

April, 2021 Minutes

French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization Virtual Meeting via the Zoom Platform

Minutes from the Governing Board meeting on April 22, 2021

April 22, 2021: Remote Attendance via Zoom

Chair Larry Haris (Town of Black Mountain)
Tristan Winkler (FBRMPO)
Nick Kroncke (FBRMPO)
Emily Scott-Cruz (FBRMPO)
John Ridout (FBRMPO)
Hannah Bagli (LOSRC-TDM)
Tom Carpenter (Village of Flat Rock)
Mike Eveland (Town of Maggie Valley)
Mariate Echeverry (AECOM)
Bob Davy (Town of Fletcher)
Troy Wilson (NCDOT Division 14)
Anne Coletta (Village of Flat Rock)
Stephen Sparks (NCDOT Division 14)
Steve Williams (NCDOT Division 14)
Jennifer Hibbert (AECOM)
George Banta (Town of Laurel Park)
Brian Caskey (Town of Mills River)
Jeff McKenna (Town of Weaverville)
Parker Sloan (Buncombe Commission)
Gwen Wisler (City of Asheville)

Jennifer Hensley (City of Hendersonville)
Wanda Austin (NCDOT Division 14)
Jill Cahoon (AECOM)
Chris Medlin (NCDOT)
Daniel Sellers (NCDOT TPD)
Rebecca McCall (Henderson Commission)
Hannah Cook (NCDOT Division 13)
Michael Dawson (FHWA)
Jason Gilliland (Site Design Studio)
Matt Wechtel (Madison Commission)
Kenny Armstrong
George Webb (FBRMPO Citizen's Advisory Committee)
Christopher Todd (Town of Laurel Park)
Chuck McGrady (NCBOT Division 14)
Mark Gibbs (NCDOT Division 13) Autumn Radcliff (Henderson County)

April 22, 2021: In-Person Attendance at the Land of Sky Office

Zia Rifkin (Minutes)

FRENCH BROAD RIVER

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Staff Report & Recommendations

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS, ROLL CALL, APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Larry Harris called the meeting to order at approximately 1:00pm and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Chair Harris read the Ethics Statement and inquired if there were any conflicts of interest to note for today's meeting. No voting members of the Board registered any conflicts with the business before the body. The roll was called and quorum established.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments received.

CONSENT AGENDA (including agenda approval)

Bob Davy moved to approve the consent agenda consisting of the February 25, 2021 meeting minutes and the agenda as presented. Anne Coletta seconded, and the motion carried unanimously upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.

NEW BUSINESS

5310 Project Selection and CRRSAA

Section 5310 (Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities) funds are allocated to the Asheville Urbanized Area (UZA), 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 31, 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 (FBRMPO typically sets 35% of funds aside for Other projects)

FY2020 5310 Available Funding	\$346,676
Admin	\$34,668
Funding available after 10% Admin	\$312,008

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% administrative costs for the City of Asheville to a single recipient. The ongoing 5310 Call for Projects made this process simplified.

CRRSAA 5310 (Total)	\$60,153
10% Admin	\$6,015
CRRSAA after Admin	\$54,138

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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 more than one County; 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.

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 CoATA 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, unforseen 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

The Prioritization Subcommittee scored the Traditional Projects after choosing to recommend fully funding FY22 Other Projects using CRRSAA and 5310 funds. Prioritization recommended TCC choose Alternative 5 to recommend to the Board, and TCC recommended Alternative 5 in their meeting on April 8. The breakdown of funding is in the table below.

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Funding Type	Amount	Percentage of Total Allocation
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%

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.

Traditional Projects:

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

Other Projects:

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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

Parker Sloan moved to approve funding alternative # 5 as recommended by the Prioritization Subcommittee and the TCC. Gwen Wisler seconded, and the motion carried upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.

Final FY 22 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

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)
- 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

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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.

Discussion occurred regarding the 20% local match, provided by member governments through dues, utilized to support match requirements on grants, etc. Tristan Winkler shared that local dues would not increase for FY 2022

Bob Davy moved to approve the final FY 2022 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and the Self-Certification resolution. Gwen Wisler 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.

Discussion occurred regarding the distance the greenway would travel (about one-mile) and where it might be located in relation to White Street in Hendersonville. Tristan Winkler shared that follow-up steps for the study could include adoption by the City and/or County, then seeking funding either through grants or the prioritization process. He noted also that the project might fall under the Locally Administered Projects Program (LAPP).

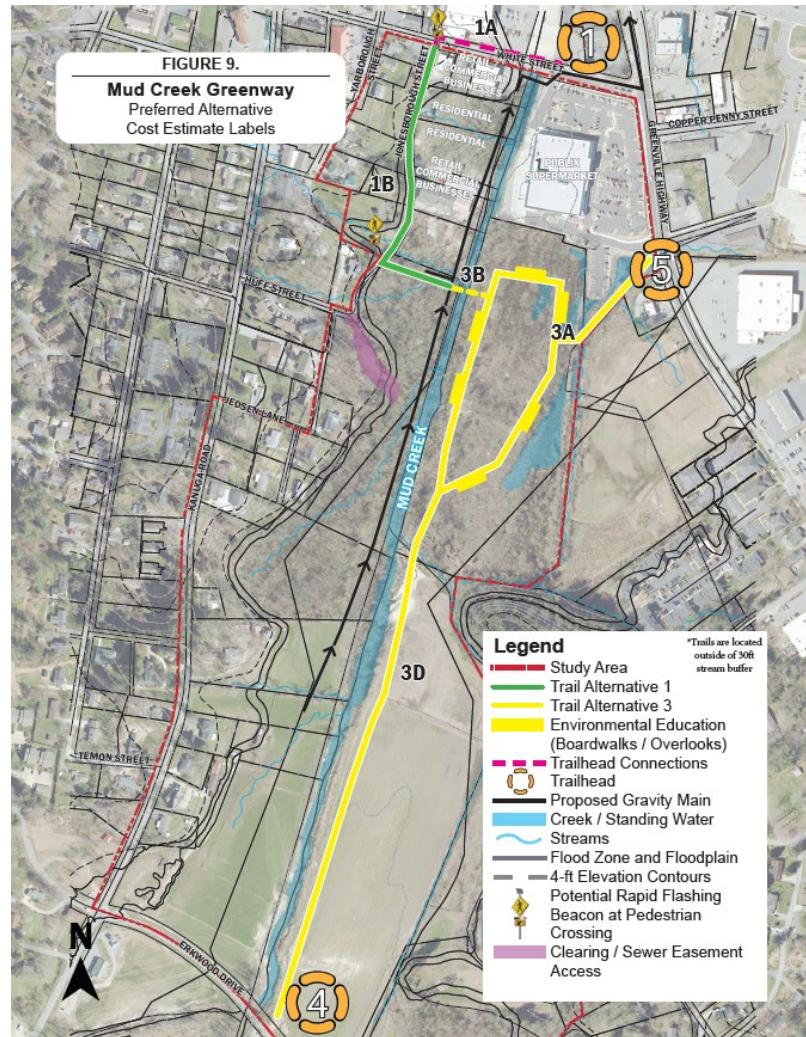
Information item. No action requested.

339 New Leicester Highway, Suite 140 • Asheville, NC 28806 • www.fbrmpo.org

Long-Range Transportation Plan • Transportation Improvement Program

Highway Planning • Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning • Transit Planning • Air Quality

Public Involvement



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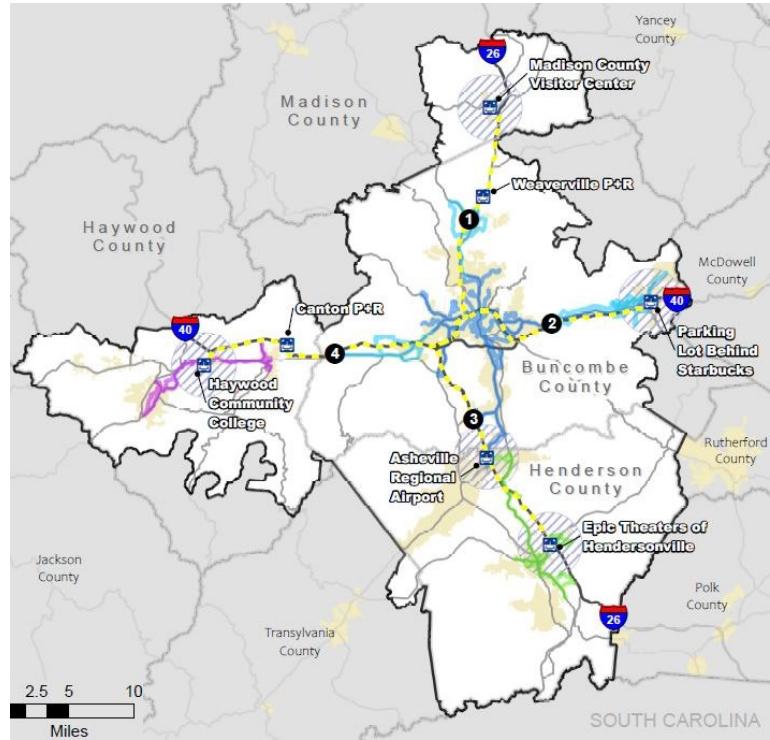
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Regional Transit Feasibility Study Update

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 22. More information on the survey and other materials are available here: <http://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/regional-transit-feasibility-study/>

Discussion occurred regarding the implementation of a regional transit authority, including what is currently allowed under current statutes and governance of a regional authority. Jennifer Hibbert with AECOM shared that creation of a regional entity could provide transit operations and services that might benefit both urban and rural areas. Tristan Winkler shared that regional movements have been changing and continue to change. The study is meant to facilitate regional movement, which is key to transportation planning success. Ultimately, it will fall to local leaders to push for development of a regional transit option. Tristan Winkler also reviewed participation on the steering committee for the study, which includes local government staff representatives, including those that work in transit, who have provided feedback on the study. The current round of public engagement for this study is wrapping up and the study will be coming before the MPO again, at a future date.

No action required.

REGULAR UPDATES

- Divisions 13 and 14 provided updates.



Staff Report & Recommendations

- A Transportation Planning Division Update was provided.
- No FHWA/FTA Update was provided
- FBRMPO Committee & Workgroup Updates:
 - Prioritization – Met April 6; next meeting May 4.
 - Transit Operators Workgroup – Next meeting TBD; 5307 Subrecipients met April 6.
 - Citizens' Advisory Committee – Next meeting TBD.
 - Regional Transit Study – Public meetings from March 22-April 22.
 - Corridor Studies – Tunnel Road public meeting on April 14.
- Legislative Updates – American Jobs Plan details were shared including \$174B towards electric vehicles, \$115B towards highway, bridges, road, etc. At the state level, there are a number of bills of interest including HB 500, HB 456, SB 395, HB 438, HB 378/SB 239, SB 1 79, etc.-these bills and others are currently in various stages of committee work. Tristan Winkler also shared that the Governor's proposed budget does include some funding for local transit systems.

ANNOUNCEMENTS, NEWS, FUTURE TOPICS AND SPECIAL UPDATES

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments received.

ADJOURNMENT

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