

**French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization**  
Minutes from the Governing Board Meeting on September 21, 2023

**Attendance:**

In-Person and Remote via the Zoom Platform:

Anthony Sutton	Town of Waynesville
Jennifer Hensley	City of Hendersonville
Steve Williams	NCDOT Div 14
Bob Davy	Town of Fletcher
Vicki Eastland	LOS RPO
Matt Wechtel	Madison County
George Banta	Town of Laurel Park
Stephen Sparks	NCDOT Div 14
Maggie Ullman	City of Asheville
Daniel Sellers	NCDOT TPD
Bill Marley	FHWA
Rebecca McCall	Henderson County
Kim Roney	City of Asheville
Hannah Cook	NCDOT Div 13
Archie Pertiller	Town of Black Mountain
Mike Eveland	Town of Maggie Valley
Catherine Cordell	Town of Weaverville
Dr. Ralph Hamlet	Town of Canton
Amanda Edwards	Buncombe County
Angela Reece	Town of Black Mountain
Rose Bauguess	Southwestern Commission
Dylan Casper	Buncombe County Transit
Chris Lee	NCDOT Div 14

Members without Representation present:

Town of Biltmore Forest
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BOT 13
BOT 14
Town of Clyde
Town of Flat Rock
Haywood County
Town of Mars Hill
Town of Mills River
Town of Montreat
Rural Transit
Urban Transit
Town of Woodfin

Additional Attendees:

Tristan Winkler (FBRMPO)	Hannah Bagli (FBRMPO)	Logan DiGiacomo (FBRMPO)
Scott Adams (FBRMPO)	Jon Barsanti (FBRMPO)	Asha Rado (LOSRC, Minutes)
Steve Goodman (Nat. Parks Conservation Association)		Nikki Robinson(Wildlands Network)
Mark Barrett (General Public)	Liz Hilard(Wildlands Network)	
Stuart Bass (General Public)	Jeff Hunter(Nat. Parks Conservation Association)	

**WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS & ROLL CALL**

Anthony Sutton called the meeting to order at 1:21 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**

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

## CONSENT AGENDA

### Letter of Support- WNC Source 5310 Application

Mr. Jeff Roper  
526 7th Ave. E.  
Hendersonville, NC 28792  
September 22, 2023

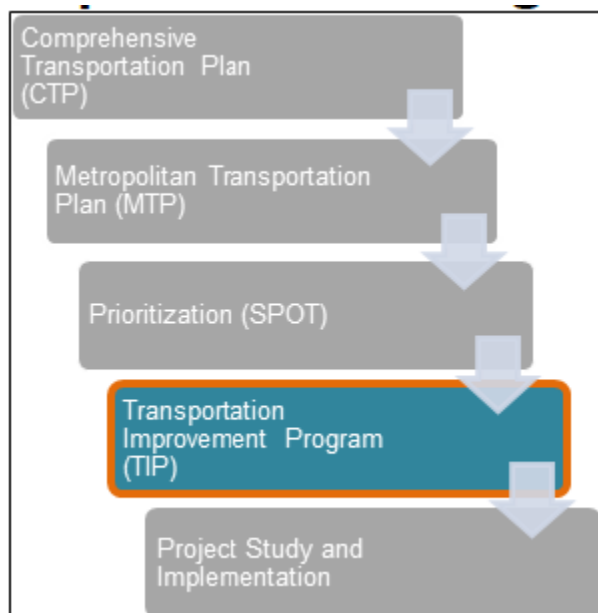
Dear Mr. Roper,

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

## 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
<b>STBGDA</b>	617	250	250	250	250	250				
<b>Local</b>	154	63	63	63	63	63				

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

***Steve Williams moved to approve the consent agenda including the August 2023 Board Minutes, the TAC agenda, the Letter of Support-WNC Source 5310 Application and the modification to the 2024-2033 Transportation Improvement Program(TIP). Matt Wechtel seconded the motion which passed unanimously upon a roll call vote.***

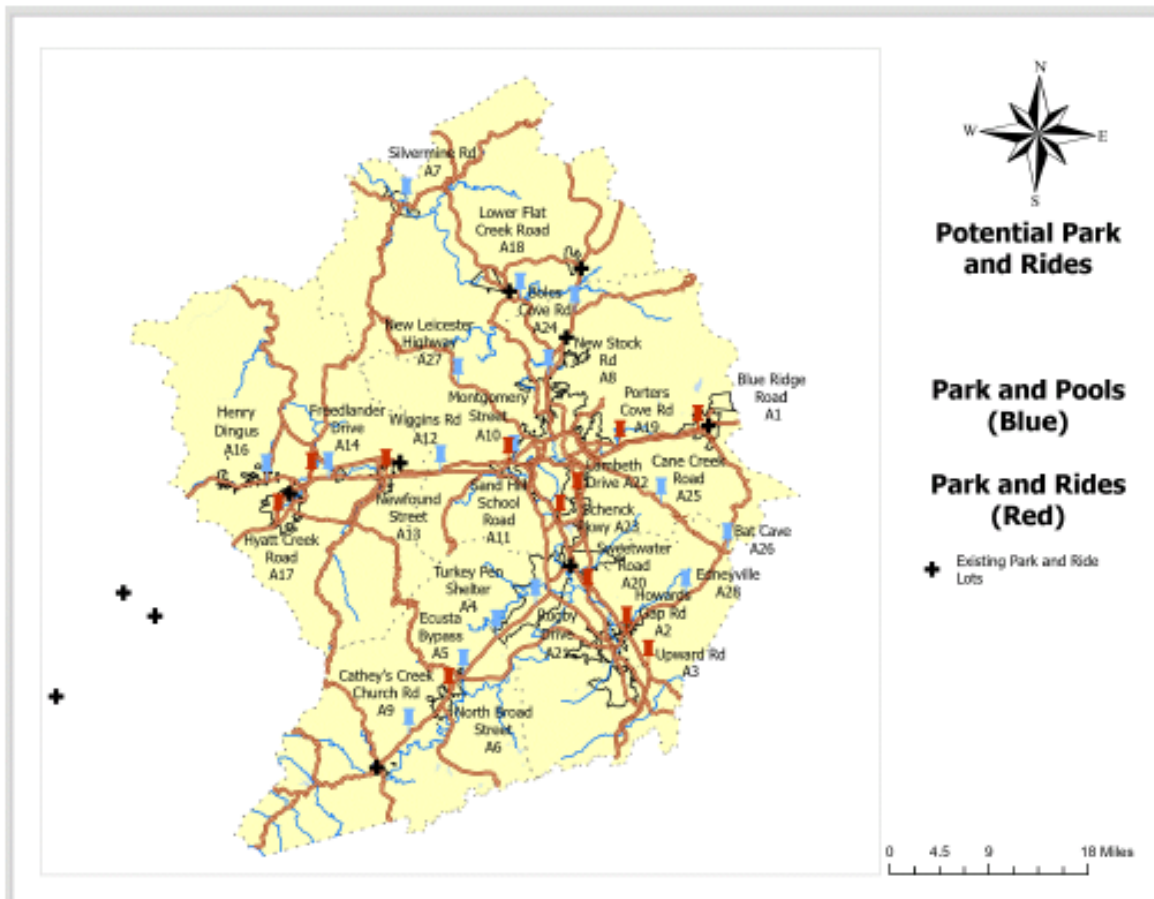
## **Business**

### **Park and Ride Identified Needs**

**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.



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 Road	
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	

Jon Barsanti, Jr presented.

Discussion occurred with suggestions for locations to be considered in Flat Rock and Weaverville.

***Matt Wechtel moved to approve the Identified Needs for Park and Ride Facilities. Kim Roney seconded, and the motion passed unanimously upon a roll call vote.***

### **Wildlife Crossings Identified Needs**

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)**.

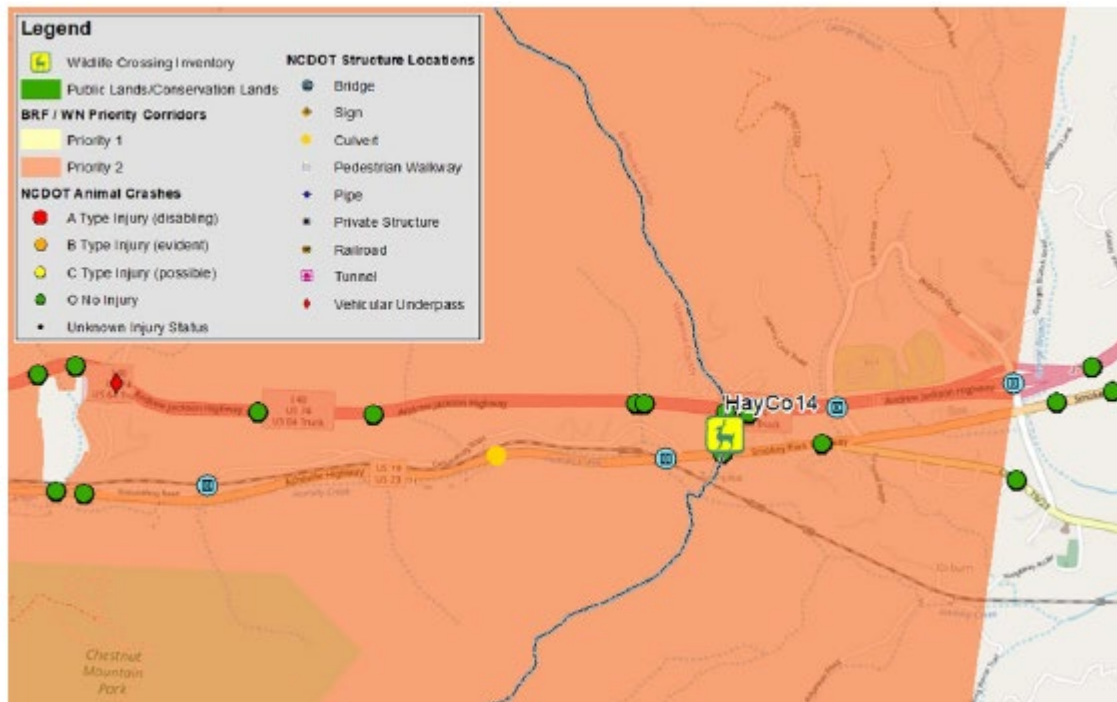
These two processes identify specific projects, so the early identification of wildlife crossing needs, in addition to other design factors like bicycle/pedestrian accommodation and climate resilience, can reduce project scope and cost revisions later on. This effort stems from the French Broad River 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.

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.



<b>Location ID</b>	HayCo14
<b>Reason</b>	WN Top 20 Sites in NC Study, high WVC
<b>Existing Conditions</b>	I-40 east of Canton
<b>Alternative Scenarios</b>	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.
<b>Key Species</b>	Bear, deer, elk
<b>Short Alternative Type</b>	Deflection Fencing, New Culvert
<b>Public Lands</b>	Sandy Mush conservation easement (north), Pisgah N.F. and Chestnut Mountain (SAHC), Mt. Pisgah (south)
<b>CTP</b>	I-40, CTP ID B-1, widen to 6 lanes
<b>STIP</b>	U-6048, US 19/23 upgrade, 2029; I-6054C, I-40 widening, 2029
<b>2021 AADT</b>	56,500
<b>2045 AADT</b>	78,800
<b>Priority Ranking</b>	Highest



## 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.

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 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 (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)

Scott Adams presented.

Discussion occurred on why a location was listed as low priority, clarifying information was given in regards to how they were categorized.

***Jennifer Hensley moved to adopt the Identified Needs for Wildlife Crossings. Matt Wechtel seconded, and the motion passed unanimously upon a roll call vote.***

### **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).

#### **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
<b>Total Region</b>	<b>\$4,083,938</b>		<b>\$4,083,792</b>			
<i>JARC Set-Aside</i>	\$408,394	10.0%	\$408,379	10.0%		
<b>Regional Amount after 10% JARC set-aside</b>	<b>\$3,675,544</b>		<b>\$3,675,413</b>			
City of Asheville	\$1,566,884	42.6%	\$1,565,726	<b>42.6%</b>		<b>46.9%</b>
Buncombe County	\$1,051,941	28.6%	\$1,051,168	<b>28.6%</b>		<b>31.9%</b>
Haywood County	\$306,540	8.3%	\$305,059	8.3%		
Henderson County	\$750,179	20.4%	\$749,784	<b>20.4%</b>		<b>21.2%</b>

Scott Adams presented

Tristan Winkler stated we need to update the formula because as of FY24 Haywood County will not be eligible for this grant. This resolution updates so we don't have delays in future cycles.

***Jennifer Hensley moved to Approve the Updated 5307 Subrecipient Formula. Kim Roney seconded, and the motion passed unanimously upon a roll call vote.***

#### **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 21<sup>st</sup> day of September, 2023

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Anthony Sutton, FBRMPO Board Chair

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Attest, Tristan Winkler Director  
French Broad River MPO

## **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.

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](mailto:info@greattrailsnc.com)

## **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

***Rebecca McCall moved to Approve the Designation of Great Trails State Day. Jennifer Hensley seconded, and the motion passed unanimously upon a roll call vote.***

## REGULAR UPDATES

### Division Project Updates

Division 13 presented by Hannah Cook

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

Division 14 presented by Steve Williams

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

### TPD updates given.

TPD Updates given by Daniel Sellers

FHWA/FTA Updates given by Bill Marley

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 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 12th

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
    - 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!**

### **MPO Studies Status**

<b>Study</b>	<b>Managing Entity</b>	<b>Year Programmed</b>	<b>Status</b>
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

### **Legislative Updates:**

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Anthony Sutton opened the floor again for public comment.

Two comments were heard.

Nikki Robinson “ This is Nikki Robinson from Wildlands Network. I just wanted to say thank you to the MPO and RPO for working with us on wildlife connectivity/motorist safety issues! Scott, you did a fabulous job presenting the potential solutions our region could really benefit from. Thanks for highlighting the cost-benefit analysis that shows wildlife crossing infrastructure can quickly pay for themselves in reducing collisions. The Wildlife Crossing Pilot Program is a new exciting funding source for these types of projects, but I do want to flag that there are also other federal funding programs in existence that could fund this type of work. I'm happy to share and go through them with those who are interested in learning more. Thanks! “

Steve Goodman “ Item 4B: Steve Goodman, Conservation Biologist, National Parks Conservation Association. I am wildlife researcher working on road ecology studies along I-40 in the Pigeon River Gorge and the Sams Gap/Appalachian Trail area along I-26. I much appreciate Scott Adam’s excellent presentation and the Board’s consideration and support, and fully support incorporating wildlife mitigations in the region to improve wildlife connectivity and to reduce wildlife vehicle collisions to improve human and animal safety. Thank you!”

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Anthony Sutton adjourned the meeting at 02:36PM as there was no further business before the Board.