

MPO Governing Board

September 21, 2023 – 1:00 P.M., Hybrid Meeting, In-Person at Land of Sky Regional

Council or Via Zoom

Login: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83455778548>

Meeting ID: 83455778548

Call-In: (312)626-6799

Agenda

1. **WELCOME AND HOUSEKEEPING (10 min)**

A. Welcome and Introductions	Anthony Sutton
B. Ethics Statement for MPO Board Members	Anthony Sutton
 2. **PUBLIC COMMENT**
 3. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA** Anthony Sutton

A. June, 2023 Board Minutes	
B. Letter of Support- WNC Source 5310 Application	
C. Modification to the 2024-2033 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)	
 4. **BUSINESS (45-60 min)**

A. Park and Ride Identified Needs	MPO Staff
B. Wildlife Crossing Identified Needs	MPO Staff
C. Updated 5307 Suballocation Formula	MPO Staff
D. Designation of Great Trails State Day	MPO Staff
 5. **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS (0 min)**
 6. **REGULAR UPDATES (15 min)**

A. NCDOT Division 13 and 14 updates	Tim Anderson/Wanda Payne or Designee
B. Transportation Planning Branch	Daniel Sellers
C. FHWA/FTA Updates	Suzette Morales
D. Subcommittee/Workgroup Reports, Staff Updates, and Housekeeping	MPO Staff
E. Legislative Updates	MPO Staff
 7. **ANNOUNCEMENTS, NEWS, SPECIAL UPDATES (5 min)**
 8. **TOPICS FOR NEXT MEETING**
 9. **PUBLIC COMMENT**
 10. **ADJOURNMENT**
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a program of Land of Sky

FRENCH BROAD RIVER

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

MPO Governing Board

Item 3:

Consent Agenda

Item 3A: August, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Item 3B: Letter of Support- WNC Source 5310 Application

Item 3C: Modification to the 2024-2033 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Staff Report & Recommendations

Item 3A:

August, 2023 Meeting Minutes

[2023_8_17_MPO.DRAFT_.Board_.Minutes.pdf \(frenchbroadrivermpo.org\)](#)

Staff Report & Recommendations

Item 3B:

Letter of Support- WNC Source 5310 Application

Mr. Jeff Roper
526 7th Ave. E.
Hendersonville, NC 28792

September 22, 2023

Dear Mr. Roper,

This letter serves as support for Henderson County's application for funding of Apple Country Public Transit (WCCA) from the North Carolina Department of Transportation and the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities through the 5310 funding process for FY2025. The French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (FBRMPO) has reviewed the request and supports the application to deliver these services.

The FBRMPO understands the need for transportation of seniors and individuals with disabilities in Henderson County so that they can have access to necessary medical appointments as well as shopping and recreational trips. This funding provides service for rural areas that have limited transportation options available and connects the target population to essential services.

We look forward to seeing the impact of these services on the lives of seniors in the community.

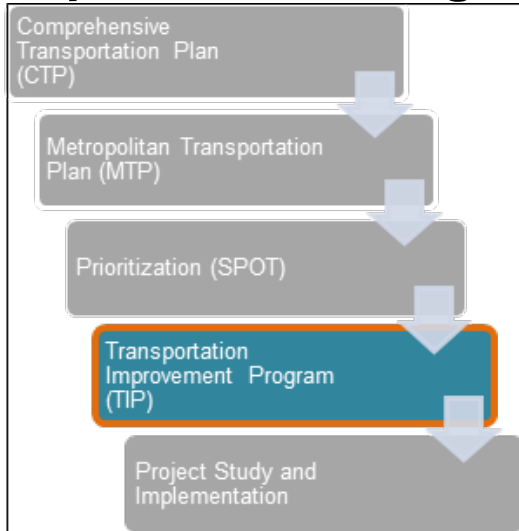
Sincerely,

Anthony Sutton
French Broad River MPO Board Chair

Staff Report & Recommendations

Item 3C:

Modification to the 2024-2033 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. The TIP is a subset of the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

Modification Summary

The only modification is to U-5616, the project that reflects the use of Surface Transportation Block Grant- Direct Allotment (STBGDA) funding for Planning in the FBRMPO area. The amount of funding in FY 2024 is being increased in order to account for studies that were scheduled to begin in FY 2023 but have been moved to FY 2024.

Project: U-5616

Description: French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization Planning (PL) Supplement

Route: Various

Counties: Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Madison

	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033
STBGDA	617	250	250	250	250	250				
Local	154	63	63	63	63	63				

Modification: Increase FY 2024 STBGDA funding to \$617,000

Staff Report & Recommendations

Item 4A:

Park and Ride Identified Needs

Jon Barsanti Jr, Transportation Demand Management Coordinator for Land of Sky Regional Council Staff, will present a brief overview of identified locations for new Park and Ride and Park and Pool locations.

What are Park and Rides? Park and Rides are one of the many Transportation Demand Management Tools that are available to us to reduce congestion and Single Occupancy Vehicle travel. Park and Rides are used to connect car travelers with transit. Another form of Park and Ride is the Park and Pool. The Park and Pool is used as a meeting spot for carpools and vanpools. You can also have Park and Bike facilities as well as Park and Charge facilities.

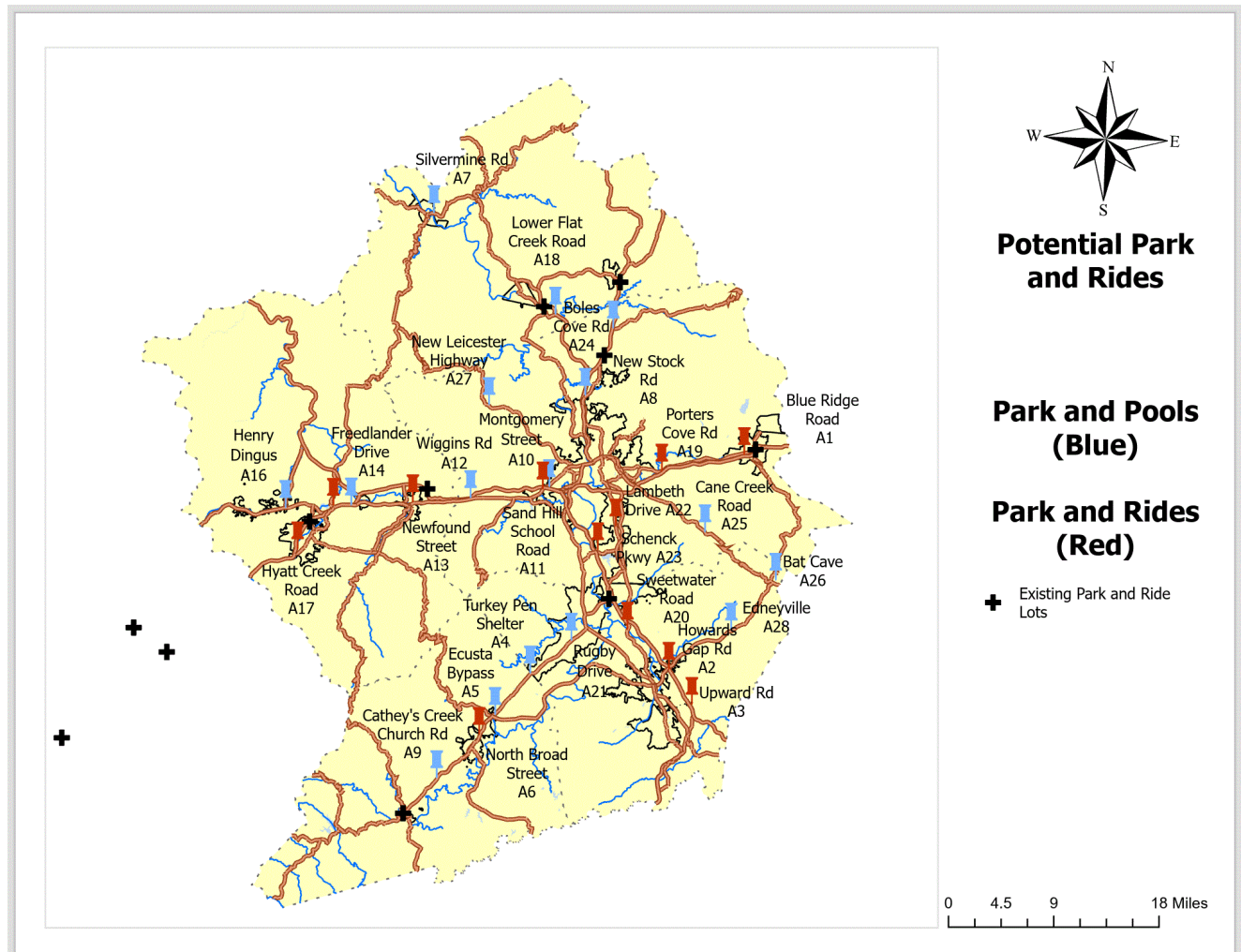
Existing Park and Rides. Currently we have seven Park and Rides at the Rosman, Ag Center/South Asheville, and Black Mountain locations. We have Park and Pool sites in Waynesville, Canton, Weaverville, and Mars Hill. There is an unofficial Park and Charge location at the Asheville Outlet Mall

Opportunities to Expand Park and Ride Facilities. We have the opportunity to expand our Park and Ride Facilities in order to reduce congestion, reduce single occupancy vehicle travel, encourage carpooling and vanpooling, and to encourage transit usage in the region.

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Staff Report & Recommendations



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Staff Report & Recommendations

Identified Park and Ride or Park and Pool Sites in the Five County Region						
County	Location Number	Type	Street	City	Major Street/Road	
Buncombe	A1	Park and Ride	Blue Ridge Rd	Black Mountain	I-40	
Buncombe	A8	Park and Pool	New Stock Rd	Asheville	I-26	
Buncombe	A10	Park and Pool	Montgomery Street	Asheville	Smokey Park Hwy I-40	
Buncombe	A11	Park and Ride	Sand Hill School Rd	Asheville	Smokey Park Highway	
Buncombe	A12	Park and Pool	Wiggins Rd	Candler	Smokey Park Highway Hillcrest	
Buncombe	A19	Park and Ride	Porters Cove Rd	Asheville	Tunnel Roud	
Buncombe	A22	Park and Ride	Lambeth Drive	Asheville	Hendersonville Rd (US-25)	
Buncombe	A23	Park and Ride	Schenck Pkwy	Asheville	Long Shoals Rd	
Buncombe	A24	Park and Pool	Boles Cove Rd	Weaverville	Barnardsville Hwy	
Buncombe	A25	Park and Pool	Cane Creek Road	Fairview	US-74A Gerton Highway	
Buncombe	A27	Park and Pool	New Leicester Highway	Leicester	New Leicester at Turkey Creek	
Buncombe	A28	Park and Pool	US-64	Edneyville	Chimney Rock Rd	
Haywood	A13	Park and Ride	Newfound Street	Canton	Church St	
Haywood	A14	Park and Pool	Freedlander Drive	Clyde	US 23-74	
Haywood	A16	Park and Pool	Henry Dingus	Maggie Valley		
Haywood	A15	Park and Ride	Paragon Pkwy	Clyde	US 19-23-74	
Haywood	A17	Park and Ride	Hyatt Creek Road	Waynesville		
Henderson	A2	Park and Ride	Howards Gap Rd	Hendersonville	I-26	
Henderson	A3	Park and Ride	Upward Rd	Flat Rock	I-26	
Henderson	A20	Park and Pool	Sweetwater Rd	Mills River	NC-280	
Henderson	A21	Park and Ride	Rugby Drive	Fletcher	Asheville Highway US-25B	
Henderson	A26	Park and Pool	Charlotte Highway	Bat Cave	Gerton Hwy	
Madison	A7	Park and Pool	Silvermine Rd	Hot Springs	US 25 & 70	
Madison	A18	Park and Pool	Lower Flat Creek Road	Marshall		
Transylvania	A4	Park and Pool	Turkey Pen Shelter	Pisgah Forest	Asheville Highway	
Transylvania	A5	Park and Pool	Ecusta Bypass	Pisgah Forest	Deaver Rd	
Transylvania	A6	Park and Ride	North Broad Street	Brevard	Osborne Rd	
Transylvania	A9	Park and Pool	Cathey's Creek Church Rd at US-64	Brevard	Rosman Highway US-64	

TCC Recommendation: Approve Identified Needs for Park and Ride Facilities

Staff Report & Recommendations

Item 4B:

Wildlife Crossings Identified Needs

Scott Adams, MPO Staff, will present a brief overview of a draft report *Potential Wildlife Crossings for the French Broad River MPO & Land of Sky RPO Planning Areas* (August 30, 2023). Two recent studies (Pigeon River Gorge, June 2022; NC Statewide Study, Fall 2022) have identified a number of potential sites in the Land of Sky RPO and French Broad River MPO areas where additional infrastructure for Wildlife Crossings (i.e. retrofit of existing bridges, culverts, plus possible new structures and fencing) need to be considered.

What's in the report?

This report reflects an initial review of the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Land of Sky Rural Planning Organization (RPO) planning areas for potential wildlife crossing locations along area roads and highways. The MPO/RPO's primary goals of this report are to begin identifying specific geographic areas and wildlife crossing typologies (eg. Deflection Fencing) that can be incorporated into the larger transportation planning process, notably the state's **Strategic Prioritization Office of Transportation (SPOT)** project scoring process, which then leads local and statewide **Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP)**.

These two processes identify specific projects, so the early identification of wildlife crossing needs, in addition to other design factors like bicycle/pedestrian accommodation and climate resilience, can reduce project scope and cost revisions later on. This effort stems from the French Broad River MPO's initial contact in December 2022 with members of Safe Passage: The I-40 Pigeon River Gorge Wildlife Crossing Project. This project is an outgrowth of a June 2022 study (see Previous Studies and Research, next page) by Wildlands Network and the National Parks Conservation Association. The Pigeon River study and some early pilot projects stemming from it (eg. A new replacement bridge at I-40, Exit 7 [Harmon Den] designed with flat wildlife paths underneath it.) may provide a template for future projects across the region and state.

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Staff Report & Recommendations

See the examples below for an attribute table for site HayCo14, I-40 east of Canton, and a map of the site. **Blank fields indicate a lack of available information.**

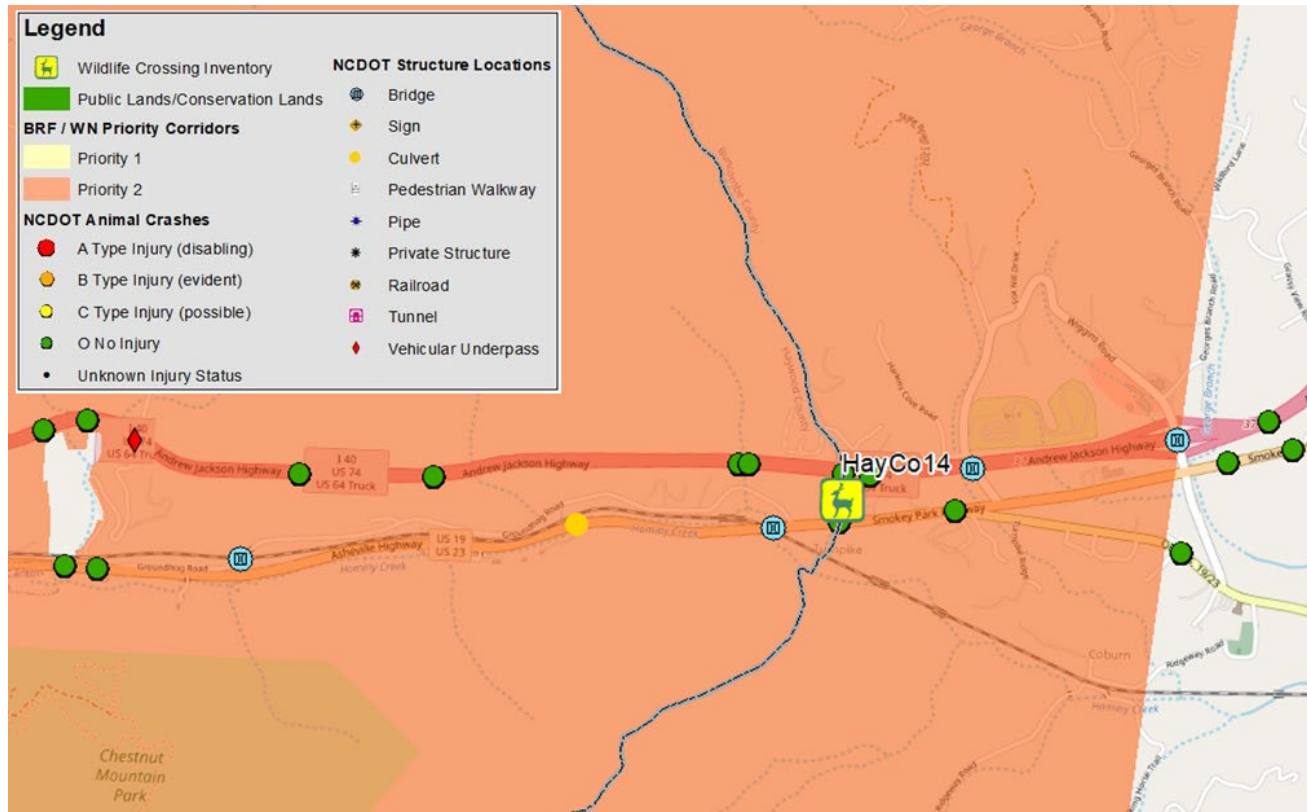
NOTE: The legend in the example can be referenced for all report maps.

Location ID	HayCo14
Reason	WN Top 20 Sites in NC Study, high WVC
Existing Conditions	I-40 east of Canton
Alternative Scenarios	WN Priority 2 Corridor; Install dry culvert underpasses under I-40 and US 19/23, as county line runs along a natural valley and connects with Hominy Creek (immediately south); install Deflection Fencing.
Key Species	Bear, deer, elk
Short Alternative Type	Deflection Fencing, New Culvert
Public Lands	Sandy Mush conservation easement (north), Pisgah N.F. and Chestnut Mountain (SAHC), Mt. Pisgah (south)
CTP	I-40, CTP ID B-1, widen to 6 lanes
STIP	U-6048, US 19/23 upgrade, 2029; I-6054C, I-40 widening, 2029
2021 AADT	56,500
2045 AADT	78,800
Priority Ranking	Highest

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METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Staff Report & Recommendations



Previous Studies and Research

This report builds upon two key studies published in 2022 (see below), Research Results and Mitigation Strategies to Improve Wildlife Connectivity and Human Safety along I-40 in the Pigeon River Gorge (Wildlands Network and National Parks Conservation Association, June 2022) and Prioritizing Wildlife Road Crossings in North Carolina To Reconnect Wildlife Habitat and Improve Road Safety (Wildlands Network, September 2022). The I-40 Pigeon River Gorge study covered both North Carolina and Tennessee.

Additionally, French Broad River MPO staff have consulted additional sources for research including the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP), a program of the Transportation Research Board (TRB), part of the Federal National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. Other sources of background research included the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and Animal Road Crossing (ARC) Solutions, a coalition of conservation organizations and transportation research organizations including the Center for Large Landscape Conservation and the Western Transportation Institute – Montana State University.

Top Recommendations

As of August 2023, French Broad River MPO staff have identified 67 potential wildlife crossing locations in Madison, Buncombe, Henderson, Transylvania, and Haywood County via Geographic Information Systems (GIS) analysis and mapping.

Staff Report & Recommendations

Of these sites, 13 North Carolina sites from the I-40 Pigeon River Gorge study are noted, including the Top Priority Recommendations as follows:

1. **Wilkins Creek Overpass:** Construct an overpass over I-40 between Wilkins Creek Box Culvert A (i.e. north) and the NCDOT Rest Area. Pursue land acquisition or conservation easements to stabilize the area for wildlife.
2. **Single Tunnel Overpass:** Construct an overpass extending the existing Single Tunnel land bridge across the rest of I-40.
3. **Cold Springs Creek Exit Culverts:** Replace the existing culverts on both the entrance and exit ramps with larger structures to facilitate better terrestrial and aquatic wildlife passage.
4. **Groundhog Creek:** Replace the three small existing culverts with a larger structure suitable for all target species.

Top Recommendations continued on next page

Top Recommendations contd.

In comparison to the I-40 Pigeon River Gorge's specific recommendations for wildlife crossing locations and typologies, the **statewide study's**[1] geographic locations are not as specific and recommendations for specific wildlife crossing typologies are not listed. Still, the study's information provided a useful starting point for the French Broad River MPO to recommend possible locations and crossing typologies. Of the statewide study's 155 sites, 17 are located in the MPO/RPO planning area. These 17 sites include five of the study's Top 20 Priority Wildlife Crossing Sites as follows:

1. **I-40 Through the Pigeon River Gorge** (Recommendations covered by I-40 PRG study)
2. **I-26 at the Appalachian Trail:** WN Priority 2 Corridor; Retrofit north side of Flag Pond Rd. bridge with Level Bench Path for wildlife passage; install Deflection Fencing to guide wildlife to bridge underpass. Existing culverts 2 mi. South.
3. **I-40 at Kitsuma Peak:** WN Priority 1 Corridor connecting Pisgah N.F. (north) to Hickory Nut Gorge, South Mountains/Box Creek Wilderness Area (south); Consider new overpass at Eastern Cont. Divide or new culverts underpass at Kitsuma Peak Trailhead. Rockslide fencing exists.
4. **I-40 East of Canton:** WN Priority 2 Corridor; Install dry culvert underpasses under I-40 and US 19/23, as county line runs along a natural valley and connects with Hominy Creek

Staff Report & Recommendations

(immediately south); install Deflection Fencing.

5. **US 19 at the Blue Ridge Parkway:** High elk WVC area. WN Priority 1 Corridor connecting Pisgah N.F., part of Eastern Wildway corridor. Install 24x24 MUTCD warning signs on US 19 and BRP in proximity to the roads' junction.

[1]Prioritizing Wildlife Road Crossings in North Carolina To Reconnect Wildlife Habitat and Improve Road Safety (Wildlands Network, September 2022)

NOTE: Tables and maps of proposed Wildlife Crossings Location IDs are on the following pages.

Action: Consider Adoption of the Identified Needs for Wildlife Crossings

TCC Recommendation: Approve Identified Needs for Wildlife Crossings

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Staff Report & Recommendations

Buncombe County

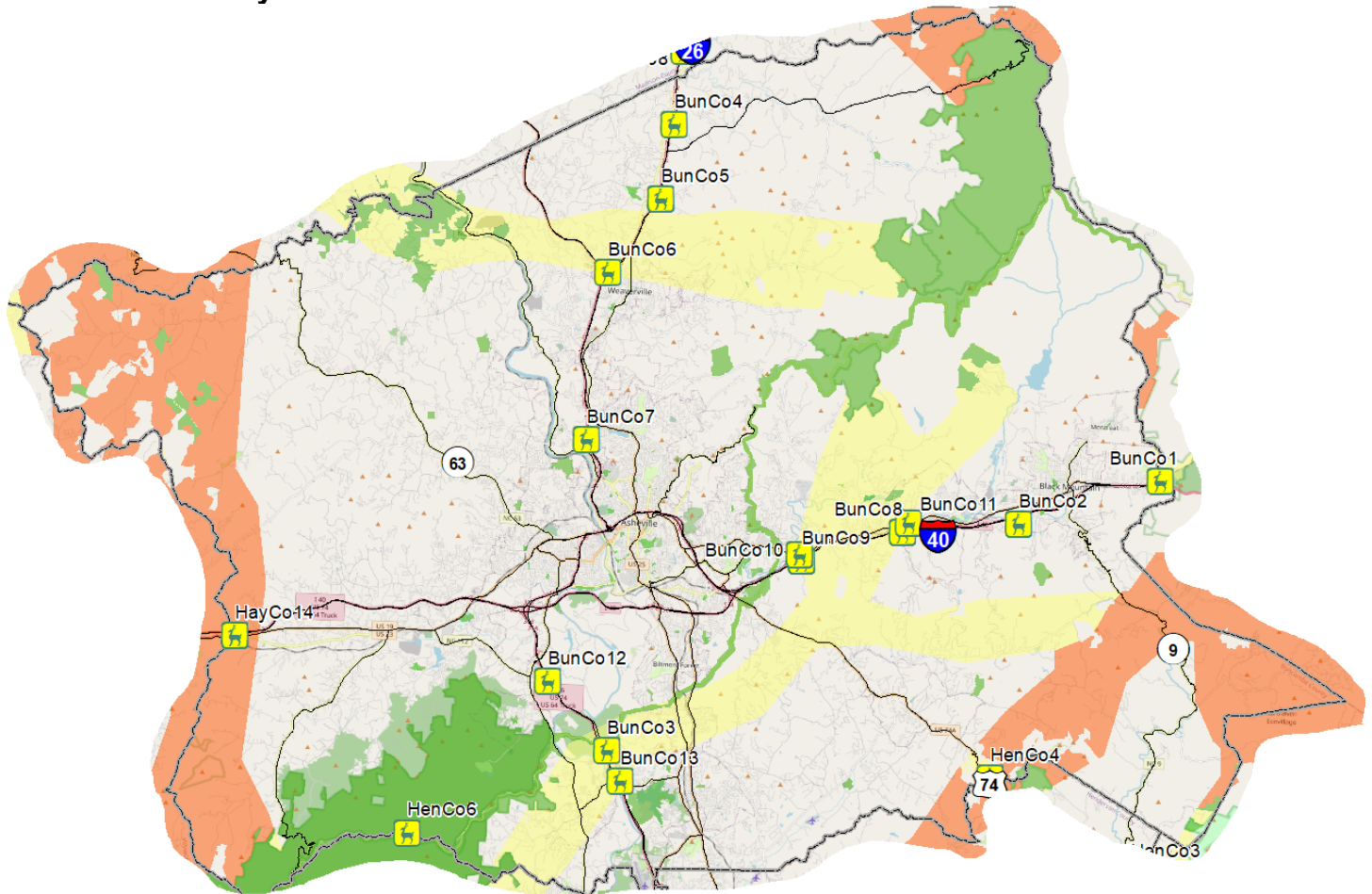
Location ID	Existing Conditions	Short Alternative	2021 AADT	2045 AADT	Priority Ranking
BunCo1	I-40 at Kitsuma Peak	Deflection Fencing, Overpass	26500	42000	Highest
BunCo2	I-40 bear crossing site cited by Kendrick Weeks, NCWRC	Deflection Fencing, Level Bench Path	27500	42000	High
BunCo3	New BRP bridge being built in 2023	Deflection Fencing, Level Bench Path	27500	42000	High
BunCo4	2-mile corridor with cluster of crashes	Deflection Fencing, Level Bench Path	27500	42000	High
BunCo5	2.38-mile corridor with cluster of crashes	Deflection Fencing, Underpass	27500	42000	High
BunCo6	WN Priority 1 Corridor in northern section; 4.4-mile corridor with cluster of crashes	Deflection Fencing	26500	42000	Low
BunCo7	2.75-mi. corridor with cluster of crashes	Level Bench Path, Solar Lighting	26500	42000	Medium
BunCo8	WN Priority 1 Corridor; 3.27-mi. corridor with cluster of crashes	Deflection Fencing, Land Protection	26500	42000	High
BunCo9	WN Priority 1 Corridor; 3.27-mi. corridor with cluster of crashes	Deflection Fencing, New Culvert	26500	42000	High
BunCo10	WN Priority 1 Corridor; 3.3-mi. corridor with cluster of crashes	Overpass	26500	42000	Highest
BunCo11	WN Priority 1 Corridor; 3.3-mi. corridor with cluster of crashes	Deflection Fencing, New Culvert	26500	42000	Highest
BunCo12	11'wide x 9' tall vehicle culvert 0.5 mi. north, 14' x 14' vehicle culvert 0.5 mi. south	Deflection Fencing, New Culvert	26500	42000	Highest
BunCo13	Vehicle underpass 0.5 mi. north, vehicle underpass 0.5 mi. south of Long Shoals Rd.	Deflection Fencing, Level Bench Path	27500	42000	High

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METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Staff Report & Recommendations

Buncombe County Overview

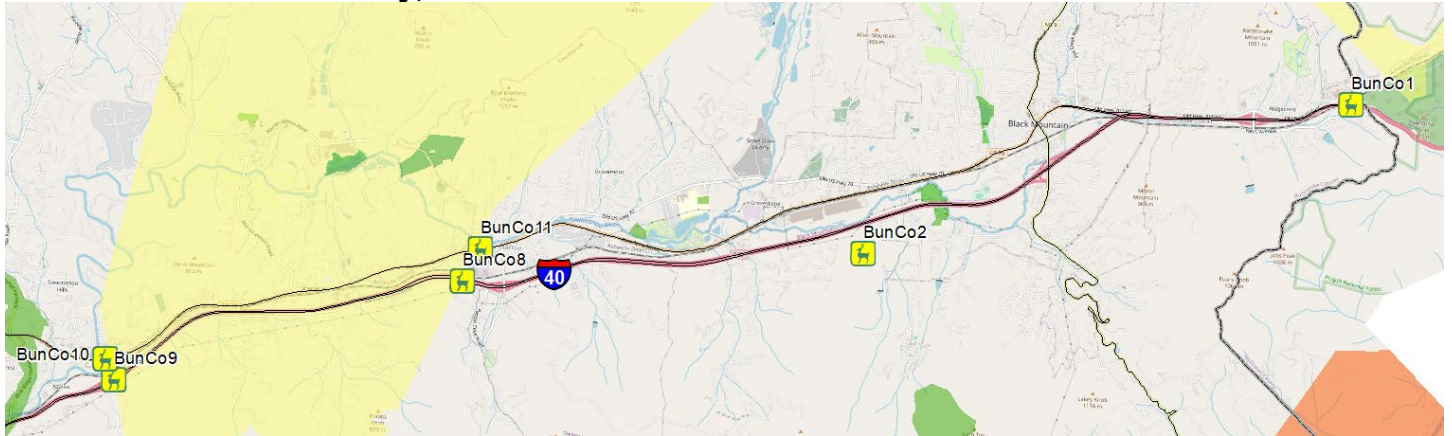


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Staff Report & Recommendations

Eastern Buncombe County, I-40 detail



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Haywood County

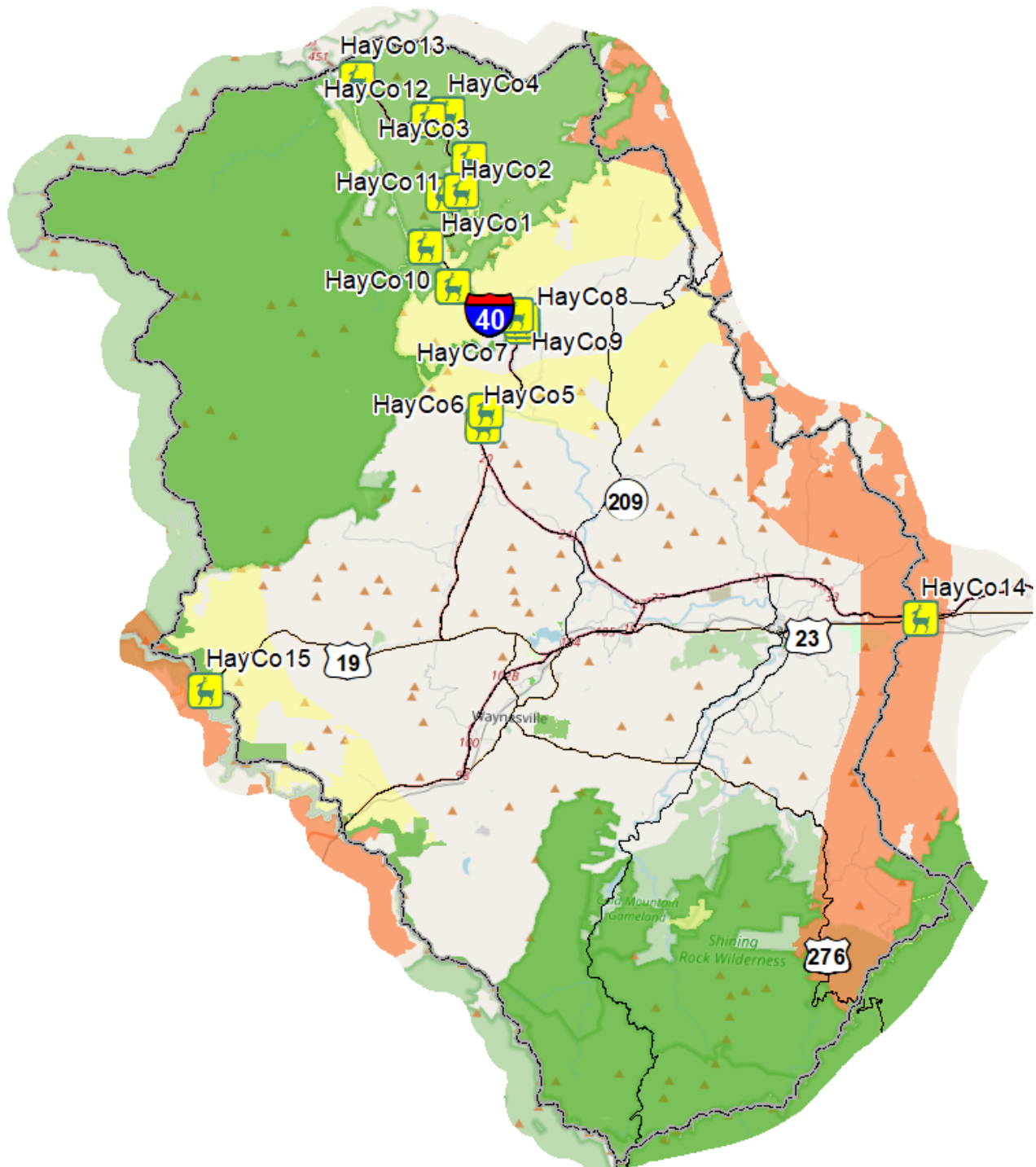
Location ID	Existing Conditions	Short Alternative	2021 AADT	2045 AADT	Priority Ranking
HayCo1	Wilkins Creek Box Culvert A	Deflection Fencing, New Culvert	56500	78800	Highest
HayCo2	Single Tunnel	Deflection Fencing, Level Bench Path	16000	21600	High
HayCo3	Cold Springs Creek Rd Culverts on on/off ramps	Deflection Fencing	43500	54000	High
HayCo4	Groundhog Creek, 3 existing small culverts	Deflection Fencing, Signage	4200	0	High
HayCo5	High Bridge	Deflection Fencing, Signage	1900	0	High
HayCo6	Low Bridge	Deflection Fencing, Signage	7300	13600	High
HayCo7	Pigeon River Bridge	Deflection Fencing, Signage	6000	10000	High
HayCo8	Fines Creek Large Culvert	Signage	3800	6200	High
HayCo9	Fines Creek Bridge	Deflection Fencing, Signage	19000	29300	High
HayCo10	Wilkins Creek Box Culvert B	Deflection Fencing, Level Bench Path	10000	0	Highest
HayCo11	Hurricane Creek Culvert	Deflection Fencing, New Culverts or New Overpass	33500	54200	Highest
HayCo12	Double Tunnel	Signage	0	0	Highest
HayCo13	Snowbird Creek Culvert	Deflection Fencing, Bridge Retrofit	2800	0	High
HayCo14	I-40 east of Canton	Deflection Fencing, Bridge Retrofit	40000	64600	High
HayCo15	US 19 at Blue Ridge Parkway	Deflection Fencing	83000	128000	High

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Haywood County Overview



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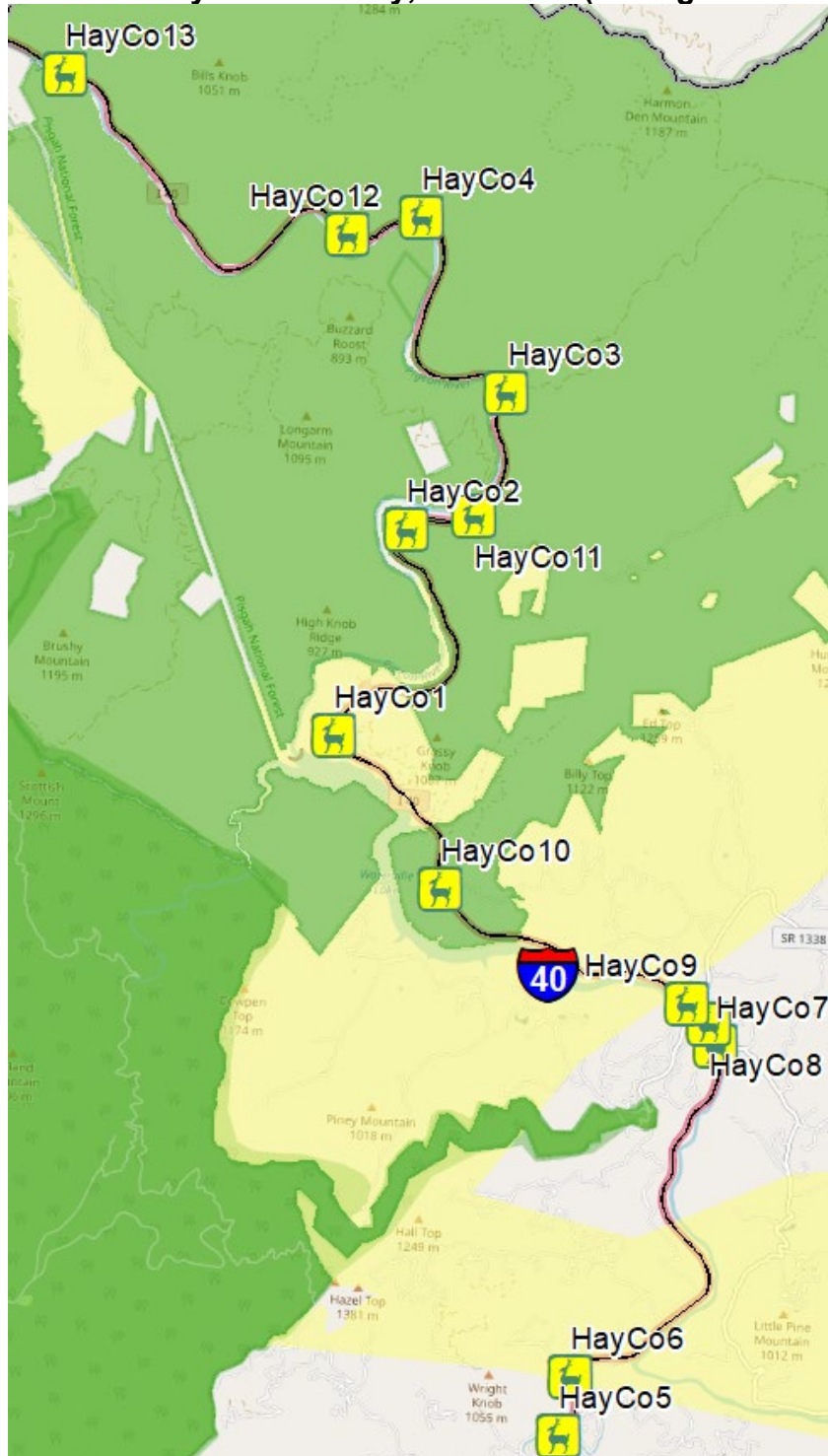
Public Involvement

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Staff Report & Recommendations

Northern Haywood County, I-40 Detail (i.e. Pigeon River Gorge area)



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Public Involvement

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Staff Report & Recommendations

Henderson County

Location ID	Existing Conditions	Short Alternative	2021 AADT	2045 AADT	Priority Ranking
HenCo1	US 25 at Green River; Brdg_Number 440080, triple 15'x15' RC box culvert	Deflection Fencing, New Culvert	0	0	High
HenCo2	Peter Guice Memorial Bridge (I-26)	Deflection Fencing	26000	39400	High
HenCo3	US 64 thru Hickory Nut Gorge	Signage	10000	0	High
HenCo4	US 64 at Tater Knob	Signage	10000	0	High
HenCo5	NC 280 SW of Mills River	Signage	12000	23000	High
HenCo6	BRP, between Ferrin Knob Tunnels 1 & 2; Reptile mortality hotspot, noted by anon wildlife expert	Signage	12000	23000	High
HenCo7	2-mile corridor with cluster of crashes; WN Priority 2 Corridor	Signage	10500	29000	High
HenCo8	2-mile corridor with cluster of crashes; WN Priority 2 Corridor	Signage	10500	29000	High
HenCo9	2-mile corridor with cluster of crashes; WN Priority 2 Corridor	Deflection Fencing	27000	43000	High
HenCo10	2-mile corridor with cluster of crashes; WN Priority 2 Corridor	New Culverts	2100	0	High
HenCo11	2-mile corridor with cluster of crashes; WN Priority 2 Corridor	Deflection Fencing, Level Bench Path	2300	0	Medium
HenCo12	2-mile corridor with cluster of crashes; WN Priority 2 Corridor	Signage	4300	0	Low
HenCo13	16.5-mile corridor (to Pisgah Forest) with cluster of crashes on US 64	Signage	4300	0	Low
HenCo14	2-mile corridor with cluster of crashes; WN Priority 2 Corridor	Signage	5500	8900	Low
HenCo15	2.2-mile corridor with cluster of crashes; WN Priority 2 Corridor 1 mi. south	Signage	5500	8900	Low

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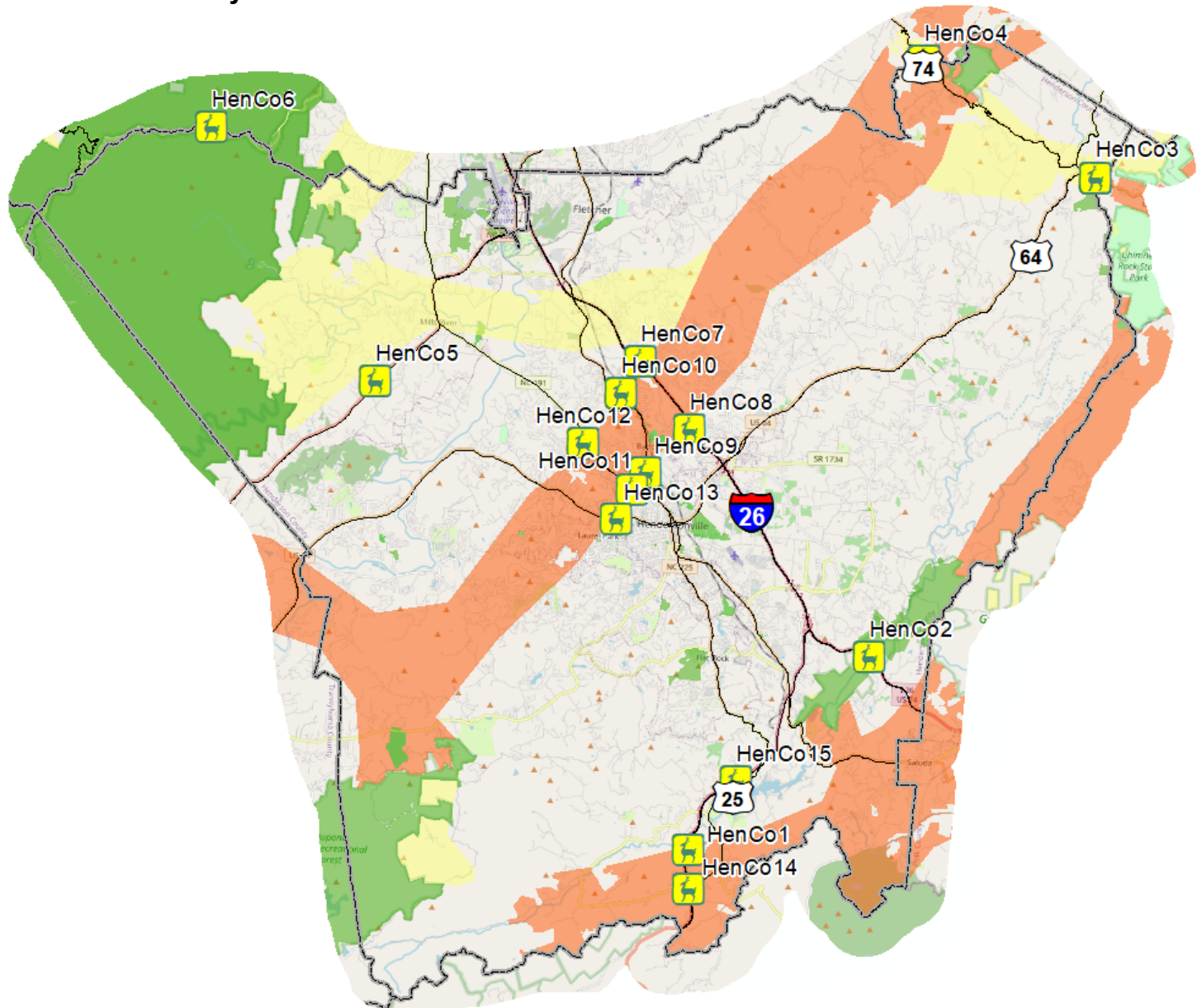
Public Involvement

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Henderson County Overview



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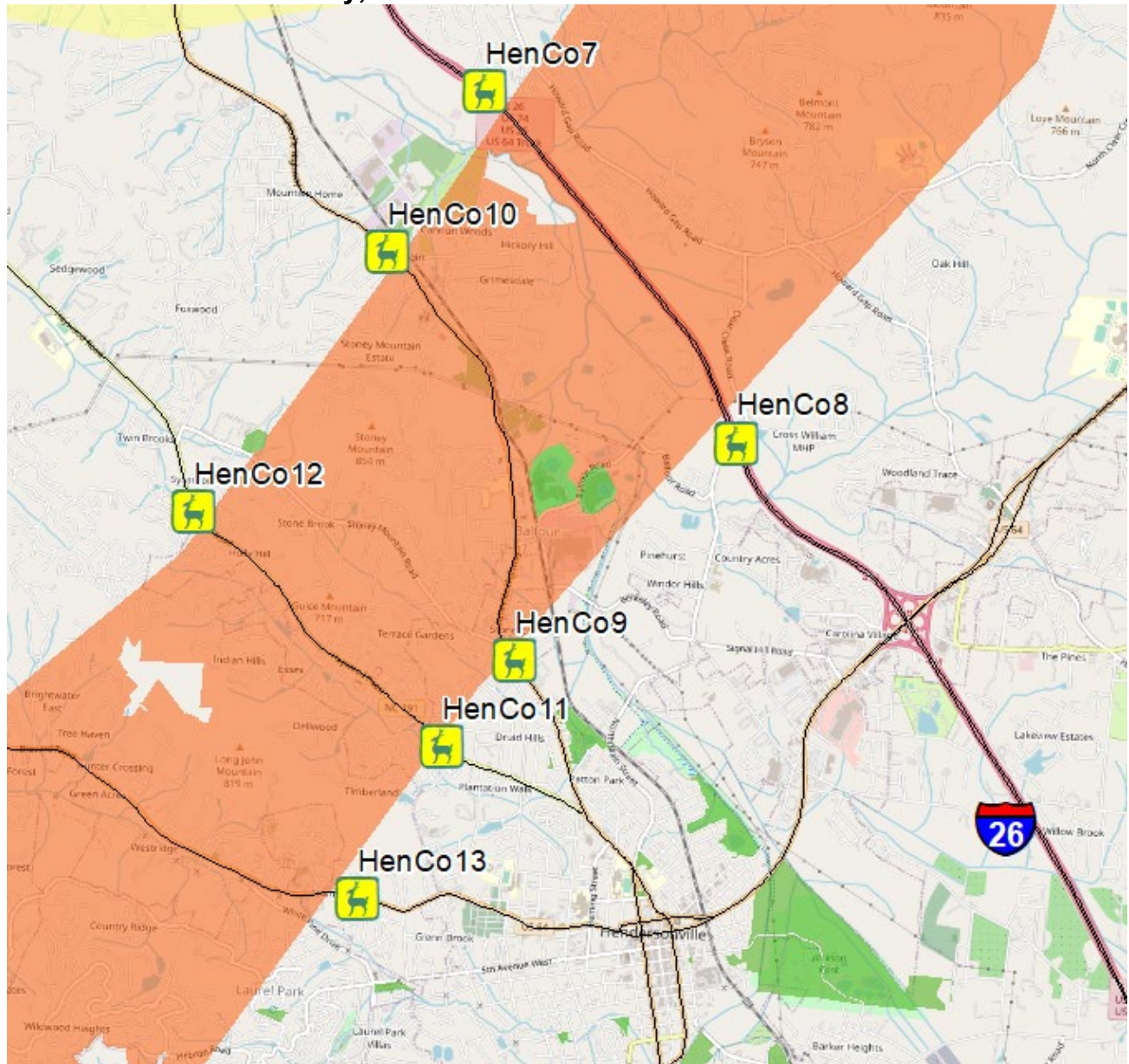
Public Involvement

FRENCH BROAD RIVER

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Staff Report & Recommendations

Central Henderson County, Detail



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Staff Report & Recommendations

Madison County

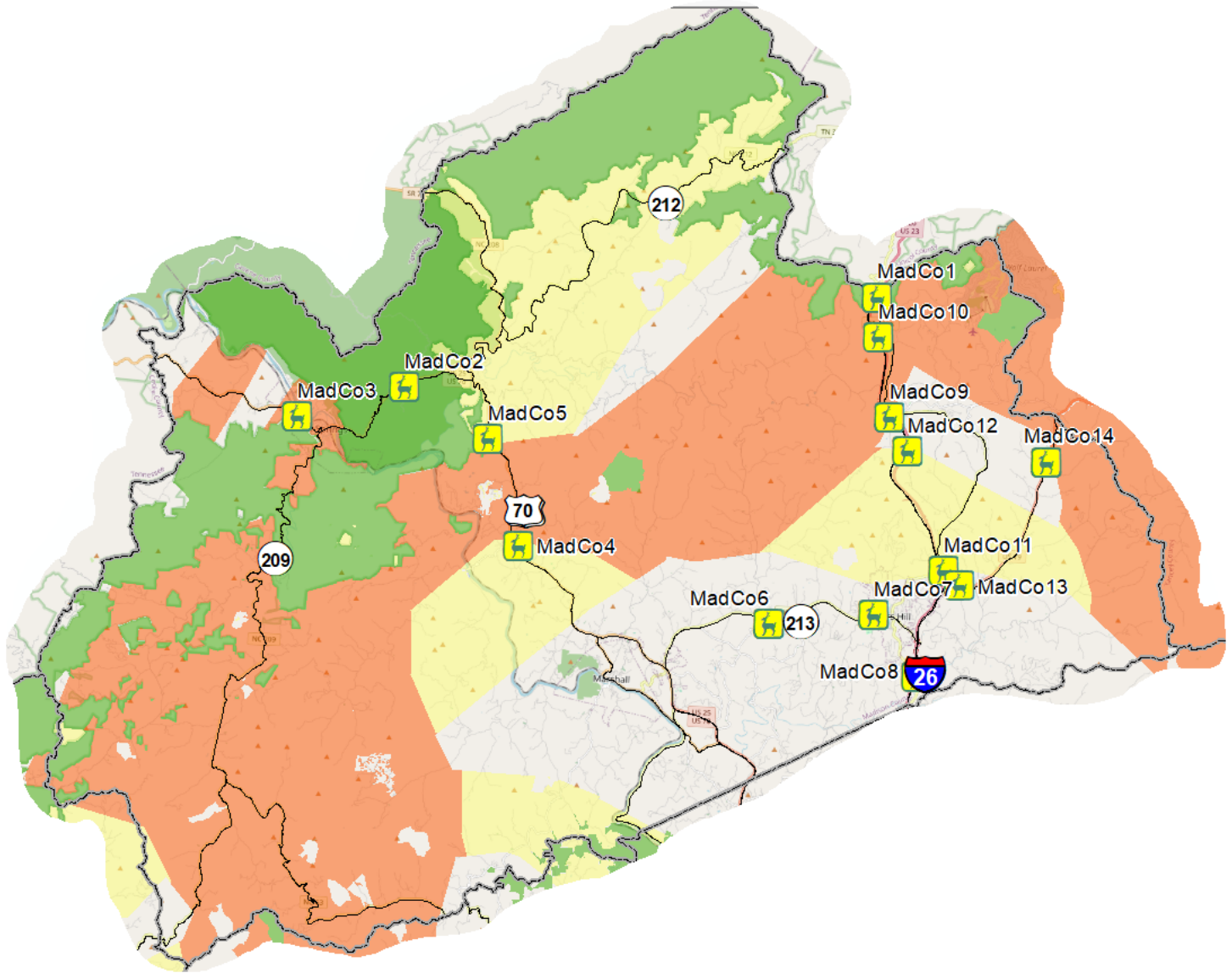
Location ID	Existing Conditions	Short Alternative	2021 AADT	2045 AADT	Priority Ranking
MadCo1	I-26 at Appalachian Trail	Deflection Fencing	32500	50600	High
MadCo2	US 25 at Appalachian Trail	Signage	13000	19300	High
MadCo3	US 25/70 west of Hot Springs	Signage	5200	6600	Low
MadCo4	WN Priority 2 Corridor	Signage	5200	6600	Low
MadCo5	WN Priority 2 Corridor	Signage	5000	8100	High
MadCo6	3-mile corridor with cluster of crashes	Signage	5000	8100	High
MadCo7	3-mile corridor with cluster of crashes	Signage	12000	28000	High
MadCo8	1-mile corridor with cluster of crashes	Signage	12000	28000	High
MadCo9	2-mile corridor with cluster of crashes	Deflection Fencing	83000	128000	High
MadCo10	2-mile corridor with cluster of crashes	Deflection Fencing	48000	59000	High
MadCo11	3.5 mile corridor with cluster of crashes, WN Priority 1 Corridor	Deflection Fencing	63500	95200	High
MadCo12	3.5 mile corridor with cluster of crashes	Signage	52000	75800	High
MadCo13	5 mile corridor with cluster of crashes, WN Priority 1 Corridor	Signage	52000	75800	High
MadCo14	5 mile corridor with cluster of crashes, WN Priority 1 Corridor	Signage	13000	19300	High

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Madison County Overview



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Transylvania County

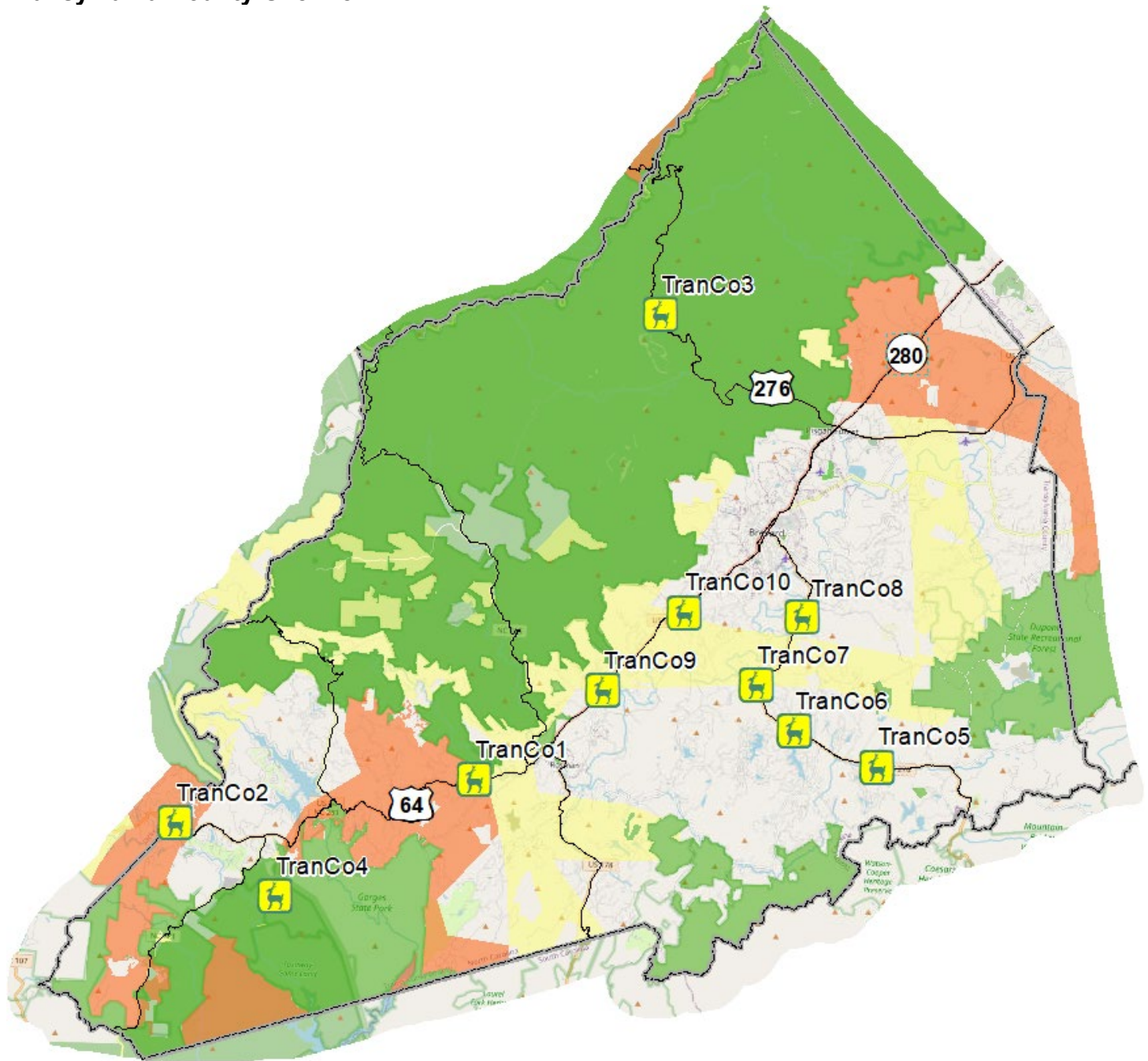
Location ID	Existing Conditions	Short Alternative	2021 AADT	2045 AADT	Priority Ranking
TranCo1	US 64 at Panther Mountain	Deflection Fencing	83000	128000	High
TranCo2	US 64 at Sapphire	Signage	62500	94000	High
TranCo3	US 276 in Pisgah N.F.	Signage	24000	32000	Medium
TranCo4	Reptile mortality hotspot; 3 existing culverts installed 2009, noted by anon wildlife expert	Signage	24000	32000	Medium
TranCo5	2.85-mile corridor with cluster of crashes	Signage	10500	13000	Medium
TranCo6	2.85-mile corridor with cluster of crashes	Signage	10500	13000	Medium
TranCo7	2-mile corridor with cluster of crashes; WN Priority 1 Corridor	Signage	11500	15500	Medium
TranCo8	2-mile corridor with cluster of crashes; WN Priority 1 Corridor	Deflection Fencing, Underpass	14500	22500	High
TranCo9	3-mile corridor with cluster of crashes; WN Priority 1 Corridor	Deflection Fencing, Underpass	16500	24000	High
TranCo10	3-mile corridor with cluster of crashes; WN Priority 1 Corridor	Signage	62500	94000	High

FRENCH BROAD RIVER

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Staff Report & Recommendations

Transylvania County Overview



Staff Report & Recommendations

Item 4C:

Updated 5307 Suballocation Formula

What are 5307 funds?

5307 funds are the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding program for urban transit systems for transit capital and operating assistance and transportation-related planning in urbanized areas. Since the Asheville Urbanized Area has a population greater than 200,000 people, 5307 funds go directly to a local Designated Recipient rather than the Governor's office at the state level.

The Asheville Urbanized Area receives an apportionment of FTA Section 5307 Urban Transit Formula funds on an annual basis, and the City of Asheville is currently the Designated Recipient for FTA Section 5307 Urban Transit Formula funds in our region, with Buncombe County and Henderson County eligible for a portion of Section 5307 FTA Urban Transit Funds as subrecipients to the City of Asheville.

What is the MPO's role with 5307 funds?

In 2017, the French Broad River MPO Board allocated funds to undertake a Section 5307 Urban Transit Funding Formula Study to determine how to distribute FTA Section 5307 Urban Transit Formula Funds apportioned to the Asheville Urbanized Area on an annual basis, with **funding Alternative #9** (see below) chosen and endorsed by MPO resolution on February 23, 2017.

Additionally, the MPO administers and scores an annual Call for Projects for Jobs Access Reverse Commute (JARC) funding. JARC funds are subset of 5307 funds, with local policy designating 10 percent of total 5307 funds to be used for JARC projects. A current JARC-funded project is the Asheville Rides Transit (ART) Bus Route 170 that operates between downtown Asheville's transit center and a bus stop just south of downtown Black Mountain.

Why are we taking action? (i.e., new urban boundaries changed eligible recipients)

The 2020 U.S. Census resulted in changes to the urbanized area and one public transit agency, Haywood Public Transit (Haywood County), in the French Broad River MPO region became ineligible for FTA Section 5307 Urban Transit Formula funds (i.e. per 2020 U.S. Census, Haywood County now has Urbanized Areas independent from the Asheville Urbanized Area).

FRENCH BROAD RIVER

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Staff Report & Recommendations

Details on the recommendation

Until changes are sought by the Designated Recipient or Subrecipients, the following formula (i.e. **funding Alternative #9**) will be utilized to allocate FTA Section 5307 Urban Formula funding between eligible subrecipients, with the data necessary taken from National Transit Database report form FFA-10, latest year available, apportioned for urban and rural trips, or through another data input methodology as agreed upon by all the subrecipient agencies and by the City of Asheville:

- 45.4% Urban Area Population
- 45.4% Urban Area Population x Urban Area Population/Urban Area Density
- 9.2% Incentive: Urban Bus Passenger Miles * Urban Bus Passenger Miles/Urban Operating Cost

The FBRMPO's 5307 SubRecipients Work Group met 4/3/23, agreeing on continued use of funding Alternative #9, and met again on 9/12/23, confirming agreement on continued use of funding Alternative #9. A phase-in period will take place starting with state fiscal year 2024 (starting on July 1, 2023) and continuing through the end of state fiscal year 2030 (June 30, 2029), during which the following percentages will be applied to distribute the annual apportionments to the Asheville Urbanized Area (UZA), between eligible agencies:

	These funding apportionments are based on 2010 UZA				Beginning with FY 24, funding apportionments are based on 2020 UZA.	
	Oct. 2021-Oct. 2022		Oct. 2022-Oct. 2023		Oct. 2023-Oct. 2024	
Jurisdiction	FY 22 Apportionment	Percent Allocation	FY 23 Apportionment	Percent Allocation	FY 24 Apportionment	Percent Allocation
Total Region	\$4,083,938		\$4,083,792			
JARC Set-Aside	\$408,394	10.0%	\$408,379	10.0%		
Regional Amount after 10% JARC set-aside	\$3,675,544		\$3,675,413			
City of Asheville	\$1,566,884	42.6%	\$1,565,726	42.6%		46.9%
Buncombe County	\$1,051,941	28.6%	\$1,051,168	28.6%		31.9%
Haywood County	\$306,540	8.3%	\$305,059	8.3%		
Henderson County	\$750,179	20.4%	\$749,784	20.4%		21.2%

Action: Consider Approval of 5307 Subrecipients Formula continuation.

TCC Recommendation: Approve the Updated 5307 Subrecipient Formula

a program of Land of Sky

FRENCH BROAD RIVER

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE 5307 URBAN TRANSIT FUNDING ALLOCATION FORMULA FOR USE IN THE FRENCH BROAD RIVER MPO REGION

WHEREAS, the Asheville Urbanized Area receives an apportionment of FTA Section 5307 Urban Transit Formula funds on an annual basis, and the City of Asheville is currently the Designated Recipient for FTA Section 5307 Urban Transit Formula funds in our region, with Buncombe County, Haywood County, and Henderson County eligible for portions of Section 5307 FTA Urban Transit Funds as a subrecipient to the City of Asheville; and

WHEREAS, the 2020 U.S. Census has resulted in changes to the urbanized area and Haywood County is no longer eligible for FTA Section 5307 Urban Transit Formula funds; and

WHEREAS, changes to eligible entities will impact which agencies will be able to access FTA Section 5307 Urban Transit Formula funds beginning in FY 2024; and

WHEREAS, the French Broad River 5307 Subrecipient Workgroup has reviewed the updates to the 5307 Suballocation Formula; and

WHEREAS, the French Broad River MPO Board has reviewed the recommendations,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization hereby adopts the following recommendations for FTA Section 5307 Urban Transit Formula funds allocation in the Asheville Urbanized Area:

- A 10% regional Jobs Access Reverse Commute (JARC) set-aside out of Section 5307 Urban Transit Formula funds apportioned to the Asheville Urbanized Area will remain in place, with a call for JARC projects to be held by the French Broad River MPO in coordination with the Designated Recipient;
- French Broad River MPO Board retains the right to modify the Jobs Access Reverse Commute (JARC) set-aside percentage in the future without modifying the full FTA Section 5307 Urban Transit Formula funding agreement;
- Starting with fiscal year apportionments FY 2024 and later years, the following formula will be utilized to allocate FTA Section 5307 Urban Formula funding between eligible subrecipients, with the data necessary taken from National Transit Database report form FFA-10, apportioned for urban and rural trips, or through another data input methodology as agreed upon by all the subrecipient agencies and by the Designated Recipient:
 - 45.4% Urban Area Population
 - 45.4% Urban Area Population x Urban Area Population/Urban Area Density

- 9.2% Incentive: Urban Bus Passenger Miles * Urban Bus Passenger Miles/Urban Operating Cost
- This FTA Section 5307 Suballocation Formula for the FBRMPO shall be utilized to include any new recipients without delay unless specific action is taken by the FBRMPO Board to direct otherwise.

ADOPTED: This the 21st day of September, 2023

Anthony Sutton, FBRMPO Board Chair

Attest, Tristan Winkler Director
French Broad River MPO

Staff Report & Recommendations

Item 4D:

Designation of Great Trails State Day

About the Great Trails State Day

On August 16, 2022, the North Carolina Legislature declared 2023 to be the Year of the Trail. 2023 marks the 50th anniversary of the 1973 North Carolina Trails System Act. The NC Trails System Act created North Carolina's Trails Program which is housed in the Division of Parks and Recreation and is assisted by the North Carolina Trails Committee, a group of citizens appointed to represent users of different types of trails, including hiking, biking, paddling, horseback riding and off road vehicles.

Information from Great Trails State Coalition

Celebrate the inaugural Great Trails State Day on Saturday, October 21st, and join thousands of others on North Carolina's amazing and diverse trail networks that span from the

Call a neighbor or friend, lace up your shoes or boots, get on a bike, borrow a kayak, or saddle up your horse and get outside on a trail! And, don't forget to smile and say, "hello!" to others you may see out there!

There's truly a trail for everyone, everywhere, in North Carolina – from easy and accessible to challenging and even thrill-seeking. Every trail is an adventure for exploration, movement, health, and joy.

[Find your trail here on our "Find a Trail" page.](#)

While you're out there, don't forget to share your trail experience with us – take a photo with a friend on your favorite trail! We'll be creating an album to commemorate this great day in this great year in The Great Trails State! Tag us @greattrailsnc and #greattrailsstateday2023

Are you interested in planning a Great Trails State Day event? The possibilities are limitless and don't need to be complicated – partner with a local outings group, church, senior center, or other organization to share the fun.

Staff Report & Recommendations

Here are a few other ideas:

Guided hike/walk/paddle/ride or meet up

Paddle expo day

Bike rodeo

Scavenger hunt

Trail tracker completion challenge – [see our template here](#)

Tours

Facebook live event

Have a picnic on a trail

Tools and Assets:

[Great Trails State Day logo](#)

[Yard sign template](#)

[Sticker template](#)

[Poster](#)

[Great Trails State Day proclamation template](#)

For more information, contact: info@greattrailsnc.com

TCC Recommendation: Approve the Designation of Great Trails State Day

Staff Report & Recommendations

2023 GREAT TRAILS STATE DAY PROCLAMATION FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES

WHEREAS, the French Broad River MPO's natural beauty is critical to its residents' quality of life, health, and economic wellbeing; and

WHEREAS, the trails that span across our community are an integral part of the recreational and transportation possibilities of our area and promote an enjoyment of scenic beauty by our residents and our visitors; and

WHEREAS, the parks, greenways, trails and natural areas in our community are welcoming to all and provide a common ground for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to access our rich and diverse natural, cultural, and historic resources; and

WHEREAS, French Broad River MPO's nature trails vary from paved trails to natural surface; and

WHEREAS, trails offer quality-of-life benefits to all as expressions of local community character and pride, as outdoor workshops for science education, as tools for economic revitalization, as free resources for healthy recreation, as accessible alternative transportation, and as sites for social and cultural events; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina General Assembly designated 2023 as the Year of the Trail in North Carolina to promote and celebrate the state's extensive network of trails that showcase our state's beauty, vibrancy and culture; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina is known as the "GreatTrailsState;" and

WHEREAS, the French Broad River MPO maintains a goal to Improve Multimodal Transportation and several member governments of the MPO are working on developing greenway projects;

NOW, THEREFORE, the French Broad River MPO does hereby proclaim October 21, 2023 as "GREAT TRAILS STATE DAY" in the French Broad River MPO, and commend its observance to all people.

DATED THIS 21st day of September, 2023

Staff Report & Recommendations

Item 6A:

Division Project Updates

Division 13: <https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Div-13-updates-Sept-2023.pdf>

Division 14: <https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Div-14-Updates-September-2023.pdf>

Item 6B:

TPD Updates

Item 6C:

FHWA/FTA Updates

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

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

FHWA Updates – September 2023

U.S. Access Board Issues Final Rule on Public Right-of-Way Accessibility

On August 8, 2023, the U.S. Access Board published a [Federal Register notice](#) to finalize the Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG). The purpose of PROWAG is to help ensure that pedestrian facilities located in the public right-of-way are readily accessible to and usable by pedestrians with disabilities. PROWAG addresses access to sidewalks and streets, crosswalks, curb ramps, pedestrian signals, on-street parking, and other components of public rights-of-way. The final rule has an effective date of September 7, 2023. More information is available [here](#).

USDOT Appoints 24 Members to the Advisory Committee on Transportation Equity

On August 17, 2023, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) [announced](#) the appointment of 24 members to the Advisory Committee on Transportation Equity (ACTE). Appointees to the ACTE are drawn from academia, the private sector, and the transportation industry, including experts in community engagement, transportation planning, design, research, policy, advocacy, and diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. The group will hold its first meeting in the Fall of 2023.

USDOT Announces \$100 Million in Available Funding for the SMART Grants Program

On August 8, 2023, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) [announced](#) the availability of \$100 million in funding through the [Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation \(SMART\) Grants Program](#). The SMART program was established to provide grants to eligible public sector agencies to conduct demonstration projects focused on advanced smart community technologies and systems in order to improve transportation efficiency and safety. The application deadline is October 10, 2023. More information is available [here](#) and [here](#).

FTA Announces \$13.4 Million in Available Funding for Transit-Oriented Development Planning

On August 7, 2023, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) recently [announced](#) the availability of \$13.4 million through the [Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development Planning](#). The Pilot Program helps support FTA's mission of improving America's communities through public transportation by providing funding to local communities to integrate land use and transportation planning with a new fixed guideway or core capacity transit capital investment. The application deadline is October 10, 2023. More information is available [here](#) and [here](#).

Application Deadlines Approaching for Other USDOT Discretionary Grant Opportunities

Please be aware of the approaching application deadlines for the following discretionary grant opportunities from the USDOT:

- [September 28, 2023 – Rural and Tribal Assistance Pilot Program](#);
- [September 28, 2023 – Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods \(RCN\) Grant Program](#), which includes:
 - [Reconnecting Communities Pilot \(RCP\) Program](#), and
 - [Neighborhood Access and Equity \(NAE\) Program](#); and

- [November 6, 2023 – Nationally Significant Federal Lands and Tribal Transportation Projects \(NSFLTP\) Program.](#)

FHWA Announces \$195 Million in Awards for the Culvert Aquatic Organism Passage Program

On August 16, 2023, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) [announced](#) more than \$195 million in awards to 59 Tribal, State, and local governments through the [Culvert Aquatic Organism Passage \(AOP\) Program](#). The grants will help improve approximately 550 miles of stream habitat by fixing or removing 169 culvert barriers to fish passage. More information is available [here](#).

FHWA Seeking Public Comments on Intention to Collect Information from States and MPOs

On August 31, 2023, the FHWA Office of Planning, Environment, and Realty published a [notice](#) in the Federal Register to request public comments on the agency's intention to collect information from State Departments of Transportation (DOTs) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) regarding planning and research work programs, periodic progress reports, and periodic financial reports, as part of [23 CFR Part 420](#) and [2 CFR Part 200](#). The public comment period closes October 2, 2023. FHWA will summarize and/or include public comments in its approval request to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

FHWA Publishes Report on Approaches to Distributing Federal Metropolitan Planning Funds

On August 10, 2023, the FHWA Office of Planning published a [report](#) entitled, "Review of State DOT Approaches to Distribute Federal Metropolitan Planning (PL) Funds to MPOs." FHWA is providing this information as a resource for State DOTs and MPOs nationwide to use in the self-assessment of current distribution approaches and the consideration of alternative approaches. A similar report from 2015 is available [here](#).

FHWA Publishes Report on Target Setting for Safety Performance Measures

In July 2023, the FHWA Office of Safety published a [report](#) entitled, "Safety Performance Target Setting: State of the Practice Report." This report documents the results from a research study to better understand State safety performance target setting practices and how States are integrating these practices into project planning and programming.

FHWA Publishes Report on Forecasting Methods for Travel Time-Based Performance Measures

On August 18, 2023, the FHWA Office of Operations published a [report](#) entitled, "Approaches to Forecasting the Third Performance Management Rulemaking (PM3) Measures for Target Setting." The approaches include extrapolation of past trends, identifying "at risk" highway segments, and model-based forecasting options.

FHWA Publishes Report on Virtual Public Involvement in Rural Communities

In June 2023, the FHWA Office of Federal Lands Highway published a [report](#) entitled, "Rural Virtual Public Involvement: Synthesis and Tools." The purpose of the report is to assist transportation practitioners in developing their own, local frameworks for decision-making around how to connect with

rural communities and whether virtual tools might be appropriate in doing so. The report synthesizes current practices, challenges and opportunities, and existing tools for practitioners.

GAO Publishes Report on State and Local Efforts to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

On August 3, 2023, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) published a [report](#) entitled, “Climate Change: State and Local Efforts to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Vehicles.” GAO found examples of State DOTs and MPOs estimating on-road greenhouse gas emissions, analyzing the effects of transportation investments on greenhouse gas emissions, and establishing targets for reducing on-road greenhouse gas emissions.

NCHRP Publishes Research on Resilience, Freight, and Automation

The National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) recently published the following research:

- [Integrating Resilience Concepts and Strategies into Transportation Planning](#);
- [Integrating Freight and Active Transportation into Policies, Programs, Plans, and Project Development](#);
- [State and Local Impacts of Automated Freight Transportation Systems](#); and
- [Realistic Timing Estimates for Automated Vehicle Implementation](#).

Upcoming Webinars on Project Delivery, Roadway Classifications, MOVES4, Grant Tools, and Safety

Here is the registration information for six upcoming webinars in September:

- [September 7, 2023 – Embedding Equity in Project Delivery](#);
- [September 7, 2023 – Context-Based Classification in Roadway Planning and Design](#);
- [September 13, 2023 – Using MOVES4: Guidance, Instructions, and Comparisons to MOVES3](#);
- [September 19, 2023 – Utilizing USDOT Data and Mapping Tools for Stronger Grant Applications](#);
- [September 25, 2023 – Global Benchmarking Webinar Series: Improving Pedestrian Safety on Urban Arterials \(Part 1 of 4\)](#); and
- [September 27, 2023 – Using NEPA Review to Define and Shape Better Projects](#).

Staff Report & Recommendations

Item 6D:

Committee & Workgroup Updates

Prioritization Subcommittee— met on September 6th

Points of Discussion:

- P 7.0 Submittal List
- I-40 Widening and Possibility of HOT Lanes

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 September 12, 2023

Points of Business/Discussion:

- 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

Staff Report & Recommendations

- 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.

Hellbender Trail Stakeholder Group/Regional Trail Forum Updates- done!

FRENCH BROAD RIVER

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Staff Report & Recommendations

MPO Studies Status

Study	Managing Entity	Year Programmed	Status
Asheville Bike/Ped Counters	City of Asheville	2016	Closed- Q4, 2023
Reed Creek Greenway Feasibility Study	City of Asheville	2023	Underway
2050 Socio-Economic Projections	FBRMPO	2023	Consultant Selected
CTP/MTP Update	FBRMPO	2024	RFLOI Drafted, Awaiting Approval
Safe Streets for All Regional Action Plan	FBRMPO	2024	RFLOI Drafted, Awaiting Approval
Patton Avenue Corridor Study	City of Asheville	2023	Consultant Selected
Ridgecrest Connector Greenway Feasibility Study	Town of Black Mountain	2023	Consultant Selected
Cane Creek Greenway Study	Town of Fletcher	2024	Agreement Being Drafted
Woodfin-Weaverville Greenway Study	Town of Woodfin	2024	Agreement Being Drafted
Buncombe County Multimodal Master Plan	Buncombe County	2024	Agreement Being Drafted
Hellbender Implementation Plan	FBRMPO	2024	Not Started
Regional ITS Plan	FBRMPO	2024	Not Started
Travel Survey/Model Upgrades	FBRMPO	2024	Not Started
Staffing & Implementation Study	FBRMPO	2024	Not Started

FRENCH BROAD RIVER

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Staff Report & Recommendations

Item 6E:

Legislative Updates