

**French Broad River MPO  
Prioritization Subcommittee**

**Meeting Minutes  
February 5th, 2025**

**ATTENDANCE in Person or Remote  
Voting Members**

Archie Pertiller, Town of Black Mountain  
Catherine Cordell, Town of Weaverville  
Anthony Sutton, Town of Waynesville  
Elizabeth Teague, Town of Waynesville  
Autumn Radcliff, Henderson County  
Jessica Morris, City of Asheville  
William High, Buncombe County

**Non-Voting Members**

Tristan Winkler, FBRMPO  
Daisy O'Connor-FBRMPO  
Steve Williams, NCDOT Div 14  
Emily Scott-Cruz, McAdams  
Stephen Sparks, NCDOT  
Alex Mumby, Town of Waynesville  
Connor Klassen, VHB  
Elias Hoard, General Public  
Colby Brown, Manhan Group

Hannah Bagli, FBRMPO  
Sandy Broadwell, Land of Sky Transportation  
Daniel Sellers, NCDOT TPD  
Mike Maleck, Town of Mills River  
Joel Strickland, McAdams  
Luba Zuyeva, VHB  
David Wasserman, NCDOT  
Teresa Robinson, NCDOT

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Jessica Morriss started the meeting at 9: 33AM with introductions. A quorum was announced, and roll was called.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Jessica Morriss opened the floor for public comment. No comments were heard.

**APPROVAL of January 2025 MEETING MINUTES AND AGENDA**

***Anthony Sutton moved to approve the January Meeting Minutes. William High seconded the motion which passed unanimously upon a roll call vote.***

## BUSINESS

### **4A. 2050 Socio-Economic Projections**

#### **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

Discussion around water and sewer accessibility in relation to development of sub divisions and how its considered in the analysis. Discussion around the census block in southern boundry of Haywood County and Transylvania county and needing corrections. Discussion also occurred around if there should be higher growth than what is shown in regards to Weaverville.

Info Only.

## **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.

Comment was heard on Haywood County areas of concern seem to actually be in the RTP areas. Discussion occurred around definition of what “concern” meant in regards to this report.

### **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 31<sup>st</sup>. 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
<b>Improve Access + Connectivity</b>	
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.
<b>Advance Equity</b>	
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.
<b>Promote Sustainability + Resiliency</b>	
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.

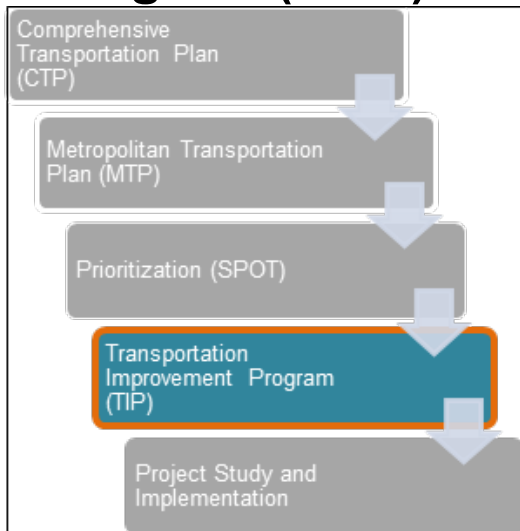
Goal	Objectives
<b>Address Capacity Management + Mobility</b>	
Implement strategies that address congested roadway segments and increase roadway connectivity and regional mobility.	4.a. Develop strategies that address system performance and congested segments.
	4.b. Improve travel time reliability for all modes.
	4.c. Improve safe and efficient freight movement within and through the region.
<b>Enhance Safety, Security, + System Preservation</b>	
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.
<b>Foster Economic Vitality</b>	
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.

Discussion around support of the changes to the terminology and making it align better.

Information Only.

#### 4C. Draft 2026-2035 STIP

# Draft 2026-2035 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)



### What is the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)?

The State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) is North Carolina’s document that reflects planned transportation investments over a ten-year period. The STIP describes each project, a schedule for implementation, funding sources, and estimated costs. The STIP includes all of the MPO’s TIPs as well as programs for RPOs.

### Development of the 2026-2035 State Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The cycle to update the STIP for 2026-2035 began in fall 2023. Due to rising costs for existing projects funded in the currently adopted 2024-2033 STIP, little to no funding was projected to be available for new projects in the 2026-2035

STIP. While P 7.0 was completed, few projects across the State were funded and none in the French Broad River MPO. Instead, the primary focus was on right-sizing NCDOT’s budget and delaying or cutting existing projects due to cost increases.

#### Projects Being Decommited

Project	Route	County	Funding Tier	Revised Cost
U-4712	US 23B (South Main Street) Widening	Haywood	Division 14	\$57,400,000
U-6159	US 276 (Russ Avenue) Access Management	Haywood	Division 14	\$39,000,000
U-6158	US 276 @ Crymes Cove Intersection Improvements	Haywood	Division 14	\$6,700,000
U-2801AB	US 25A (Sweeten Creek Road) Widening	Buncombe	Region G	\$215,000,000
U-5832	NC 81 (Swannanoa River Road) Widening	Buncombe	Division 13	\$145,000,000
U-6047	NC 112 (Sand Hill/Sardis Road) Widening	Buncombe	Division 13	\$175,800,000
I-4400BA	I-26 @ US 64 Interchange Improvements	Henderson	Division 14	\$143,600,000

\*A-0010AA decommitted (officially) but previously brought before the MPO Board

**Project Delays & Construction Schedules**

Project	Route	County	Previous CST Year	Updated CST Year
A-0010AE	Future I-26 (near New Stock Road)	Buncombe	2031	2031
I-2513AC	I-26/I-240	Buncombe	2025	2027
I-2513B & I-2513D	I-26/I-240	Buncombe	2024	2024
I-4409	I-40 @ Blue Ridge Road	Buncombe	2025	2026
I-4759	I-40 @ Liberty Road	Buncombe	2027	2029
U-4739	Amboy/Meadow Road	Buncombe	2030	2030
U-5834	Mills Gap Road	Buncombe	2025	2026
U-6163	Mills Gap Road @ Cane Creek Road	Buncombe	2025	2025
R-5921	US 276 (Jonathan Creek Road)	Haywood	2024	2025
U-6048	US 19/23	Haywood	2030	2033
R-2588B	NC 191	Henderson	2026	2029
U-5783	US 64	Henderson	2025	2025
U-5886	White Street	Henderson	2027	2028
U-6049	NC 225 (South Main Street)	Henderson	2027	2028

**Next Steps**

Action	Date
Draft STIP Released	January 31, 2025
Division 13/14 Public Meetings	February 24-28 (Drop-In at Division HQ)
Public Comments Due	April 4, 2025
NC BOT Adoption	June, 2025
FBRMPO Adoption	August, 2025

Information Only.

Discussion occurred around our deficit in funding and cost increases. Concerns about S. Main st in Waynesville and that half of that road is now just blight and that other businesses had come in in anticipation of the updates to the road and without the project happening it is very frustrating and dangerous. Differences between decommitted and delayed.



## PUBLIC COMMENT

Elizabeth Teague opened the floor for public comment. No comments were heard.

## ADJOURNMENT

Elizabeth Teague adjourned the meeting at 11:05 AM.