

Prioritization Subcommittee

Meeting Agenda

January 8, 2024

9:30 AM

Meeting to be held at Land of Sky Regional Council or via

Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/91373453789>

Voting Members on the Committee: Jessica Morris (City of Asheville, Vice-Chair), William High (Buncombe County), Autumn Radcliff (Henderson County), Anthony Sutton (Town of Waynesville), Elizabeth Teague (Town of Waynesville, Chair), Archie Pertiller (Town of Black Mountain), Catherine Cordell (Town of Weaverville)

1. Welcome and Introductions	Elizabeth Teague
2. Public Comment	Elizabeth Teague
3. Business	
A. Demographic Changes	MPO Staff
B. Elevate 2050 Update- Vision & Goals Adoption; Environmental Justice update	Joel Strickland, Emily Scott-Cruz, McAdams
C. 2050 Socio-Economic Projections	Colby Brown, Manhan Group
4. News, Events, Updates	Elizabeth Teague
5. Public Comment	Elizabeth Teague
6. Adjournment	Elizabeth Teague

Item 4A

Demographic Changes

As a follow-up to our last meeting, MPO staff will present on changes to our region-based on US Census data- between 2000 and 2020.

Item 4B:

Elevate 2050- Vision & Goals Adoption; Other Updates

Elevate 2050 Update:

Elevate 2050, or the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) update, is a federally required planning document that MPOs are required to update and maintain to reflect planned transportation investments in the region over the next twenty-five years. The MTP is required to be fiscally constrained, meaning that projects in the MTP have to be reasonably expected to work within projected revenues. The French Broad River MPO is required to update its MTP every five years with the last update completed in September 2020 (not including amendments).

Items for Today:

- Environmental Justice (EJ) Methodology Update
- Phase 2 of Public Engagement
- Vision and Goals/Objectives – review and recommend for adoption

Environmental Justice (EJ) Methodology Update

Environmental Justice (EJ) is defined by the EPA as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. In the transportation decision making process, it is important to understand the needs, perspectives, and limitations of all populations that may be affected by transportation projects since the projects produce long-lasting effects on communities. In 1994, the Presidential Executive Order 12898 directed every Federal agency to make Environmental Justice part of its mission. The United States Department of Transportation, North Carolina Department of Transportation, and French Broad River MPO are committed to a comprehensive, inclusive, and equitable approach to transportation planning and development, aiming to achieve environmental justice.

An EJ analysis is a crucial component of Elevate 2050. VHB staff, as part of the McAdams team, will present their updated approach for identifying Communities of Concern as part of the overall MTP Environmental Justice approach, which accounts for feedback received from the Prioritization Subcommittee during their last meeting.

Phase 2 Public Engagement:

The second phase of public engagement for Elevate 2050 was scheduled for early October. This timeline shifted to late November following Hurricane Helene. This phase of engagement involves multiple different efforts:

1. Focus Group meetings were scheduled between late November and early December and mid-October with representatives from the following groups:

- Civic Organizations – 9/25/24 ✓
 - Regional Focus Group #1 – 11/19/24 ✓
 - Economic Development – 11/19/24 ✓
 - Transportation + Community Service Providers – 11/21/24 ✓
 - Public Agencies – 11/22/24 ✓
 - Residents + Communities – 11/22/24 ✓
 - Regional Focus Group #2 – 11/25/24 ✓
 - Elected Officials – 12/3/24 ✓
2. Pop-up events were planned for late October, but instead moved to November and December. The FBRMPO advertised these events on their social media platforms as well as on the Elevate 2050 website. Project team members attended:
- Weaverville Tailgate Market ✓
 - Asheville Holiday Jamboree ✓
 - Olde Fashioned Christmas (Hendersonville) ✓
3. A public meeting was held in Waynesville (12/4) ✓
4. Public Survey – the survey for this phase of engagement is open! The survey aims to collect input on Elevate 2050’s goals and objectives, budgetary priorities, and specific projects that the public wants considered.
- The Public Survey closed on December 31st. The Project Team observed a spike in responses following each pop-up event and public meeting.
 - i. 57% of respondents heard about the survey from social media and 13% heard about the survey directly from project staff

Vision and Goals/Objectives

Phase 1 of Public Engagement for Elevate2050 culminated with the development of a draft Vision Statement and Goals/Objectives for the 25-year plan. The draft Vision Statement and Goals/Objectives were developed prior to Hurricane Helene and public input following Helene was incorporated into the version of the materials included in this agenda item.

Vision Statement:

The FBRMPO region envisions a **resilient**, equitable, connected, **and** well-maintained multimodal transportation system **that reflects the unique character of the region and its terrain, while getting** all travelers to their destinations safely, easily, and reliably. This system supports an inclusive, healthy, and economically vibrant region that aligns with land use goals and expands mobility choices.

Revised Goals:

Goal	Objectives
Improve Access + Connectivity	
Support an efficient, reliable, and connected multimodal transportation system that equitably improves access and mobility to all activities for all users.	1.a. Create a connected network of bikeways and pedestrian routes by expanding existing facilities and closing gaps.
	1.b. Enhance and expand transportation options and choices for all users to ensure network efficiency and reliability.
	1.c. Implement transportation facilities that are appropriate for intended adjacent land use.
	1.d. Support transit initiatives to improve service frequency, quality, access, and reliability.
Advance Equity	
Promote equity and public participation throughout all stages of planning.	2.a. Increase engagement with historically underrepresented and traditionally underserved groups in the planning process.
	2.b. Reduce harmful environmental, health, and safety effects of the transportation system on people in disadvantaged communities.
	2.c. Invest in transportation options in disadvantaged communities to better meet residents' needs.
	2.d. Invest in projects that reconnect and rebuild previously harmed disadvantaged or historically underserved communities.
Promote Sustainability + Resiliency	
Preserve/enhance the natural and human environment while creating a safe and secure transportation network.	3.a. Mitigate and reduce impacts of transportation projects and travel patterns on the environment.
	3.b. Plan facilities that support context sensitive design and promote a system that is compatible with community needs and the natural environment.
	3.c. Minimize effects of transportation projects on water quality.
	3.d. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from mobile sources to continuously meet EPA air quality standards and increase utilization of other modes.

Goal	Objectives
Address Capacity Management + Mobility	
Implement strategies that address congested roadway segments and increase roadway connectivity and regional mobility.	4.a. Develop strategies that address system performance and congested segments.
	4.b. Improve travel time reliability for all modes.
	4.c. Improve safe and efficient freight movement within and through the region.
Enhance Safety, Security, + System Preservation	
Provide and maintain safer and more secure places to live, walk, bike, ride the bus, and drive.	5.a. Improve safety of travelers and residents.
	5.b. Improve system resilience and security by reducing existing vulnerabilities and improving ability to achieve timely emergency response.
	5.c. Maintain current transportation network across all modes in a state of good repair.
	5.d. Minimize conflict between different modes of travel, reduce unsafe behaviors, and increase attentiveness and awareness.
Foster Economic Vitality	
Develop a transportation system that supports a thriving, sustainable, broad-based economy while maintaining the surrounding area's character and expanding extra-regional travel, job access, and efficient movement of freight and goods.	6.a. Promote an adaptable transportation system that supports the local and regional economy and job growth and enhances economic prosperity.
	6.b. Invest in projects that enhance tourism and extra-regional travel, including aviation, bicycle, pedestrian, transit, safety, rail, and roadway projects.
	6.c. Improve job access for non-motorized users (i.e. bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit users).
	6.d. Increase transportation connections between where people live and where people work to enhance the region's affordability as a place to live, work, and visit.

Action Items for Today:

- Recommend that the draft Vision Statement and Goals/Objectives for Elevate 2050, the ongoing metropolitan transportation plan (MTP), be adopted by Board.

Item 4C:

2050 Socio-Economic Projections

As part of the development of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), the MPO develops what's referred to as the "Preferred Growth Scenario" that determines how much growth the region should be planning to accommodate in 2050, what kind of growth is expected (in terms of demographics and business type), and where that growth is expected to go. This information feeds into the region's Travel Demand Model, which is used to develop traffic projections to determine future transportation needs. Outputs from the model are used to build Purpose & Need Statements for future projects as well as a starting point for the development of traffic forecasts that NCDOT uses to determine roadway needs for projects.

Today's Update

- Colby Brown will present the updated Business as Usual growth scenario for the region as well as the Consolidated Growth scenario
- Re-consideration of the four selected scenarios
 - Business as Usual
 - Consolidated Growth
 - Dispersed Growth
 - **Accelerated Growth**

Overview of the Selected Scenarios:

1. **Business as Usual**- growth would be dictated by a combination of comprehensive plans and market forces with the general intent that growth patterns would not change significantly based on current patterns and comprehensive plans. Growth total: NC OSBM
2. **Consolidated Growth**- growth would be more focused in more walkable areas (WalkUPs), areas with lower VMT/HH, and/or generally more developed areas. The intent would be to focus more growth in areas more conducive to shorter trips and densify urban areas beyond what is likely in current plans and UDOs. Growth Total: NC OSBM
3. **Dispersed Growth**- growth would be more focused in areas with lower densities in order to avoid densification of the region beyond what is currently in comprehensive plans. Growth Total: NC OSBM
4. **Accelerated Growth**- growth rates would exceed current projections with the hopes of accommodating additional housing and avoiding becoming a region being heavily-reliant on its working-age population being outside of the region as well as alleviating housing price pressures. Growth Total: Custom