

**French Broad River MPO
Prioritization Subcommittee**

**Meeting Minutes
January 14th, 2026**

ATTENDANCE in Person or Remote

Voting Members

Archie Pertiller, Town of Black Mountain
Jessica Morriss, City of Asheville
William High, Buncombe County
Anthony Sutton, Town of Waynesville

Non-Voting Members

Tristan Winkler, FBRMPO	Hannah Bagli, FBRMPO
Daisy O'Conner FBRMPO	Ada McGovern, FBRMPO
Mike Malechek, Mills River	Lucy Crown, City of Asheville
Steve Williams, NCDOT	Daniel Sellers, NCDOT
Alex Mumby, Waynesville	John Hunter, NCDOT
Stephan Sparks, NCDOT	Doug Phillips NCDOT
Cody Weddle, NCDOT	

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Jessica Morriss started the meeting at 9:39AM 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 November 2025 MEETING MINUTES AND AGENDA

William High moved to approve the November 2025 Meeting Minutes and agenda. Anthony Sutton seconded the motion which passed unanimously upon a roll call vote.

BUSINESS

4A: Local Input Point Methodology

What a Local Input Point Methodology Does

The Local Input Point (LIP) Methodology establishes how the MPO assigns its limited pool of local priority points as part of North Carolina's Transportation Prioritization (STI/SPOT) process.

Its purpose is to ensure that:

- Local priorities are reflected in a data-driven, transparent, and defensible way
- Projects are evaluated consistently across jurisdictions and modes
- The MPO meets NCDOT requirements for public involvement and objective decision-making

The methodology does not replace SPOT scoring. Instead, it governs how the MPO applies its discretionary points within the broader statewide framework.

Per State requirements, every local input point methodology is required to have at least one quantitative criteria and one qualitative criteria.

What Local Input Points Do

Local Input Points:

- Allow MPOs to reflect regional and community priorities that may not be fully captured by statewide models
- Provide a mechanism to recognize:
 - Multimodal connectivity
 - Local safety concerns
 - Equity, access, and regional networks

In practice, Local Input Points serve as a policy balancing tool, not a technical re-scoring of projects.

In the prioritization process, funding is split into three different tiers. Local Input Points play a different role in generating a total score for projects evaluated in each tier:

	Quantitative Score	MPO LIPs	Division LIPs
Statewide Mobility	100%	0%	0%
Regional Impact	70%	15%	15%
Division Needs	50%	25%	25%

Summary of Targeted Changes Under Consideration

MPO staff is not recommending a wholesale overhaul to the local input point methodology at this time. A few areas of potential changes include:

Highway Projects:

- Modify Safety Scoring Criteria to include the High Injury Network from the Safe Streets for WNC Plan

Bike/Ped Projects

- Add Safety as a component and include the Bike/Ped High Injury Network from the Safe Streets for WNC Plan
- Add the Hellbender Regional Trail as a scoring component to recognize projects that have regional significance

Existing Methodology

The most recently approved methodology is available here:

<https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/FBRMPO-P7 Local Input Point Methodology.pdf>

Due Date

Final MPO Local Input Point Methodologies are due to NCDOT's SPOT office by the end of March.

Discussion occurred around what real impact the changes will have or will it not make any major changes. Helps link process to safety plan. Discussion around trying to incorporate additional safety related criteria in points. Discussion around running another prioritization cycle to see what the impact might be. Just doing it run through a few to see what it looks like. Will bring back next month. Discussion around how we scored bike ped in past. Discussion around high injury network and hellbender plan. Discussion of adding a middle score connecting to the network. Hesitancy over the hellbender overlap. Discussion of shifting consideration over to the SPOT score, or MPO can draft something new and bring it back around.

Informational Only.

4B. Planning Project Selection for FY 2027

Overview of the FY 2027 Call for Planning Projects

In October 2025, the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (FBRMPO) issued a Call for Planning Projects for inclusion in the FY 2027 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The purpose of the call was to solicit transportation planning and feasibility studies that advance regional mobility, safety, multimodal access, and alignment with adopted MPO plans. Eligible activities included corridor studies, transit plans, bicycle and pedestrian planning, small area plans, and other transportation-related planning efforts. Projects are funded with federal planning (PL) or flexed STBG-DA funds, with a required 20% local match provided by the project sponsor.

Key parameters of the call included:

- Total funding available: \$500,000
- Eligible applicants: MPO member governments
- Evaluation criteria: Regional influence, project readiness, strategic alignment with MPO plans, multimodal access and safety, and consistency with the MPO's Preferred Growth Scenario
- Selection process: Applications reviewed and scored internally by MPO staff, with two recommendations forwarded to the TCC and MPO Board for final action

Scoring Criteria:

Regional Impact- 30%

Project Readiness- 25%

Strategic Alignment- 20%

Multimodal Access- 15%

Growth Management- 10%

By the application deadline, the MPO received five complete applications, reflecting a strong level of interest across the region.

Summary of Applications Received

1. Buncombe County Public Transportation Plan

Applicant: Buncombe County Project Type: Transit Plan

Federal Funding Requested: \$200,000 Summary:

This project proposes development of a countywide public transportation plan to evaluate existing demand-response and deviated fixed-route services, identify opportunities for new or expanded service, assess regional connections (including potential service to Hendersonville), and establish funding and implementation frameworks. The plan would provide a comprehensive foundation for future transit investment and coordination across jurisdictions.

Staff assessment:

The project scored highly due to its regional impact, strong alignment with the MPO's long-range transportation goals, readily-available funds for implementation, and its role in shaping future transit service decisions in a rapidly growing area.

2. Four Seasons Boulevard (US 64) Corridor Study / Small Area Circulation Plan

Applicant: City of Hendersonville

Project Type: Corridor Study / Circulation Plan Federal Funding Requested: \$96,000 Summary:

This study would evaluate safety, circulation, and multimodal conditions along Four Seasons Boulevard and the surrounding street network, a key regional gateway and commercial corridor. The project would focus on identifying short-, medium-, and long-term improvements to address high crash rates, limited pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and complex access management issues.

Staff assessment:

The project demonstrated strong safety need, regional significance, and consistency with the MTP, Safe Streets, and local adopted plans. The corridor's documented presence on the High Injury Network and its importance to regional travel contributed to a high overall score.

3. Reems Creek Greenway Feasibility Study Update

Applicant: Town of Weaverville

Project Type: Greenway Feasibility Study Update Federal Funding Requested: \$121,600

Summary:

This proposal seeks to update a previously completed feasibility study for the Reems Creek Greenway to reflect current growth conditions, recent flood impacts, and updated cost estimates, while also advancing conceptual design for an initial phase of the greenway.

Staff assessment:

While the project is well aligned with regional greenway and trail plans, and is partially funded in the TIP, it did not quite score well enough to get in the top two, largely due to its limited regional significance.

4. Hilliard Avenue Corridor Feasibility Study

Applicant: City of Asheville

Project Type: Corridor Feasibility Study Federal Funding Requested: \$250,000 Summary:

This study would examine multimodal safety, utility constraints, and connectivity improvements along Hilliard Avenue, a constrained downtown corridor with high crash history and connections to other major capital projects.

Staff assessment:

The project addresses a known and important corridor; however, the project did not score as well for regional significance and strategic alignment.

5. Frog Level Small Area Plan

Applicant: Town of Waynesville Project Type: Small Area Plan

Federal Funding Requested: \$22,400 Summary:

The proposed plan would focus on revitalization, bicycle and pedestrian safety, greenway connections, and flood resilience in the Frog Level area, a district significantly impacted by recent flooding.

Staff assessment:

Staff recognized the project's local importance and strong community vision, but noted that the proposal is more localized in scope and less immediately tied to regional transportation priorities compared to other applications received in this cycle.

Staff Recommendations

After reviewing and scoring all five applications against the adopted criteria, MPO staff recommend:

Recommended for the FY 2027 UPWP Funding

1. Buncombe County Public Transportation Plan
2. Hendersonville Four Seasons Boulevard Corridor Study

Unprogrammed projects remain eligible for future consideration and may be strong candidates in subsequent calls as regional conditions, project timing, or complementary studies evolve.

Discussion around hearing more about the proposed planning project from Buncombe County and how it would relate to the City of Asheville's current operations analysis or not. It would be tied in directly. It would be used as a key element in the County plan. Discussion around micro transit possibly being added. More clarification was provided on more details for this plan study. Discussion around Reems Creek and how they can move forward and what their back up plan would be. Clarification was given around Reems Creek. Discussion around funding totals and if there was opportunity to fund an additional project. Recommendation is to keep to two a year based off past experience. Further discussion around how all these studies are from different jurisdictions why we can't have more than 2 if the money is available and the jurisdictions are separate. When there have been more than two studies it has caused stress on MPO staff capacity and how well the studies are being done. Consensus is some confusion around back log and ability to not add more than two at this time. The money wouldn't go away but would be used to a future cycle or go towards projects already within our direct allotment. All four current projects are being led by MPO staff before the addition of the two open spots being discussed today. MPO is required to be a part of the procurement, steering committees and process invoices. The member governments don't have capacity to man a federally funded study.

The subcommittee decided to send this to the TCC for further discussion and to have them make final decisions.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

ADJOURNMENT

Jessica Morriss adjourned the meeting at 10:32 AM.