

French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization
Minutes from the Governing Board Meeting on June 15, 2023

Attendance:

In-Person and Remote via the Zoom Platform:

Jennifer Hensley (Hendersonville Council)	Anthony Sutton (Waynesville Council)
Tristan Winkler (FBRMPO)	Brian Murphy (NCDOT)
Hannah Bagli (FBRMPO)	Kevin Ensley (Haywood Commission)
Kim Roney (Asheville Council)	Shanon Gonce (Mills River Council)
Bill Lapsley (Henderson Commission)	Catherine Cordell Weaverville Council)
Bob Davy (Fletcher Council)	Amanda Edwards (Buncombe Commission)
David Wasserman (NCDOT)	Rebecca McCall (Henderson Commission)
Sam Cullen	Lucy Crown (City of Asheville)
Suzette Morales (FHWA)	Jane Pies (LOSRC – Minutes)
Steve Williams (NCDOT Div. 14)	George Banta (Laurel Park Council)
Jon Barsanti (FBRMPO)	Anne Coletta (Flat Rock Council)
Vicki Eastland (Land of Sky RPO)	Stephen Sparks (NCDOT Div. 13)
Daniel Sellers (NCDOT TPD)	Logan DiGiacomo (FBRMPO)
Steve Cannon (NCDOT Div. 13)	Scott Adams (FBRMPO)
Hannah Cook (NCDOT Div. 13)	Wanda Payne (NCDOT Div. 14)
Dylan Casper (Buncombe County)	Tom Widmer (Town of Montreat)
Chuck McGrady (NCBOT)	Matt Wechtel (Madison Commission)
Alexius Farris (NCDOT IMD)	

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS & ROLL CALL

Anthony Sutton called the meeting to order at 1:02PM 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

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

CONSENT AGENDA

Matt Wechtel made a motion to modify the agenda by moving the Letter of Support of the WNC EV Charging Stations Grant Application from the consent agenda to Business Item: 4A. Shanon Gonce seconded the motion which passed unanimously upon a roll call vote.

Shanon Gonce moved to approve the consent agenda including the May 2023 Board Minutes and the TAC agenda. Matt Wechtel seconded the motion which passed upon a roll call vote.

BUSINESS

Letter of Support- WNC EV Charging Stations Grant Application

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
U.S. Secretary of Transportation
United States Department of Transportation 1200 New
Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590 Dear

Secretary Buttigieg:

I would like to express my strong support for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT's) application, in partnership with the Land of Sky Clean Vehicles Coalition and Ingles Markets Inc., to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) Grant Program for funding for the implementation of charging infrastructure at five Ingles Market locations across Western North Carolina. The project offers an opportunity to expand accessibility to electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure and encourages those traveling by EV to travel through Western NC when entering and exiting surrounding states.

At this time, charging infrastructure is limited in Western NC, leaving little option but to use the Interstate for those with EVs. The project is integral to meet future mobility needs and to promote competitive growth while meeting state and national emission reduction goals. As the project is expected to reduce the number of internal combustion engines on the road over time and increase the number of electric vehicles, this will lead to a decline in greenhouse gas emissions.

Furthermore, the implementation of the project is expected to foster economic growth and development in the region leading to increased job opportunities, household income, and local tax revenue. The region experiences tourism due to the area's unique topography, beautiful weather, and proximity to parks with an increase in tourism in the summer. The project will expand access to new users, and those charging their vehicles are likely to visit local shops and restaurants as they wait. This is extremely important to the local community and region, as it stands to benefit impoverished residents within the area.

Furthermore, the infrastructure will be implemented in Ingles Market parking lots which are well lit and have people present at all times of the day and night, even when the store is closed. Ingles Market locations provide numerous safety features including well delineated pedestrian infrastructure and phones available at all hours that can be used in an emergency. The sites will provide safe environments for those traveling long distances in need of a refuel.

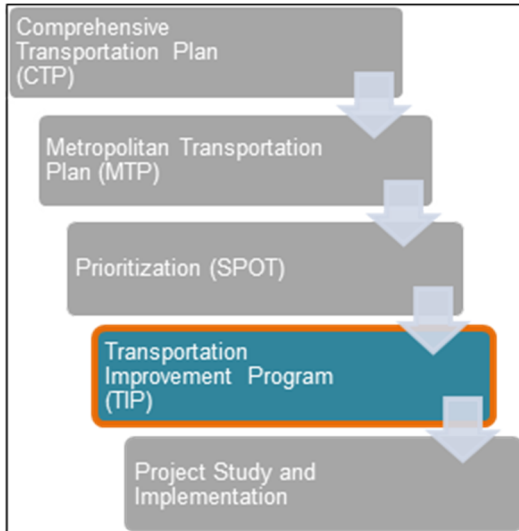
For these reasons, I, along with those I represent, strongly urge you to support the expansion of electric vehicle charging infrastructure into Western NC and the NCDOT's application for federal CFI grant funding to accelerate its implementation.

Respectfully,

Anthony Sutton
Board Chair, French Broad River MPO

Tristan Winkler explained that moving the Letter of Support from the consent agenda to a business item was best as more discussion was needed on the quality of the application that was presented as a draft.

Amendments to the 2020-2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)



What is the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)?

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is our region’s document that reflects planned transportation investments over a ten-year period. The TIP describes each project, a schedule for implementation, funding sources, and estimated costs. Current items are for modification of existing projects. No new projects or amendments are included for March, 2023.

Modifications Summary

There are two modifications to the TIP this month. The first is the addition of CRRSAA funds to the French

Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization Planning Supplement (U-5616). The second modification is the addition of a highway safety project to the TIP (HS-2014S) which involves installing long life pavement markings along US 19 from Jackson County to Maggie Valley.

TIP/STIP No.	HS-2014S
TIP/STIP Title	US 19, JACKSON COUNTY TO MAGGIE VALLEY. INSTALL LONG LIFE PAVEMENT MARKINGS.
ROW Cert	STI

Funding				
Type	Phase	FY	Amend	Amount
HSIP	Construction	2023	Yes	\$105,000
Total Project Cost				\$105,000
Total Local Match Amount				\$0
Total Discretionary Amount				\$0

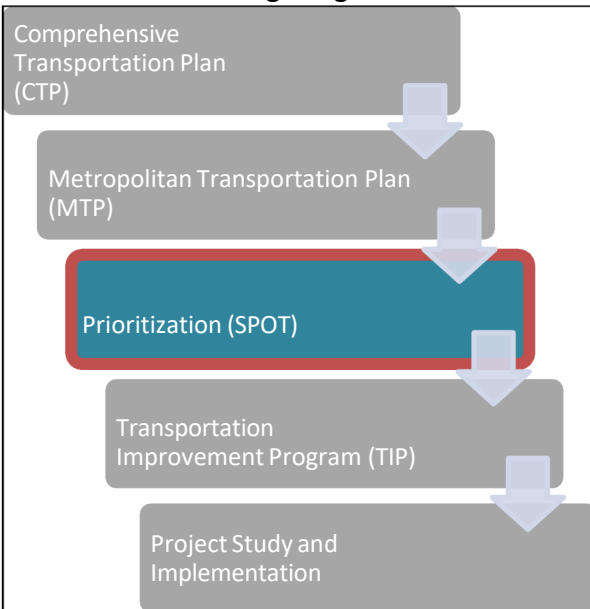
Amendments				
CRTPO Date	Item N Date	Agency Request	Description	Amendment Type
6/15/2023			ADD PROJECT BREAK AT THE REQUEST OF THE TRANSPORTATION MOBILITY AND SAFETY DIVISION.	

Matt Wechtel moved to approve the Amendments to the 2020-2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Catherine Cordell seconded, and the motion passed unanimously upon a roll call vote.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

P 7.0 Update and Process

The Prioritization Process (aka SPOT) is the process that determines the majority of capital improvement projects funded through NCDOT and NCDOT’s allotment of federal funds. The process is governed by the Strategic Transportation Investments (STI) Law of 2012 that provides the framework for a more data-driven and transparent process that also utilizes local input from NCDOT Divisions, MPOs, and RPOs. In relation to other aspects of transportation planning, the prioritization process serves as the bridge to determine what long-range needs are funded in the TIP/STIP for implementation.



P 7.0 refers to the seventh iteration of the prioritization process in North Carolina and will be the process that determines what new projects are funded in the 2026- 2035 TIP/STIP.

What’s Changed Between P 6.0 and P 7.0?

In sum, not a lot. The process is still very much the same with some modifications or “tweaks” that have changed how some projects will be scored and opened the process to more project types. Some of the more substantive changes include:

- Microtransit is now an eligible submittal for transit

funding

- Rail modernization is now an eligible submittal for rail funding

- A minimum of 6% of funding will be programmed to non-highway (the previous minimum was 4%); 90%

minimum for highway funding remains the same

What is the Schedule for Events in P 7.0?

Date	Event
July, 2023	Local Government Discussions on Potential Submittals
August, 2023	Draft Submittal List (Board Action Required)
August- September, 2023	Public Comment on Draft Submittal List
September, 2023	Final Submittal List (Board Action Required)
February, 2024	Data Review
March, 2024	Local Input Point Methodology Adoption (Board Action Required)
April, 2024	Statewide Mobility Projects Programmed
May, 2024	Draft Local Input Point Assignment for Regional Impact Projects
May-June, 2024	Public Comment on Draft Local Input Point Assignment for Regional Impact Projects
June, 2024	Final Local Input Point Assignment for Regional Impact Projects
August, 2024	Regional Impact Projects Programmed
October, 2024	Draft Local Input Point Assignment for Division Needs Projects
October- November, 2024	Public Comment on Draft Local Input Point Assignment for Division Needs Projects
November, 2024	Final Local Input Point Assignment for Division Needs Projects
February, 2025	Draft 2026-2035 TIP/STIP Released
August, 2025	Final 2026-2035 TIP/STIP (Board Action Required)

What Do We Need to Start Work On?

The primary bit of work for the next few months is determining what projects the MPO will be submitting into the prioritization process. The MPO can submit 26 projects for each mode (26 highway, 26 bike/ped, 26 rail, 26 transit, 26 aviation, etc.)

P 6.0 Submittals

No projects were funded in P 6.0 but projects were given scores based on quantitative criteria. This can help with decisions on what may be more or less competitive in P 7.0.

Next Steps:

Hold meeting with local government representatives in June and July to develop a draft list of submittals for Prioritization Subcommittee consideration in August.

Tristan Winkler presented.

Information only. No action required.

NCDOT Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment

One of the new requirements of the new federal transportation legislation (IIJA) is a requirement for States to conduct Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessments. These include a systematic look at various crash factors and trends involving vulnerable road users as well as potential strategies to help improve vulnerable road user safety. The initial assessment from states is due by November, 2023. Additional guidance from USDOT is available here: https://highways.dot.gov/sites/fhwa.dot.gov/files/2022-10/VRU%20Safety%20Assessment%20Guidance%20FINAL_508.pdf

Brian Murphy from NCDOT provided an update on NCDOT's Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment. Slides from a previous meeting are available here: https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/FrenchBroadRiver_VRUppt.pdf

Discussion occurred about the need to include equity and sustainability in follow-up and prioritization. Brian Murphy shared that when areas of disparity are identified, they should be used as part of prioritization.

Information only. No action required.

Funding Swaps & August Redistribution

August Redistribution is an annual process through USDOT that allows states that have utilized 100% or more of their federal funds to request additional funds if other states leave federal funds on the table. In order to take advantage of this process and potentially get additional federal funds for North Carolina, the MPO and NCDOT frequently process "funding swaps" in which the MPO's Direct Allotment funds are "swapped" for NCDOT funds. This allows NCDOT to draw down federal funds throughout the state while the projects funded through the MPO's direct-allotment funding remain fully funded but through a (slightly) different funding source.

Teresa Robinson with the NCDOT STIP Unit provided a short presentation on the process and consideration of funding swaps and August Redistribution.

Information only. No action required.

REGULAR UPDATES

Division Project Updates

Division 13:

https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Div13_June_Updates.pdf

Division 14:

https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Div14_June_Updates.pdf TPD updates given.

TPD Updates given by Daniel Sellers

FHWA/FTA Updates given by Suzette Morales

FHWA Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Website: <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/>

FTA Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Website: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/BIL>

Committee & Workgroup Updates Prioritization

Prioritization Subcommittee— met on June 7th

Points of Discussion:

- P 7.0
- Wildlife Crossings
- Environmental Justice

Transit Operators' Workgroup— last met on May 15th;

Points of Business/Discussion:

- **May 15 Agenda:**
 - **5307 funding updates**
 - For 5307 funding, Haywood County leaving Urbanized Area in FY 2024.
 - For FY 2022, FY 2023, Haywood County is still eligible for 5310, 5307 funds.
 - FY 2024 funds are the start of 5311 (Rural) funds, plus state Rural Operating Assistance Program (ROAP) funds for Haywood County.
 - FY 2025 and beyond, new State formula for 5311 funds? (NCDOT-IMD to discuss, no committee at this time)
 - **Henderson County Transit Plan update**
 - **Joint City of Asheville-Buncombe County Transit Plan update** (\$300,000 from each entity, for \$600,000 total study)
 - **NCDOT-IMD, Coordinated Regional Transit Plan**, for French Broad River MPO and Land of Sky RPO, status (Bryan Lopez, NCDOT-IMD and AECOM)

5307 Subrecipient Workgroup- met on April 4, 2023 Points of

Business/Discussion:

- Updated Urbanized Areas (UZAs) from US Census finalized and published January 9, 2023
- Asheville UZA land area shrank from 262 to 250 sq. mi., population increased from 279,201 to 285,495; new UZAs: Waynesville, 24,285 pop.; Canton, 8,812 pop., Brevard, 13,059 pop.
- FY 2023 allocations:
 - City of Asheville, 42.6%
 - Buncombe County, 28.6%
 - Haywood County, 8.3%
 - Henderson County, 20.4%
- FY 2024 allocations (proposed):
 - City of Asheville, 46.8%
 - Buncombe County, 32.0%
 - Haywood County, n/a
 - Henderson County, 21.2%

- Discussion of 5307 Sub-Recipients allocation formula; MPO staff and Work Group members agreed to the following approach:
 - No new funding formula study at this time in light of Henderson County and Asheville-Buncombe County transit studies underway.
 - Keep the formula the same, albeit with updated FTA National Transit Database (NTD) operational data, but not population data from ESRI Community Analyst; only official US Census population data is the preferred source for population data.

Citizens' Advisory Committee- next meeting TBD

Hellbender Trail Stakeholder Group/Regional Trail Forum Updates- last meeting October 6th; next meeting TBD

PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

ADJOURNMENT

Anthony Sutton adjourned the meeting at 3:05PM as there was no further business before the Board.