

French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization
 Minutes from the Governing Board Meeting on February 19th, 2026

Attendance:

In-Person and Remote via the Zoom Platform:

Kim Roney	City of Asheville
David White	Rural Transit
Emily Whitmire	Village of Flat Rock
Jim Player	Town of Fletcher
Parker Sloan	Buncombe County
Jennifer Hensley	City of Hendersonville
Tom Widmer	Town of Montreat
Drew Stephens	Town of Biltmore Forest
Anthony Sutton	Town of Waynesville
Shanon Gonce	Town of Mills River
Jim McAllister	Town of Woodfin
Daniel Sellers	NCDOT TPD
Steve Williams	NCDOT Division 14
Doug Phillips	NCDOT Div 13
John Hunter	NCDOT TPD
Sheila Franklin	Henderson County
Jay Egolf	Henderson County
Stephen Sparks	NCDOT
Drew Ball	Buncombe County
Dr Ralph Hamlet	Town of Canton
Archie Pertiller	Town of Black Mountain
Susan Bean	Urban Transit
Mark Endries	Town of Weaverville
Kevin Ensley	Haywood County
Anson Merithew	NCDOT
Thomas Smith	NCDOT
Matt Wechtel	Madison County
Sage Turner	City of Asheville

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Members without Representation present:

Town of Clyde
Town of Maggie Valley
Town of Mars Hill
BOT 13
BOT 14
Town of Laurel Park

Additional Attendees:

Tristan Winkler (FBRMPO) Daisy O’Connor (FBRMPO) Asha Rado (LOSRC, Minutes)
 Sandy Broadwill(FBRMPO) Ada McGovern(FBRMPO)

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS & ROLL CALL

Anthony Sutton called the meeting to order at 1:01 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.

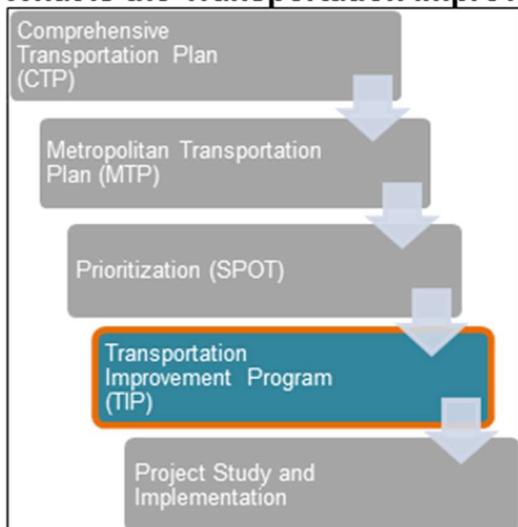
CONSENT AGENDA

3A. January 2026 Meeting Minutes:

https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/2026_01_22_MPO.DRAFT_Board_Minutes.pdf

3B. 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:

- Multiple transit amendments for both Apple Country Transit and ART to update project descriptions and program funding for future fiscal years
- Multiple NCDOT transit amendments to program 5311 and 5310 funds for upcoming years.
- Date shifts for multiple rail projects that bring them into the current 4-year STIP/TIP window.

All TIP Amendment Summaries can be found here: https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/FBRMPO_February2026_TIP_Amendments_26_35_Updated.pdf

3C. Letter of Support-Hendersonville BUILD Grant Application:



The Honorable Sean Duffy
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20590

RE: FY2026 BUILD Grant Application – Hendersonville Downtown Streets Modernization Project: New Streets for New Business

Dear Secretary Duffy:

On behalf of the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (FBRMPO), I am writing to express our strong support for the FY2026 BUILD grant application titled *“Hendersonville Downtown Streets Modernization Project: New Streets for New Business.”* This project is the result of a collaborative effort among the City of Hendersonville, Henderson County, the North Carolina Department of Transportation, and other regional and local partners.

As the federally designated metropolitan planning organization for this region, the FBRMPO is responsible for coordinating transportation planning and investment decisions that improve safety, mobility, and economic vitality across Western North Carolina. The Hendersonville Downtown Streets Modernization Project directly advances these goals by improving safety and accessibility for pedestrians and bicyclists along two historic downtown corridors; enhancing the public realm for residents, families, and visitors; reconnecting neighborhoods to downtown destinations

This project represents a balanced, context-sensitive investment that maintains necessary vehicular capacity while providing safer and more accessible transportation options for all users. In doing so, it supports economic development by strengthening Hendersonville’s downtown as a hub for local businesses, tourism, and regional recreation.

Support for this project would allow the U.S. Department of Transportation to highlight an investment that aligns closely with the Administration’s objectives, including:

- Improving safety and reliability within the local transportation system;
- Enhancing quality of life for residents and visitors;
- Expanding accessible, affordable, and connected transportation options while preserving

roadway functionality; and

- Supporting job creation, local businesses, and long-term economic opportunity.

In summary, the Hendersonville Downtown Streets Modernization Project will serve as a catalyst for safer streets, economic vitality, and resilient infrastructure in Western North Carolina. The French Broad River MPO strongly encourages USDOT's favorable consideration of this BUILD grant application.

Thank you for your leadership and for considering this request for BUILD Program funding.

Sincerely,

Tristan Winkler Director
French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization

3D. Letter of Support-Asheville BUILD Application:

a program of Land of Sky



Sean Duffy, Secretary of Transportation
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington DC, 20590

Dear Grant Review Committee,

The French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (FBRMPO) supports the City of Asheville's grant application for the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) program. This funding will facilitate a Corridor Feasibility Study for Hilliard Avenue, a backbone of our regional transportation network.

Hilliard Avenue is a critical link between Asheville's South Slope, River Arts District, and Central Business District. An estimated 68,000 people commute to Asheville's Downtown and South Slope regionally every day, with many traveling along Hilliard Avenue directly.

In August 2025, the FBRMPO Board adopted the Safe Streets for Western North Carolina: Regional Safety Action Plan, funded by a USDOT Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant. This data-driven plan identifies Hilliard Avenue as a high-priority corridor and placed multiple intersections along Hilliard Avenue within the Total Top 1% of worst intersections for crashes, as well as the Top 1% for Vulnerable Road User (VRU) incidents. It is also a recognized priority in the City's Greenway-ADA-Pedestrian (GAP) Plan. This feasibility study is the necessary first step in addressing these systemic safety risks for pedestrians and cyclists.

The corridor is at the heart of our regional transit network. It intersects with Coxe Avenue, home to the Asheville Rides Transit (ART) Center. There are multiple bus stops along the corridor serviced by seven routes, and it provides a direct link to the Greyhound Intercity Bus.

The Corridor Study will complement the redesign and construction of a future Patton Avenue resulting from the North Carolina Department of Transportation's I-26 Connector Project, so that the full vision of a safe, welcoming, transformative, and well-functioning gateway into the city's economic heartbeat is realized.

The FBRMPO is currently working in close coordination with the City of Asheville to ensure this project is integrated into the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) as soon as possible. We view this study as a prerequisite for the future implementation of safety and infrastructure improvements that will benefit the entire Western North Carolina region.

Sincerely,

Tristan Winkler Director
French Broad River MPO

Matt Wechtel moved to approve the TAC Agenda, consent agenda including the January 2026 Meeting Minutes, The Amendments to the 2026-2035 TIP, the Letter of Support for Hendersonville BUILD Grant Application and the Letter of Support for Asheville BUILD Application. Jim McAllister seconded the motion which passed upon a unanimous roll call vote.

Business:

4A. 5310 Project Selection:

Section 5310 (Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities) funds are allocated to the Asheville Urbanized Area, with the City of Asheville serving as the designated recipient for these funds. The application process for Section 5310 ran from October 16, 2025, to January 15, 2026. Additional information about Section 5310 is available at: <https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/5310-and-jarc/>.

FY2025 Call for Projects Application Timeline	
October 16, 2025	5310 and JARC Call for Projects opens
January 15, 2026	5310 and JARC applications due to FBRMPO
February 4, 2026	FBRMPO Prioritization Subcommittee meets to review 5310 and JARC applications
February, 12 2026	TCC approves 5310 and JARC project selection
February 19, 2026	MPO Board votes on 5310 and JARC project selection
March 19, 2026	MPO Board approves TIP Amendments for 5310 and JARC projects

The 5310 Grant has two categories for funding:

- Traditional/Capital projects: at least 55% of the total funding amount has to go to “traditional” projects.
- Other/Operations projects: no more than 45% of the total funding amount can go to these projects

FY 2024 FTA Section 5310 Funds Available to Asheville UZA	\$486,152	55% of Funds (Traditional)*	\$267,384
Section 5310 Admin at 10%	\$48,615	35% of Funds (Other)*	\$170,153
Remaining Section 5310 after Admin	\$437,537	*note: percentage divisions were calculated before 10% admin.	

MPO Staff reviewed the 5310 applications, rating them based on a scorecard (out of 100 points). The following pages show recommendations for awarding 5310 funds based on scores. The quantitative scoring methodology was simplified for this round of funding.

	Hendersonville Pedestrian Signals (Traditional)	Buncombe County SEDTAP (Traditional)	Buncombe County RIDE (Other)	Council on Aging Buncombe County (Other)
Project Code	HPS	BC SEDTAP	BC RIDE	COA
Score (out of 100 points)	95	95	90	85
Requested Amount	\$163,518	\$267,384	\$65,849	\$35,353
Proposed Local Match	\$66,355	\$66,846	\$65,849	\$35,353
Propose Local Match %	29%	20%	50%	50%
Proposed Total Project Amount	\$229,873	\$334,230	\$131,698	\$70,706
Scenario 1 (82% Funding)	\$134,457	\$219,864	\$54,146	\$29,070
Scenario 2 Awarded by Points	\$163,518	\$267,384	\$0	\$0
Pro-Rated by Points	\$155,342	\$254,015	\$59,264	\$30,050
Scenario 3 (pro-rated by Points)	\$136,298	\$222,874	\$51,999	\$26,366

Discussion around methodology on why the Prioritization and TCC decided on the projects.

Ralph Hamlett moved to select and approve Scenario #1 for 5310 project applications. Kim Roney seconded this motion and it passed unanimously during a roll call vote

4B. JARC Project Selection:

JARC Project Selection

JARC (Jobs Access Reverse Commute) funds are allocated to the Asheville Urbanized Area, with the City of Asheville serving as the designated recipient for these funds. The application process for JARC ran from October 16, 2025, to January 15, 2026. Additional information about JARC is available at:

<https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/5310-and-jarc/>.

FY 2025's Section 5307 (JARC) Allocation	
Regional JARC - FY 2025 at 10% of FTA 5307 Amount allocated to Asheville Urbanized Area	\$ 420,732

Applicant	Project Title	Period of Performance	Project Description	Funding Requested	Local Match	Total Cost	Project Score
City of Asheville	ART Routes 170, S3, S6, and Transit Operations Funding Request	7/2026-6/2027	The City of Asheville is seeking support through the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC, Section 5307) grant to sustain the operations of its pivotal public transportation routes, Routes 170, S3, and S6. These services are essential in bridging the mobility gap for low-income individuals, enabling seamless access to employment opportunities, and fostering community and regional connectivity.	\$420,732	\$420,732	\$841,464	100

Scoring was based on a scorecard (out of 105 points). The following pages show recommendations for awarding JARC funds based on scores. The quantitative scoring methodology was simplified for this round of funding.

Discussion did not occur

Kim Roney moved to approve funding for the City of Asheville's JARC Application. Kevin Ensley seconded the motion and it passed unanimously during a roll call vote.

5A. Bike/Ped Advisory Committee Consideration:

Background

This is a follow up item from the October, 2025 discussion in which the Citizens Advisory Committee was dissolved. One former Citizens Advisory Committee noted that a Bike/Ped Committee could generate more interest and noted that there is a little interest in a number of smaller municipalities but not enough for many of them to have their own groups. This was also requested by the MPO Board to come back for discussion and consideration. To note: this was also brought to the Prioritization Subcommittee where a number of concerns were raised.

Overview

The MPO is considering the formation of a Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee to replace the current Citizens Advisory Committee and the Hellbender Regional Trail Workgroup. This committee would serve as a focused forum for community input on active transportation, safety, and multimodal planning initiatives across

the MPO region.

The proposed committee would be composed primarily of community members, advocates, and other interested stakeholders appointed by the MPO Board, with attention given to geographic representation across participating jurisdictions. The intent is to create a body that reflects diverse perspectives from throughout the region while maintaining a manageable and effective working group.

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee would be advisory in nature and would provide recommendations to MPO staff, the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC), and the MPO Board on matters such as:

- Complete streets and multimodal corridor concepts
- Identification of bicycle and pedestrian safety issues and needs
- Priorities for walking and bicycling infrastructure
- Community perspectives on active transportation projects and policies
- Support for regional initiatives such as the Safe Streets for WNC Plan and the Hellbender Regional Trail, as well as related bike/ped efforts

This committee would also help consolidate existing advisory functions into a single, more focused group, improving coordination and efficiency while strengthening public engagement on walking and bicycling topics.

Staff is seeking guidance from the TCC and MPO Board on whether to proceed with the formation of this committee and, if so, on key considerations related to membership structure, geographic representation, and scope of responsibilities.

POTENTIAL BYLAWS

Article I. Purpose

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) is established to advise the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) on matters related to bicycle and pedestrian transportation, safety, and multimodal planning.

The BPAC shall serve as a forum for community input and stakeholder perspectives on active transportation issues and shall provide recommendations to MPO staff, the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC), and the MPO Board.

Article II. Responsibilities

The BPAC shall perform an advisory role and may provide input and recommendations on:

1. Bicycle and pedestrian safety concerns and needs within the MPO planning area
2. Complete Streets and multimodal corridor concepts
3. Priorities for walking and bicycling infrastructure investments
4. Community perspectives on active transportation policies and programs
5. Regional trail and greenway initiatives, including the Hellbender Regional Trail
6. Public engagement related to bicycle and pedestrian planning efforts
7. Other matters related to active transportation as requested by the MPO Board or TCC

The BPAC shall not have decision-making authority and shall function solely in an advisory capacity.

Article III. Membership Section

1. Composition

The BPAC shall be composed primarily of community members, advocates, and other interested stakeholders appointed by the MPO Board.

Membership should reflect geographic diversity across the MPO planning area and may include representation from:

- Municipal and county jurisdictions
- Urban and rural communities
- Bicycle and pedestrian users
- Advocacy or nonprofit organizations
- Public health, education, or safety interests

Section 2. Number of Members

The BPAC shall consist of **[9–15] voting members**, as determined by the MPO Board.

Section 3. Appointments and Terms

- Members shall be appointed by the MPO Board.
- Terms shall be for **two (2) years**, with the option for reappointment.
- Initial appointments may be staggered to ensure continuity.
- Vacancies shall be filled by MPO Board appointment for the remainder of the term.
- A minimum of one representative per County shall be required

Section 4. Ex Officio Members

MPO staff shall serve as non-voting ex officio members to provide coordination and technical support.

Additional non-voting members (such as representatives from partner agencies) may be appointed as needed.

Article IV. Officers Section 1. Officers

The BPAC shall elect the following officers from among its voting members:

- Chair
- Vice Chair

Section 2. Terms of Officers

Officers shall serve one-year terms and may be re-elected.

Section 3. Duties Chair:

- Presides over meetings
- Works with MPO staff to develop agendas
- Represents the BPAC to the TCC and MPO Board

Vice Chair:

- Assists the Chair
- Presides in the Chair's absence

Article V. Meetings Section 1. Frequency

The BPAC shall meet at least **quarterly**, or more frequently as needed.

Section 2. Quorum

A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of appointed voting members.

Section 3. Open Meetings

All meetings shall be open to the public and conducted in accordance with applicable open meetings laws and MPO policies.

Section 4. Voting

Actions and recommendations shall be adopted by a majority vote of members present.

Article VI. Relationship to MPO Committees

1. The BPAC shall report to the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) and MPO Board through staff.
2. BPAC recommendations shall be forwarded to the TCC and MPO Board for consideration.
3. The BPAC shall not supersede the authority of the MPO Board or TCC.

Article VII. Scope and Limitations

The BPAC:

- Shall not obligate MPO funds
- Shall not direct MPO staff
- Shall not act independently of MPO policies
- Shall serve in an advisory capacity only

Article VIII. Dissolution and Transition

Upon adoption of these bylaws, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee shall replace the Citizens Advisory Committee and the Hellbender Regional Trail Workgroup.

Existing advisory responsibilities related to bicycle, pedestrian, and trail issues shall be consolidated under the BPAC.

Article IX. Amendments

These bylaws may be amended by action of the MPO Board. Proposed amendments may be submitted by:

- The BPAC
- MPO staff
- The Technical Coordinating Committee

Article X. Effective Date

These bylaws shall take effect upon approval by the MPO Board.

Information Only

Discussion occurred around if it was general public or a specific community?(double check this). We should need to put guard rails into plan to keep them from stepping on DOTs toes. Also there should be elected members from each county via county appointments.(listen to recording). Discussion around assigning seats permanently to a town or community. Keep it an odd number vs even number, moves stuff along quicker and allows for a tie breaker. The members that are elected are elected by the public, a large board gets unruly. 9 seems best size. Suggestion it should be a member of the public, clarification that is what MPO is proposing, basically it would be a public person that was elected to this board by the county commissioners as they know who in their counties might be passionate about it. Discussion around adding town and city municipalities within counties being added as seats. It would be too large. Two year seats allow for change out potentially. Maybe add a participation requirement that under the guidelines if they miss x amount of meetings they can be replaced.

6A. Division Project Updates

Division 13:

Division 14: https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Division14_February2026_Updates.pdf

6B. TPD Updates

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>

6C.

Committee & Workgroup Updates

Prioritization Subcommittee— met on February 4th, next meeting March 4th.

- Local Input Point Methodology
- 5310 Project Selection
- JARC Project Selection

5307 Subrecipient Workgroup- met on November 18th, next meeting February 17th.

Points of Business/Discussion:

- Grant management update by the City of Asheville
- Locally Coordinated Plan update
- Title VI Plan Update
- 5310/JARC Call for Projects
- 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
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	Underway
Travel Survey/Model Upgrades	FBRMPO	2024	RFP Drafted
Staffing & Compensation Study	LOSRC	2024	Not Started

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

6D. Legislative Updates:

PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

ADJOURNMENT

Anthony Sutton adjourned the meeting at 1:58PM as there was no further business before the Board.

Member	Name	Vote#1	Vote#2	Vote#			
Asheville (KR)	Kim Roney	y	y	y			
Asheville (ST)	Sage Turner	y	y	y			
Black Mountain	Archie Pertiller	y	y	y			
BOT D13	Billy Clarke						
BOT D14	Chuck McGrady						
Buncombe County (DB)	Drew Ball	y	y	y			
Buncombe County (PS)	Parker Sloan	y	y	y			
Canton	Dr. Ralph Hamlett	y	y	y			
Clyde	Dann Jesse						
Flat Rock	Emily Whitmire		y	y			
Fletcher	Jim Player	y	y	y			
Haywood County (BR)	Brandon Rodgers						
Haywood County (KE)	Kevin Ensley	y	y	y			
Henderson County (JE)	Jay Egolf	y	y	y			
Henderson County (SF)	Sheila Franklin	y	y	y			
Hendersonville	Jennifer Hensley	y	y	no answer			
Laurel Park	George Banta						
Madison County	Matt Wechtel	y	y	y			
Maggie Valley	Mike Eveland						
Mars Hill	John Chandler						
Mills River	Shanon Gonce	y	y	y			
Montreat	Tom Widmer	y	y	y			
Rural Transit	David White		A	y			
Town of Biltmore Forest	Drew Stephens	y	y	y			
Urban Transit	Susan Bean	y	y	y			
Waynesville	Anthony Sutton	y	y	y			
Weaverville	Mark Endries	y	y	y			
Woodfin	Jim McAllister/Betsy E	y	y	y			

Total Yes 19 22
Total No 0
Total No Answer 0
Abstained 0 1

If they were here during roll call but did not vote in subsequent motions, their vote is for the motion