

Technical Coordinating Committee & Governing Board

November 20, 2025 – 1:00 P.M., Hybrid Meeting, In-Person at Land of Sky Regional

Council or Via Zoom

Login: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89218712714>

Meeting ID: 892 1871 2714

Call-In: 312 626 6799

Agenda

1. **WELCOME AND HOUSEKEEPING (5 min)**

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| A. Welcome and Introductions, Approval of Agenda (<i>Joint Action</i>) | William High & Anthony Sutton |
| B. Ethics Statement for MPO Board Members | Anthony Sutton |

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

3. **CONSENT AGENDA**

William High & Anthony Sutton

- A. October, 2025 TCC Minutes (*TCC Action*)
- B. October, 2025 Board Minutes (*Board Action*)
- C. Amendments to the 2026-2035 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) (*Joint Action*)
- D. Express Design Priorities (*Joint Action*)
- E. 2026 Meeting Schedule (*Joint Action*)
- F. Letter of Support- Mars Hill Safety Study on NC 213 (*Joint Action*)

4. **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS (45-60 min)**

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| A. Federal Legislative Update | Bill Keyrouze, AMPO |
| B. NCDOT Transportation Planning Update | Alpesh Patel, NCDOT |
| C. Safety Targets | MPO Staff |

5. **BUSINESS (60-75 min)**

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| A. Confident Scope & Cost Estimate Milestone (<i>Joint Action</i>) | David Wasserman, NCDOT |
| B. I-40 Widening Express Lanes (<i>Joint Action</i>) | David Roy & Carly Swanson, NC Turnpike Authority |

6. **PARTNER UPDATES (15-30 min)**

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|--|--|
| A. NCDOT Division 13 and 14 updates | Tim Anderson/Wesley Grindstaff or Designee |
| B. Transportation Planning Branch | Daniel Sellers |
| C. FHWA/FTA Updates | George Hoops |
| D. Subcommittee/Workgroup Reports, Staff Updates, and Housekeeping | MPO Staff |
| E. Legislative Updates | MPO Staff |

7. **ANNOUNCEMENTS, NEWS, SPECIAL UPDATES (5 min)**

8. **TOPICS FOR NEXT MEETING (January 15th and 22nd)**

9. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

10. **ADJOURNMENT**

FRENCH BROAD RIVER

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Staff Report & Recommendations

Item 3:

Consent Agenda

Item 3A: October, 2025 TCC Meeting Minutes

Item 3B: October, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes

Item 3C: Amendments to the 2024-2033 and 2026-2035 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Item 3D: Express Design Priorities

Item 3E: 2026 Meeting Schedule

Item 3F: Letter of Support- Mars Hill Request for a Safety Study on NC 213

Staff Report & Recommendations

Item 3A:

October, 2025 TCC Meeting Minutes

https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/2025_10_09_DRAFT.MPO_TCC_Minutes.pdf

Staff Report & Recommendations

Item 3B:

October, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes

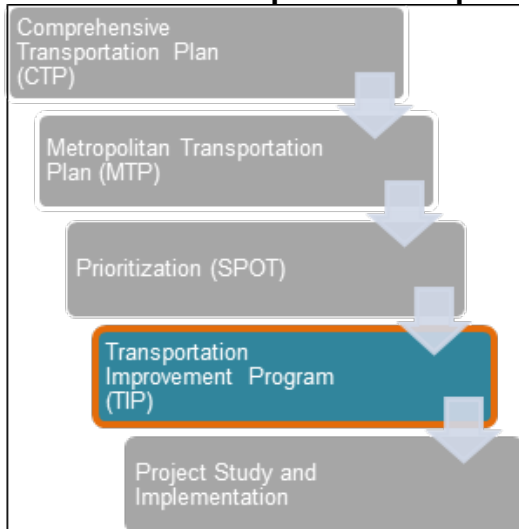
https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/2025_10_16_MPO.DRAFT_Board_Minutes.pdf

Staff Report & Recommendations

Item 3C:

Amendments to the 2026-2035 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:

- Increase in ROW funds for B-5929 which replaces bridge 430246 over West Fork Pigeon Creek.

All TIP Amendment Summaries can be found here:

https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/November2025_TIPAmendment.pdf

Action Required: Consider Adoption of the Amendment to the 2024-2033 and 2026-2035 TIP.

Staff Recommendation: Approve the Amendment to the 2024-2033 and 2026-2035 TIP.

Staff Report & Recommendations

Item 3D:

Express Design Priorities

What are Express Designs?

Express designs are meant to be “quick” designs of a potential transportation project, developed in collaboration between NCDOT, the MPO, and local government staff. These designs serve primarily as a tool to get a better idea of the potential cost of a project, but can also serve to look at high-level issues that a project may encounter.

Express Design Requirement for P9

The Prioritization Workgroup recommended that express designs be required for projects in the Prioritization process by P9 (next round- expected to begin in 2027). To begin work towards that requirement, express designs are starting in early 2026 to get as many express designs done as possible.

There are exceptions to the requirement. As of right now, lower-cost projects (projects expected to cost <\$10,000,000) are exempt and POs are allowed to have one project per round that is not required to have an express design.

Express Design Allotments

NCDOT has said that their capacity for express designs is roughly 200/year or 400/prioritization cycle. Split between the different MPOs, RPOs, and Divisions, the French Broad River MPO is being allotted 10 express designs over the P8 cycle.

Due Dates for Express Design Selection:

November 30th – 1/3rd of Express Design Assignments Due

May 31st- 1/3rd of Express Design Assignments Due

September 30th- 1/3rd of Express Design Assignments Due

Staff Report & Recommendations

The Prioritization Subcommittee met on November 5th to discuss priority express design projects. The following were recommended by the subcommittee:

Recommended Express Designs

- Clingman Avenue @ Patton Avenue & Hilliard Avenue (Multiple Intersection Improvements)
- NC 63 (New Leicester Highway) from Newfound Road to Gouges Branch Road (Multiple Intersection Improvements)
- US 25B (Asheville Highway) from North Main Street to NC 191 (Brevard Road) (Multiple Intersection Improvements)
- US 19/23 (Smokey Park Highway) from I-40 to Wiggins Road (Access Management)

Staff Report & Recommendations

Item 3E:

2026 Meeting Schedule

Prioritization Subcommittee	TCC	Board
January 14 th	January 15 th	January 22 nd
February 4 th	February 12 th	February 19 th
March 4 th	March 12 th	March 19 th
April 1 st	April 9 th	April 16 th
No Meetings in May- NCAMPO Conference in Asheville		
June 3 rd	June 11 th	June 18 th
July 1 st	No July Meeting	No July Meeting
August 5 th	August 13 th	August 20 th
September 2 nd	September 10 th	September 17 th
October 7 th	October 8 th	October 15 th
October 28 th	November 19 th (Joint Meeting)	
December 3 rd	No December Meeting	No December Meeting

Staff Report & Recommendations

Item 3F:

Letter of Support- Mars Hill Request for a Safety Study on NC 213

November 20, 2025

Tim Anderson
Division Engineer, Division 13
North Carolina Department of Transportation

Dear Mr. Anderson:

On behalf of the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Board, I am writing to express our support for the Town of Mars Hill's recent request for NCDOT to conduct a safety study along the NC 213 corridor from South Main Street to the Ingles entrance.

The Town has shared that residents recently raised concerns during a Town Board meeting regarding high vehicle speeds, limited pedestrian visibility, and the difficulty of making safe crossings along this segment. Given the combination of residential areas, commercial activity, and pedestrian use in this corridor, the MPO Board agrees that a safety assessment is both appropriate and timely.

We respectfully request that NCDOT evaluate existing conditions and determine potential safety improvements—including speed management, crossing enhancements, traffic calming, or other measures—to support safer travel for all users.

The MPO stands ready to assist in coordinating data, supporting community engagement, or helping identify potential funding pathways for any improvements that may result from this evaluation.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and for your continued partnership in improving transportation safety across our region.



Staff Report & Recommendations

Sincerely,

Anthony Sutton

Chair, French Broad River MPO Board

Staff Report & Recommendations

Item 4A:

Federal Legislative Update

As Congress has started work on drafting a new federal transportation bill, we have asked Bill Keyrouze, the Executive Director of the Association of MPOs to provide an update as a draft of the bill is likely approaching.

Slides are available here: https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/RVARC_10.23.25.pdf

Staff Report & Recommendations

Item 4B:

NCDOT Transportation Planning Division Update

Alpesh Patel, took over as the Director of the Transportation Planning Division at NCDOT in 2014, and will provide an update on a number of initiatives the division is undertaking.

Slides are available here: https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/2025_11_20_I40_Turnpike.pdf

Staff Report & Recommendations

Item 4C:

Safety 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 five-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.

State safety performance targets for 2026 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 document available here:

https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/SafetyPerformanceMeasures_2026Targets_Memo_FrenchBroadRiverMPO.pdf

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METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Staff Report & Recommendations

Table 2: French Broad River MPO Safety Performance Target Achievement Determination Summary for CY 2023.

Performance Measures	5-Year Rolling Averages			Target Achieved?	(Actual) Better than Baseline?	Met or Made Significant Progress?
	Target	Actual	Baseline			
	2019 - 2023	2019 - 2023	2017 - 2021			
Fatalities (5 Year Average)	43.7	52.8	51.0	No	No	No
Fatality Rate (5 Year Average)	0.876	1.099	1.047	No	No	
Serious Injuries (5 Year Average)	105.6	133.0	133.0	No	No	
Serious Injury Rate (5 Year Average)	2.096	2.773	2.731	No	No	
Non-Motorized Fatalities and Serious Injuries (5 Year Average)	15.1	21.4	20.0	No	No	

In 2025, the French Broad River MPO voted to become the first MPO in North Carolina to not go along with the State's targets. Instead, the MPO adopted its own safety goal of "achieving a 10% reduction of fatalities and serious injury crashes by 2035, an additional 45% reduction by 2045, and moving towards zero serious injuries and fatalities by 2050."

MPO staff will provide the item as information in November, with an expected vote on the targets in January.

Staff Report & Recommendations

Item 5A:

NCDOT Certified Scope & Cost Estimate Milestone

NCDOT recently introduced a new milestone in project development known as the Certified Scope & Cost Estimate (CSCE). This milestone is documented by what is being called the **Project Definition Document (PDD)**. This step is being introduced to develop clear expectations for each project and enable more trustworthy cost estimates. This milestone is also important because it sets some parameters on what will be part of the project and what will not be part of the project.

David Wasserman with NCDOT will present on the new milestone in project development.

MPO staff has noted a concern that the Project Definition Document is only planned to receive approval from an NCDOT Division Engineer. In an effort to ensure a Collaborative process that also enables follow-up to ensure and/or understand the expected impacts of transportation projects and raise awareness of project milestones, MPO staff requests that the MPO Board and TCC consider a letter to NCDOT to request a change in NCDOT's process to also require MPO & RPO approval of the Project Definition Document.

November 20, 2025

Secretary Johnson
North Carolina Department of Transportation
1 South Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27601

Dear Secretary Johnson,

On behalf of the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Board, we are writing regarding NCDOT's recently introduced project development milestone known as the Certified Scope & Cost Estimate (CSCE) and its accompanying Project Definition Document (PDD).

We appreciate NCDOT's intent in creating this milestone—to establish clearer expectations for each project, improve cost reliability, and provide a consistent framework for defining project elements. These improvements are beneficial not only for project management within NCDOT, but also for local governments, MPOs/RPOs, and the public who rely on transparent and predictable project development processes.

Staff Report & Recommendations

However, the MPO Board has significant concerns about the planned approval procedure for the Project Definition Document. As currently designed, the PDD would be approved solely by the NCDOT Division Engineer. Because the PDD will define the scope, key elements, and cost expectations for each project—and because these decisions directly influence local land use, economic development, multimodal access, and long-term transportation planning—local input is essential.

To ensure a fully collaborative, coordinated, and accountable process, the MPO respectfully requests that NCDOT revise the CSCE/PDD approval process to **require MPO and RPO concurrence** before a Project Definition Document is finalized.

Requiring MPO/RPO involvement in this milestone would:

- Ensure that local and regional priorities are consistently reflected in project scopes;
- Create a transparent mechanism for understanding scope changes and their implications;
- Strengthen communication and buy-in between NCDOT, local governments, and regional planning partners; and
- Improve the likelihood that cost estimates developed at the CSCE stage remain reliable throughout the project lifecycle.

We value our long-standing partnership with NCDOT and recognize the complexity of improving project delivery statewide. Including MPOs and RPOs more formally in this milestone would reinforce that partnership and enhance the shared responsibility needed to steward public resources effectively.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. The French Broad River MPO looks forward to continued collaboration as NCDOT refines the CSCE process and other project development tools.

Sincerely,

Anthony Sutton

Chair, French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization

Staff Report & Recommendations

Item 5B:

I-40 Express Lanes

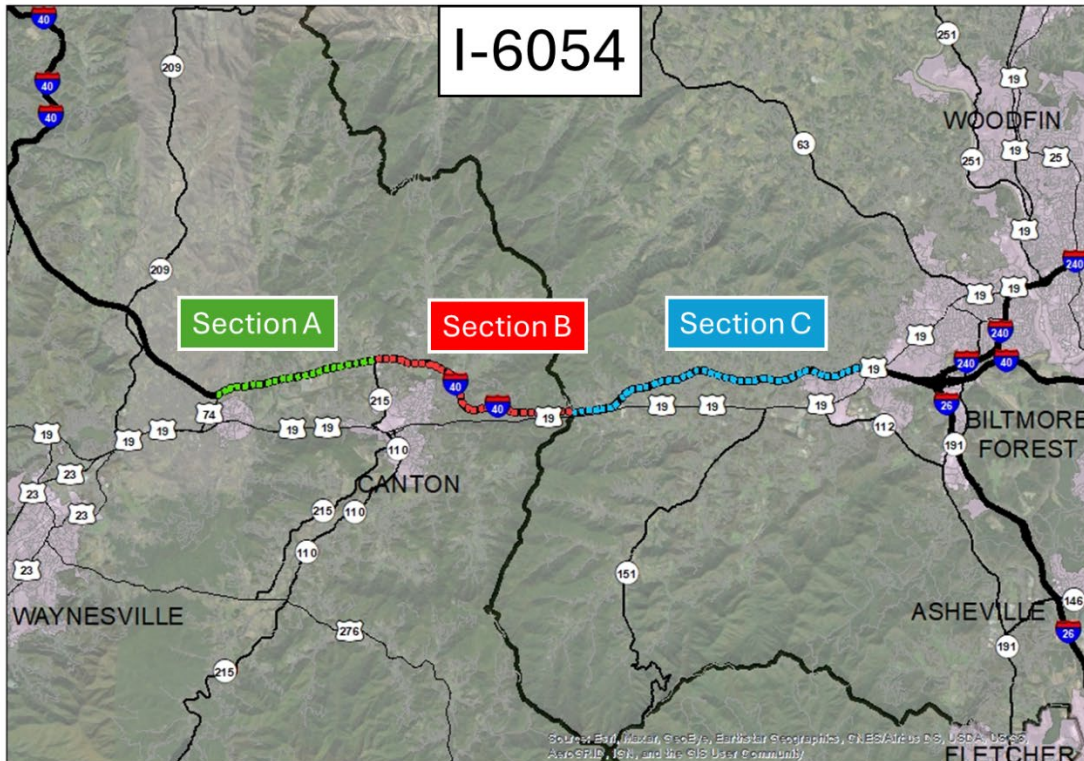
Background

Project Under Consideration

The project being discussed is the widening of I-40 from Exit 44 (Monte Vista Road) in Buncombe County to Exit 27 (US 23/74) in Haywood County. This project has historically been submitted as a general-purpose widening (State TIP project I-6054) in each Prioritization cycle since P5, and it previously appeared as an unfunded project in the STIP.

In prior submissions, I-6054 has been divided into three sections:

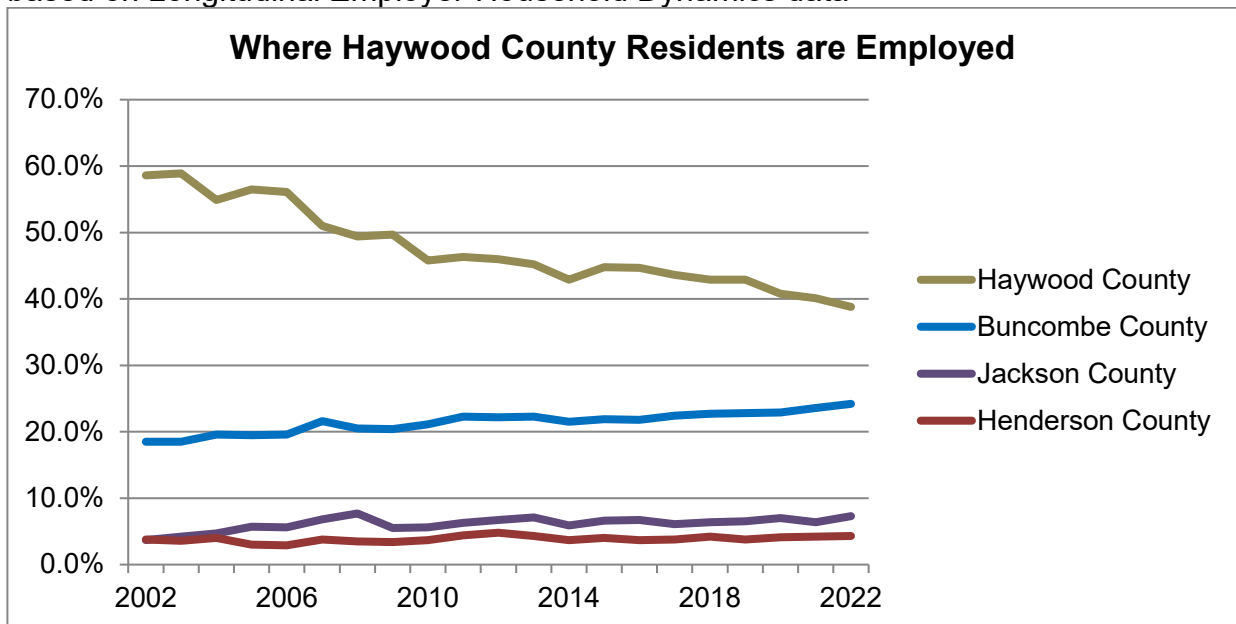
- Section A: US 23/74 (Smokey Mountain Expressway) → NC 215 (Champion Drive)
- Section B: NC 215 (Champion Drive) → Exit 37 (Wiggins Road)
- Section C: Exit 37 (Wiggins Road) → Monte Vista Road



Staff Report & Recommendations

Why is the Project Considered a Priority?

- The corridor is part of the major freight corridor in the region, carrying roughly 8,000 trucks/day.
- The corridor carries 55,000-58,000 vehicles/day
- This section of I-40 has seen considerable reliability issues, based on the 2023 Congestion Management Process update
- The corridor includes sections of medium-to-high safety section scores (no low scores), i.e., higher number of crashes
- The corridor connects to the most visited national park in the country- Great Smoky Mountains National Park (>12 million visitors/year)
- The corridor has locations identified as wildlife crossing priorities in the MPO's Wildlife Crossing Plan
- This corridor is likely playing an increasingly important role in cross-county commuting, based on Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics data



What Is Actually Being Considered at This Stage

For Prioritization 8.0, the question before the MPO is how the project should be submitted—not whether it proceeds, but how it is defined in the scoring process:

- Option 1: Submit the project as a conventional highway widening (additional general-purpose lanes); or
- Option 2: Submit the project as a widening that includes managed lanes (likely HOT/express lanes).

This distinction is important because the way a project is defined directly affects how it is scored and evaluated under the state Prioritization process.

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METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Staff Report & Recommendations

Funding Category Context

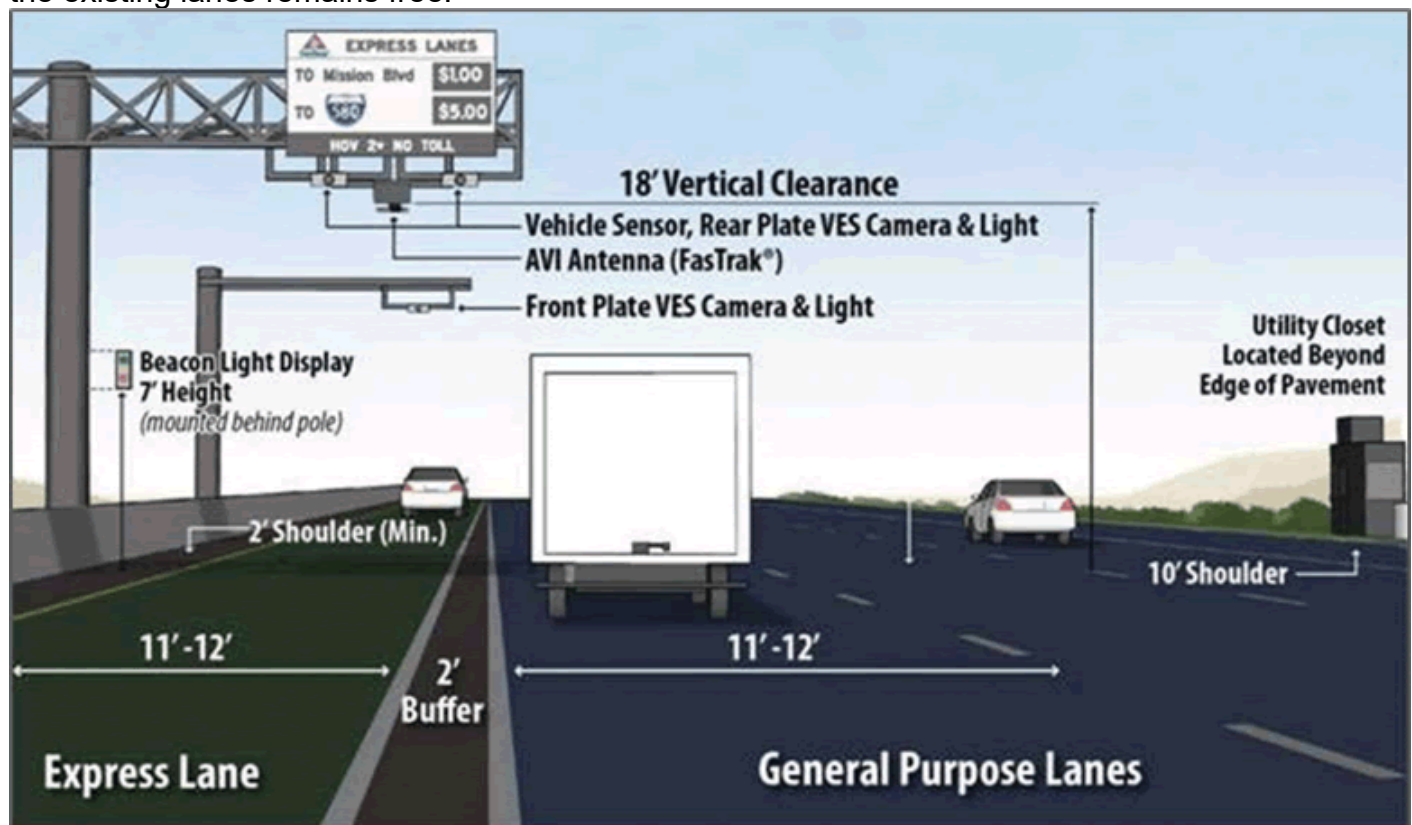
I-6054 is a Statewide Mobility tier project.

This means:

- It competes only against other major statewide highway and interstate projects, not against local surface street, transit, or bicycle/pedestrian projects.
- Choosing between a traditional widening or a managed-lanes widening will not impact regional or division-level project funding for smaller multimodal improvements (unless the project is cascaded at the request of the MPO Board).

What Are Managed Lanes?

Managed lanes are highway lanes where traffic is actively regulated—often through tolls—to maintain reliable travel speeds. In most applications, including on I-40, the concept would involve High-Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes added alongside the existing free-flow general-purpose lanes. Carpoolers and transit may access these managed lanes at reduced or no charge, and traffic in the existing lanes remains free.



Staff Report & Recommendations

Past Discussion

This topic has a long planning history:

- 2018: The MPO's Congestion Management Process identified managed lanes as a potential strategy for the I-40 corridor in west Buncombe and Haywood Counties.
- January 2024: The MPO Board voted to support NCDOT's study of managed lanes feasibility for I-6054.
- September 6, 2025: NCDOT presented preliminary feasibility findings to MPO staff.
- September, 2025: The MPO Board and TCC voted to submit the project as a widening from Exit 44 to Exit 27, and to revisit whether it should be submitted as a managed-lanes project in P8.
- October, 2025: The MPO Board continued discussion of the pros and cons of a potential toll application and signaled an intention to vote on the matter in November.

Discussion at This Meeting

David Roy, Director of Innovative Finance, and Carly Swanson, Director of Innovative Delivery, at the NCDOT Turnpike Authority, will present a general summary of NCDOT's financial feasibility study and an overview of tolling considerations and applications.

The slides from the Turnpike Authority are available here: https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/2025_11_20_I40_Turnpike.pdf

MPO staff will provide additional information on funding and background.

Other Resources

[Impacts of Congestion Pricing on Low-Income Populations \(FHWA\)](#)

[Safety Impacts of Managed Lane Cross Section Elements \(FHWA\)](#)

[Energy and Emission Impacts of Atlanta's High-Occupancy Toll Lanes \(National Center for Sustainable Transportation\)](#)

[Express Lanes in North Carolina \(NCDOT\)](#)

Staff Report & Recommendations

Item 6A:

Division Project Updates

Division 13: https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Division13_November2025Updates.pdf

Division 14: https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Division14_November2025Updates.pdf

Item 6B:

TPD Updates

Available here: https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/FBRMPO_LOSRPO_Newsletter_2025.pdf

Item 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>

Staff Report & Recommendations

Item 6D:

Committee & Workgroup Updates

Prioritization Subcommittee— met on November 5th, next meeting January 14th.

- Express Design Priorities
- Chair Election

5307 Subrecipient Workgroup- met on November 18th

Points of Business/Discussion:

- 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

MPO Studies Status

Study	Managing Entity	Year Programmed	Status
CTP/MTP Update	FBRMPO	2024	Completed
Safe Streets for All Regional Action Plan	FBRMPO	2024	Completed
Patton Avenue Corridor Study	City of Asheville	2023	Completed
Woodfin-Weaverville Greenway Study	Town of Woodfin	2025	Underway
Buncombe County Pedestrian Plan	Buncombe County	2025	Underway
Hellbender Implementation Plan	FBRMPO	2024	Not Started
Regional ITS Plan	FBRMPO	2024	Contracting Underway
Travel Survey/Model Upgrades	FBRMPO	2024	RFLOI Drafted
Staffing & Compensation Study	LOSRC	2024	Not Started

FRENCH BROAD RIVER

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Staff Report & Recommendations

Locally Administered Projects

TIP ID	Project Title	County	Project Status	When Will Current Phase Be Completed?	Construction Year (Beginning)
BL-0005	Broadway St Ped Improvement	Buncombe	Closing Out	Recently Completed!	
HL-0012	I-240/Charlotte St Interchange & Ped Improvements	Buncombe	Closing Out	Recently Completed!	
BL-0007	Ecusta Trail (Kanuga Rd to US 64)	Henderson	Under Construction	Late Summer 2025 due to the impacts of Hurricane Helene	2023
EB-5948	Onteora Blvd Sidewalks	Buncombe	Under Construction	Recently Completed!	2023
EB-5926	US 19 (Soco Rd) Bike/Ped Improvements	Haywood	Under Construction	2024	2022
U-5190	New Leicester Sidewalks	Buncombe	Closing Out	Recently Completed!	2023
HL-0014	Biltmore Ave/White Fawn Dr Intersection Improvements	Buncombe	Working on Project Agreement	Construction to Begin This Year	2024
EB-5944	Johnston Rd Sidewalks	Buncombe	Design – 99% R.O.W – 99%	Construction to Begin This Year, submitted final plans to NCDOT, awaiting action.	2024
EB-5947	New Haw Creek Rd Sidewalks	Buncombe	Under Construction	Estimated to be complete in April 2026	2025
U-5019A	Town Branch Greenway	Buncombe	Design – 95% R.O.W. – 100%	Construction to Begin This Year	2024
HL-0003	Haywood Rd Resurfacing & Ped Improvements	Buncombe	Design – 90%	Going to bid in September 2024	2024

FRENCH BROAD RIVER

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Staff Report & Recommendations

TIP ID	Project Title	County	Project Status	When Will Current Phase Be Completed?	Construction Year (Beginning)
BL-0008	Clear Creek Greenway	Henderson	ROW – To be completed in May 2025 Construction- To be transferred to NCDOT	ROW complete in 2025, Construction to begin in FY25 and will extend into FY26	2024
BL-0076	Riceville Rd Sidewalks	Buncombe	Design – 30%	Late 2025	2025
EB-5547A	Riverwalk Greenway (Black Mountain Ave to Flat Creek Greenway)	Buncombe	Design – % ROW - 0%	Summer 2025	2025
EB-5547B	Riverwalk Greenway (Black Mountain Ave to Into the Oaks Trail)	Buncombe	Design – 30%	2025	2025
EB-5774A	Woodfin Greenway	Buncombe	Design – 65%	R.O.W. – 2025 Construction – 2026/2027	2027
EB-5824	Enka Heritage Trail	Buncombe	Design – 15%	R.O.W. – 2025 - 2026	2025
EB-5831	Coxe Ave Bike/Ped Improvements	Buncombe	Design – 10%	ROW/Construction – June 2026	2025
BL-0006	Various Ped Improvements within Asheville City Limits	Buncombe			2026

FRENCH BROAD RIVER

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Staff Report & Recommendations

TIP ID	Project Title	County	Project Status	When Will Current Phase Be Completed?	Construction Year (Beginning)
EB-5774B	Beaverdam Creek Greenway	Buncombe	Design – 25%	R.O.W. – 2026 Final landowner coordination required post Helene	2026
EB-5822	North RAD Greenway	Buncombe	Design – 25%	30% Design will determine the path forward/interaction with I-2513B/D	2026
HL-0013	9 th Ave Bridge Replacement	Buncombe	Design – 50%	Design – Complete in September 2025 R.O.W. – Began September 2024	2026
BL-0078	Ecusta Trail (US 64 to Transylvania County Line)	Henderson	Design – 30%	Winter 2025	2027
EB-5945	Champion Dr Multi-Use Path	Haywood	ROW Underway		Funded for ROW Only
EB-5946	NC 280 Multi-Use Path	Henderson	PE to Begin in 2026		Funded for PE Only
EB-5823	Bent Creek Greenway	Buncombe	PE to Begin in 2029		Funded for PE Only
EB – 5946	NC 280 Multi-Use Path	Henderson			Funded for PE Only

Item 6E:

Legislative Updates