

French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization
Minutes from the Governing Board Meeting on August 21st, 2025

Attendance:

In-Person and Remote via the Zoom Platform:

Kim Roney	City of Asheville
Sage Turner	City of Asheville
Chuck McGrady	BOT D14
Dr Ralph Hamlett	Town of Canton
Susan Gregory	Village of Flat Rock
Jim Player	Town of Fletcher
Kevin Ensley	Haywood County
Jay Egolf	Henderson County
Jennifer Hensley	City of Hendersonville
George Banta	Town of Laurel Park
Matt Wechtel	Madison County
Jeff Moore	Town of Mills River
Tom Widmer	Town of Montreat
Drew Stephens	Town of Biltmore Forest
Larry Harris	Urban Transit
Anthony Sutton	Town of Waynesville
Catherine Cordell	Town of Weaverville
Jim McAllister	Town of Woodfin
Daniel Sellers	NCDOT TPD
Steve Williams	NCDOT Division 14
Chris Medlin	NCDOT Division 13
Angela Reece	Town of Black Mountain
Christina Harris	City of Asheville
Tim Anderson	NCDOT

Members without Representation present:

Town of Black Mountain
BOT D13
Buncombe County
Town of Clyde
Town of Maggie Valley
Town of Mars Hill
Rural Transit

Additional Attendees:

Tristan Winkler (FBRMPO)	Hannah Bagli (FBRMPO)	Daisy O'Connor (FBRMPO)
Asha Rado (LOSRC, Minutes)	Sandy Broadwill(FBRMPO)	Joel Strickland (McAdams)
Joe Minicozzi(public)	Ed Evans	Lauren Blackburn (VHB)

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS & ROLL CALL

Anthony Sutton called the meeting to order at 1:03 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 conflict's were had.

Quorum was announced to conduct the business of the Board.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

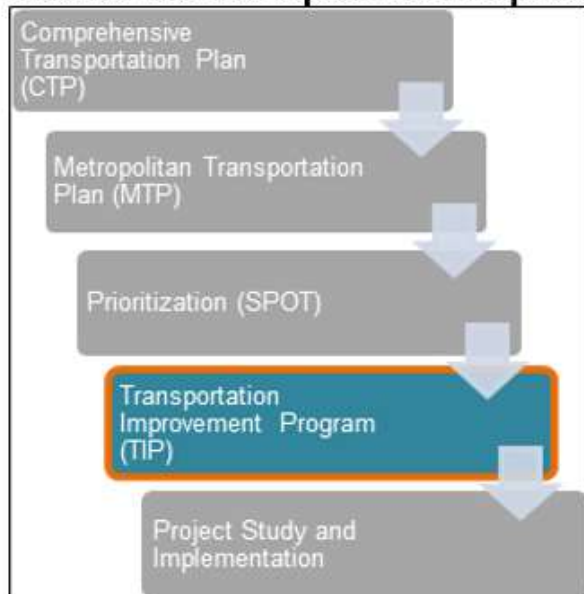
CONSENT AGENDA

3A. June 2025 Meeting Minutes:

https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/2025_06_12_DRAFT.MPO_.TCC_.Minutes.pdf

3B. 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.

Amendment Highlights:

Amendments this month include:

- HE-0001A and HE-0001B: Cost increases on the I-26 (Fredrick Law Olmstead Way) interchange and new road
- BL-0078 (Ecusta Trail): Addition of the RAISE (BUILD) and NSFLTP Grants to the TIP/STIP
- C-5702E (NC Clean Energy Technology

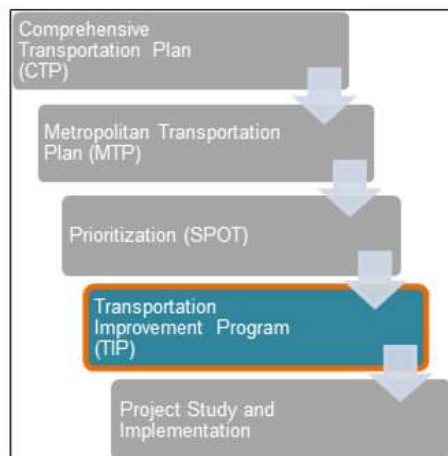
Center): NC Clean Energy Technology Center, sub-awards to CMAQ-Eligible Counties

TIP Amendment Summaries can be found here: https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/FBRMPO_August2025_TIP_Amendments_UPDATED.pdf

Chuck McGrady moved to approve the TAC Agenda, consent agenda including the June minutes and the amendments to the 2024-2033 TIP. Jim McAllister seconded the motion which passed upon a roll call vote.

Business

4A. Adoption of the 2026-2035 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)



What is the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)?

The State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) is North Carolina's federally-required 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 MPOs' TIPs as well as programs for RPOs.

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is the MPO's subset of the STIP. In order for federal actions to be approved or for federal

funds to be obligated, projects are required to be reflected in both the TIP and STIP.

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 Decommitted

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 2029
U-6049	NC 225 (South Main Street)	Henderson	2027	2028 2029

Next Steps

The NCDOT Board of Transportation approved the 2026-2035 STIP at its July meeting. Every MPO in the State is expected to do adopt their TIPs before September 30, 2025. Following the approval of the STIP and every MPO TIP, FHWA and FTA would review the documents. Once accepted, the 2026-2035 STIP & TIPs would become the official documents reflecting planned transportation investments in North Carolina.

Discussion occurred around pushing forward with funding the expansion of the I 26 connector and prioritizing this over our local corridor projects. Those corridors are where affordable housing is supposed to go. City of Asheville's Kim Roney wanted on record that she will vote No on approval of the 2026-2035 TIP because of the above reasons. She does acknowledge the hard work that this board and staff do, and she does support the transit funding but does not support the connector project that is in this TIP.

Matt Wechtel motioned to approve the 2026-2035 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). -Chuck McGrady seconded and it passed upon a roll call vote.

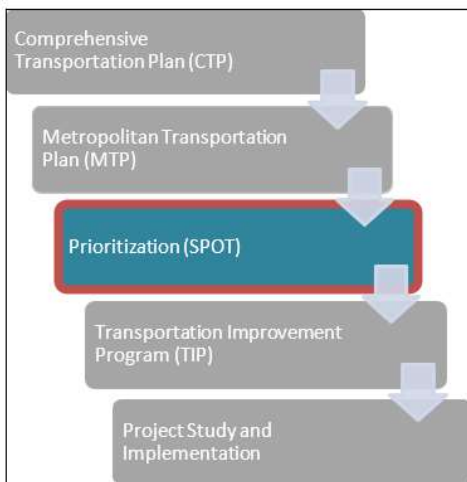
4B. P8 Project Submittals

Very Brief Overview

The Prioritization Process (AKA SPOT, AKA P 8) is the process in North Carolina that helps determine the majority of transportation improvements across the State. The process is dictated by the [Strategic Transportation Investments Act \(STI\) of 2012](#) and is generally designed to be a data- driven, transparent process to determine what transportation projects are funded or not. MPOs are engaged throughout the process to submit projects for consideration (along with Divisions and RPOs) as well as local input points that are used to boost the scores of projects competing for Regional Impact or Division Needs funding.

Project submittals are planned transportation projects that are elected to be considered for funding in the process by MPOs, RPOs, or NCDOT Divisions. Projects will be scored based on the mode, facility type, and proposed improvement, to compete for any available funding.

The end result of the process is expected to be the 2028-2037 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), as well as the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) at the MPO.

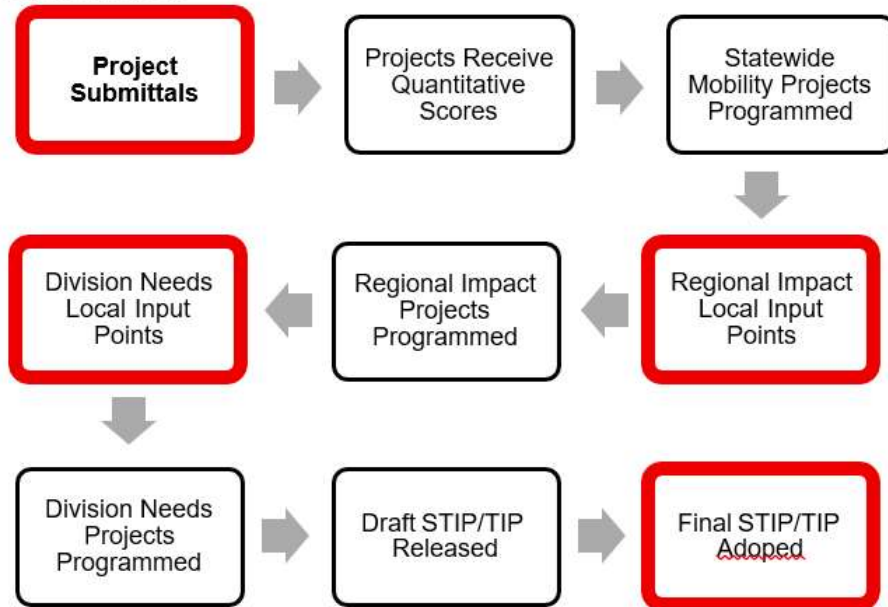


Action Items for Today

- Recommendation of the Draft Submittal List

Prioritization Background

There are several “major” steps in the prioritization process. The steps are laid out below with MPO tasks circled in red.



Initial/Current Step

We are currently at Step #1 in the process- Project Submittals.

Project Submittals generally come from three different places:

1. **New Projects Submitted by the MPO**- the MPO can submit **18** projects of each mode for consideration in the prioritization process (18 highway, 18 transit, 18 rail, 18 bike/ped, 18 aviation.)
2. **New Projects Submitted by the Divisions**- NCDOT Divisions are allotted **10** submittals per mode for consideration in the prioritization process.
3. **Carryover Projects**- projects that are “automatically” added to the prioritization process, either because they are “siblings” of existing projects or were projects decommitted in the last round.

Other sources of projects for our region:

1. **New Projects Submitted by Other Planning Organizations**- Land of Sky RPO, Foothills RPO, and Southwestern RPO are all adjacent to the FBRMPO and sometimes projects submitted go into the MPO.

MPO Schedule

August, 2025	Draft Submittals Approved by Board & TCC
August 22-September 17, 2025	Public Comment on MPO Draft Submittals
September, 2025	Final Submittals Approved by Board & TCC
June, 2026	Draft Regional Impact Local Input Points
June 19, 2026-August 19, 2026	Public Comment on Draft Local Input Points (Regional Impact)
August, 2026	Final Regional Impact Local Input Points
October, 2026	Draft Division Needs Local Input Points
October 16, 2026-November 18, 2026	Public Comment on Draft Local Input Points (Division Needs)
November, 2026	Final Division Needs Local Input Points
January, 2027	Draft STIP Released

** See [Agenda](#) for more project lists.

Discussion around carry over projects in Henderson and Haywood counties. New requirements are that projects have to have an express design.

Jim McAllister moved to approve a Draft List of P8 Project Submittals. Kevin Ensley seconded the motion and it passed on a roll call vote. Village of Flat Rock Susan Gregory abstained herself from voting.

4C: Adoption of the Safe Streets for WNC Plan

What is the Safe Streets for WNC Plan?

Safe Streets for WNC (SS4WNC) is a safety action plan developed for Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania Counties. The French Broad River MPO and Land of Sky RPO were awarded funding in 2023 and the plan kicked off in early 2024. This plan provides the region with detailed information about crashes and safety history. This plan aims to provide strategies and countermeasures to help reduce roadway fatalities and make roadways safer for all users.

How was the Safe Streets for WNC Funded?

The SS4WNC Safety Action Plan was funded through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) competitive grant program. The FBRMPO and LOSRPO applied for action plan funding in 2022 and were awarded funds in 2023. Dogwood Health Trust provided the local match for the plan.

What was the process for developing the Safe Streets for WNC Plan?

The FBRMPO and LOSRPO hired VHB and McAdams to help develop the SS4WNC Safety Action Plan. Staff and the consultant team began with meeting with a diverse group of stakeholders to help establish goals and oversee the plan. Data analysis was then done to identify safety problems and risks based on past crashes and traffic conditions. The data analysis fed into identifying areas and populations most at risk for different crash types and looking at potential preventive measures. This is also where targeted public engagement happened so we could hear from a diverse group of community members. This was achieved through focus groups and public meetings. Strategies were then developed to help target specific crash reduction strategies. The team then developed a countermeasure toolbox that gives communities resources on how to reduce and counter

specific crash types. The team also provided recommendations for policies, guidelines, and project planning opportunities to support the integration of safety into both short- and long-term improvements.

Public Engagement Summary

Public engagement for the plan included three steering committee meetings with stakeholders from all five counties. Two leadership summits were held, one at the beginning of the plan and one at the end of the planning period. The leadership summits brought together first responders, planners, school staff, elected officials, and other community stakeholders to talk about the plan and how it would be an effective tool. The team held three focus groups; each focused on a different specialty to get a diverse perspective on safety in the region. Due to Hurricane Helene, the original community outreach events were cancelled but the team was able to combine with community outreach efforts of the Elevate 2050 MTP plan and the team held joint public meetings in April of 2025. A survey was also running at the same time as the public meeting to capture responses from others community members.

Discussion around thanks for this whole process and how everything is coming together. Also if this plan is unique to just WNC or if its something that can be shared across the state. Discussion around grants and funding requirements.

Jennifer Hensley motioned to adopt the Safe Streets for WNC Plan. Jim Player seconded and it passed upon a roll call vote.

5A. Elevate 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update

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).

Updates:

- Statewide Mobility Projects – Fiscally Constrained Update (R-CTP06 / A-0010)
- Additional Text
- Public Comment Reminder

Statewide Mobility Projects – Fiscally Constrained Update (R-CTP06 / A-0010)

As proposed previously, the R-CTP06 project stretched from Broadway Avenue to US 25/70 (Weaver Boulevard). In an effort to break the project up and streamline delivery of the I-26 project, the limits of R-CTP06 have been revised to extend from Broadway Avenue to Elk Mountain Road.

Project ID	Improvement Type	Recommendation Name	Limits	Cost
Previous R-CTP06	1 – Widen Existing Roadway	I-26 (US 19/23)	From Broadway Avenue to US 25/70	\$350,169,000
Updated R-CTP06	1 – Widen Existing Roadway	I-26 (US 19/23)	From Broadway Avenue to Elk Mountain Road	\$41,832,369

The revisions/solution

- Note that A-0010AE (*New Stock Road interchange improvements including widening of I-26 to the north of Aiken Road*) is funded in the STIP, which gets us to Aiken Road.
- Include the new R-CTP06 project along with three I-26 interchange projects.
- The cost estimates for the projects that are replacing the original R-CTP06, reflect the most recent STIP cost estimates.
- To account for the shortening of R-CTP06, R-CTP11 will be expanded and segmented to include:
 - R-CTP11A: Elk Mountain Road to New Stock
 - R-CTP11B: Aiken to Weaver
 - R-CTP11C: Weaver to N. Buncombe School Road

Project ID	Improvement Type	Recommendation Name	Limits	Cost
A-0010AB	8 - Interchange Improvements	I-26 (US 19/23)	Broadway Avenue interchange	\$102,000,000
A-0010AC	8 - Interchange Improvements	I-26 (US 19/23)	Elk Mountain Road interchange	\$66,503,000
A-0010AD	8 - Interchange Improvements	I-26 (US 19/23)	<u>Merrimon Avenue</u> interchange	\$122,400,000
R-CTP06	1 - Widen Existing Roadway	I-26 (US 19/23)	From Broadway Avenue to Elk Mountain Road	\$41,832,369
TOTAL				\$332,735,369

In addressing the concerns in this way, we have stayed within the total cost presented to the public and the Board (\$350,000,000).

Additional Text Added

- Since the publication of the draft Elevate 2050 plan, a few sections of text were added to the plan, including:
- Subsection on High Occupancy Toll (HOT) Lanes

- Electric Vehicle Infrastructure
- Environmental Mitigation Activities
- Additional information about transit, specifically mentioning ART's ongoing Comprehensive Operational Analysis and FTA grants received by ART.
- Revisions to project descriptions in the fiscally constrained list that provide greater detail on cross-sections
- Inclusion of the Near-Term (i.e. programmed STIP/TIP projects) in the chapter identifying projects

Public Comment Reminder – Phase 4 Engagement

The public comment period for the draft Elevate 2050 plan closes on August 15, 2025. Please encourage your networks to review the draft plan and provide comments as they see fit. After the survey closes, we will incorporate the comments into the final Elevate 2050 plan, which will go before this Steering Committee for recommendation for approval in September.

- The survey can be accessed (along with information about the project) by visiting www.elevate2050.com
- Survey Link: <https://app.maptionnaire.com/q/public-comment-draft-elevate-2050>

We held three public meetings in early July, with a total of 44 attendees between Asheville, Mills River, and Waynesville.

Next Steps

- **Plan Approved by Board (September)**

6A. Division Project Updates

Division 13: : TBD

Division 14: https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Division14_August2025Updates.pdf

6B. TPD Updates

6C. FHWA/FTA Updates

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 August 6th, next meeting September 3rd.

- P8 Updates
- Elevate 2050 Updates
- Subcommittee Bylaws Discussion

5307 Subrecipient Workgroup- met on May 20th, next meeting August 19th

Points of Business/Discussion:

- Helene lessons-learned
- Transit-specific training and learning opportunities for workgroup
- Grant reporting updates and future detailed reporting needs
- Knowledge-sharing opportunities within current group composition

Hellbender Trail Stakeholder Group/Regional Trail Forum Updates- met on April 3rd, next meeting TBD (Late summer)

Citizens Advisory Committee- met on July 7th

- Discussed the Committee's current standing, recommended dissolution.

(*See Agenda for Locally Administered Projects and MPO Studies Status)

Legislative Updates:

PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

ADJOURNMENT

Anthony Sutton adjourned the meeting at 2:59 PM as there was no further business before the Board.