

## French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization Minutes from the Governing Board Meeting on February 16, 2023

### Attendance:

#### In-Person and Remote via the Zoom Platform:

Anthony Sutton (Waynesville Council)

Tristan Winkler (FBRMPO)

Hannah Bagli (FBRMPO)

Kim Roney (Asheville Council)

Bill Lapsley (Henderson Commission)

Bob Davy (Fletcher Council  
Council)

Archie Pertiller (Black Mountain Council)

Jane Pies (LOSRC – Minutes)

Daniel Sellers (NCDOT TPD)

Steve Williams (NCDOT Div. 14)

George Banta (Laurel Park Council)

Shanon Gonce (Mills River Council)

Jennifer Hensley (City of Hendersonville)

Matt Wechtel (Madison Commission)

Kevin Ensley (Haywood Commission)

Logan DiGiacomo (FBRMPO)

Troy Wilson (NCDOT Div. 14)

Catherine Cordell (Weaverville

Hannah Cook (NCDOT Div.13)

Mike Eveland (Maggie Valley Council)

Bill Marley (FHWA)

Tom Widmer (Montreat Council)

Dylan Casper (Buncombe County)

Brandon Rogers (Urban Transit)

Anne Coletta (Flat Rock Council)

### WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS & ROLL CALL

Chair, Anthony Sutton called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM and welcomed everyone. He 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.

Quorum was announced to conduct the business of the Board.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Sutton opened the floor for public comment. No comments were heard.

### CONSENT AGENDA

***Shanon Gonce moved to approve the TAC agenda. Catherine Cordell seconded the motion which carried unanimously upon a roll call vote.***

***Matt Wechtel moved to approve the consent agenda, including the January 2023 meeting minutes, the Letter of Support for the Ecusta Trail RAISE Grant Application to USDOT, and the Modification to the FY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Catherine Cordell seconded the motion which passed upon a roll call vote.***

## LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR THE CITY OF BREVARD'S RAISE GRANT APPLICATION FOR THE ECUSTA TRAIL

February 16, 2023  
The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation 1200  
New Jersey Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

The French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (FBRMPO) strongly supports the RAISE grant application for the Ecusta Trail: An Engine for Reimagining Rural Mobility and Economic Recovery.

The project is the result of a collaboration between the City of Brevard, Henderson County, the City of Hendersonville, Conserving Carolina, Friends of the Ecusta Trail, the FBRMPO, the Land of Sky Rural Planning Organization, NCDOT, and other stakeholders.

The project not only serves as an important link between two centers of activity in the region- Hendersonville and Brevard- but would also provide safe and accessible infrastructure and economic development opportunities for the communities in-between (Laurel Park, Etowah, Horse Shoe, Penrose.) The Ecusta Trail would also connect to the Estatoe Trail in Brevard, providing increased access to Pisgah National Forest.

The 19-mile Ecusta corridor is also a major piece of the regional Hellbender Regional Trail as well as the Statewide Great Trails State Plan, helping to link the communities of Western North Carolina and the State of North Carolina while providing residents and visitors the opportunity to get outdoors, visit businesses, exercise, and move about the region through healthy and sustainable means.

The RAISE grant would be critical to completing the Ecusta Trail and furthering the goals of the region as identified in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, including (1) Improve Multimodal

Infrastructure; (2) Improving the Safety of the Transportation System; (3) Ensure Changes Protect and Enhance Our Environments; (4) Develop a More Equitable Transportation System.

Thank you for considering our region’s application for RAISE Program funding. Sincerely,

Anthony Sutton  
 Chair, French Broad River MPO Board

**Modification to the FY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**

Modification Summary: A special study managed by the City of Asheville has requested a change in scope for the Patton Avenue Corridor Study. The previous scope included the study to go from the Jeff Bowen Bridge to Pritchard Park. The modification requested would take the study from the Jeff Bowen Bridge to Biltmore Avenue.

This modification is required in order to allow expenses between Pritchard Park and Biltmore Avenue to be eligible for reimbursement.

FY	Study	Managing Entity	Summary
2023	Patton Avenue Corridor Study	City of Asheville	This study will hire a consultant to provide recommendations on long-term improvements to the Patton Avenue corridor from the Jeff Bowen Bridge to South Spruce Street in Downtown Asheville. Improvements that may be considered include intersection improvements, opportunities to improve street network connectivity, forecasting future growth and land use, and bicycle and pedestrian improvements along the corridor.

**BUSINESS**

**Board Member Appointment to the Prioritization Subcommittee**

The MPO Prioritization Subcommittee plays an important role in advising the MPO TCC and Board and is made up of four members of the TCC and three members of the MPO Board. One representative from the Board, Larry Harris, is no longer a representative of the MPO Board. His position needs to be replaced.

**Purpose of the Subcommittee**

The MPO Prioritization Subcommittee was initially setup to advise the MPO TCC and Board on items related to the prioritization process but its role was expanded over the years to include the evaluation of the Locally Administered Projects Program (LAPP), being the steering committee for major MPO planning efforts including the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), and any other items that generally require preliminary, in-depth discussions before those items make it to the TCC and Board for consideration.

**Current Roster**

All TCC, Board, and NCDOT members are welcome to join subcommittee meetings, but there are only seven voting members: four TCC representatives and the Board representatives. The current voting members include:

<b>Voting Member</b>	<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>TCC/Board</b>
Anthony Sutton	Town of Waynesville	Board
Jerry Vehaun	Town of Woodfin	Board
VACANT	-	Board
Autumn Radcliff	Henderson County	TCC
William High	Buncombe County	TCC
Jessica Morris (Vice-Chair)	City of Asheville	TCC
Elizabeth Teague (Chair)	Town of Waynesville	TCC

***Archie Pertiller moved to be elected as MPO Prioritization Subcommittee Board. Matt Wechtel seconded motion which carried unanimously upon a roll call vote.***

**Safety Performance Targets**

Effective April 14, 2016, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) established five highway safety performance measures in accord with regulations set forth in the Federal MAP-21 and FAST Act transportation funding bills. These performance measures are:

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1. Number of fatalities;
2. Rate of fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled;
3. Number of serious injuries;
4. Rate of serious injuries per 100 million vehicle miles traveled; and
5. Number of combined non-motorized fatalities and non-motorized serious injuries.

North Carolina state targets are set in agreement with Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) goals.

- The goal of the most recent (2019) SHSP is to **reduce fatalities and serious injuries by half by 2035, moving towards zero by 2050.**

*Table 2: French Broad River MPO Safety Performance Target Achievement Determination Summary for CY 2020*

Performance Measures	5-year Rolling Averages			Target Achieved?	(Actual) Better than Baseline?	Met or Made Significant Progress?
	Target	Actual	Baseline			
	2016 - 2020	2016 - 2020	2014 - 2018			
Fatalities (5 Year Average)	45.9	49.4	52.2	No	Yes	No
Fatality Rate (5 Year Average)	0.961	0.999	1.076	No	Yes	
Serious Injuries (5 Year Average)	91.1	128.4	102.0	No	No	
Serious Injury Rate (5 Year Average)	1.879	2.593	2.067	No	No	
Non-motorized Fatalities and Serious Injuries (5 Year Average)	13.7	18.6	17.2	No	No	

### FBRMPO's 2023 Safety Performance Metrics

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	128.4	2.593	18.6
2017 - 2021	50.2	1.006	136.8	2.743	19.2
<b>2023 Target*</b>	<b>43.7</b>	<b>0.876</b>	<b>105.6</b>	<b>2.096</b>	<b>15.1</b>

## **MPO's Options:**

1. Adopt targets defined by the State's Methodology (**Staff Recommendation**)
2. Use a different methodology to define our own targets
  - a. Would require the MPO to hire someone to monitor performance metrics

Logan DiGiacomo presented on the Safety Performance Targets. Discussion occurred about what actions are being taken to meet these targets after they are set. Tristan Winkler shared that until now, the targets have largely been informative and aspirational. He requests that the subcommittee take a more informative look at how planned investments should impact these targets.

***Matt Wechtel moved to approve the Safety Performance Targets by the State's Methodology. Bob Davy seconded the motion which passed upon a roll call vote.***

## **Draft FY 2024 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 April.

### **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 Final UPWP is due at the end of March.

### **Major Changes between the FY 2023 and FY 2024 UPWP**

-Less emphasis is being put on data, modeling, and travelers' behavior to reflect work completed in FY 2022 and FY 2023.

-Work added for P 7.0 includes project submittals, local input point methodology, and regional impact point assignments.

-More funding is being put towards special study administration with a number of carryover studies as well as the award of funds for a Safe Streets for All Action Plan

-More emphasis is being put on regional planning for MTP development and 5307 suballocation formula updates

-A Staffing & Compensation Study has been added to the list of studies to be done

-Percentage of local dues has been recalculated using 2020 decennial census figures. Carryover dues have also been applied.

Tristan Winkler presented on the FY 2024 Draft UPWP.

***Bob Davy moved to approve the FY 2024 Draft UPWP. Anne Coletta seconded the motion which passed upon a roll call vote.***

## INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

### **Draft 2024-2033 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

#### **Background**

The Draft 2024-2033 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) was developed in reaction to rising construction costs for transportation projects. Instead of programming new projects through P 6.0 (the usual process), the Board of Transportation and Prioritization Workgroup stopped the P 6.0 process in 2021 and worked to develop a process to determine what projects would remain on the STIP for the 2024-2033 iteration and which projects would be removed and required to recompete in future rounds of prioritization.

The process developed for the Draft 2024-2033 STIP included the following steps:

- 1) Prioritize projects by which round of prioritization a project was funded in (i.e., prioritize projects that have been funded in the STIP for longer) as well as the points received until available funding is exhausted.
- 2) Enable projects to be swapped in and out so long as the following rules are followed:
  - a. MPO/RPO and Division must agree to any swaps by March 17, 2023
  - b. A project(s) being swapped in must not exceed 110% of the cost of the project(s) being swapped out
  - c. Projects changing funding tier must follow the typical prioritization rules for cascading projects:

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		PROJECT OUT		
		Statewide Mobility	Regional Impact	Division Needs
PROJECT IN	Statewide Mobility	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible
	Regional Impact	X	Eligible	Eligible
	Division Needs	X	X	Eligible

The initial Draft 2024-2033 STIP was released in April, 2022. Since that time, the NC General Assembly approved a bill, later signed by the Governor, that allowed for the transfer of Sales Tax revenues into the Highway Trust Fund and Highway Fund, adding additional funding and enabling more projects to be added back to the STIP. The [revised Draft 2024-2033 STIP](#) was released in August, 2022.

Project Status in the French Broad River MPO:

### Statewide Mobility

Projects In		Projects Out	
TIP ID	Project	Project	TIP ID
I-2513B	I-26 Connector (Haywood to Broadway)	I-26 Connector (I-26/I-40/I-240 Interchange Final Improvements)	I-2513C
I-4759	Liberty Road (New Interchange on I-40)	I-26/US 64 Interchange	I-4400B A
I-2513A A	I-26 Connector (I-40 Improvements & Maintenance)		

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## Regional Impact

Projects In		Projects Out	
TIP ID	Project	Project	TIP ID
I-2513AB	I-26 Connector (Partial I-26/I-40/I-240 Interchange Improvements)	NC 191 (Brevard Road) Widening	U-3403B
I-2513AC	I-26 Connector (Widening from I-40 to Haywood)	NC 63 (New Leicester Highway) Access Management	U-5972
U-5783	US 64 Improvements (Laurel Park)	NC 63 (New Leicester Highway) and US 19 (Patton Avenue) Intersection Improvements	U-5971B
U-6049	South Main Street Bridge Widening (Hendersonville)	NC 280 (Boylston Highway) Access Management	U-6124
U-2801A	US 25A (Sweeten Creek Road) Widening	US 25 (Weaverville Highway) and New Stock Road Intersection Improvements	U-5973
A-0010AA	Future I-26 Widening		

## Division Needs (Division 13)

Projects In		Projects Out	
TIP ID	Project	Project	TIP ID
I-4409	I-40/Blue Ridge Road New Interchange	N Louisiana Avenue Improvements (Patton to Emma)	U-6162
I-2513D	NC 251 (Riverside Drive) Improvements (Hill Street to Broadway)	Riceville Road Improvements	U-5837
U-5834	Mills Gap Road Widening	NC 81 (Swannanoa River Road) Improvements (S Tunnel to Tunnel)	U-6046
U-6163	Mills Gap Road @ Cane Creek Road Intersection Improvements		
U-4739	Amboy/Meadow Road Improvements		
U-6047	Sand Hill/Sardis Road Widening		
EB-5919	McDowell/Choctaw Pedestrian Improvements		
EB-5822	North RAD Greenway		
EB-5965	Deaverview Road Sidewalks		

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U-5832	NC 81 (Swannanoa River Road) Improvements (Biltmore to S Tunnel)		
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### Division Needs (Division 14)

Projects In		Projects Out	
TIP ID	Project	Project	TIP ID
R-2588 B	NC 191 Widening (NC 280 to Mountain Road)	US 23/74 Improvements (Balsam View to Old Balsam)	U-6172
U-5839	US 276 (Russ Avenue) Improvements (Main Street to US 23/74)		
U-5888	N Main @ Walnut Intersection Improvements		
U-5886	White Street Improvements		
R-5921	US 276 (Jonathan Creek Road) Improvements		
R-5748	Kanuga Road Improvements		
EB-5860	Blythe Street Sidewalks		
EB-5963	Grove Street Sidewalks		
U-4712	South Main Street Widening (Hyatt Creek to US 276 (Pigeon St))		
U-6158	US 276 @ Crymes Cove Road Intersection Improvements		
U-6159	US 276 (Russ Avenue) Access Management (US 23/74 to US 19 (Dellwood Road))		
U-6048	US 19/23 Improvements (Chestnut Mountain to Wiggins Road)		

### MPO Process Since the Release of the Draft TIP

MPO staff has convened meetings with County and Municipal groups to discuss potential project swaps. These meetings included staff of Buncombe County & Municipalities, Haywood County & Municipalities, and the Henderson Transportation Advisory Committee.

### Proposed Swaps

Only one swap has been officially proposed, coming from Henderson County and approved by their Transportation Advisory Committee:

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## Project to Swap In:

TIP ID: I-4400BA

Description: Improvements to the I-26/US 64

Interchange Current Funding Tier: Statewide Mobility

Cost: \$29,500,000

## Project to Swap Out:

TIP ID: R-5748

Description: Modernization of Kanuga Road from Church Street to Little River Road

Current Funding Tier: Division Needs (14)

Cost: \$52,200,000

## **U-2801A (Sweeten Creek Road Widening)**

In a recent meeting with NCDOT Division 13, Buncombe County, and Buncombe Municipalities, staff was informed that the cost of U-2801A has increased from \$195 million to more than \$240 million. NCDOT also informed staff that a cost increase of that magnitude would require U-2801A to potentially be (once again) defunded in the STIP.

A follow-up meeting with NCDOT, Buncombe County, and City of Asheville staff determined that the best course of action would be to develop costs for a reduced cross-section that would be for three-lanes, intersection improvements, and complete streets improvements instead of the four-lane divided typical that was previously used. The updated costs are expected by the end of February with more determinations to be potentially considered at that point.

**Information only. No action required until March meeting.**

## **REGULAR UPDATES**

### **Division Project Updates**

Division 13 Updates:

[Div13 February Updates.pdf \(frenchbroadrivermpo.org\)](#)

Division 14 Updates:

[https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Div14\\_February\\_Updates.pdf](https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Div14_February_Updates.pdf)

**TPD Updates** were provided

**FHWA/FTA Updates** were provided

**Committee & Workgroup Updates**

## **Prioritization Subcommittee**— met on February 1<sup>st</sup>

Points of Discussion:

- Draft Communities of Concern as part of the Environmental Justice Evaluation for the 2050 MTP
- Draft Project Swaps for the 2024-2033 TIP/STIP

## **Transit Operators' Workgroup**—met on November 29, 2022

Points of Business/Discussion:

- FTA 5310/JARC funding applications were due by 12/15/22
- NCDOT/IMD (Integrated Mobility Division) will be working with FBRMPO and Land of Sky RPO on a Coordinated Regional Transit Plan
  - MPO Staff's current understanding of this process is that these documents can act as an update of the existing Locally Coordinated Plan (LCP, required for use of FTA 5310 Program – Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities
- NCDOT/IMD will post a Call for Applications for their Multimodal Planning Grant Program, date as of 11/29/22 was "January 2023"; as of 1/4/23, no current info on NCDOT/IMD website, MPO Staff will check for updates
- Next Transit Operator's Workgroup meeting: March 2023

## **5307 Subrecipient Workgroup**- met on October 18, 2023

MPO Staff noted:

- Updated Urbanized Areas (UZAs) from US Census, statistics released end of December 2022, maps planned for release end of January 2023
- Discussion of 5307 Sub-Recipients allocation formula; MPO staff and Work Group members noted this could be reexamined once new UZA data and maps are finalized.

## **Citizens' Advisory Committee**- met June 24th; next meeting TBD

## **Hellbender Trail Stakeholder Group**- last meeting October 6th; next meeting TBD

- Regional Trail Forum meeting held on January 4<sup>th</sup> to continue with the aim of planning for an event in May 2023.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Anthony Sutton opened the floor for public comment. No comments were received.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Anthony Sutton adjourned the meeting at 2:19PM as there was no further business.