



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

North Carolina Division

March 1, 2024

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In Reply Refer To:
HDA-NC

Mr. Anthony Sutton, Chair
French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization
Town of Waynesville

Subject: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)/Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Certification Review of the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization's (FBRMPO) Transportation Planning Process

Dear Mr. Sutton:

This letter notifies you that the FHWA and the FTA jointly certify the planning process for the FBRMPO Transportation Management Area (TMA). This certification is based on the findings from the Federal Certification Review conducted on December 13, 2023.

The overall conclusion of the Certification Review is that the planning process for the FBRMPO complies with the spirit and intent of Federal metropolitan transportation planning laws and regulations under 23 USC 134 and 49 USC 5303. The planning process is a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive process and reflects a significant professional commitment to deliver quality in transportation planning.

We would like to thank Mr. Tristan Winkler, MPO Director, and the MPO staff for their time and assistance in planning and conducting the review. Enclosed is the report that documents the results of this review and offers four commendations and nine recommendations for continuing quality improvements and enhancements to the planning process. This report has been transmitted concurrently to the FBRMPO, North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), and the City of Asheville Transit. As a final step of the Certification Review process, we offer to present these findings to the FBRMPO Policy Board as well as the FBRMPO Technical Coordinating Committee, at your discretion.

If you have any questions regarding the Certification Review process, the Certification action, and/or the enclosed report, please direct them to either Suzette Morales, FHWA NC Division, at (919) 747-7351 or Jason Morgan, FTA Region 4, at (404) 865-5619.

Sincerely,

For Yolonda K. Jordan
Division Administrator

cc:

Autumn Radcliff, TCC, Chair

Tristan Winkler, FBRMPO Director

Amber Wagner, City of Asheville Transit

Jamal Alavi, Director, NCDOT-TPD

Robert Sachnin, Director, FTA-Region 4

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U.S. Department
of Transportation

Transportation Management Area Planning Certification Review

Federal Highway
Administration

Federal Transit
Administration

Asheville, North Carolina Transportation Management Area



Downtown Black Mountain, NC by Southern Living

March 2024

Summary Report





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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On December 13, 2023, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) conducted the certification review of the transportation planning process for the Asheville urbanized area. FHWA and FTA are required to jointly review and evaluate the transportation planning process for each urbanized area over 200,000 in population at least every four years to determine if the process meets the Federal planning requirements.

1.1 Previous Findings and Disposition

The first certification review for the Asheville urbanized area was conducted in 2004. The second, third, fourth, and fifth certification reviews were conducted in 2008, 2012, 2016, and 2020 respectively. The previous Certification Review findings and their disposition are summarized as follows.

Finding	Action	Disposition
Commendation	The FBRMPO is commended for the Regional Transit Feasibility Study that began in 2020.	
Commendation	The MPO is commended for recognizing that the area had three specific corridor types with each having different evaluation methods and mitigation strategies.	
Commendation	The MPO is commended for adding a goal to “Develop a More Equitable Transportation System” with the objectives of increasing the participation of and decreasing adverse impacts to historically underutilized groups thus ensuring that EJ is being given greater priority	
Recommendation	It is recommended that the FBRMPO include FTA obligated funding for all public transit agencies in the annual listing of projects.	Complete. The annual list is uploaded to the MPO’s website.
Recommendation	It is recommended that the MPO update its MOU with NCDOT and transit operators.	In progress. The MPO is currently updating its MOU.
Recommendation	It is recommended that the MPO staff identify in Meeting Minutes the jurisdictions members represent.	Complete
Recommendation	It is recommended that the MPO complete the CMP Biennial report in FY21.	Complete



Recommendation	It is recommended that the MPO coordinate with NCDOT to update the ITS Architecture/Strategic Deployment Plan prior to the next certification review.	Complete
Recommendation	It is recommended that the MPO ensure that the method for determining an EJ community (community of concern) does not overlook EJ populations with less than three indicators.	In progress. The MPO is in the process of developing its next MTP update.
Recommendation	It is recommended that in addition to current and planned projects, the MPO develop an overlay map that also includes past projects to ensure that cumulative impacts are considered.	In progress. The MPO is in the process of developing its next MTP update.

1.2 Summary of Current Findings

The current review found that the metropolitan transportation planning process conducted in the Asheville urbanized area meets Federal planning requirements.

As a result of this review, FHWA and FTA are certifying the transportation planning process conducted by North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (FBRMPO) and City of Asheville subject to addressing corrective actions. There are also recommendations in this report that warrant close attention and follow-up, as well as areas that MPO is performing very well in that are to be commended.

Finding	Corrective Actions/ Recommendations/ Commendations	Resolution Due Date
Commendation	The FBRMPO is commended for its efforts in meeting with each of its jurisdictions impacted by the changes to the urbanized area, consulting with NCDOT and keeping all members of the MPO informed of the process to develop a MPA boundary that was acceptable for all parties.	
Commendation	The FBRMPO is commended for developing an interactive TIP that is useful to both its Policy Board and the Public.	
Commendation	MPOs work to engage non-profits to more effectively outreach to communities that have not historically engaged with the MPO.	
Commendation	The MPO is commended for completing CMP biennial reports for fiscal years 2021 and 2023.	
Recommendation	It is recommended that the MPO add an official of public transportation to its Policy Board and add representation from freight, housing, and other transportation to the TCC.	January 2028
Recommendation	It is recommended that the MPO update its UPWP to include a discussion on the planning priorities facing the MPA and include a discussion of the process in developing the UPWP.	Next UPWP
Recommendation	It is recommended that the FBRMPO coordinate with NCDOT and the City of Asheville to confirm eligibility requirements for project activities associated with the applicable formula planning programs including Section 5303, 5304, and 5305.	
Recommendation	It is recommended that FBRMPO coordinate with NCDOT and the City of Asheville on developing strategies to address Section 5307 funding impacts due to UZA boundary changes resulting from the 2020 Census.	



Recommendation	It is recommended that the MPO utilize the MTP Agency contact list developed by NCDOT as the basis for consultation with the resource agencies.	Next MTP Update
Recommendation	It is recommended that the MPO develop a section in the MTP, in concert with applicable Federal, State, wildlife, and regulatory agencies, to highlighting potential mitigation strategies on the proposed program of projects and their possible environmental impacts, including historic sites, noise, endangered species, buffers, etc.	Next MTP Update
Recommendation	It is recommended that the MPO ensure that the method for determining an EJ community (community of concern) does not overlook EJ populations with less than three indicators.	Next MTP Update
Recommendation	It is recommended that in addition to current and planned projects, the MPO develop an overlay map that also includes past projects to ensure that cumulative impacts are considered.	Next MTP Update
Recommendation	Update the Regional ITS Architecture/Strategic deployment plan in coordination with NCDOT.	January 2028

Details of the certification findings for each of the above items are contained in this report.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

Pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 134(k) and 49 U.S.C. 5303(k), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) must jointly certify the metropolitan transportation planning process in Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) at least every four years. A TMA is an urbanized area, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, with a population of over 200,000. In general, the reviews consist of three primary activities: a review of the MPOs planning products (in advance of and during the site visit), a site visit, and preparation of a Certification Review Report that summarizes the review and offers findings. The reviews focus on compliance with Federal regulations, challenges, successes, and experiences of the cooperative relationship between the MPO(s), the State DOT(s), and public transportation operator(s) in the conduct of the metropolitan transportation planning process. Joint FTA/FHWA Certification Review guidelines provide agency field reviewers with latitude and flexibility to tailor the review to reflect regional issues and needs. Consequently, the scope and depth of the Certification Review reports will vary significantly.

The Certification Review process is only one of several methods used to assess the quality of a regional metropolitan transportation planning process, compliance with applicable statutes and regulations, and the level and type of technical assistance needed to enhance the effectiveness of the planning process. Other activities provide opportunities for this type of review and comment, including Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) approval, the MTP, metropolitan and statewide Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) findings, air-quality (AQ) conformity determinations (in nonattainment and maintenance areas), as well as a range of other formal



and less formal contact provide both FHWA/FTA an opportunity to comment on the planning process. The results of these other processes are considered in the Certification Review process.

While the Certification Review report itself may not fully document those many intermediate and ongoing checkpoints, the “findings” of Certification Review are, in fact, based upon the cumulative findings of the entire review effort. The review process is individually tailored to focus on topics of significance in each metropolitan planning area. Federal reviewers prepare Certification Reports to document the results of the review process. The reports and final actions are the joint responsibility of the appropriate FHWA and FTA field offices, and their content will vary to reflect the planning process reviewed whether they relate explicitly to formal “findings” of the review.

To encourage public understanding and input, FHWA/FTA will continue to improve the clarity of the Certification Review reports.

2.2 Purpose and Objective

Since the enactment of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991, the FHWA and FTA, are required to jointly review and evaluate the transportation planning process in all urbanized areas over 200,000 population to determine if the process meets the Federal planning requirements in 23 U.S.C. 134, 40 U.S.C. 5303, and 23 CFR 450. The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), extended the minimum allowable frequency of certification reviews to at least every four years.

The French Broad River MPO is the designated MPO for the Asheville urbanized area. North Carolina DOT is the responsible State agency and City of Asheville is the responsible public transportation operator. Current membership of the French Broad River MPO consists of elected officials and citizens from the political jurisdictions in Buncombe County, Haywood County, Henderson County, and Madison County and the municipalities of Asheville, Biltmore Forest, Black Mountain, Canton, Clyde, Flat Rock, Fletcher, Hendersonville, Laurel Park, Maggie Valley, Mars Hill, Mills River, Montreat, Waynesville, Weaverville, and Woodfin. For the Asheville urbanized area, the City of Asheville is the largest population center.

Certification of the planning process is a prerequisite to the approval of Federal funding for transportation projects in such areas. The certification review is also an opportunity to assist with new programs and to enhance the ability of the metropolitan transportation planning process to provide decision makers with the knowledge they need to make well-informed capital and operating investment decisions.

3.0 SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY



3.1 Review Process

The initial certification review was conducted in 2004. Subsequent certification reviews were conducted in 2008, 2012, 2016, and 2020. A summary of the status of findings from the last review is provided in Appendix B. This report details the 6th review, which consisted of a formal site (hybrid) visit and a public involvement opportunity, conducted in December 2023.

Participants in the review included representatives of FHWA, FTA, NCDOT, City of Asheville, and French Broad River MPO staff. A full list of participants is included in Appendix A.

A desk review of current documents and correspondence was completed prior to the site visit. In addition to the review, routine oversight mechanisms provided a major source of information upon which to base the certification findings.

The certification review covered the transportation planning process conducted cooperatively by the MPO, State, and public transportation operators. Background information, status, key findings, and recommendations are summarized in the body of the report for the following subject areas selected by FHWA and FTA staff for the on-site review:

- Metropolitan Planning Area Boundaries
- MPO Structure and Agreements
- Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
- Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)
- Housing Coordination
- Transit Planning
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- Public Participation/Visualization
- Civil Rights (Title VI, EJ, LEP, ADA)
- Consultation and Coordination
- Freight Planning
- Environmental Mitigation/Planning Environmental Linkage
- Transportation Safety
- Transportation Security Planning
- Congestion Management Process / Intelligent Transportation Systems

3.2 Documents Reviewed

The following MPO documents were evaluated as part of this planning process review:

- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)



- Policy Board and Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) Bylaws
- FY21, FY22, FY23, FY24 UPWPs
- 2045 MTP
- FY-2024 2023 TIP
- MPO Self-Certification
- FY21 Public Involvement Policy
- 2018 Congestion Management Process and 2021 and 2023 Report
- List of Obligated Projects

4.0 PROGRAM REVIEW

4.1 Metropolitan Planning Area Boundaries

4.1.1 Regulatory Basis

23 U.S.C. 134(e) and 23 CFR 450.312(a) state the boundaries of a Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) shall be determined by agreement between the MPO and the Governor. At a minimum, the MPA boundaries shall encompass the entire existing urbanized area (as defined by the Bureau of the Census) plus the contiguous area expected to become urbanized within a 20-year forecast period for the MTP.

4.1.2 Current Status

The French Broad River MPO identified concerns regarding the 2020 U.S. Census, which did not consider jumps and hops associated with physical barriers such as mountain passes, when urbanized area boundaries were developed. Large areas of the 2010 Asheville Urban Area, including Haywood County and parts of Madison County, were removed from the 2020 Asheville Urban Area. A significant result is that Haywood County is now ineligible to receive FTA Section 5307 funds. Because there is a likelihood that Haywood County will rejoin the Asheville Urban Area within the next 20 years, the county will remain in the MPA. Madison County and the Town of Mars Hill (in Madison County) will also remain in the MPA.

The 2010 Asheville urbanized area also included a very small portion of Transylvania County, but this section was removed in 2020. The MPO removed Transylvania County from the MPO planning boundary. The entire county now falls within the Land of Sky Rural Planning Organization (LOSRPO).

4.1.3 Findings

Commendations:



- The FBRMPO is commended for its efforts in meeting with each of its jurisdictions impacted by the changes to the urbanized area, consulting with NCDOT and keeping all members of the MPO informed of the process in order to develop a MPA boundary that was acceptable for all parties.

4.2 MPO Structure and Agreements

4.2.1 Regulatory Basis

23 U.S.C. 134(d) and 23 CFR 450.314(a) state the MPO, the State, and the public transportation operator shall cooperatively determine their mutual responsibilities in carrying out the metropolitan transportation planning process. These responsibilities shall be clearly identified in written agreements among the MPO, the State, and the public transportation operator serving the MPA.

4.2.2 Current Status

The MPO Policy Board (Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)) contains 27 seats/representatives. Each county has two seats, the City of Asheville has two seats, all other jurisdictions have one seat, and NCDOT Divisions 13 and 14 each have one seat. FHWA is an advisory/non-voting member. Some board members have served over ten years. The MPO has now had record attendance due to hybrid meetings. Quorum (51%) is easily reached consistently.

A TAC member is considered inactive if they miss two consecutive meetings and reactivated upon their return. Each seat has one vote. Though rarely invoked, weighted voting is allowed during the adoption of the Draft TIP or Final TIP. The impacted jurisdiction(s) receive three votes per representative. A TAC member also can call for the use of veto power to exclude a project from the TIP if the project is on a road that does not carry an Interstate route designation, is not located on a limited-access highway, or is not a designated Strategic Highway Corridor.

The FBRMPO has a Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC). The members of the TCC are the technical staff of local, state, and federal government agencies who provide their expertise and recommendations to the TAC.

The MPO has a prioritization subcommittee that is currently updating its MOU. The subcommittee is reviewing the MPO representation and the voting structure.

4.2.3 Findings

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the MPO add an official of public transportation to its Policy Board and add representation from freight, housing and other transportation to the TCC.



Schedule for Process Improvement:

January 2028/Next certification review

4.3 Unified Planning Work Program

4.3.1 Regulatory Basis

23 CFR 450.308 sets the requirement that planning activities performed under Titles 23 and 49 U.S.C. be documented in a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The MPO, in cooperation with the State and public transportation operator, shall develop a UPWP that includes a discussion of the planning priorities facing the MPA and the work proposed for the next one- or two-year period by major activity and task in sufficient detail to indicate the agency that will perform the work, the schedule for completing the work, the resulting products, the proposed funding, and sources of funds.

4.3.2 Current Status

The MPO coordinates with its partners when developing its UPWP each year. The NCDOT Transportation Planning Division (TPD) helps to drive the UPWP schedule. The MPO provides quarterly and annual reports to NCDOT TPD as required.

The MPO indicated it needs more PL funding to maintain its existing level of service. The MPO has had to flex its STBG-DA funds but still finds itself short in meeting planning and staffing needs. The MPO has experienced staffing shortages recently and has had to increase its local dues and overall budget to fund salary, cost of living increases, and increases in general planning costs.

The current UPWP contains eleven transportation studies. The UPWP special studies are generally managed by the jurisdiction that requests the study. In the past, the MPO has had to take over management of some studies due to difficulties with on-time completion. To ensure on-time completion, the MPO developed a special studies oversight document which lays out expectations such as who should be involved in the study, progress reporting requirements, quarterly invoicing requirements, and the understanding that studies should be completed by the end of the contract period.

Smaller jurisdictions within the MPO are finding that providing the required local match for special studies is often challenging. Community organizations and special interest groups have provided some of this funding. The MPO has looked towards discretionary grants as a potential funding source for planning studies.

Each MPO is required to use at least 2.5% of its PL funds on specified planning activities to increase safe and accessible options for multiple travel modes for people of all ages and abilities. The MPO used its 2.5% to help fund the Hellbender Regional Greenway Forum. The



forum was held on August 31, 2023. The forum was a way for the public to learn more about regional greenway and trail efforts that would improve walking and biking connectivity. The free event was well advertised, and all available tickets were completely “sold”.

4.3.3 Findings

Recommendations:

- It is recommended that the MPO update its UPWP to include a discussion on the planning priorities facing the MPA and include a discussion of the process, in developing the UPWP.

Schedule for Process Improvement:

Next UPWP

4.4 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

4.4.1 Regulatory Basis

23 U.S.C. 134(c), (h) & (i) and 23 CFR 450.324 set forth requirements for the development and content of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). Among the requirements are that the MTP address at least a 20-year planning horizon and that it includes both long- and short-range strategies that lead to the development of an integrated and multi-modal system to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods in addressing current and future transportation demand.

The MTP is required to provide a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive multimodal transportation planning process. The plan needs to consider all applicable issues related to the transportation systems development, land use, employment, economic development, natural environment, and housing and community development.

23 CFR 450.324(c) requires the MPO to review and update the MTP at least every four years in air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas and at least every 5 years in attainment areas to reflect current and forecasted transportation, population, land use, employment, congestion, and economic conditions and trends.

Under 23 CFR 450.324(f), the MTP is required, at a minimum, to consider the following:

- Projected transportation demand
- Existing and proposed transportation facilities
- Operational and management strategies
- Congestion management process



- Capital investment and strategies to preserve transportation infrastructure and provide for multimodal capacity
- Design concept and design scope descriptions of proposed transportation facilities
- Potential environmental mitigation activities
- Pedestrian walkway and bicycle transportation facilities
- Transportation and transit enhancements
- A financial plan

4.4.2 Current Status

The FBRMPO usually develops its MTP in-house. However, this year they will be using a consultant for the 2050 MTP Update. For the 2050 MTP update, the MPO could consider addressing the results of implementing its strategies and recommendations contained in its 2045 MTP. A socioeconomic and land use study informed the latest MTP. Three growth scenarios were developed and the preferred one was selected. The MPO took a “bottom-up” approach where local land use plans were used to inform the MTP. All planning factors are addressed. MTP Amendments are executed as necessary, typically in response to projects being added to the STIP and TIP. The MTP addresses management and operation of the transportation system. Performance targets signify aging infrastructure. The MPO has adopted a “fix it first” policy to address this. Data used to address the safety planning factor indicates that the bicycle and pedestrian transportation modes are most at risk. Accident data reveals a worsening trend.

The congestion management plan was referenced in developing the growth scenarios. Most of the congestion occurs from commuters traveling to and from work in Buncombe County from the surrounding counties. The region experiences more extensive congestion seasonally from tourism and second homeowner travel.

The MPO reported that land use and housing is its largest transportation challenge. The MPO has a housing shortage. Many lower income residents have moved to the surrounding counties and must commute to and from Asheville and Buncombe County to access jobs. There is a lack of public transportation service to many of these areas. The MPO will include housing considerations as they develop the next MTP.

4.4.3 Findings

Proposed FHWA/FTA Technical Assistance:

- FHWA to provide technical assistance and knowledge of federal requirements to the FBRMPO as they develop their scope and throughout the development of the 2050 MTP update.



4.5 Transit Planning

4.5.1 Regulatory Basis

49 U.S.C. 5303 and 23 U.S.C. 134 require the transportation planning process in metropolitan areas to consider all modes of travel in the development of their plans and programs. Federal regulations cited in 23 CFR 450.314 state that the MPO in cooperation with the State and operators of publicly owned transit services shall be responsible for carrying out the transportation planning process.

4.5.2 Current Status

The City of Asheville is the FTA Designated Recipient of 5307 urbanized area funding for the Asheville Urbanized Area (UZA). The French Broad River MPO is currently served by four public transportation providers, which provide a variety of fixed route, deviated fixed route, subscription, and demand- response transit services.

Four public transit providers operate in the Asheville UZA: 1) City of Asheville - Asheville Rides Transit 2) Buncombe County – Mountain Mobility Services 3) Henderson County – Apple Country Transit and 4) Haywood County – Haywood Public Transit. As the Designated Recipient, the City of Asheville in coordination with the French Broad River MPO apportions 5307 urbanized area funding to the three urban systems in the UZA based on a mutually agreed upon formula/agreement. The City of Asheville applies directly to FTA for the three transit systems. In 2017, the MPO completed a 5307 Suballocation Study that redistributed 5307 funding in the Asheville UZA as a result of the 2010 Census. The 2020 Census has resulted in changes to urban area designations that may have an effect on formula apportionments for the Asheville UZA.

FBRMPO completed a Regional Transit Feasibility Study in 2021. The study identifies service, governance, and funding strategies to support a potential regionally integrated transit system for the metropolitan area.

NCDOT is the Designated Recipient of FTA 5303/5304 Statewide and Metropolitan Planning funds. The FBRMPO is the sub-recipient of FTA Section 5303 Statewide and Metropolitan Planning program funding awarded and passed through from NCDOT. The FTA Apportionment for Section 5307 Urbanized Area formula funds is to the Asheville Urbanized Area. There is a split agreement in place that is applied to the UZA FTA 5307 Apportionment to divide the funding between each transit agency. The split agreement is provided to FTA annually.

4.5.3 Findings

Recommendations:



- It is recommended that the FBRMPO coordinate with NCDOT and the City of Asheville to confirm eligibility requirements for project activities associated with the applicable formula planning programs including Section 5303, 5304, and 5305.
- It is recommended that FBRMPO coordinate with NCDOT and the City of Asheville on developing strategies to address Section 5307 funding impacts due to UZA boundary changes resulting from the 2020 Census.

4.6 Transportation Improvement Program

4.6.1 Regulatory Basis

23 U.S.C. 134(c), (h), & (j) set forth requirements for the MPO to cooperatively develop a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Under 23 CFR 450.326, the TIP must meet the following requirements:

- Must cover at least a four-year horizon and be updated at least every four years.
- Surface transportation projects funded under Title 23 U.S.C. or Title 49 U.S.C., except as noted in the regulations, are required to be included in the TIP.
- List project description, cost, funding source, and identification of the agency responsible for carrying out each project.
- Projects need to be consistent with the adopted MTP.
- Must be fiscally constrained.
- The MPO must provide all interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed TIP.

4.6.2 Current Status

The MPO developed an online interactive TIP, which features project specific content and maps. The interactive feature affords the public an opportunity to view TIP project information, view amendments to those projects, and provide comments to projects they are interest in. This has led to more robust public engagement on the TIP.

The MPO indicated that in the past, numerous project schedule and funding changes have been requested by NCDOT and this has led to numerous TIP amendments and modifications. Currently, the MPO is being asked to include TIP changes for project oversight increase as high as 10-15%. This causes delays for other projects and impacts fiscal constraint.

In one instance, the NCDOT requested the MPO amend their TIP to include a \$30 million interchange that had not gone through the prioritization process and would have negatively impacted the projects that had gone through the prioritization process. This MPO Board did not approve the TIP amendment and thereby created an impasse. The MPO believes that early proactive engagement could substantially reduce this from occurring in the future.



The MPO would like NCDOT to provide better coordination on proposed TIP changes to ensure the 3C planning process is upheld. The MPO did acknowledge it enjoys a good relationship with the NCDOT Division offices and collaborates frequently with them.

The MPO has enjoyed project success through the Locally Administered Projects Program (LAPP). There is \$70 million earmarked over a five-year period for LAPP projects. Consequently, the MPO is seeking to hire a staff person to manage its LAPP projects.

4.6.3 Findings

Commendation:

- The FBRMPO is commended for developing an interactive TIP that is useful to both its Policy Board and the Public.

4.7 Public Participation/Visualization

4.7.1 Regulatory Basis

Sections 134(i)(5), 134(j)(1)(B) of Title 23 and Section 5303(i)(5) and 5303(j)(1)(B) of Title 49, require a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to provide adequate opportunity for the public to participate in and comment on the products and planning processes of the MPO. The requirements for public involvement are detailed in 23 CFR 450.316(a) and (b), which require the MPO to develop and use a documented participation plan that includes explicit procedures and strategies to include the public and other interested parties in the transportation planning process.

Specific requirements include giving adequate and timely notice of opportunities to participate in or comment on transportation issues and processes, employing visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs, making public information readily available in electronically accessible formats and means such as the world wide web, holding public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times, demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input, and a periodically reviewing of the effectiveness of the participation plan.

4.7.2 Current Status

The Public Involvement Policy (PIP) was amended in January 2021 and is followed. The MPO plans to begin updating it within the next year to include new strategies for engagement.

They are looking to improve representation across the region to better capture key issues of the region. They currently conduct direct outreach using posters, coasters with Q.R. codes, mailings, locally administered surveys, regional transit surveys, and public meetings but would



like to further improve public involvement. They are looking for specific outreach methods to improve effectiveness of engage with such groups as EJ, LEP, and migrant communities. To do this they have invited several community groups to join citizens advisory committees and received some interest.

In the future the MPO would like to be invited to NCDOT project relate public meetings.

The MPO employs visualization through its interactive TIP tool, which contains project maps of bicycle and pedestrian, modernization, widening, access management, intersection and interchange improvements, and other highway projects.

4.7.3 Findings

Commendation:

- MPOs work to engage non-profits to more effectively outreach to communities that have not historically engaged with the MPO.

4.8 Civil Rights (Title VI, EJ, LEP, ADA)

4.8.1 Regulatory Basis

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, prohibits discrimination based upon race, color, and national origin. Specifically, 42 U.S.C. 2000d states that “No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” In addition to Title VI, there are other Nondiscrimination statutes that afford legal protection. These statutes include the following: Section 162 (a) of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1973 (23 U.S.C. 324), Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973/Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. ADA specifies that programs and activities funded with Federal dollars are prohibited from discrimination based on disability.

Executive Order #12898 (Environmental Justice) directs federal agencies to develop strategies to address disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their programs on minority and low-income populations. In compliance with this Executive Order, USDOT and FHWA issued orders to establish policies and procedures for addressing environmental justice in minority and low-income populations. The planning regulations, at 23 CFR 450.316(a)(1)(vii), require that the needs of those “traditionally underserved” by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and/or minority households, be sought out and considered.



Executive Order # 13166 (Limited-English-Proficiency) requires agencies to ensure that limited English proficiency persons can meaningfully access the services provided consistent with and without unduly burdening the fundamental mission of each federal agency.

4.8.2 Current Status

Because the French Broad River MPO last updated their Title VI Program Plan in June 2019 and the MTP was last updated in September 2020, the responses included in the prior review remain valid and will be reiterated as part of this review. Including that the MPO should consider alteration of their prior approach to identify “community of concern”, which includes that at least three indicators be present. This methodology may lead to EJ populations being overlooked due to having only one or two indicators, however large they may be.

To analyze the system-wide equity of project impacts on communities of concern, the MPO developed an equity scoring method that accounts for the type of project and the potential net positive, net neutral, and net negative impacts of projects in the MTP. Map 4.4 provides a good visual of the projects that will potentially have negative impacts on EJ communities. As noted in the previous certification reviews, the MPO should also identify past and currently underway projects to ensure that cumulative impacts are considered. As an enhancement, we also suggest developing other overlay maps depicting factors such as safety data, congestion, level of service, crash data, commute times, transit etc.

The EJ section of the MTP contains thorough details of its efforts to quantitatively analyze impacts to EJ communities at a system-wide level. The complexity of the analyses conducted is admirable, however, the MPO must also be cognizant of presenting the information in a manner that is as easily understood as possible.

4.8.3 Findings

Recommendations identified in last Certification Review that remain valid):

- It is recommended that the MPO ensure that the method for determining an EJ community (community of concern) does not overlook EJ populations with less than three indicators.
- It is recommended that in addition to current and planned projects, the MPO develop an overlay map that also includes past projects to ensure that cumulative impacts are considered.

Schedule for Process Improvement:

Next MTP update



4.9 Consultation and Coordination

4.9.1 Regulatory Basis

23 U.S.C. 134(g) & (i)(5)-(6) and 23 CFR 450.316(b-e) set forth requirements for consultation in developing the MTP and TIP. Consultation is also addressed specifically in connection with the MTP in 23 CFR 450.324(g)(1-2) and in 23 CFR 450.324(f)(10) related to environmental mitigation.

In developing the MTP and TIP, the MPO shall, to the extent practicable, develop a documented process that outlines roles, responsibilities, and key decision points for consulting with other governments and agencies as described below:

- Agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities (State, local, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, or freight)
- Other providers of transportation services
- Indian Tribal Government(s)
- Federal land management agencies

4.9.2 Current Status

There are a multitude of resource agencies in North Carolina that MPOs have access to in order to enhance their transportation planning efforts. MPOs consult with land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation agencies. For example, specific to the FBRMPO, some of the Pisgah National Forest lies within the MPO's planning boundary, therefore; it is important for the MPO to consult with the US Forest Service. Additionally, the Blue Ridge Parkway is a National Parkway that goes through the MPO and is managed by the US National Park Service. FBRMPO uses available online data from resources agencies to inform their MTP and other MPO transportation planning activities. However, there is minimal direct consultation and coordination with these agencies.

4.9.3 Findings

Recommendations:

- It is recommended that the MPO utilize the MTP Agency contact list developed by NCDOT as the basis for consultation with the resource agencies.

Schedule for Process Improvement:

Next MTP update



4.10 Freight Planning

4.10.1 Regulatory Basis

The MAP-21 established in 23 U.S.C. 167 a policy to improve the condition and performance of the national freight network and achieve goals related to economic competitiveness and efficiency; congestion; productivity; safety, security, and resilience of freight movement; infrastructure condition; use of advanced technology; performance, innovation, competition, and accountability, while reducing environmental impacts.

In addition, 23 U.S.C. 134 and 23 CFR 450.306 specifically identify the need to address freight movement as part of the metropolitan transportation planning process.

4.10.2 Current Status

The MPO is traversed by I-40 and I-26, both of which contain heavy truck traffic. Given its mountainous terrain, the MPO has identified the need to add truck climb lanes in various locations as a congestion relief strategy. No specific truck counts or data collection efforts have been conducted, however, the MPO has determined that trucks parking on shoulders is a growing problem. Additionally, it was found that truck crash clearance times are not timely, especially in Haywood County. The need to provide crossings for wildlife is also an issue and has been challenging to address when considering projects to address overnight parking demand in the area. The MPO has convened a freight work group that meets with stakeholders, local Chambers of Commerce, and NCDOT. Furthermore, the MPO has developed strategies, listed in their MTP, such as partnering with truck travel centers to expand existing facilities and to create guidelines and mitigation strategies aimed at easing public opposition to private truck parking facilities. Also indicated in the MTP, is the MPO's desire to review and update thru truck movement prohibitions.

4.10.3 Findings

None.

4.11 Environmental Mitigation/Planning Environmental Linkage

4.11.1 Regulatory Basis

23 U.S.C. 134(i)(2)(D)23 CFR 450.324(f)(10) requires environmental mitigation be set forth in connection with the MTP. The MTP is required to include a discussion of types of potential environmental mitigation activities for the transportation improvements and potential areas to carry out these activities, including activities that may have the greatest potential to restore and maintain the environmental functions affected by the plan.



23 U.S.C. 168 and Appendix A to 23 CFR Part 450 provide for linking the transportation planning and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) processes. A Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study can incorporate the initial phases of NEPA through the consideration of natural, physical, and social effects, coordination with environmental resource agencies, and public involvement. This will allow the analysis in the PEL study to be referenced in the subsequent NEPA document once the project is initiated, saving time and money with project implementation.

4.11.2 Current Status

The MPO has incorporated resiliency planning in its MTP. It was noted that many floodplains are shifting. Five I-40 bridge replacement projects accommodate wildlife crossings. Landslide mapping is conducted during project scoping. Avoidance and mitigation measures are detailed in project descriptions.

The MTP includes discussions of stormwater mitigation and weather mitigation and contains a hazard mitigation plan. However, it is recommended that more discussion on the proposed program of projects and their possible environmental impacts and recommended mitigation strategies be included that are developed in concert with applicable Federal, State, wildlife, and regulatory agencies. The MTP is not clear as to what outreach was conducted with environmental agencies. It is recommended that the MPO reach out to agency representatives based on the NCDOT's Transportation Planning Division agency contact list. It is also recommended that the MPO include a section in the MTP highlighting potential mitigation strategies for environmental features such as Archaeological, Community impacts, farmland, fragmented animal habitats, historic sites, noise, endangered species, and stream and lake buffers.

In 2023, the FBRMPO developed a regional wildlife crossing along roadways and highways report. It is a review of the potential wildlife crossings for the MPA and the Land of Sky Rural Planning Organization planning area. The MPO/RPO's primary goals of the report are to begin identifying specific geographic areas and wildlife crossing typologies that can be incorporated into the larger transportation planning process, particularly for project prioritization and the TIP. In November 2023, the work by the MPO was presented by NCDOT at the FHWA Talking Freight Seminar on Freight and Wildlife Considerations.

4.11.3 Findings

Recommendations:

- It is recommended that the MPO develop a section in the MTP, in concert with applicable Federal, State, wildlife, and regulatory agencies, to highlighting potential mitigation strategies on the proposed program of projects and their possible environmental impacts, including historic sites, noise, endangered species, buffers, etc.



Schedule for Process Improvement:

Next MTP update

4.12 Transportation Safety

4.12.1 Regulatory Basis

23 U.S.C. 134(h)(1)(B) requires MPOs to consider safety as one of ten planning factors. As stated in 23 CFR 450.306(a)(2), the planning process needs to consider and implement projects, strategies, and services that will increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.

In addition, SAFETEA-LU established a core safety program called the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) (23 U.S.C. 148), which introduced a mandate for states to have Strategic Highway Safety Plans (SHSPs). 23 CFR 450.306 (d) requires the metropolitan transportation planning process should be consistent with the SHSP, and other transit safety and security planning.

4.12.2 Current Status

The MTP contains a robust discussion of safety, including safety analyses and efforts the MPO is making to increase safety on its transportation system. The MTP contains several informative tables that identify roads and intersections with concerns, and maps depicting bicycle and pedestrian crashes. However, it is difficult to discern how this data correlates to specific projects in the MTP. The MPO should consider highlighting the roadways and intersections with safety concerns that correspond to a specific mitigating project identified in the MTP.

The MPO adopted the State's safety targets.

4.12.3 Findings

None.

4.13 Transportation Security Planning

4.13.1 Regulatory Basis

23 U.S.C. 134(h)(1)(C) requires MPOs to consider security as one of ten planning factors. As stated in 23 CFR 450.306(a)(3), the Metropolitan Transportation Planning process provides for consideration of security of the transportation system.

The regulations state that the degree and consideration of security should be based on the scale and complexity of many different local issues. Under 23 CFR 450.324(h), the MTP should



include emergency relief and disaster preparedness plans and strategies and policies that support homeland security, as appropriate.

4.13.2 Current Status

While the 2045 MTP contains a section titled Safety & Security, the section was very heavy on Safety with minimal discussion of Security. However, security was adequately discussed sporadically throughout the MTP such as in the Environment & Resiliency section. To ease compliance assurance, consider documenting all the Security Planning information in one section.

4.13.3 Findings

None

4.14 Congestion Management Process / Intelligent Transportation Systems

4.14.1 Regulatory Basis

23 U.S.C. 134(k)(3) and 23 CFR 450.322 set forth requirements for the congestion management process (CMP) in TMAs. The CMP is a systematic approach for managing congestion through a process that provides for a safe and effective integrated management and operation of the multimodal transportation system. TMAs designated as non-attainment for ozone must also provide an analysis of the need for additional capacity for a proposed improvement over travel demand reduction, and operational management strategies.

23 CFR 940 requires that ITS projects shall conform to the National ITS Architecture and standards in accordance with the requirements contained in this part. Conformance with the National ITS Architecture is interpreted to mean the use of the National ITS Architecture to develop a regional ITS architecture, and the subsequent adherence of all ITS projects to that regional ITS architecture. Development of the regional ITS architecture should be consistent with the transportation planning process for Statewide and Metropolitan Transportation Planning.

4.14.2 Current Status

The MPO provides a list of congested corridors identified through the CMP. It is recommended that the MPO identify any implemented projects from the CMP and MTP and include a before and after congestion analysis. They have also begun using travel time reliability in addition to volume to capacity ratio as a measure of congestion.



In the previous certification review, it was recommended that the MPO complete the Biennial report as stated in the Congestion Management Process. Since that review, the MPO has twice developed the biennial report. The reports were thorough and well developed. The MPO should consider adding a section in the report that documents implemented projects that were identified in the CMP.

The current Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Regional Architecture is more than 20 years old and outdated. While it hasn't been an issue for the MPO to date as they have not used federal funds for ITS projects, the document is in need of an update to ensure federal eligibility of future ITS projects. The update should be coordinated with NCDOT.

4.14.3 Findings

Commendation:

- The MPO is commended for completing CMP biennial reports for fiscal years 2021 and 2023.

Recommendations:

- Update the Regional ITS Architecture/Strategic deployment plan in coordination with NCDOT.

Schedule for Process Improvement:

- January 2028



5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The FHWA and FTA review found that the metropolitan transportation planning process conducted in the Asheville urbanized area meets planning requirements as follows.

5.1 Commendations

The following are noteworthy practices that the French Broad River MPO is doing well in the transportation planning process:

1. The FBRMPO is commended for its efforts in meeting with each of its jurisdictions impacted by the changes to the urbanized area, consulting with NCDOT and keeping all members of the MPO informed of the process to develop a MPA boundary that was acceptable for all parties.
2. The FBRMPO is commended for developing an interactive TIP that is useful to both its Policy Board and the Public.
3. MPOs work to engage non-profits to more effectively outreach to communities that have not historically engaged with the MPO.
4. The MPO is commended for completing CMP biennial reports for fiscal years 2021 and 2023.

5.2 Recommendations

The following are recommendations that would improve the transportation planning process:

1. It is recommended that the MPO add an official of public transportation to its Policy Board and add representation from freight, housing and other transportation to the TCC.
2. The MPO is recommended to update its UPWP to include a discussion on the planning priorities facing the MPA and include a discussion of the process in developing the UPWP.
3. It is recommended that the FBRMPO coordinate with NCDOT and the City of Asheville to confirm eligibility requirements for project activities associated with the applicable formula planning programs including Section 5303, 5304, and 5305.
4. It is recommended that FBRMPO coordinate with NCDOT and the City of Asheville on developing strategies to address Section 5307 funding impacts due to UZA boundary changes resulting from the 2020 Census.
5. It is recommended that the MPO utilize the MTP Agency contact list developed by NCDOT as the basis for consultation with the resource agencies.



6. It is recommended that the MPO develop a section in the MTP, in concert with applicable Federal, State, wildlife, and regulatory agencies, to highlighting potential mitigation strategies on the proposed program of projects and their possible environmental impacts, including historic sites, noise, endangered species, buffers, etc.
7. It is recommended that the MPO ensure that the method for determining an EJ community (community of concern) does not overlook EJ populations with less than three indicators.
8. It is recommended that in addition to current and planned projects, the MPO develop an overlay map that also includes past projects to ensure that cumulative impacts are considered.
9. Update the Regional ITS Architecture/Strategic deployment plan in coordination with NCDOT.

5.3 Technical Assistance

The following technical assistance is recommended to assist the MPO with improvements to the transportation planning process:

1. FHWA to provide technical assistance and knowledge of federal requirements to the FBRMPO as they develop their scope and throughout the development of the 2050 MTP update.



APPENDIX A - PARTICIPANTS

The following individuals were involved in the French Broad River (Asheville) urbanized area on-site/hybrid review:

- George Hoops, FHWA North Carolina Division
- Bill Marley, FHWA North Carolina Division
- Suzette Morales, FHWA North Carolina Division
- Joe Geigle, FHWA North Carolina Division (virtual)
- Rob Sachnin, FTA Region 4 (virtual)
- Jason Morgan, FTA Region 4 (virtual)
- Parris Orr, FTA Region 4 (virtual)
- Tristan Winkler, Director, French Broad River MPO
- Hannah Bagli, Transportation Planner, French Broad River MPO
- Logan DiGiacomo, Transportation Planner, French Broad River MPO
- Vicki Eastland, Director, Land of Sky Rural Planning Organization
- Erica Anderson, Director of Economic and Community Development, Land of Sky Regional Council
- Daniel Sellers, Transportation Engineer, Transportation Planning Division, NCDOT (virtual)
- Alexius Farris, Regional Planner, Integrated Mobility Division, NCDOT (virtual)
- Hannah Smith, Division Planning Engineer, NCDOT Division 13 (virtual)
- Steven Williams, Division Planning Engineer, NCDOT Division 14 (virtual)
- Amber Wagner, Transit Planning Manager, City of Asheville (virtual)
- William High, Transportation Planner, Buncombe County (virtual)
- Jodie Ferguson, Development Services Coordinator, Haywood County (virtual)
- Autumn Radcliff, Planning Director, Henderson County (virtual)
- Janna Bianculli, Planner, Henderson County (virtual)



APPENDIX B – PUBLIC COMMENTS

Factory Direct Best Quality Best Price

ARTLANTIC Unique Handicrafts

10:30-6:30pm Daily

925 Silver Gemstones & Costume Jewelry
~ Carpet ~ Lighting ~ Tableware

908.842.3021 | artlantic.us | 317 N. Main Street in Hendersonville

WINTER SPIRIT ISSUE

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FRENCH BROAD RIVER LAND SKY
A PROGRAM OF METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) continues to mandate the certification of the transportation planning process in Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) at least once every four years by the U.S. Department of Transportation in order to determine if the transportation planning process being conducted in the area meets the Federal requirements as listed in 23 CFR 450 Part C. The Federal certification review team will conduct an on-site visit in Asheville, NC on Wednesday, December 13, 2023.

An important part of the certification review is providing the public with an opportunity to comment. The public comment period will be open from November 16, 2023, until 6 pm on December 12, 2023. An open house will also be held on Tuesday, December 12th from 4PM-6PM at the Dr. Wesley Grant Sr. Southside Community Center at 285 Livingston Street in Asheville, North Carolina. Comments can also be e-mailed to tristan@landofsky.org or via U.S mail to:

Tristan Winkler, Director
French Broad River MPO
339 New Leicester Highway, Suite 400
Asheville, North Carolina 28806

For more information, please contact Tristan Winkler at 828-251-6622 or by email at tristan@landofsky.org

FBRMPO meetings are open to people of all ages and abilities. Please let us know 48 hours in advance if you require special meeting accommodation or translation services. FBRMPO operates without regard to race, color, national origin, limited English proficiency, sex, age or disability. For more information on our Title VI program, or how to file a discrimination complaint, please contact Erica Anderson 828-251-6622 or mpo@landofsky.org.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

to stay silent while six songwriters play three original songs each. Donations are accepted.
TU (11/28), 7pm, Funkatorium, 147 Coxo Ave

Dark City Song Swap: Beth Lee, Jon Vezner & Jon Weisberger
A new series focusing on talented local, regional, and national songwriters who both write and sing their original compositions.
WE (11/29), 7:30pm, White Horse Black Mountain, 105C Montreat Rd, Black Mountain

The Band: Last Waltz & Pink Floyd
A movie night hosted by Alex Wolfinger Jones.
SA (11/25), 8pm, Sovereign Kava, 268 Biltmore Ave

Jeeves Takes a Bow
The British upper crust meets the New York mob in this witty play. Everyone's favorite hapless hero, Bertie Wooster, embarks on an American adventure armed only with his handsome fortune, his talent for trouble, and his remarkable valet, Jeeves.
FR (11/24), SA (11/25), WE (11/29), TH (11/30), 7:30pm, SU (11/26), 2pm, NC Stage Co., 15 Stage Ln

Stories of Christmas
An evening of great storytelling, hilarious comedy, nostalgia and warm holiday sing-alongs with Donna Marie Todd, an award-winning storyteller and singer.
SU (11/26), 2pm, Black Mountain Center for the Arts, 225 West State St, Black Mountain

Silent Films & Loud Music
A screening of silent short films accompanied by local bands providing live music, all proceeds support Fierce Flux summer camp for girls and queer youth.
MO (11/27), 7pm, Different Wld, 701 Haywood Rd, Ste 101

Max Roach: The Drum Also Waltzes
The film follows Roach across a rich and complicated life, years of now-legendary achievement, deep personal struggle, and the price he paid for his outspoken views.
TH (11/30), 7pm, Black Mountain College Museum & Arts Center, 120 College St

Eightfold Path Study Group
A group will gather to study the Eightfold Path Program. Kris Kramer will host the group as a fellow participant and student.
WE (11/22), 3pm, Black Mountain, Honeycutt St, Black Mountain

Free E-Bike Rental
A free one hour bike adventure to experience Asheville's historic River Arts District, French Broad River Greenway, local breweries, restaurants and more.
WE (11/22, 29), 10am, Ace Bikes, 342 Depot St

Aerial Silks Foundations
Learn how to properly ascend, descend, and create stunning shapes on the silks while emphasizing safety and proper form. Participants of all ages and all abilities are welcome.
WE (11/22, 29), 4pm and 5:30pm, Armetyst Realm, 244 Short Coke Ave

Porangui: Music is Medicine & Workshop
The workshop will explore where voice and spirit meet in improvisational dance.
SA (11/25), 1pm, Ayur-Prana Listening Room, 312 Haywood Rd

Dididada: Movement Lab w/Coco Villa
A movement workshop created by Coco Villa. Enjoy getting back into your bodies, and simply dancing for the joy of moving through hyper warm ups, routines, and prompts.
SU (11/26), 11am, Different Wld, 701 Haywood Rd, Ste 101

Local Cloth Community Holiday Make & Take
Fun holiday crafting with fun for the whole family, including indigo dyeing, felting, embroidery, card making and more.
SU (11/26), 11am, Local Cloth, 408 Depot St, Ste 100

Scrabble
Weekly scrabble play. All scrabble gear provided.
SU (11/26), 12:15pm, Stephens Lee Recreation Center, 30 George Washington Carver Ave

Drug Facilitated Sexual Assault
A two hour training session on Drug Facilitated Sexual Assault techniques. In this 2 hour training, you will learn how to best intervene when harm is happening.
MO (11/27), 11am, AmeriHealth Caritas, 216 Ashland Ave

Kids & Teens Kung Fu
Learn fighting skills as well as conflict resolution and mindfulness. First class is free to see if it's a good fit for you.
MO (11/27), TU (11/28), TH (11/30), 4pm, Dragon Phoenix, 51 N Merrimon Ave, Ste 109

Black Men Monday
A local group that has stepped up in the community to advocate for and mentor students through academic intervention.
MO (11/27), 7pm, AmeriHealth Caritas, 216 Ashland Ave

World Tavern Poker Night
A free to play poker night every Monday.
MO (11/27), 7pm, The Getaway River Bar, 790 Riverside Dr

Toddler Discovery Time
Crafts, games, and playtime for youngsters. Advance registration at avrec.com is required.
TU (11/28), 9:45am, Stephens-Lee Recreation Center, 30 George Washington Carver Ave

Intro to Senior Games Sports
Each week will cover a different sport. This is for people trying a new sport for the 2024 Asheville-Buncombe senior games.
TU (11/28), 10am, W Asheville Park, 11 Vermont Ave

Therapeutic Recreation Adult Crafting & Cooking
A variety of cooking and crafts for individuals with disabilities ages 17 and over each week. This week will focus on cooking chicken salad.
TU (11/28), 10am, Oakley Community Center, 749 Fairview Rd

Holiday Cookie Baking
Learn how to perfect your cookies so you'll be ready to make some for Santa. We provide dough, you cut it into festive shapes and decorate.
TU (11/28), 5pm, Temple Avery Montford Community Center, 34 Pearson Ave

Community Choice
Enjoy family activities including puzzles, board games, arts and crafts, and more. Kids ages 12 and under must be accompanied by an adult.
WE (11/29), 6:30pm, Dr Wesley Grant, Sr, Southside Center, 285 Livingston S

Dollar Décor DIY
Enjoy new crafts made from simple items you have at home or can be found at dollar stores. Advance registration at avrec.com required.
WE (11/29), 7pm, Stephens-Lee Recreation Center, 30 George Washington Carver Ave

Building Our City Speaker Series w/ Gregg Colburn
This free speaker series features Gregg Colburn, author of *Homelessness is a Housing Problem*.
TH (11/30), 5:30pm, Asheville Masonic Temple, 80 Broadway

Dharma & Discuss: Michael Scardaville Teaching
A dharma talk and an opportunity to ask questions afterwards. The topic for this talk will be: The Nature of Awakening. Beginners and experienced practitioners are welcome.
TH (11/30), 7pm, Quietude Micro-retreat Center, 1130 Montreat Rd, Black Mountain

Personal Stories of Recovery & Redemption
Three men with stories of overcoming trauma



From: [Tristan Winkler](#)
Cc: [Logan DiGiacomo](#); [Hannah Bagill](#); [Erica Anderson](#); [Asha Badio](#); [Vikki Eastland](#)
Subject: Public Comment Period & Open House: MPO Certification Review
Date: Thursday, November 16, 2023 4:28:25 PM
Attachments: [Outlook-H3mmf65.png](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Department of Transportation (DOT). Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To the MPO Board, TCC, and Interested Citizens,

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) continues to mandate the certification of the transportation planning process in Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) at least once every four years by the U.S. Department of Transportation in order to determine if the transportation planning process being conducted in the area meets the Federal requirements as listed in 23 CFR 450 Part C. The Federal certification review team will conduct an on-site visit in Asheville, NC on Wednesday, December 13, 2023.

An important part of the certification review is providing the public with an opportunity to comment. The public comment period will be open from November 16, 2023, until 6 pm on December 12, 2023. An open house will also be held on Tuesday, December 12th from 4PM-6PM at the Dr. Wesley Grant Sr. Southside Community Center at 285 Livingston Street in Asheville, North Carolina. This allows residents and other interested parties to provide comments to FHWA and FTA officials on FBRMPO's planning processes. Comments can also be e-mailed to tristan@landofsky.org or via U.S mail to:

For more information, please contact Tristan Winkler at 828-251-6622 or by email at tristan@landofsky.org

Thank you,

Tristan Winkler

French Broad River MPO Director
Land of Sky Regional Council
He/Him/His
828.251.6622
847.997.7328 (cell)
Tristan@landofsky.org





Poder Emma Community (Translated from Spanish)

Good afternoon, we are Poder Emma and we thank you for taking our community into consideration in the development of smaller areas.

Thank you for stopping and changing your plans on building sidewalks that were not going to benefit the Emma community and for taking the time to ask in which way the sidewalk construction would benefit or affect us.

Our community is counting on our own development plan alongside the development with the county.

We would like for your developers to participate more with us on our committee of neighbors. We are an organized and informed community where we make decisions in what happens within our community and how it affects us.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Emma Community

- **FHWA Response** – Comment for MPO Staff

Anonymous

"If traffic congestion, parking and air pollution are real concerns the state should look to invest in re-establishing passenger lines on existing infrastructure that can draw residents out and re-invigorate neighboring mountain towns of Black Mountain and Old Fort and make for easy commutes and motor-less trips to cities like Asheville and Charlotte reducing suburban sprawl, traffic and population concentrations. Park and Ride lots can be established to encourage local commuting."

- **FHWA Response** – Comment for MPO Staff

Rick Freeman, Asheville, NC

"My only experience with your organization is the Tunnel Road Corridor study. As you may recall, that study suggested that in the long term, White Pine Drive be extended to the back of the Asheville Mall for improved traffic flow. Ultimately that recommendation was removed, footnoted by our neighborhood's concern. It is my belief that this drama would have been avoided if your public engagement process would have directly engaged neighborhood



leadership registered with the city of Asheville during the idea formation. With open arms our neighborhood leaders would have welcomed a visit to White Pine Drive and a fruitful discussion about the safety risks associated with typical shopper traffic moving both directions on our narrow, sharp curved, hillside, no side walk roads. I strongly suggest you revise your operating policies to require earlier engagement."

- **FHWA Response** – Comment for MPO Staff

Anonymous

"The noise from the highway is very loud in our neighborhood in west Asheville. Is there any technology that can be used to dampen the noise? I have read about new types of pavement that decrease sound pollution. I would also like to see barriers and foliage installed to limit noise. I am also interested in how we can encourage alternate means of transportation such as cycling, walking and public transit."

- **FHWA Response** – Comment for MPO Staff

Laura Dawson, Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, NCDHHS

Hey Tristan,

Is there a way to get a copy of budget spent on Mtn Mobility for the past 10 years or so?

Laura

- **FHWA Response** – Comment for MPO Staff

Thomas Davis, Asheville, NC

"Bus schedules and routes should support workers at 24/7 facilities. These jobs could be a lifeline out of poverty for folks without cars."

- **FHWA Response** – Comment taken into consideration for the report and for MPO Staff



APPENDIX C - LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act
AMPO: Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations
CAA: Clean Air Act
CFR: Code of Federal Regulations
CMP: Congestion Management Process
CO: Carbon Monoxide
DOT: Department of Transportation
EJ: Environmental Justice
FAST: Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act
FHWA: Federal Highway Administration
FTA: Federal Transit Administration
FY: Fiscal Year
HSIP: Highway Safety Improvement Program
ITS: Intelligent Transportation Systems
LEP: Limited-English-Proficiency
M&O: Management and Operations
MAP-21: Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century
MPA: Metropolitan Planning Area
MPO: Metropolitan Planning Organization
MTP: Metropolitan Transportation Plan
NAAQS: National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NO₂: Nitrogen Dioxide
O₃: Ozone
PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}: Particulate Matter
SHSP: Strategic Highway Safety Plan
STIP: State Transportation Improvement Program
TDM: Travel Demand Management
TIP: Transportation Improvement Program
TMA: Transportation Management Area
U.S.C.: United States Code
UPWP: Unified Planning Work Program
USDOT: United States Department of Transportation





Report prepared by:

North Carolina FHWA Division Office

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