

FRENCH BROAD RIVER

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Staff Report & Recommendations

April, 2021 Minutes

French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization

Minutes from the TCC Virtual Meeting via Zoom on April 8, 2021

ATTENDANCE:

Remote via the Zoom Platform:

Chair Autumn Radcliff	Tristan Winkler	Nick Kroncke	Emily Scott-Cruz
Troy Wilson	Joel Setzer	Jill Cahoon	Mariate Echeverry
Michael Dawson	James Voso	Stephen Sparks	Eric Rufa
Ed Evans	Jennifer Hibbert	Peyton O'Conner	Daniel Metcalf
Jessica Trotman	Brendan Merithew	Daniel Sellers	Janna Peterson
Anna	John Ridout	Kenny Bussey	John Fargher
Rachel Bronson	Jessica Morris	Dan Baechtold	Elizabeth Teague
Ron Hancock	Cole Sutton	Karla Furnari	Daniel Cobb
Pat Christie	William High	David White	Chris Lee
Ed Evans	Matt Cable	Mark Teague	Jay Hair
Erica Anderson	Brent Detwiler		

In-Person at Land of Sky Regional Council:

Zia Rifkin (minutes)

WELCOME AND HOUSEKEEPING

Chair Radcliff called the meeting to order, welcomed everyone, and roll call followed. Upon completion of roll call, quorum was announced for conducting the business of the TCC.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Radcliff called for public comments. No public comments were made.

CONSENT AGENDA

Chair Radcliff indicated that the Consent Agenda included the February 11, 2021 minutes. She requested approval for the Agenda at this time, as well.

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Elizabeth Teague moved to approve the consent agenda and the agenda as presented. William High seconded the motion, which was affirmed upon a roll call vote of the member governments present.

BUSINESS

FTA 5310 Project Selection

The Asheville UZA was awarded Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Apportionment Act (CRRSAA) funds to Section 5310. Funds are to be used for 5310 operations and payroll (if recipients have furloughed employees). The UZA received \$60,153 in additional Section 5310 funds. The Regional Transit Operators Workgroup met to discuss CRRSAA funding, deciding that the best approach would be to divert the funding, which totals \$54,138 after taking out 10% Admin costs for the City of Asheville to a single recipient. The ongoing 5310 Call for Projects made this process simplified.

The agencies that submitted “Other” (operating) projects with the highest funding request, for only one project, were asked if they could provide an updated letter of local match and extend their Period of Performance to expend the entire \$54,138. Senior Companions was approached first because their project spans multiple counties; however, they were unable to provide a match commitment letter for the full amount. Mountain Projects was also approached and confirmed their ability to provide a local match commitment, revised budget, and certification that they have not furloughed employees.

Note: Mountain Projects is eligible to receive CRRSAA funds, in which case **all** Other Projects could be fully funded for FY22 with 5310 funds, and an additional \$14,902 could be added to the Traditional pot of funds.

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 application process for Section 5310 ran from November 20th, 2020 through December 31st, 2020.

Additional information about Section 5310 is available at: <http://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/5310-and-jarc/>.

The 5310 Grant has two categories for funding:

- Traditional/Capital projects: at least 55% of the total funding amount has to go to “traditional” projects.
- Other/Operations projects: no more than 45% of the total funding amount can go to these projects.

Following the February Prioritization Subcommittee meeting, Alternative 4 (shown below) was approved pending a conversation with the Traditional applicants, whose projects were scored during the February Prioritization Subcommittee meeting. **Alternative 5 was created after a conversation between Buncombe County, the City of Asheville, and MPO Staff.**

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SUBMITTED PROJECTS:

The table below shows the projects submitted and funding requested.

Applicant	Traditional or Other	Project Title	Period of Performance	Project Description	Funding Requested	Local Match	Total Cost
Buncombe County	Traditional	SEDTAP	7/1/21 - 6/30/22	Door-to-door service for seniors/disabled on ADA compliant vans. Funds to support medical trips for elderly adults; demand response for customers with disabilities. 5310 funds allow more state and local funds to extend across all programs to cover transportation needs.	\$ 200,081	\$ 50,021	\$ 1,257,510
City of Asheville	Traditional	Asheville Paratransit	7/1/21 - 6/30/22	Allows CoA to offer service to residents beyond the 3/4 service boundary	\$ 166,832	\$ 41,708	\$ 208,540
Buncombe County	Other	RIDE Voucher Program	2/1/22 - 6/20/22	Curb-to-curb, user-side subsidy that allows users to purchase vouchers for rides at a lower rate to be used in Buncombe county for same day, unforeseen trips and trips not available through public transit	\$ 20,112	\$ 20,112	\$ 40,224
Land of Sky	Other	Senior Companions Program	7/1/21 - 6/30/22	Provides companions for senior adults that provide transportation and other needed services.	\$ 42,838	\$ 42,838	\$ 85,676
Madison County	Other	Expanded Nutrition Access	7/1/21 - 6/30/22	Continue providing home delivery meals for Mars Hill meal side and provide extra 35 home deliveries since March 2020.	\$ 26,058	\$ 26,058	\$ 52,116
Madison County	Other	Expanded Transportation to Mars Hill	7/1/21 - 6/30/22	Allow MCTA to continue providing transportation services to Mars Hill residents for medical appointments and other accessibility, covering cost of driver, vans, scheduling, and management.	\$ 17,426	\$ 17,426	\$ 34,852
Mountain Projects, Inc.	Other	Haywood Public Transit Paratransit	7/1/21 - 6/30/22	Funds support paratransit services; if awarded, 5310 State funding could serve a wider portion of Haywood County and these funds could pay for the UZA	\$ 43,136	\$ 43,136	\$ 86,272

Alternatives 4 and 5: 5310 funding breakdown and CRRSAA allocation-recommended by Regional Transit Operators Group:

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<i>Funding Type</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Percentage of Total Allocation</i>
Admin	\$ 34,668	10%
Total Traditional Projects Funding	\$ 205,574	59%
Total Other Projects Funding	\$ 106,434	31%
Total 5310 Funding Amount	\$ 346,676	100%

Applicant	Project Title	Period of Performance	Recommended Funding	Recommended Funding Level	Funding Requested	Local Match	Total Cost
Buncombe County	RIDE Voucher Program	2/1/22-6/30/22	\$ 20,112	100%	\$20,112	\$20,112	\$40,224
Land of Sky	Senior Companions Program	7/1/21 - 6/30/22	\$ 42,838	100%	\$ 42,838	\$ 42,838	\$ 85,676
Madison County	Expanded Nutrition Access	7/1/21 - 6/30/22	\$ 26,058	100%	\$ 26,058	\$ 26,058	\$ 52,116
Madison County	Expanded Transportation to Mars Hill	7/1/21 - 6/30/22	\$ 17,426	100%	\$ 17,426	\$17,426	\$ 34,852
CRRSAA Funding							
Mountain Projects, Inc.	Haywood Public Transit Paratransit	7/1/21 - 12/31/22	\$ 108,276	100%	\$ 54,138	\$ 54,138	\$108,276

CONSIDER THE TRADITIONAL SCORE

Alternative 4:

Fund both Buncombe SEDTAP and Asheville's Paratransit at 56% of their requested funding. Use CRRSAA funds as detailed above and fully fund Other 5310 projects, diverting an extra \$14,902 to Traditional percentage of the 5310 allocation.

ALTERNATIVE 4	Project Title	Recommended Funding	Recommended Funding Level	Funding Requested	Local Match
Buncombe County	SEDTAP	\$ 112,148	56%	\$200,081	\$50,021
City of Asheville	Asheville Paratransit	\$ 93,426	56%	\$166,832	\$41,708

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Alternative 5:

Split the total Traditional funding available (\$205,574) between Buncombe's SEDTAP and Asheville's Paratransit—leaving each project with \$102,787. Use CRRSAA funds as detailed above and fully fund Other 5310 projects, diverting that additional \$14,902 to Traditional funding.

Alternative 5	Project Title	Recommended Funding	Recommended Funding Level	Funding Requested	Local Match
Buncombe County	SEDTAP	\$ 102,787	51%	\$200,081	\$25,697
City of Asheville	Asheville Paratransit	\$ 102,787	62%	\$166,832	\$25,697

A motion was made to recommend the Board approve the recommendation given by the Regional Transit Operators Group for Alternatives 5 for this year's 5310 and CRRSAA. Peyton O'Conner seconded and the motion carried upon a roll call vote and without further discussion.

Final FY 22 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and MPO Self-Certification

The French Broad River MPO is required to develop a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and present a draft in February with the final version approved in May.

The UPWP is a federally mandated document for MPO's to produce that serves as the MPO's budget. This includes line items of work for MPO staff, planning work planned by the region's designated recipient for FTA 5303 Metropolitan Planning Funds (City of Asheville), as well as studies being carried out using federal planning funds.

Major Changes between the FY 2021 and FY 2022 UPWP include the following:

- More emphasis is being put on data, modeling, and travelers behavior to reflect anticipated work to build the region's base-year socio-economic dataset for the 2050 MTP. This includes further work on updating the region's land use layer,
- More funding is being put towards TIP Development/Prioritization to go along with anticipated work tasks for P 6.0
- Less funding is being put towards Special Study Coordination with the Regional Transit Study and Corridor Studies expected to be completed.
- Less funding is being put towards Statewide Planning & Coordination (less travel, likely)

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-More funding is being put towards Regional Planning with work beginning to ramp up for the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, the 5307 Suballocation Formula being discussed/reconsidered, and work to begin on updating the Locally Coordinated Human Services and Public Transportation Plan

MPO's are required to annually certify that they have conformed to federal planning requirements for Metropolitan Transportation Planning. A resolution is passed by the MPO annually with the Final UPWP.

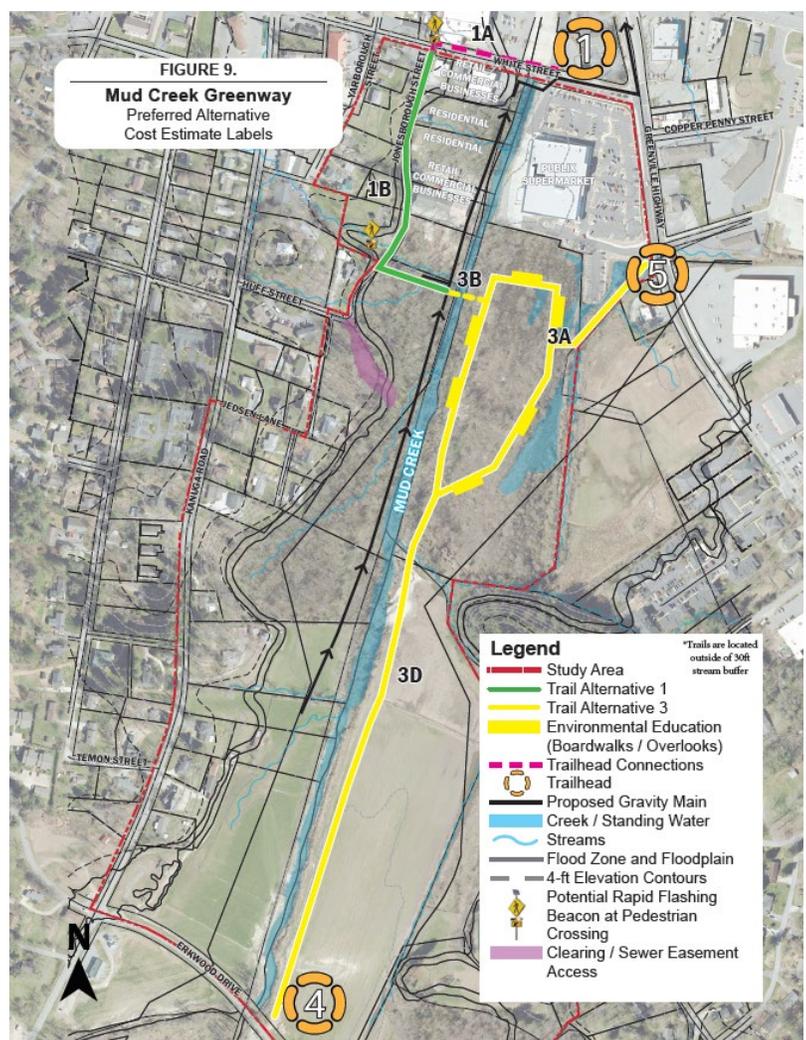
Elizabeth Teague moved to recommend the Board approve the FY 22 UPWP and the resolution for the MPO Self-Certification. Jessica Morriss seconded and the motion carried upon a roll call vote and without further discussion.

Mud Creek Greenway Study Presentation
Project Overview: Henderson County applied for funding to conduct a feasibility study along Mud Creek in south Hendersonville to provide safe infrastructure for pedestrians and bicyclists. The study was conducted in FY 2021, primarily to look at potential alignments and cost estimates for pursuing a multi-use path roughly parallel to the creek. The study area is a quickly growing and developing part of Henderson County that also has frequent flooding issues near the creek.

The project team for the Mud Creek Greenway Study is made up of AECOM and Henderson County staff, Mariate Echeverry, representing AECOM, provided a presentation on the findings from the study to the MPO TCC.

Information item. No action requested.

Regional Transit Feasibility Study Update



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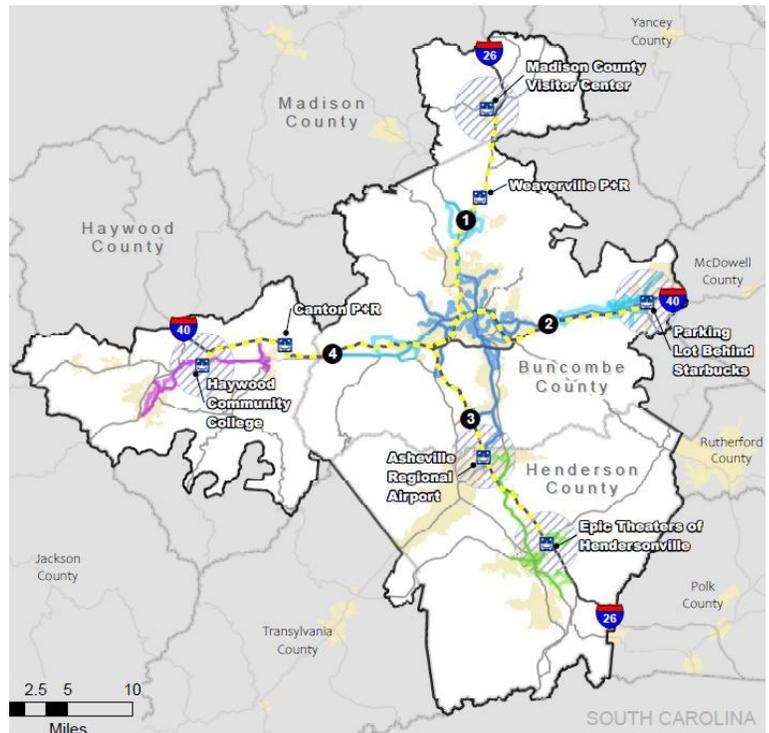
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AECOM staff, Jill Cahoon, Jennifer Hibbert, and Mariate Echeverry, provided a presentation on the current findings and recommendations of the study beginning with a project overview.

The MPO approved a Regional Transit Feasibility Study for its FY 2021 UPWP. The study looks at adding regionally-focused transit routes (ex. Asheville to Hendersonville, Waynesville to Black Mountain, etc.) to provide the FRBMPO region with express bus options in the MPO planning area (Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, and Madison counties.) This study looks at the feasibility of providing these options by examining the likely governance structure that may be required to provide this service (Regional Transit Authority), the responsibilities that could fall to a regional body, funding opportunities, and potential routes.

Examining regional transit has been an identified need since, at least, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) completed in 2000. This study would help to provide a roadmap for our region on how to implement a regional transit system.



The Regional Transit Feasibility Study is currently going through its second round of public involvement through online videos and public surveys running through April 22nd. More information on the survey and other materials are available here: <http://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/regional-transit-feasibility-study/>

Information item. No action requested.

REGULAR UPDATES AND INFORMATION ITEMS

Regular updates included NCDOT Division 13 and 14 updates, TPD updates and FHWA/FTA updates. MPO Subcommittees, Legislative, and Staff updates were also presented.

ANNOUNCEMENTS, NEWS, SPECIAL UPDATES

TOPICS FOR NEXT MEETING

There may be a presentation regarding Wildlife Crossings over highways at the May meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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Chair Radcliff opened the second public comment period. No public comments received.

ADJOURNMENT

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