

**French Broad River MPO
Prioritization Subcommittee**

**Meeting Minutes
April 1st , 2026**

ATTENDANCE in Person or Remote

Voting Members

Archie Pertiller, Town of Black Mountain
Anthony Sutton, Town of Waynesville
Jessica Morriss, City of Asheville
William High, Buncombe County
Mark Endries, Town of Weaverville
Autumn Radcliff, Henderson County
Elizabeth Teague, Town of Waynesville

Non-Voting Members

Tristan Winkler, FBRMPO	Hannah Bagli, FBRMPO
Daisy O’Conner FBRMPO	Ada McGovern, FBRMPO
Sandy Broadwill, FBRMPO TDM	Troy Wilson, NCDOT
Stephen Sparks, NCDOT	Doug Phillips, NCDOT
Daniel Sellers, TPD	Chloe Donohoe, Buncombe County
Alex Mumby, Waynesville	Steve Williams, NCDOT
Janna Bianculli, Apple Country Transit	Mike Malecheck, Town of Mills River

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Autumn Radcliff opened the floor for public comment. No comments were heard.

APPROVAL of March 2026 MEETING MINUTES AND AGENDA

***William High moved to approve the March 2026 Meeting Minutes and agenda.
Archie Pertiller seconded the motion which passed unanimously upon a roll call vote.***

BUSINESS

4A: Express Design Priorities- Round Two

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 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
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
I-40	Exit 44	Exit 27	Widen to Add Express Lanes (Statewide Mobility)	Buncombe, Haywood
US 176 (Spartanburg Highway)	NC 225 (Greenville Highway)	Upward Road	Access Management (Regional Impact)	Henderson
Fanning Bridge Road	US 25 (Hendersonville Road)	NC 280 (Airport Road)	Modernization (Division Needs)	Henderson

Recommendation

Alternative #1: Focus on Division Needs projects

1. Reems Creek Road
2. Elkwood Avenue/Old Burnsville Highway
3. Fanning Bridge Road

Alternative #2: Focus on Regional Impact projects with an emphasis on projects that haven't had previous work done

1. US 70 (Tunnel Road) Road Diet
2. US 70 (State Street) Road Diet
3. US 176 (Spartanburg Highway)

NOTE: I-40 has had express designs done but not with express lanes, just as a widening.

Reference: On-Going Or Expected to Begin Express Designs

Route / Facility / Project Name	From / Cross Street / Location	To / Cross Street	Description	County
US 19 (Smokey Park Highway)	I-40	NC 151 (Pisgah Highway)	Access Management	Buncombe
SR 3548 (Clingman Avenue)	Hilliard Avenue	Patton Avenue	Multiple Intersection Improvements	Buncombe
NC 63 (New Leicester Highway)	Newfound Road	Gouges Branch Road	Multiple Intersection Improvements	Buncombe
NC 191	Mountain Road	US 25B (Asheville Highway)	Widening	Henderson
US 25B (Asheville Highway)	North Main Street	Berkeley Road	Multiple Intersection Improvements/Access Management	Henderson

Action: Recommend three projects for Express Designs

Discussion occurred around feasibility studies. Discussion around Reems Creek Rd and a recreation facility that is in the works and how the road is not suited to support that kind of development at this time. Discussion occurred around wanting to see more geographical equity and possibly creating a third alternative (Reems Creek, Spartanburg Hwy and another). Cost of Spartanburg hwy will be pretty high and their won't be as much funding available right now. Discussion occurred around if Fanning Bridge is part of Henderson or Buncombe. Discussion around scoring of projects and how competitive they are on how they would get picked up in P8. Currently Reems Creek has a significantly low score. Maybe submitting smaller sections to help bring up the score. Discussion on which projects from a NCDOT perspective which projects would be better to go with. Top two would be State St and Tunnel Rd in Buncombe and Fanning Bridge is also a top priority for express designs. Discussion around express designs on road diet scenario.

Elizabeth Teague moved to recommend US 70 (State St) , US 70 (Tunnel Road) and Fanning Bridge Rd for Express Designs to the TCC and Board. Jessica Morriss seconded the motion and it passed upon a roll call vote. 7Y, 1N.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Autumn Radcliff opened the floor for public comment. No comments were heard.

ADJOURNMENT

Autumn Radcliff adjourned the meeting at 10:12 AM.