

French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization
Minutes from the Governing Board Meeting on February 15th, 2024

Attendance:

In-Person and Remote via the Zoom Platform:

Anthony Sutton	Town of Waynesville
Jennifer Hensley	City of Hendersonville
Steve Williams	NCDOT Div 14
George Banta	Town of Laurel Park
Kim Roney	City of Asheville
Daniel Sellers	NCDOT TPD
Shannon Gonce	Town of Mills River
Bill Lapsley	Henderson County
Larry Harris	Urban Transit
Hannah Smith	NCDOT Div 13
Anne Coletta	Village of Flat Rock
Catherine Cordell	Town of Weaverville
Dr Ralph Hamlett	Town of Canton
George Banta	Town of Laurel Park
Kim Roney	City of Asheville
Stephen Sparks	NCDOT
Jim McAllister	Town of Woodfin
Alexius Farris	NCDOT
Ricky Hurley	Town of Woodfin
Charles McGrady	BOT Div 14
Esther Manheimer	City of Asheville
Brandon Rogers	Haywood County
David White	Rural Transit
Parker Sloan	Buncombe County
Kevin Ensley	Haywood County

Tom Widmer	Town of Montreat
Jason Myers	NCDOT Rail Division
Rose Bauguess	Southwestern Commission
Tim Anderson	NCDOT Div 13
Loretta Barren	FHWA

Members without Representation present:

Town of Biltmore Forest
BOT 13
Town of Black Mountain
Town of Clyde
Town of Maggie Valley
Town of Clyde
Town of Mars Hill
Madison County
Town of Mars Hill
Town of Fletcher

Additional Attendees:

Tristan Winkler (FBRMPO)	Hannah Bagli (FBRMPO)	Logan DiGiacomo (FBRMPO)
Jon Barsanti (FBRMPO)	Asha Rado (LOSRC, Minutes)	Ada Sloop (FBRMPO)
Larry Morton (Public)	Trevor Lance(Public)	Christopher Todd(Public)
Paul Koch(Public)	Erica Anderson (LOSRC)	Brionna Dallara (The Mountaineer)

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS & ROLL CALL

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

Larry Morton spoke in regard to a train service from Asheville to Hendersonville. He has been an active participant in the Apple Valley Model Railroad Club. He has been researching how to get a rail service in place from Asheville to Hendersonville. He mentions that it would be a good option to reduce traffic on 26. He mentions having heavy

support for this idea from the public. He put together a team to look into getting the service set up. He provided a summary of his efforts.

CONSENT AGENDA

January 2024 Board Minutes: https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/2024_1_18_MPO.DRAFT_Board_Minutes.pdf

3B. FY 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Amendments

What is the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)?

The UPWP is a federally mandated document for MPO's to produce that serves the MPO's budget. This includes line items of work for MPO staff, planning work planned by the region's designated recipient for FTA 5303 Metropolitan Planning Funds (City of Asheville), as well as studies being carried out using federal planning funds, and any programmatic support or planning being funded by FTA 5307 Support.

Proposed Amendments:

- Change the "Buncombe County Multimodal Master Plan" to the "Buncombe County Pedestrian Plan"

The amendments will change the scope to make the project more focused on the pedestrian realm

Catherine Cordell moved to approve the consent agenda including the January 2024 Board Minutes, the amendments to the FY2024 UPWP and the TAC agenda. Larry Harris seconded the motion which passed unanimously upon a roll call vote.

Business

4A. Safety Performance Targets

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

These performance measures are:

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

These targets are established annually, are based on 5 year rolling averages, and are for calendar years. North Carolina state targets are set in agreement with our Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) goals. The SHSP goals are developed through collaborative efforts of a diverse group of stakeholders including state, regional, and local partners (including MPOs). The goal of the most recent (2019) SHSP is to reduce fatalities and serious injuries by half by 2035, moving towards zero by 2050.

2024 state safety performance targets were submitted to FHWA on August 31st, as required, with the submission of the annual Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) report. These targets reflect the 2019 SHSP goal to reduce fatalities and serious injuries by half by 2035, moving towards zero by 2050. The calculated targets are shown in the table below.

Performance Measure	CY 2024
Number of Fatalities	1,151.7
Rate of Fatalities	0.967
Number of Serious Injuries	3,312.1
Rate of Serious Injuries	2.767
Number of Non-Motorized Fatalities & Serious Injuries	451.1

French Broad River MPO 2024 Safety Performance Targets

Year	Fatalities (5 Year Average)	Fatality Rate (5 Year Average)	Serious Injuries (5 Year Average)	Serious Injury Rate (5 Year Average)	Non-motorized Fatalities and Serious Injuries (5 Year Average)
2008 - 2012	44.0	1.000	113.4	2.578	16.4
2009 - 2013	45.0	1.012	101.6	2.289	15.6
2010 - 2014	46.8	1.042	89.6	2.003	15.6
2011 - 2015	46.8	1.030	81.8	1.809	15.6
2012 - 2016	46.0	0.993	74.0	1.599	16.0
2013 - 2017	50.0	1.052	84.4	1.751	15.2
2014 - 2018	52.2	1.076	102.0	2.067	17.2
2015 - 2019	51.0	1.029	116.8	2.327	17.6
2016 - 2020	49.4	0.999	128.4	2.593	18.6
2017 - 2021	50.6	1.014	136.8	2.743	19.6
2018 - 2022	50.6	1.021	137.8	2.782	19.0
2024 Target*	42.0	0.841	103.0	2.041	14.5

FBRMPO Options:

1. Adopt targets defined by the State’s methodology (**Staff Recommendation**)
2. Use a different methodology and define our own targets

Endorsement of Targets for Safety Performance Measures Established By NC DOT

WHEREAS, the French Broad River MPO has been designated by the Governor of the State of North Carolina as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) responsible, together with the State, for the comprehensive, continuing, and cooperative transportation planning process for the MPO's metropolitan planning area; and;

WHEREAS the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) final rule (23 CFR Part 490) requires States to set targets for five safety performance measures annually, by August 31, and;

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) has established targets for five performance measures based on five year rolling averages for: (1) Number of Fatalities, (2) Rate of Fatalities per 100 million Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT),

(3) Number of Serious Injuries, (4) Rate of Serious Injuries per 100 million VMT, and (5) Number of Non-Motorized (bicycle and pedestrian) Fatalities and Non-motorized Serious Injuries, and;

WHEREAS, the NCDOT coordinated the establishment of safety targets with the 19 Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) in North Carolina continually through outreach conducted by NCDOT's Mobility and Safety Group and;

WHEREAS, the NCDOT officially establishes and reports the safety targets in the Highway Safety Improvement Program annual report by August 31, of each year and;

WHEREAS the MPO's may establish safety targets by agreeing to plan and program projects that contribute toward the accomplishment of the State's targets for each measure or establish its own target within 180 days of the State establishing and reporting its safety targets in the HSIP annual report.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the French Broad River MPO agrees to plan and program projects that contribute toward the accomplishment of the State's targets as *noted below for each of the aforementioned performance measures:*

1. For the 2024 Highway Safety Improvement Plan (HSIP), the goal is to reduce total fatalities by 4.2 percent from 1202.2 (CY 2023) to 1151.7 (CY 2024) by December 31, 2024.
2. For the 2024 Highway Safety Improvement Plan (HSIP), the goal is to reduce the fatality rate by 4.35 percent from 1.011 (CY 2023) to 0.967 (CY 2024) by December 31, 2024.
3. For the 2024 Highway Safety Improvement Plan (HSIP), the goal is to reduce total serious injuries by 3.24 percent from 3423.0 (CY 2023) to 3312.1 (CY 2024) by December 31, 2024.
4. For the 2024 Highway Safety Improvement Plan (HSIP), the goal is to reduce the serious injury rate by 3.35 percent from 2.863 (CY 2023) to 2.767 (CY 2024) by December 31, 2024.
5. For the 2024 Highway Safety Improvement Plan (HSIP), the goal is to reduce the total nonmotorized fatalities and serious injuries by 3.65 percent from 468.2 (CY 2023) to 451.1 (CY 2024) by December 31, 2024

ADOPTED: This the 15th day of February 2024.

Attest: Anthony Sutton, FBRMPO Board Chair

Attest: Tristan Winkler, FBRMPO Director

Discussion around if we don't meet them if there will be any repercussions, answer is no. Discussion around if there was a benefit about adopting different targets. Discussion around if there was any specific design criteria or changes around these goals. NCDOT says they are always evaluating the design regarding these goals. Discussion around clarification of numbers and what overall this means for the MPO. NCDOT went into more detail of the crash reports and how different pieces add to the targets.

Shannon Gonce moved to adopt the FBRMPO 2024 Safety Performance Targets. Larry Harris seconded, and the motion passed upon a roll call vote.

Anthony Sutton stated he would entertain another motion to sit down with NCDOT to discuss more goals.

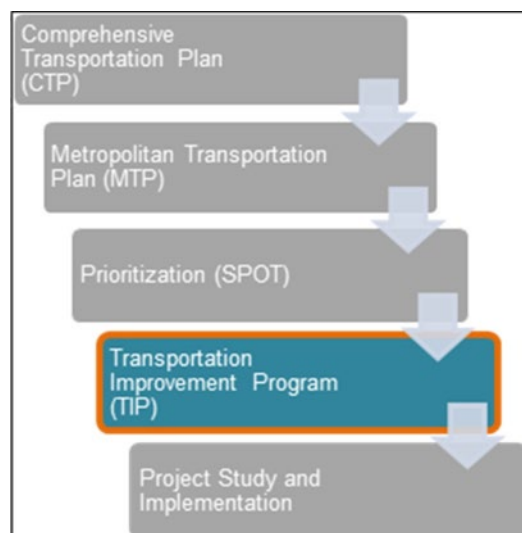
Catherine Cordell stated she would put this motion forward

She made a suggestion to meet in the future to coordinate with more realistic goals with the state and have points of clarification on how we move forward.

Catherine Cordell motioned to set a meeting with NCDOT to discuss safety goals and better clarification. Shannon Gonce seconded the motion.

Kim Roney added an amendment to the motion that point systems are matched with budget plans and policies that impact education programs and design, Shannon Gonce seconded the amendment. And it passed upon a roll call vote.

4B. Amendments 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. Current items are for modification of existing projects.

Amendments Summary

The "heavy hitter" of this round of amendments is significant cost increases to sections B & D of the I-26 Connector Project (I-2513). In preparation for these projects to let, cost

estimates have updated, with roughly a \$200 million increase for I-2513B and a roughly \$30 million increase for I-2513D. Beyond this, there are some project delays including the construction funding for the Nasty Branch Greenway (U-5019A) from 2024 to 2025, construction funding for Livingston St complete streets improvements (U-5019D) from 2023 to 2026, and construction funding for Craven St bridge improvements (U-5019E) delayed from 2025 to 2027. There have also been project delays for a handful of pavement rehabilitation projects on I-40, I-240, and I-26 to balance the interstate maintenance program.

Discussion if this will include the safety metrics to improve the North RAD greenway.

Larry Harris moved to adopt the amendments to the 2024-2033 TIP. Parker Sloan seconded, and the motion passed unanimously upon a roll call vote.

5A. WNC Passenger Rail Update

The WNC Passenger Rail project has seen a couple of major milestones in the previous two months:

-The Final WNC Passenger Rail Report was published by NCDOT, outlining the anticipated costs for restarting service, annual operating costs, estimated ridership, and estimated revenues. The report is available here:

https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/WNCReport_Final_2023-12-06.pdf

-The Asheville-to-Salisbury passenger rail extension was selected into the FRA Corridor ID program. This enters the project into a “pipeline” for passenger rail expansion projects and provides \$500,000 for additional environmental documentation and service planning.

Jason Meyers, the Rail Programs Manager with the NCDOT Rail Unit presented. Information Only.

Discussion occurred around how long stage 1 will take. Also, around what the MPO can do to assist NCDOT in getting the railway here. Being ready to engage and give insight into the analysis side of the processes.

5B. Division 13 Project Milestones for 2024

Hannah Smith, Division Planning Engineer with Division 13, will present on projects that are expected to be started, completed, or see significant progress over 2024 in Division 13. The 2024- 2033 Transportation Improvement Program has more than \$2 billion in improvements slated for the MPO Planning Area over the next ten years and Hannah will present on the progress expected to be seen over the next year.

Information Only.

6A. Division Project Updates

Division 13: https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Div13_Feb_Updates.pdf

Division 14: https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Div14_Feb_Updates.pdf

6B. TPD Updates given by Daniel Sellers

6C. FHWA/FTA Updates given by Suzette Morales

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

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

FHWA Updates – February 2024

President Approves Fiscal Year 2024 Appropriations Through March 1, 2024

On January 19, 2024, the President signed a [continuing resolution](#) to approve appropriations for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 through March 1, 2024.

FHWA Issues Abeyance Memorandum for Greenhouse Gas Emissions Performance Measure

On January 26, 2024, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) issued an [abeyance memorandum](#) regarding the deadline for the initial targets and reports for the greenhouse gas emissions performance measure. FHWA has agreed that it will not seek to enforce the February 1, 2024, deadline for States to submit initial targets and reports, until March 29, 2024. More information is available [here](#) and [here](#).

FHWA Publishes Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for National Performance Management Measures

On January 25, 2024, FHWA published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) in the Federal Register [[89 FR 4857](#)] to request comments on proposed regulatory changes to the National Performance Management Measures. FHWA proposed substantive changes to three subparts of [23 CFR Part 490](#):

- Subpart A—General Information, which applies to all of the regulations throughout part 490;
- Subpart B—National Performance Management Measures for the Highway Safety Improvement Program; and
- Subpart E—National Performance Management Measures to Assess Performance of the National Highway System.

In addition, FHWA has also proposed non-substantive changes throughout the regulatory text to provide increased clarity. The comment deadline is February 26, 2024.

USDOT Announces \$4.9 Billion in Awards for the Mega and INFRA Grant Programs

On January 25, 2024, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) [announced](#) \$4.9 billion in awards from the National Infrastructure Project Assistance (Mega) grant program and the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant program. The Department awarded Mega grants to 11 projects that will generate national and regional economic, mobility, and safety benefits, and INFRA grants to 28 projects that will improve the safety, efficiency, and reliability of the movement of freight and people in and across rural and urban areas. More information is available [here](#) and [here](#).

FHWA Announces \$623 Million in Awards for Charging and Fueling Infrastructure On January 11, 2024, FHWA [announced](#) nearly \$623 million in awards from the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Discretionary Grant Program to strategically deploy publicly accessible electric vehicle charging and alternative fueling infrastructure. The 47 awards are located across 22 States and Puerto Rico, and include 2 Tribes. More information is available [here](#) and [here](#).

FHWA Announces \$150 Million in Awards for Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure On January 18, 2024, FHWA [announced](#) nearly \$150 million in awards from the Electric Vehicle Charger Reliability and Accessibility Accelerator Program to make existing electric vehicle charging infrastructure more reliable. The 24 awards are located in 20 States, and were awarded to 14 State Departments of Transportation (DOTs) and 10 local entities. More information is available [here](#) and [here](#).

USDOT Announces \$2.97 Million in Available Funding for Mobility Equity Research

On January 5, 2024, the USDOT published a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to announce the availability of \$2.97 million in funding through the Mobility Equity Research Initiative. The USDOT seeks to advance research and technologies that support the Department's goal of expanding accessibility and mobility to underserved communities, including people with disabilities, older Americans, and rural and disadvantaged communities. The application deadline is March 5, 2024. More information is available [here](#).

Application Deadlines Approaching for Other USDOT Discretionary Grant Opportunities

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

- [February 2 – Advanced Transportation Technology and Innovation \(ATTAIN\) Program;](#)
- [February 13 – Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility \(ICAM\) Pilot Program;](#)
- [February 28 – Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity \(RAISE\) discretionary grant program;](#)
- [March 13 – Rural Autonomous Vehicle \(RAV\) Program;](#) and
- [March 19 – Bridge Investment Program, Planning and Bridge Project Grants.](#)

USDOT Launches the Transforming Transportation Advisory Committee

On December 29, 2023, the USDOT [announced](#) the launch of the Transforming Transportation Advisory Committee (TTAC). TTAC is tasked with providing information, advice, and recommendations to the Secretary about needs, objectives, plans, and approaches for transportation innovation. More information is available [here](#).

TRB Publishes Report on Critical Issues in Transportation for 2024 and Beyond

On January 2, 2024, the Transportation Research Board (TRB) announced the publication of a report on "[Critical Issues in Transportation for 2024 and Beyond](#)." The report focuses on five societal goals to meet the major challenges facing society: (1) Mitigating and responding to climate change, (2) Promoting equity and inclusion, (3) Increasing road safety, (4) Advancing public health, and (5) Building and sustaining a strong, competitive economy.

FHWA Resources on PEL, Safety, Active Transportation, VPI, and NEPA

FHWA recently published the following resources:

- [Planning and Environmental Linkages \(PEL\) Handbook and Flowcharts;](#)
- [Proven Safety Countermeasures in Rural Communities;](#)
- [Safe System Roadway Design Hierarchy: Engineering and Infrastructure-Related Countermeasures;](#)
- [TAP-ing into HSIP: Leveraging a Flexible Federal Share Provision for Certain Highway Safety Projects;](#)
- [Tribal Development of Trails and Other Dedicated Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure;](#) and
- [Virtual Public Involvement \(VPI\) Practices in the National Environmental Policy Act \(NEPA\) – Case Studies.](#)

Webinars on Air Mobility, Asset Management, Electric Vehicles, Freight, Prioritization, and Trails

Here is the registration information for some upcoming webinars:

- [February 6 – International Collaboration in Advanced Air Mobility;](#)
- [February 7 – Global Benchmarking Study on Unmanned Aircraft Systems;](#)
- [February 7 – Integrating Asset Management into the Transportation Planning and Programming Process;](#)
- [February 13 – Permitting and Site Selection Strategies for Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure;](#)
- [February 13 – Talking Freight: Leveraging Discretionary Grants for Freight Projects;](#)
- [February 14 – Prioritization Process Pilot Program;](#)
- [February 15 – The Advanced Air Mobility Workforce of the Future;](#)
- [February 15 – Navigating Zoning and Building Codes for Electric Vehicle Charging;](#)
- [February 27 – Curbside Electric Vehicle Charging Strategies;](#) and
- [February 28 – Advancing Trails to Support Multimodal Networks and Resilient Infrastructure.](#)

6D. NCDOT IMD Updates: Alexius Farris presented.

6E. Committee & Workgroup Updates

Prioritization Subcommittee— met on February 7th; next meeting March 6th.

Transit Operators’ Workgroup— last met on September 18th; next meeting TBD Points of Business/Discussion:

- **September 18th Agenda:**
 - 5307 funding updates
 - NCDOT Regional Transit Study Update
 - Updates from Agencies

5307 Subrecipient Workgroup- met on January 23rd; plans to meet in April Points of Business/Discussion:

- TIP/STIP Updates Needed
- FY 2025 UPWP
- City of Asheville hired Hendrickson Consulting to assist with grant management

Hellbender Trail Stakeholder Group/Regional Trail Forum Updates- met on November 30th; next meeting TBD.

MPO Studies Status

Study	Managing Entity	Year Programmed	Status
Reed Creek Greenway Feasibility Study	City of Asheville	2023	Underway
2050 Socio-Economic Projections	FBRMPO	2023	Consultant Selected; Awaiting NCDOT OIG Approval

CTP/MTP Update	FBRMPO	2024	Consultant Selected; Contracting in Progress
Safe Streets for All Regional Action Plan	FBRMPO	2024	Consultant Selected; Contracting in Progress
Patton Avenue Corridor Study	City of Asheville	2023	Underway
Ridgecrest Connector Greenway Feasibility Study	Town of Black Mountain	2023	Underway
Cane Creek Greenway Study	Town of Fletcher	2024	Agreement Being Drafted
Woodfin-Weaverville Greenway Study	Town of Woodfin	2024	Draft RFLOI Created
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 & Compensation Study	LOSRC	2024	Not Started

Legislative Updates:

PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

ADJOURNMENT

Anthony Sutton adjourned the meeting at 2:55PM as there was no further business before the Board.