates:
  - Prioritization – Met August 4. Next meeting planned for September 1.
  - Transit Operators Workgroup – Met on June 16. Next meeting on September 14.
  - Citizens' Advisory Committee – Met July 15. Next meeting in October.
  - Hellbender Regional Trail Workgroup - Draft Hellbender Trail Plan Public Comments closed on August 21.
- Legislative Updates – Federal updates included that the Fast Act does expire at the end of September 2020 and a proposal has been put forth by the House for a new transportation bill, which has little or no chance of moving forward. In addition, there have been divergent stimulus bills put forth over the summer that included funding for highway programs. No forward movement, at this point, on any of those. State bill about personal delivery devices, that gives local government regulatory control has passed. Follow-up to HB 77, part of that bill allows for additional Transportation Board appointments and has led to additional

appointments from the western region of the state, including Chuck McGrady. In addition, just to note, HB 77 modified the cash floor for NCDOT by lowering it slightly.

- Public Meetings held virtually- Tristan Winkler shared that there was a virtual public meeting for the Hellbender Trail Plan and there have been a couple of other public meetings held virtually, too.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chairman Lapsley called for any public comments. No public comments were heard.

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

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