



**French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization**  
Minutes from the TCC Hybrid Meeting on September 12th, 2024

**Minutes**

**ATTENDANCE:**

In-person and remote via Zoom:

Steve Williams	NCDOT Division 14
Suzette Morales	FHWA
Janna Bianculli	Apple Country Transit
Vicki Eastland	Land of Sky RPO
William High (Vice-Chair)	Buncombe County
Stephen Sparks	NCDOT Div 13
Sam Cullen	Town of Maggie Valley
Steve Cannon	NCDOT Div 13
Chloe Donohoe	Buncombe Co Transit
Jessica Morriss	ART
Talik Lassiter	NCDOT
Daniel Sellers	NCDOT TPD
Jodie Ferguson	Haywood County
Hannah Smith	NCDOT Div 13
Matt Manley	City of Hendersonville
Anna Sexton	City of Asheville
Brendan Merrithew	NCDOT Div 13
Autumn Radcliff	Henderson County
Eric Rufa	Town of Fletcher
Cody Weddle	NCDOT
Savannah Parrish	Town of Montreat
Pat Christie	Village of Flat Rock
Ricky Hurley	Town of Woodfin

**Members Without Representation Present:**

Madison County
Town of Weaverville
Town of Mars Hill
Town of Waynesville
Town of Clyde
Town of Black Mountain
Town of Canton
Town of Waynesville
Haywood Transit

Town of Laurel Park
Town of Mills River

Additional Attendees:

Tristan Winkler	Jon Barsanti	Hannah Bagli
Asha Rado(Minutes)	Daisy O'Connor	Ada Sloop

**WELCOME AND HOUSEKEEPING**

Autumn Radcliff called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone at 11:02AM. A quorum was established to conduct the business before the meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Autumn Radcliff opened the floor for public comment. There was none in room but we had an online comment : A resident of North Asheville said “Data regarding Merrimon Ave about the road diet and that it is not accurate and traffic congestion has gotten much worse than the data had indicated. Generally feels that the project wasn’t effective.”

**Consent Agenda:**

**3A: June 2024 Meeting Minutes:**

[https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/2024\\_08\\_08\\_DRAFT.MPO\\_TCC\\_Minutes.pdf](https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/2024_08_08_DRAFT.MPO_TCC_Minutes.pdf)

**3B: Letter of Support NCDOT Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program Grant Application**

As standard practice, letters of support that did not have time to go through the MPO TCC and Board for approval are provided as consent agenda items for information.

MPO staff was requested to provide a letter of support in for an NCDOT grant application that included two wildlife crossing improvements- one in Haywood County, one in Madison County. This project was supported by the Wildlife Crossings Recommendations approved by the MPO Board in September, 2023.

The letter of support that was provided is below.

A program of Land of Sky

# FRENCH BROAD RIVER

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

FHWA WILDLIFE CROSSINGS PILOT PROGRAM

2024 GRANT APPLICATION

NCDOT WILDLIFE CROSSING APPLICATION

This letter is provided to showcase support for NCDOT's application to the Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program. The [Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program | FHWA \(dot.gov\)](#) is a competitive grant program that awards grants to eligible entities for projects with the goal of reducing Wildlife Vehicle Collisions (WVC) while improving habitat connectivity for terrestrial and aquatic species.

The goals of the Wildlife Crossing Pilot Program fits neatly with the goals of the French Broad River MPO, including "Ensuring Changes Don't Negatively impact our Region's Unique Environments" and "Improve Roadway Safety." Western North Carolina is home to one of the most diverse biospheres in the country and our mountains and natural areas serve as some of the biggest recreational destinations as well as home to numerous wildlife and biodiversity. Our region has also struggled to meet roadway safety targets-reducing wildlife collisions, especially with the large mammals in our region, may help to improve safety and reduce crashes on our roadways.

In September, 2023 the French Broad River MPO approved a series of recommendations for proposed wildlife crossing areas throughout the MPO and Land of Sky RPO planning areas in order to improve roadway safety for our residents, visitors, and travelers, as well as promote a transportation system that reduces barriers for our natural resources.

We believe that the following proposed projects are in-line with the vision and goals of the MPO as well as the recommendations adopted by the Board in September, 2023:

**1-26 Madison County: Wildlife Fence Installation for Wildlife Crossings and Roadway Safety** - This project proposes to install 6.5 miles of appropriately designed wildlife fencing to direct species, especially large mammals, to the existing wildlife crossing structures. The fencing would minimize highway access while directing wildlife to the underpasses and the Big Laurel Creek bridge.

**1-40 Haywood County: Groundhog Creek Area Wildlife Passage Structures** - This project seeks to install wildlife underpasses at Groundhog Creek as well as 2.2 miles of wildlife fencing to bracket the multiple hydraulic structures under I-40 near and Groundhog Creek. The fence will extend to the 1-40 westbound tunnel, thereby incorporating the proposed passage improvements with an existing overpass that is used by wildlife. This will create a mix of wildlife crossing opportunities within a section of the Pigeon River Gorge.

*Mailing Address:*  
NC DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY UNIT  
1598 MAIL SERVICE CENTER  
RALEIGH, NC 27699-1598

*Telephone:* (919)7076153

*Customer Service:* 1-877-368-4968

*Location:*  
1000 BIRCH RIDGE DR.  
RALEIGH, NC 27610

*Website:* [www.ncdot.gov](http://www.ncdot.gov)

The French Broad River MPO offers its full support for the project as submitted by NCDOT to help improve our region, the safety of our roadways' users, and to improve conditions for the wildlife and natural resources.

Thank you,

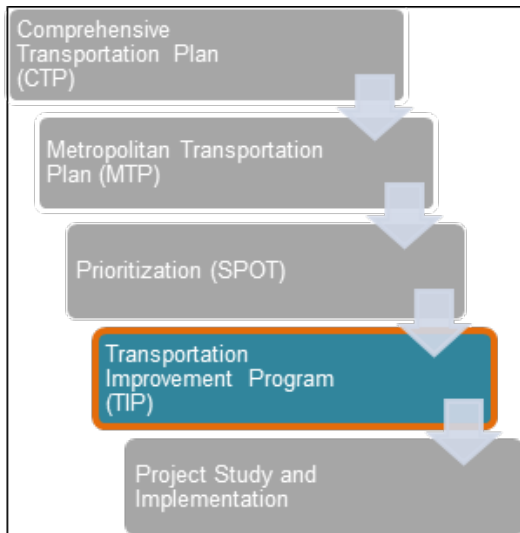
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tristan Winkler', written in a cursive style.

Tristan Winkler  
French Broad River MPO  
Director [tristan@landofsky.org](mailto:tristan@landofsky.org)  
(828)251-6622

***William High moved to accept the consent agenda including the minutes from the August 2024 meeting and the Letter of Support for the NCDOT Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program Grant Application. Janna Bianculli seconded the motion which passed unanimously upon a roll call vote.***

**Business:**

**4A. Amendments to the 2024-2033 Transportation Improvement Plan (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**

We have a significant number of amendments this month. A Some changes to highlight include the segmentation of HE- 0001 (I-26 Pratt and Whitney Interchange) into HE-0001A

and HE-0001B. There was a significant cost increase, roughly \$34 million, to I-2513AA (I-40 from Monta Vista Road to Sand Hill Road). FY25 and FY26 construction funding was added to HB-0004 (Bridge replacement over Champion Drive). There are a few safety projects including four in Division and two in Division 14. These improvements include installing guardrails, crosswalks, and rapid flashing beacons.

**\*(See AGENDA pages 8-55 for in depth tables and charts explaining amendments)**

Discussion occurred around HE001 and why segmentation is needed. Also discussion around timeline of interchange. Discussion around how applying future year funding to projects might affect us.

***Sam Cullen moved to recommend the adoption of the Amendments to the 2024-2033-TIP to the board. Vicki Eastland seconded the motion which passed unanimously upon a roll call vote.***

**4B. Memorandum of Understanding**

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is a formal agreement between various governmental entities and stakeholders involved in

metropolitan transportation planning.

### What an MOU for an MPO Includes

1. **Governance Structure:**
  - **Organizational Framework:** Details the structure of the MPO, including decision-making processes and membership.
  - **Decision-Making Processes:** Describes how decisions will be made, including voting rights and procedures.
2. **Funding and Resources:**
  - **Financial Contributions:** Specifies how funds will be provided to the MPO for operations and planning
3. **Responsibilities and Obligations:**
  - **Planning Duties:** Outlines planning duties and deliverables, such as transportation plans and studies.
  - **Compliance:** Addresses compliance with federal, state, and local regulations and requirements.
4. **Termination:**
  - **Termination Conditions:** Defines conditions under which the MOU can be terminated by any party.

### Summary of Changes to the MOU

- Formatted changes to meet with the approved MOU template from NCDOT
- MPO Board membership changes
  - Transylvania County removed as a non-voting member
  - Urban Transit Representative clarified
  - Rural Transit Representative clarified
  - FTA Representative added as a non-voting member
- MPO TCC membership changes
  - Transylvania County removed as a non-voting member
  - NCDOT Integrated Mobility Division added as a voting member
  
- FTA Representative, NCDOT Freight Representative, NCDOT Rail Representative, Regional Housing Representative, and Vulnerable Road Users Representatives added as a non-voting members
- A section on dues-paying members and local dues responsibilities was added

### Steps Following Board Approval

- every jurisdiction in the MPO would be required to provide a resolution

**\*(See AGENDA pages 58-70 for the full Memorandum of Understanding for the FBRMPO)**

Discussion occurred around clarification about IMD as a non voting vs voting member.

***Steve Williams moved to recommend to the board the Memorandum of Understanding with change on IMD. Hannah Smith seconded the motion which passed unanimously upon a roll call vote***

## 5A. Haywood Road Improvement Project (HL-0003)

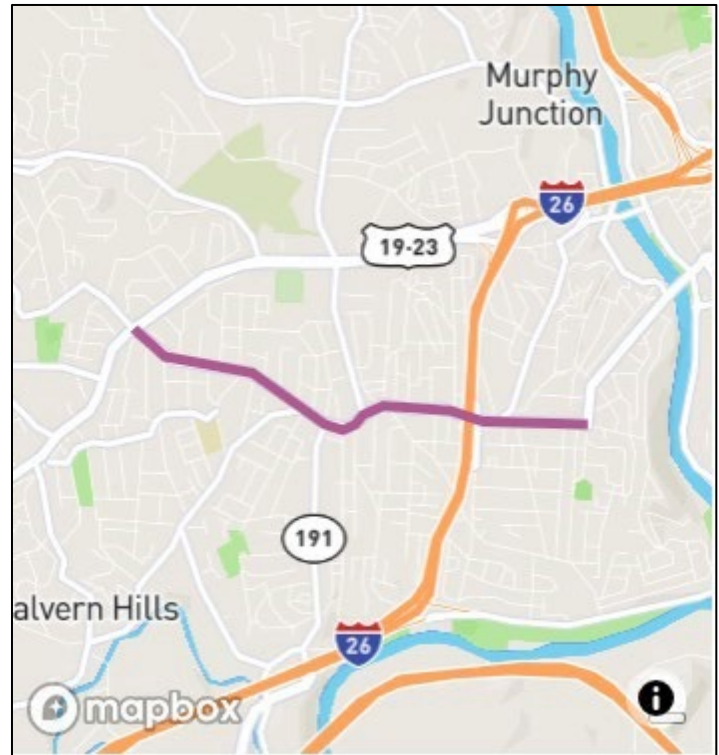
### What is the Haywood Road Improvement Project?

The Haywood Road Improvement Project is a relatively unique project funded through the MPO's Locally Administered Project Program. The project goes from US 19/23 (Patton Avenue) to Ridgeland Road and is generally scoped to resurface the road and include bicycle and pedestrian improvements as well.

### What Makes This Project Unique?

- No local funds are being used as match for this project, instead NCDOT is using resurfacing and other funds to provide match.
- The project was developed out of meetings between the West Asheville Business Association (WABA), NCDOT Division 13, City of Asheville Planning, and the MPO.
- The project allows for the planned resurfacing to include additional improvements that would not be provided under a resurfacing project.

Brendan Merithew with NCDOT Division 13 will provide a presentation on the project.



### Information Only.

Discussion occurred around encounters with pedestrians while driving this stretch. Currently there are an overload of signage that can be distracting and if there is any effort to reduce that or not. Also if there was any plans to use color transitions or on curbs. Tough decisions had to be made due to tight corridors. Praise was given to Brendan Merithew on putting this together.

## 6A. Division Project Updates

**Division 13:** [https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Div13\\_September\\_Updates.pdf](https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Div13_September_Updates.pdf)

**Division 14 :** [https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Div14\\_September\\_Updates.pdf](https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Div14_September_Updates.pdf)

**6B. TPD Updates:** Daniel Sellers and Talik Lassiter presented.

**6C. FHWA/FTA Updates :** Suzette Morales presented

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

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

## 6D. Committee & Workgroup Updates

**Prioritization Subcommittee**— met on September 4th; next meeting October 10th.

- P7 Regional Impact Local Input Point Assignment
- Existing TIP/STIP Project Rankings
- 2050 Socio-Economic Growth Scenarios

**5307 Subrecipient Workgroup**- met on August 20th, next meeting November. Points of Business/Discussion:

- TIP/STIP Updates Needed
- Potential Changes to the 5307 Subrecipient Formula

**Hellbender Trail Stakeholder Group/Regional Trail Forum Updates**- met on April 23rd; next meeting TBD.

### MPO Studies Status

Study	Managing Entity	Year Programmed	Status
2050 Socio-Economic Projections	FBRMPO	2024	Underway
CTP/MTP Update	FBRMPO	2024	Underway
Safe Streets for All Regional Action Plan	FBRMPO	2024	Underway
Patton Avenue Corridor Study	City of Asheville	2023	Underway
Ridgecrest Connector Greenway Feasibility Study	Town of Black Mountain	2023	Completed
Cane Creek Greenway Study	Town of Fletcher	2024	Not Started
Woodfin-Weaverville Greenway Study	Town of Woodfin	2025	Consultant <u>Selected</u> ; Contracting in Progress
Buncombe County Pedestrian Plan	Buncombe County	2025	RFLOI 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

**\*See pages 75-77 of the Agenda for Locally Administered Projects**

## 6E. Legislative Updates

To be updated

### PUBLIC COMMENT

Autumn Radcliff opened the floor for public comment.

### ADJOURNMENT

Autumn Radcliff adjourned the meeting at 12:17PM as there was no further business.



