



French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting Minutes from the Governing Board Meeting on March 24, 2022

Attendance:

Remote via the Zoom Platform:

Chair Larry Harris (Black Mountain Council)
Tristan Winkler (FBRMPO)
John Ridout (FBRMPO)
Hannah Bagli (FBRMPO)
Jane Pies (LOSRC - Minutes)
Kim Roney (Asheville Council)
Anne Coletta (Flat Rock Council)
Bill Lapsley (Henderson Commission)
Bob Davy (Fletcher Council)
Rebecca McCall (Henderson Commission)
Kevin Ensley (Haywood Commission)
Matt Wechtel (Madison Commission)
Brownie Newman (Buncombe Commission)
Daniel Sellers (NCDOT TPD)
Steve Williams (NCDOT Division 14)
Mike Eveland (Maggie Valley Council)
Amanda Edwards (Buncombe Commission)

Stephen Sparks (NCDOT Division 14)
Troy Wilson (NCDOT Division 14)
Parker Sloan (Buncombe Commission)
Michael Dawson (FHWA)
Jennifer Hensley (Hendersonville Council)
Anthony Sutton (Town of Waynesville)
Chuck McGrady (NCBOT Division 14)
Shanon Gonce (Mills River Council)
David Wasserman (NCDOT STIP Unit-West)
George Banta (Laurel Park Council)
Gwen Wisler (Asheville Council)
Hannah Cook (NCDOT Division 13)
Brian Murphy (NCDOT)
Adrienne Isenhower (Town of Woodfin)
Brandon Rogers (Haywood Commission)
John Chase (Weaverville Council)

Board Seats Considered Inactive:

- Board of Transportation, Division 13
- Town of Canton
- Town of Clyde
- Town of Mars Hill
- Rural Transit Representative

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS & ROLL CALL

Chair Larry Harris called the meeting to order at approximately 1:00 PM 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 conflicts were noted with the business before the body.

Roll was called and quorum was announced to conduct the business of the Board.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were received.

CONSENT AGENDA

Bill Lapsley moved to approve the consent agenda consisting of the January 2022 meeting minutes, the modifications to the 2020-2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the TDM Letter of Support and the consent agenda as presented. Bob Davy seconded the motion which carried unanimously upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.

NEW BUSINESS

NCDOT Complete Streets Implementation

For the past few months, NCDOT staff have been working internally on updates to NCDOT's Complete Streets implementation approach. The Complete Streets Policy, originally adopted by NCDOT in 2012, is not changing, but NCDOT is proposing changes to how the policy is implemented. A new project evaluation methodology and flowchart were recently developed, and the information provided in the following pages shows a summary of the changes and next steps. This information was shared with FBRMPO staff as well as the North Carolina Association of MPOs in the past few months.

In 2019, NCDOT updated its Complete Streets Policy. This policy strengthened NCDOT's commitment to including pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities in the construction of highway projects. NCDOT also issued an Implementation Guide that provided more details about how the policy would be implemented. As outlined in 2019, NCDOT would do the following:

- Construct facilities at no cost to local government if they were in an adopted plan
- Maintain facilities outside of municipal boundaries if local governments did not agree to maintain the facilities

NCDOT's new Complete Streets Evaluation Methodology provides more details on how the policy will be integrated into the project development process. There are several issues of concern, including:

- NCDOT is clarifying that they will construct facilities at no cost to local government if there is an identified need and they are in an adopted plan. The primary issue is the use of a questionable demand estimation tool and its role with local knowledge and established plans.
- NCDOT is requiring that all separated facilities (i.e., sidewalks, trails, and sidepaths) have maintenance agreements with local government both inside and outside of municipal boundaries otherwise a non-separated facility may be considered.
- "Projects that exceed a 10% cost increase for integrating Complete Streets components or result in significant schedule impacts may warrant greater scrutiny and additional analyses to further reduce impacts." MPO staff is concerned our region may have more instances of greater scrutiny due to the environmental constraints and challenges of our region.

Updated NCDOT Documents:

[-NCDOT's Complete Streets Implementation Guide](#)

[-NCDOT's Complete Streets Project Evaluation Methodology](#)

NCDOT Division 13 Planning Engineer, Hannah Cook, presented on NCDOT's Complete Streets changes. Hannah Cook went over Complete Street's goals, the evolution of Complete Streets in NC,

implementation challenges and offered a summary of new implementation guidance for project development. She also discussed next steps and resources.

Complete Streets goals include reducing pedestrian crashes and unsafe conditions, improving access and mobility for those without a vehicle, enhancing quality of life by providing transportation choices, and ensuring that NCDOT has an equitable transportation system that works for everyone. Complete Streets are important in NC as over 600,000 people are in households without a vehicle and about a million have limited access to a vehicle.

Hannah Cook added that key challenges to implementation of the Complete Streets Policy include inconsistent implementation across divisions, lack of standard and a need to streamline, policy gaps in key areas, limited metrics, data and tracking and a need for enhanced training. These challenges led to a coordinated effort in 2021 to update the implementation guidelines. Proposed implementation improvements include a new project evaluation methodology to identify multimodal needs, selecting the appropriate facility type and assess impacts, and making modifications to the Implementation Guide to integrate new evaluation methodology to clarify key guidance areas.

The Complete Streets Project Evaluation Methodology process serves as guidance to aid in the evaluation of highway projects for Complete Streets elements. The five steps of this process include initial screening and data input, transportation need determination, facility type selection and final analysis. Hannah Cook shared several items for ongoing discussions on key issues, to include:

1. Maintenance of separated multimodal facilities, particularly outside municipal boundaries
2. Inclusion of complete streets elements on maintenance projects
3. Harmonization of complete streets processes with the Project Delivery Network (PDN) including Planning and Express Design
4. Alignment of pedestrian/bike need determination between CTP and Complete Streets methodologies
5. Local coordination when determining bike/ped needs and choosing facility
6. Determining costs and benefits of complete streets elements
7. Incorporation complete streets elements in projects prior to programming

Three work groups have been set up by NCDOT to help address these key issues. Representatives from Divisions, other units and MPO/RPOs are included. Discussions are anticipated to occur between the end of March and July of this year.

Next steps in the process were shared by Hannah Cook. Continued training and outreach on the methodology and resources will occur. Work groups will convene and develop update recommendations. Updates will be made to Complete Streets resources as necessary and provide revised guidance and/or trainings. NCDOT will continue to collect data, monitor implementation, and identify additional improvements to guidance for planning, prioritization, project development, and maintenance activities.

Discussion occurred regarding whether changes to Complete Streets implementation policies will affect the new I-26 interchange project. Per Hannah Cook, they will affect project I-2513. These policies apply to all projects that do not have a completed environmental document. As bicycles and pedestrians are prohibited on the interstate facility itself, there will be no bike/ped facilities built on the interstate. The Y-lines that cross over and under the interstate, however, will include Complete Streets elements. Analysis work for these projects will be done at division level if the division manages the design, and by central management level if the design is managed centrally. It was noted that the more local/division input included in these types of projects the better. The concept of “If you build it, they will come” was brought up in discussion regarding large projects including bike/pedestrian facilities (example: River Arts District). Is there enough consideration given to the impact these improvements may have projects such as I-26 on the front end? If this is applied retroactively to I-26, will it go over the 10% threshold described in the policies? Per Hannah Cook, she does not believe that this will be an issue. Continued discussion occurred about the use of Work Groups within policy implementation.

Included in the agenda packet was NCAMPO’s letter regarding Complete Streets Changes.

Gwen Wisler moved to endorse the comments from NCAMPO on the Complete Streets Changes. Anne Coletta seconded the motion which carried upon a roll call vote.

FY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program & 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.

What is a UPWP?

The UPWP is a federally mandated document for MPO’s to produce that serves 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, and any programmatic support or planning being funded by FTA 5307 Support.

The Draft UPWP was presented and adopted on January 28th. The Final UPWP is due at the end of March.

Major Changes between the FY 2022 and FY 2023 UPWP

-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 work associated with updated the region’s socio-economic projections

-More funding is being put towards TIP Development/Prioritization to go along with anticipated work tasks for the development of the 2024-2033 TIP/STIP

-More funding is being put towards Special Studies to reflect the workload associated

-More emphasis is being put on the release of the 2020 Census, which may impact the MPO's Planning Area boundary and will be needed to update the region's Travel Demand Model

-More funding is being put towards Regional Planning with on-going work for the CTP update, LCP update, MTP work, and potential 5307 suballocation formula considerations

Self-Certification

MPOs that are designated as Transportation Management Areas (TMAs), which are MPOs with an Urbanized Area population of greater than 200,000, are required to provide annual certifications that the transportation planning process is being followed and properly carried out in the MPO planning area. The certification is typically a resolution, approved by the MPO Board.

Tristan Winkler presented on the UPWP and shared that local dues will not change for this fiscal year. Next year, the dues' structure may be reevaluated as we incorporate what is expected to happen with the urbanized area, as well as changes in population data from the 2020 Census.

Chuck McGrady moved to approve the FY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program and Self-Certification. Parker Sloan seconded, and the motion carried upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

NCDOT Safety Targets and Funding

A follow-up presentation and discussion with NCDOT Safety Planning Group's Safety Planning Engineer Brian Murphy, PE and Traffic Safety Unit's State Traffic Safety Engineer Brian Mayhew, PE. In the January TCC meeting during the Safety Performance Targets discussion, the TCC requested follow-up information from NCDOT on how safety funds are used and how those funds are allocated to Division 13 and Division 14.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) established five highway safety performance measures in 2016 with regulations set forth in the Federal MAP-21 and FAST Act transportation funding bills. FHWA guidance allows each MPO to either establish safety performance targets by either agreeing to plan (French Broad River MPO staff recommendation as well as the adopted course) or a MPO may establish its own targets, it will need to do so in coordination with the State per FHWA guidelines. MPOs are not directly assessed by FHWA on their progress towards meeting safety performance targets.

The goal of the [most recent \(2019\) SHSP](#) is to reduce fatalities and serious injuries by half by 2035, moving towards zero by 2050. In early 2021, FHWA completed an assessment of target achievement for NCDOT's calendar year (CY) 2019 safety targets, based on the 5-year averages for 2015-2019 for each measure. Based on FHWA's review, North Carolina has not met or made significant progress toward achieving its safety performance targets. As a result, NCDOT must ensure that all HSIP safety funds are obligated and must develop an HSIP Implementation Plan that describes actions the State will take to meet or make significant progress toward achieving its targets.

Table 4 Below includes past performance safety targets as well as past data in the five metrics for the MPO. The 2022 targets highlighted were adopted in January 2022.

Table 4: French Broad River MPO Specific Safety Performance Targets

Year	Fatalities (5 Year Average)	Fatality Rate (5 Year Average)	Serious Injuries (5 Year Average)	Serious Injury Rate (5 Year Average)	Non-motorized Fatalities and Serious Injuries (5 Year Average)
2008 - 2012	44.0	1.000	113.4	2.578	16.4
2009 - 2013	45.0	1.012	101.6	2.289	15.6
2010 - 2014	46.8	1.042	89.6	2.003	15.6
2011 - 2015	46.8	1.030	81.8	1.809	15.6
2012 - 2016	46.0	0.993	74.0	1.599	16.0
2013 - 2017	50.0	1.052	84.4	1.751	15.2
2014 - 2018	52.2	1.076	102.0	2.067	17.2
2015 - 2019	51.0	1.029	116.8	2.327	17.6
2016 - 2020	49.4	0.999	128.0	2.584	18.6
2022 Target	45.4	0.912	108.3	2.151	15.7

Brian Murphy, NCDOT Traffic Safety Unit, presented on statewide safety data trends. As population grows, primarily in metropolitan areas, more demand is put on our transportation systems and needs. This affects our safety trends. Many states with populations increasing rapidly have difficulty reducing transportation related serious injuries and fatalities. Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) is a good measure of activity in our state. While in rural areas VMT remains rather flat, it increases in more urban areas. VMT and vehicular fatalities and serious injuries typically trend in the same direction. Statewide, fatalities are at the highest number since 1973, with 55% in the MPO and 45% occurring in the RPO. Serious injuries have increased dramatically, but partly due to the definition changing to be more descriptive and comprehensive in 2016. In the MPO, 58% of serious injuries occurred, while 42% occurred in the RPO. Pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries are trending upwards. Many of the fatalities in urban areas are in high-speed arterials. Recorded crashes have increased, with 73% being reported in urban areas and 27% reported in rural areas.

Brian Murphy also presented on MPO safety data trends. Vehicle Miles Traveled is trending closely with that of the state. Total reported crashes have seen significant increases. Vehicular fatality numbers have remained somewhat flat for our region, but there is lots of “noise” in the numbers. Serious injury numbers have trended upward over time, partially due to the change in definition of “serious injury” changing. Non-motorized fatal and serious injuries are increasing. There are a significant number of alcohol-related and unbelted fatalities and injuries in the region.

There are several data safety resources available on ncdot.gov. This information will be shared in a packet to be sent by Tristan Winkler.

Brian Murphy presented on three project funding sources for NCDOT Safety and Mobility Programs. The Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) has \$74M of federally funded dollars annually. NCDOT places a soft cap of \$1M per project. Projects are selected bi-annually. Spot Safety comes from state funds and is \$12.1M annually. There is a \$400K cap per project and projects are selected quarterly. Spot Mobility funds are \$14,2M of state funded dollars and it imposes a \$750K per project cap. These programs are dedicated to safety, are fiscally constrained and are not sufficient to solve all our transportation safety problems. NCDOT is looking for the least expensive project that offers the most benefit when spending its safety dollars.

Brian Murphy presented on the Hendersonville Safety Study. Recommendations from NCDOT regarding this study include new controlled or uncontrolled crossings, improved exiting uncontrolled or signalized crossings, and low-cost roadway reconfiguration. Area wide recommendations include crosswalks and curb extensions, among others.

Discussion occurred regarding the relationship between fatalities in rural vs municipal areas and if our area is similar to other MPO.RPOs. Per NCDOT, it isn't unusual for more severe injuries and fatalities to happen in more rural areas due to these being lane departure and high-speed accidents. It was discussed that equity and sustainability impact analyses should be included alongside financial impact so that safety can be woven into every part of planning.

Informational item only. No action required.

NCDOT Prioritization & Funding Update

MPO staff will present on the latest information regarding the development of the 2024-2033 STIP/TIP and funding updates. The NCDOT Board of Transportation and the Prioritization Workgroup is continuing to work through the development of a process for determining the 2024-2033 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP.)

As background, NCDOT updated all the costs of projects in the STIP in the summer of 2021 and found that nearly every funding tier was overprogrammed and the STIP as a whole was more than \$10 billion overprogrammed. The following tables have been updated with revenues expected from the recently passed federal infrastructure bill (via NCDOT, current as of January 25):

Available Funding	Programming Status
\$10.6B	\$3.36B Over

Region	Available Funding	Programming Status
A (D1 & D4)	\$647.5M	\$383.2M Over
B (D2 & D3)	\$919.2M	\$428.6M Over
C (D5 & D6)	\$1.78B	\$297.1M Over
D (D7 & D9)	\$1.33B	\$596.7M Over
E (D8 & D10)	\$1.67B	\$756.5M Over
F (D11 & D12)	\$881.0M	\$455.7M Over
G (D13 & D14)	\$676.1M	\$982.2M Over

Division	Available Funding	Programming Status
1	\$569.7M	\$129.5M Over
2	\$569.7M	\$190.3M Over
3	\$569.7M	\$18.7M Under
4	\$569.7M	\$223.2M Under
5	\$569.7M	\$172.4M Over
6	\$569.7M	\$87.4M Under
7	\$569.7M	\$65.4M Under
8	\$569.7M	\$85.3M Over
9	\$569.7M	\$31.6M Under
10	\$569.7M	\$68.8M Over
11	\$569.7M	\$102.4M Under
12	\$569.7M	\$234.0M Over
13	\$569.7M	\$325.7M Over
14	\$569.7M	\$88.2M Over

To address the overprogramming the Prioritization Workgroup made a series of recommendations:

- 1) Cancel P 6.0- no new projects will be added to the 2024-2033 STIP
- 2) “Right-Size” the STIP to allow for funding to be made available in future rounds of prioritization
- 3) Reprioritize the STIP utilizing the following steps
 - a. Determine Delivery vs. To-Be-Reconsidered Projects
 - i. Delivery Projects: projects that are currently scheduled to begin construction in 2026 or sooner and/or have already started right-of-way acquisition -> would be added to the Draft STIP
 - ii. To-Be-Reconsidered Projects: projects that are currently scheduled to begin construction in 2027 or later -> would be ranked in Step #2
 - b. Rank To-Be-Reconsidered Projects
 - i. Projects would be ranked by:
 1. The round of prioritization the project was committed (projects that have

- been considered committed for longer would get first consideration)
2. The total score from the round of prioritization in which the project was committed
 3. Highest ranking projects would be reentered into the Draft STIP until the budget is exhausted (for each funding tier), if possible
- C. The “Flexibility” Option
- i. MPOs, RPOs, and Divisions could consider swapping out projects in the Draft STIP for projects that did not make the Draft STIP
 1. NCDOT Divisions must agree to the proposed swaps
 2. Swaps must be within 110% of the cost of the project being swapped out
 3. Projects may be swapped within their tier or “cascaded” but may not “cascade” up
 - a. Division Needs projects may be swapped out for Division Needs, Regional Impact, or Statewide Mobility projects
 - b. Regional Impact projects may be swapped out for Regional Impact or Statewide Mobility Projects
 - c. Statewide Mobility projects may only be swapped out for other Statewide Mobility projects
- 4) Commit projects that are programmed for right-of-way acquisition within the first five years of the STIP
- a. This would return the “committed window” to what it was in 2018 before it was changed to a six-year “committed window.”
 - b. The NCDOT Board of Transportation has ***NOT*** approved this recommendation as of March 3rd

Moving forward, it is anticipated that a Draft STIP will be released in April, 2022. That will begin the process for considerations with the “flexibility” option and public input for the development of the 2024-2033 STIP.

Based on current budgets and estimated costs, the MPO anticipates the following in our region: Total

Upcoming Projects: \$3,013,000,000

Delivery Projects: \$1,506,000,000

To-Be-Reconsidered Projects: \$1,507,000,000

Informational item only. No action required.

REGULAR UPDATES

- Division 13: https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/March_Division13_Updates.pdf
- Division 14: https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/032022_Div14_FBRMPO-Const_Update-combined.pdf
- Transportation Planning Division Update provided.
- FHWA/FTA updates provided.
- FBRMPO Committee & Workgroup Updates:
 - Prioritization Subcommittee – Met March 2nd; next meeting April 6th
 - Transit Operators Workgroup – met January 11th
 - 5307 Subrecipient Workgroup – next meeting TBD
 - Citizens’ Advisory Committee – met January 12th; next meeting April 13th
 - Hellbender Trail Stakeholder Group – last meeting February 3rd, next meeting May 5th

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Harris opened a second public comment period. No comments were received.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Harris adjourned the meeting at 3:06 PM, as there was no further business.