

**French Broad River MPO
Prioritization Subcommittee**

**Meeting Minutes
November 5th, 2025**

ATTENDANCE in Person or Remote

Voting Members

Autumn Radcliff, Henderson County
Archie Pertiller, Town of Black Mountain
Catherine Cordell, Town of Weaverville
Elizabeth Teague, Town of Waynesville
Jessica Morriss, City of Asheville

Non-Voting Members

Tristan Winkler, FBRMPO	Hannah Bagli, FBRMPO
Daisy O'Conner FBRMPO	Sandy Broadwill, TDM
Steve Williams, NCDOT	Daniel Sellers, NCDOT
Janna Bianculli, Henderson County	Alex Mumby, Waynesville
Vicki Eastland, LOSRPO	John Hunter, NCDOT
Stephan Sparks, NCDOT	Doug Phillips NCDOT

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Elizabeth Teague started the meeting at 9:30AM with introductions. A quorum was announced, and roll was called.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

APPROVAL of September 2025 MEETING MINUTES AND AGENDA

Jessica Morriss moved to approve the September 2025 Meeting Minutes and agenda. Autumn Radcliff seconded the motion which passed unanimously upon a roll call vote.

BUSINESS

4A: Priority Express Design Selections

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

Highway Projects in P8 Without Known Express Designs

Route / Facility / Project Name	From / Cross Street / Location	To / Cross Street	Description	County
US 19/23 (Smokey Park Highway)	I-40	NC 151	Access Management (Regional Impact)	Buncombe
NC 63 (New Leicester Highway)	Newfound Road	Gouges Branch Road	Improve Multiple Intersections (Regional Impact)	Buncombe
US 70 (Tunnel Road)	Beaucatcher Tunnel	US 74A (South Tunnel Road)	Road Diet (Regional Impact)	Buncombe
US 70 (State Street)	Blue Ridge Road	NC 9	Road Diet (Regional Impact)	Buncombe
Clingman Avenue	Patton Avenue	Hilliard Avenue	Multiple Intersection Improvements	Buncombe
Reems Creek Road	US 19/23 (Weaverville Highway)	Ox Creek Road	Modernization (Division Needs)	Buncombe
Elkwood Avenue/Old Burnsville Highway	NC 251 (Riverside Drive)	US 25 (Merrimon Avenue)	Modernization (Division Needs)	Buncombe
US 276	SR 1134 (Crymes Cove Rd), Raccoon Rd		SR 1134 (CRYMES COVE ROAD) AND RACCOON ROAD. INTERSECTION REALIGNMENT.	Haywood
NC 191	US 25 (Asheville Highway)	SR 1381 (Mountain Road)	Widen to <u>Multi-Lanes</u> .	Henderson
US 176 (Spartanburg Highway)	NC 225 (Greenville Highway)	Upward Road	Access Management (Regional Impact)	Henderson
US 25B (Asheville Highway)	North Main Street	NC 191	Multiple Intersection Improvements (Regional Impact)	Henderson

Route / Facility / Project Name	From / Cross Street / Location	To / Cross Street	Description	County
NC 280 (Boylston Highway)	NC 191 (Haywood Road)	NC 191 (Brevard Road)	Access Management (Regional Impact)	Henderson
Signal Hill/Berkely/Thompson Street	US 64 (Four Seasons Boulevard)	US 25B (Asheville Highway)	Modernization (Division Needs)	Henderson
Fanning Bridge Road	US 25 (Hendersonville Road)	NC 280 (Airport Road)	Modernization (Division Needs)	Henderson
NC 213	Athletic Street	Bone Camp Road	Access Management (Regional Impact)	Madison

Recommendations

- Two projects on this list are likely to not be of concern: NC 213 in Madison County is expected to be done as part of an RPO-led express design on the entire NC 213 corridor between Marshall and Mars Hill. The intersection at US 276 @ Crymes Cove Road is likely exempt from the express design requirement due to its limited cost.
- Recommendation #1- Focus on Projects That are More Likely to Be Funded This Round**

These projects were selected due to their lower cost compared to other projects in P8. Given the amount of funding available and the way intersection improvements have generally scored in the past, these recommendations are split between Division 13 (Buncombe & Madison) and Division 14 (Haywood & Henderson). Haywood County currently only has one project in P8 that needs an express design (Dellwood Road).

- Clingman Avenue @ Patton Avenue & Hilliard Avenue (Multiple Intersection Improvements)- Buncombe
- NC 63 (New Leicester Highway) from Newfound Road to Gouges Branch Road (Multiple Intersection Improvements)- Buncombe
- US 25B (Asheville Highway) from North Main Street to NC 191 (Haywood Road) (Multiple Intersection Improvements)- Henderson
- US 19 (Dellwood Road) from US 23/74 to US 276 (Russ Avenue) (Access Management)- Haywood

Recommendation #2- Focus on Projects That Have Greater Cost Uncertainty

These projects were selected due to some kind of uncertainty with cost. NC 191 is currently in P8 as a widening but the full extent of the widening and its cost are worth exploring more. US 19/23 (Smokey Park Highway) has scored well in the past but is in a somewhat constrained corridor and should be looked at more closely, especially given its high score in P6 and P7. US 70 (Tunnel Road) is the opposite- the concept in the Tunnel Road Corridor Study is likely less costly than the automated cost estimates from P7. Dellwood Road is also a constrained corridor and- again- the only Haywood County candidate at this time.

- NC 191 (Haywood Road) from US 25B (Asheville Highway) to Mountain Road (Widening)- Henderson

- US 19/23 (Smokey Park Highway) from I-40 to NC 151 (Access Management)- Buncombe
- US 19 (Dellwood Road) from US 23/74 to US 276 (Russ Avenue) (Access Management)- Haywood
- US 70 (Tunnel Road) from Beaucatcher Tunnel to US 74A (South Tunnel Road) (Road Diet)- Buncombe

Discussion occurred around if you have to have the right of way completely locked down or not, answer is no. The express design is before any funding is assigned. Part of it is finding out how much right away will be needed for the overall project. Discussion also occurred on if projects could be brand new or if it had to be previous submitted projects only. It can be anything but because there are so many already submitted projects we wanted to focus on those first. Discussion around projects that MPO thinks would more likely to be funded and projects that might be higher. Dellwood rd was already in process of express design, so it can be removed from MPO recommendations list. Discussion around other projects occurred mentions of Smokey Park Highway. Discussion around RPO submitting Jonathan Creek Rd. Projects that were settled on are : Clingman Ave, NC 63, US 25B and Smokey Park Hwy.

Archie Pertiller moved to recommend the four projects(Clingman Ave, NC 63, US 25B and Smokey Park Hwy) for express designs to the TCC and Board. Jessica Morriss seconded the motion and it passed upon a roll call vote.

Catherine Cordell moved to ask DOT to work with MPO staff to break up the Reams Creek project into a more phased or focused area and to also include NC 191 in their requests for express design. Archie Pertiller seconded the motion and it passed upon a roll call vote.

4B. Chair & Vice-Chair Elections

Every two years, the Prioritization Subcommittee is required to hold an election to select its officers: a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson, as required by the committee's By-Laws.

Officer Roles & Responsibilities

- Chairperson: The Chair calls and presides at subcommittee meetings, coordinates meeting dates and times in consultation with MPO staff, and ensures that the agenda advances the Subcommittee's tasks under Article II of the By-Laws (e.g., making recommendations to the TCC and Board on methodology, selection criteria, vetting data, and calls for projects).

- Vice-Chairperson: In the Chair's absence the Vice-Chair assumes all duties of the Chair. In the event the Chair is unable to complete his/her term, the Vice-Chair automatically becomes Chair and an election for a new Vice-Chair will be held.

Election Process & Term

- Any currently appointed member of the Prioritization Subcommittee is eligible to serve as Chair or Vice-Chair.
- If only one candidate is nominated for a position, the Chair (or acting Chair) will declare that person elected. If more than one is nominated, a ballot vote or voice vote will be used as determined by the committee.
- The term of the officers is two years, and officers may be re-elected for subsequent terms without limit.

- If the Chair vacates the position mid-term, the Vice-Chair automatically becomes Chair and a new Vice-Chair election is held for the remainder of the term.

Why This Matters

The leadership of the Subcommittee plays a key role in maintaining an efficient, transparent, and responsive process for prioritizing transportation projects across the region. A strong Chair and Vice-Chair help ensure the Subcommittee meets its core responsibilities: recommending methodologies and selection criteria, vetting data, overseeing calls for locally-administered projects, and supporting the MPO's planning efforts.

Next Steps for Members

Members interested in serving in either role are encouraged to indicate their willingness to serve as Chair or Vice-Chair. The Chair and Vice-Chair will begin their terms at the next meeting.

Elizabeth Teague moved to elect Autumn Radcliff as Chair. Jessica Morriss seconded this motion and it passed upon a roll call vote.

Archie Pertiller moved to elect Jessica Morriss as Vice-Chair. Elizabeth Teague seconded the motion and it passed upon a roll call vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

ADJOURNMENT

Elizabeth Teague adjourned the meeting at 10:30 AM.