

French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization

Minutes from the TCC Hybrid Meeting on September 10th , 2026

Minutes

ATTENDANCE:

In-person and remote via Zoom:

Anna Sexton	City of Asheville
Harry Buckner	Town of Biltmore Forest
William High (Chair)	Buncombe County
Daniel Sellers	TPO
Chloe Donohoe	Buncombe Transit
Pat Christie	Village of Flat Rock
Tyler Morrow	Town of Fletcher
Jodie Ferguson	Haywood County
Autumn Radcliff	Henderson County
Janna Bianculli	Apple Transit Country Public Transit
Matthew Manley	City of Hendersonville
Noah Taylor	Town of Maggie Valley
Michael Malecek	Town of Mills River
Vicki Eastland	LOSRPO
James Eller	Town of Weaverville
Ricky Hurley	Town of Woodfin
Doug Phillips	NCDOT Div 13
Steve Williams	NCDOT Div 14
Stephen Sparks	NCDOT Div 13
John Hunter	TPO
Nathan Moneyham	NCDOT
Cara Reeves	Laurel Park
Rusty Darnell	NCDOT
Anson Merithew	NCDOT
Jeremy Chapman	NCDOT
Troy Wilson	NCDOT
Gabriel Johnson	NCDOT

Members Without Representation Present:

ART
Town of Black Mountain
Town of Canton

Town of Clyde
Haywood Transit
Madison County
Town of Waynesville

Additional Attendees:

Tristan Winkler (FBRMPO)	Sandy Broadwill(FBRMPO)
Hannah Bagli (FBRMPO)	Daisy O'Connor (FBRMPO)
Asha Rado (LOSRC,Minutes)	Therese Buckwalter (McAdams)
Lyuba Zuyeva(Wsp)	Olin Dalenhouse(Public)
Rusty Bost (Public, Labella Associates)	
Malissa Booth(Public)	Jared Merrill (Public)
Nicole Staton(Public, Mountain Aging Partners)	

WELCOME AND HOUSEKEEPING

Chair William High called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone at 11:00AM. A quorum was established to conduct the business before the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

William High opened the floor for public comment. No comment was heard.

Consent Agenda:

3A: August 2026 TCC Meeting Minutes:

https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/2026_08_13_DRAFT.MPO_TCC_Minutes.pdf

3B. Letter of Support- City of Asheville Low/No Grant Application:

September 1, 2026
Matthew Cahill
Acting FTA Deputy Administrator and Chief Counsel
Federal Transit Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Cahill:

On behalf of the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (FBRMPO), I am pleased to express our strong support for the City of Asheville's application to the Federal Transit Administration's FY 2026 Low or No Emission Vehicle Program for the **Asheville Rides Transit (ART) Maintenance Facility Replacement Project**.

The City is requesting \$48 million in federal funding, supported by a \$12 million local share, for the design and construction of a modern \$60 million transit maintenance facility. The project would replace ART's existing 3.39-acre facility, which is undersized and functionally constrained and no longer provides adequate space to efficiently maintain, repair, and store buses for scheduled service. These limitations affect maintenance operations, reduce operational flexibility, and make it more difficult to return vehicles to service efficiently.

The City's 2021 ART Maintenance Programming Report and Site Analysis Study found that ART's operations already exceed the capacity of the existing facility and that expansion at the current location is neither feasible nor cost-effective. A replacement facility would provide the space and infrastructure necessary to maintain ART's current fleet while supporting the transition to newer low- and zero-emission vehicle technologies.

This project also supports the transportation goals identified in the FBRMPO 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The MTP calls for improved transit frequency along high-demand corridors and stronger regional transit connections, including improved access to the Asheville Regional Airport. Achieving those goals will require sufficient fleet, staffing, and maintenance capacity. The existing facility represents a significant constraint on ART's ability to expand service and support future regional mobility needs.

Reliable transit service is an important part of the region's transportation system, connecting residents and visitors with employment, healthcare, childcare, education, and other essential destinations. Investment in the ART maintenance facility would strengthen the operational foundation necessary to provide that service reliably today while positioning the system for future growth. The French Broad River MPO strongly supports the City of Asheville's application and respectfully encourages the Federal Transit Administration to fund this important investment in Asheville's transit system and the broader regional transportation network.

Sincerely,

Anthony Sutton Chair
French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization Board

Noah Taylor moved to accept the consent agenda including the minutes from the August 2026 meeting and the Letter of Support-City of Asheville Low/No Grant Application. Janna Bianculli seconded and it passed upon a unanimous roll call vote.

Business:

4A. Assignment of Express Design Projects:

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 and 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

Previously Assigned Express Designs (Approved 11/30/25 & 4/30/26)

- US 19 (Smokey Park Highway) Access Management from I-40 to Wiggins Road
- Clingman Avenue Multiple Intersection Improvements from Patton Avenue to Hilliard Avenue
- NC 63 (New Leicester Highway) Multiple Intersection Improvements from Newfound Road to Gouges Branch Road
- US 25B (Asheville Highway) Multiple Intersection Improvements/Access Management from North Main Street to Berkley Road
- Fanning Bridge Road Modernization from US 25 (Hendersonville Road) to NC 280 (Airport Road)
- US 70 (Tunnel Road) Road Diet from Beaucatcher Tunnel to US 74A (South Tunnel Road)
- Reems Creek Road Modernization from US 19 (Merrimon Avenue) to Ox Creek Road

New Recommendations

- US 176 (Spartanburg Highway) Access Management from NC 225 (Greenville Highway) from Upward Road. Submitted for P8.
- Elkwood Road Modernization from NC 251 (Riverside Drive) to US 25 (Merrimon Avenue). Submitted for P8.

- US 276 (Pigeon Road) Modernization from US 23B (Main Street) to NC 110 (Pisgah Drive). Submitted in P7.

Action Required: Consider Approval of P8 Express Design Assignments

Discussion occurred around how this is just to get ahead of this in preparation for P9. Clarification was requested on timeline.

Steve Williams moved to approve recommending the P8 Express Design Assignments to the board. Matt Manley seconded and it passed upon a unanimous roll call vote.

4B. PROTECT Planning Grant Application

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) recently opened the FY 2026 Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT) Competitive Grant Program. The program supports efforts to improve the resilience of surface transportation systems to natural disasters, severe weather, flooding, landslides, and other hazards. Metropolitan Planning Organizations are eligible applicants, and Planning Grants do NOT require non-federal match. Applications are due October 9, 2026.

MPO staff are proposing to pursue a Planning Grant to develop a regional transportation resilience plan, potentially structured as a formal Resilience Improvement Plan. Building on lessons from Hurricane Helene, the effort could evaluate vulnerabilities in the regional transportation network, identify locations where limited redundancy creates significant risks, assess emergency and critical-access needs, identify and prioritize resilience improvements, and develop recommendations for incorporating resilience into future MPO plans, project development, and prioritization.

The exact scope and funding request would be refined prior to submission. Because Planning Grants are funded at 100% federal share, pursuing the application would not require a local funding commitment from the MPO or its member governments.

Action Required: Consider recommending that the MPO Board authorize staff to develop and submit an application for a PROTECT Planning Grant.

Discussion occurred around funding opportunities this plan would open up for the board. It's not as clear as Safe Streets For All. Discussion around how PROTECT has an implementation aspect to it but not as strict planning needed. Discussion around if we need any additional resolutions of support from cities or counties. Not mandatory but would be appreciated. Discussion around if the 2024 application was before Helene, it was roughly around same time. Discussion around assets part needing to be made higher due to Helene or if we are just doing all of them.

Noah Taylor moved to approve recommending to the Board the PROTECT Planning Grant Application. Daniel Sellers seconded the motion and it passed upon a unanimous roll call vote.

4C. Woodfin-to-Weaverville Greenway Study:

Background

The Woodfin to Weaverville Greenway Feasibility Study was commissioned by FBRMPO, in partnership with the Towns of Woodfin and Weaverville and Buncombe County, to evaluate potential alignments for a future greenway connection between the planned Woodfin/Beaverdam Creek Greenway and the Reems Creek Greenway in Weaverville.

The study evaluated potential routes, including connections associated with the future I-26 corridor and other reasonable alternatives, with consideration given to safety, accessibility, environmental constraints, constructability, and implementation. The study also included public and stakeholder engagement and coordination with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). The study is particularly relevant to planned improvements along the I-26 corridor, including NCDOT Project A-0010A. Coordination between the greenway planning effort and these transportation improvements provides an opportunity to incorporate multimodal connectivity into future project development.

The Woodfin and Weaverville Town Councils have reviewed and approved the Feasibility Study. The recommended greenway connection supports the goals and policies of the FBRMPO's

Elevate 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) by improving bicycle and pedestrian connectivity, expanding multimodal transportation options, supporting safe and accessible transportation, and connecting communities to existing and planned bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Elevate 2050 serves as the region's long-range transportation plan and provides the framework for transportation investments within the FBRMPO planning area.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the TCC recommend adoption of the Woodfin to Weaverville Greenway Feasibility Study by the FBRMPO Board.

Adoption of the study would establish the study's recommendations as a regional planning document and provide a framework for continued coordination among FBRMPO, the Towns of Woodfin and Weaverville, Buncombe County, NCDOT, and other partners as opportunities arise to advance the recommended greenway connection.

Requested Action

Recommend to the FBRMPO Board adoption of the Woodfin to Weaverville Greenway Feasibility Study.

Theresa Buckwalter from McAdams presented.

Discussion occurred around if there are any sound walls already planned as part of the I26 designs already in place. Soundwalls would come much later, the other consideration that comes in play with soundwalls is balance of the visibility that is needed for security and safety vs the user experience

separating from interstate traffic. Discussion on if the study looks at maintenance responsibilities. It was a consideration and that most of the overall study area fell within one of the two towns.

Noah Taylor moved to approve the recommendation of the adoption of the Woodfin to Weaverville Greenway Feasibility Study to the Board. Anna Sexton seconded the motion and it passed upon a unanimous roll call vote.

4D. FY 2026 5310 & JARC Funding Availability:

FBRMPO holds Calls for Projects for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 and Jobs Access Reverse Commute (JARC) funds, the two transit and human services transportation funding categories allocated to the Asheville Urbanized Area. While the City of Asheville is the Designated Recipient of these funds and is required to provide contracting, administration, and oversight, the FBRMPO is required to determine how these funds are to be used and distributed across the region.

5310

FTA's Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & People with Disabilities (Section 5310) makes federal funding available to the Asheville Urbanized Area with the City of Asheville serving as the designated recipient. The program aims to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities by removing barriers to transportation service and expanding transportation mobility options.

The 5310 Grant has two categories for funding:

- Traditional/Capital Projects: at least 55% of the total funding amount must go to "traditional" projects
- Other/Operations type projects: no more than 45% of the total funding amount can go to those projects

The table below shows the available funding for Section 5310 FY2026 that must be distributed:

FY 2026's Section 5310 Allocation	
FY 2026 FTA Section 5310 Funds Available to Asheville UZA	\$521,202
Section 5310 Admin at 10%*	\$52,120
Remaining Section 5310 after Admin	\$469,082

*It is important to note that 10% of the original allocation is set aside for Administrative funds for the City of Asheville, so "Other" projects will only receive up to 35% of total funding as a result since Traditional projects are required to receive a minimum of 55% of the allocation before administrative costs are considered.

JARC

Jobs Access Reverse Commute (JARC) is a type of public transportation funding that was consolidated into FTA Section 5307 urban transit funding in 2012. JARC is geared towards transportation for low-income individuals to jobs and job training. Transit capital and operating expenses are eligible, with an appropriate local match required (20% for capital/ 50% for operating).

JARC funding in the MPO region is calculated based on a 10% set aside from the 5307 FTA urban transit formula allocated to the Asheville Urbanized Area.

FY 2026's Section 5307 (JARC) Allocation	
Regional JARC - FY 2026 at 10% of FTA 5307 Amount allocated to Asheville Urbanized Area	\$432,261.70

Timeline for 5310 and JARC:

FY2026 Call for Projects Application Timeline	
September 18, 2026	5310 and JARC Call for Projects opens
December 17, 2026	5310 and JARC applications due to FBRMPO
January 6, 2027	FBRMPO Prioritization Subcommittee meets to review 5310 and JARC applications
January 14, 2027	TCC approves 5310 and JARC project selection
January 21, 2027	MPO Board votes on 5310 and JARC project selection
February 18, 2027	MPO Board approves TIP Amendments for 5310 and JARC projects

[5310 Call for Projects](#)

[5310 Application](#)

[JARC Call for Projects](#)

[JARC Application](#)

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the TCC recommend opening the JARC and 5310 Call for Projects by the FBRMPO Board.

Requested Action

Recommend to the FBRMPO Board opening the JARC and 5310 Call for Projects.

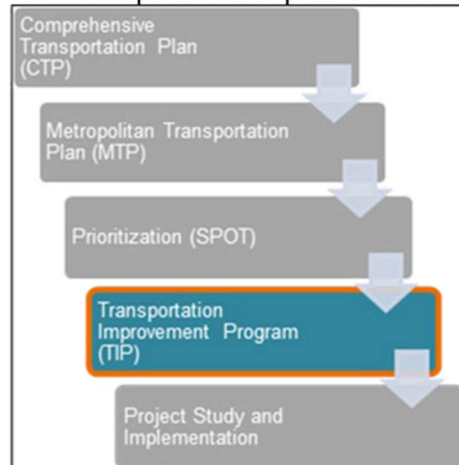
Discussion did not occur.

Steve Williams moved to recommend that the Board open the JARC and 5310 Call for Projects. Noah Taylor seconded the motion and it passed upon a roll call vote.

4E. Transportation Projects Funding & Schedule Changes (TIP Amendments)

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:

- U-4739 (Amboy/Meadow Road) Upgrade/Bridge Replacement: Delaying Right-of-Way from FY 27 to FY 30 and Construction from FY 30 to FY 33.
- EB-5822 (Wilma Dykeman Greenway Extension): Delaying Right-of-Way and Utilities from FY 26 to FY 27 and delaying Construction from FY 27 to FY 30.
- EB-5547A & EB-5547B (Riverwalk Greenway/Multi-Modal Improvements in Black Mountain): Delaying construction to FY 27
- Delays in various highway rail crossing safety projects

All TIP Amendment Summaries can be found here: https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/FBRMPO_September2026_TIP_Amendments_R1.pdf

Action Required: Consider Recommending Adoption of the Amendments to the 2026-2035 TIP.

TCC Recommendation: Recommend Approval of the Amendments to the 2026-2035 TIP.

Discussion around 3 yr delay.

Daniel Sellers moved to recommend the approval of the Amendments to the 2026-2035 TIP to the board. Steve Williams seconded and it passed upon a unanimous roll call vote.

5A. I-26 Connector Project Update:

NCDOT Will provide an update on the I-26 Connector Project.

Nathan Moneyham with NCDOT presented.

Information Only.

Discussion did not occur.

5B. Regional Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Plan:

Background

The French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (FBRMPO) is developing a Regional Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Strategic Deployment Plan to establish a regional framework

for using technology, data, communications, and transportation operations to improve the safety, efficiency, reliability, accessibility, and resiliency of the transportation system. A Regional ITS Plan provides a roadmap for how agencies across the region can work together to use technology and transportation operations to address shared transportation challenges. The plan connects **regional transportation needs, ITS strategies, regional coordination, and implementation** to identify opportunities for coordinated investment.

Planning Process

The project has completed the existing conditions and needs assessment phases, along with extensive engagement with the project Core Team and regional stakeholders. Five stakeholder workshops were held in June and July 2026, with representatives from the Hendersonville, Asheville, and Waynesville areas, advocacy organizations, and emergency management. A total of 78 participants participated in the workshops.

The project is now transitioning from identifying regional needs to identifying candidate ITS strategies and developing business cases. The remaining work will focus on strategy development, prioritization, implementation and phasing, and development of the draft and final plan.

Plan Framework

The draft plan framework organizes potential ITS investments around regional transportation needs and desired outcomes rather than specific technologies. Business cases will be developed using four components:

- **Regional Need** – Why does the region need to invest?
- **Desired Outcome** – What does the region want to achieve?
- **ITS Capabilities and Strategies** – How can ITS help address the need?
- **Priority Initiatives** – What projects, actions, partnerships, or other initiatives should be considered?
- Initial focus areas identified through the planning process include **Emergency Response and Resiliency, Active Demand Management – Freight, Active Demand Management – Multimodal, Traffic Incident Management, and Arterial Management**.
- The draft vision and guiding principles also emphasize safety and accessibility, sustainability and resilience, equity and inclusion, community engagement, economic vitality, and smart growth.

Requested Action

This item is for informational purposes only. No action is requested from the TCC or MPO Board.

Staff will provide an overview of the Regional ITS Strategic Deployment Plan, summarize progress to date, introduce the proposed planning framework and focus areas, and discuss the next steps in development of the plan.

Discussion around timeline around the upcoming meetings leading up to final draft. Ideally end of this calendar year.

6A. Division Project Updates

Division 13: https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/Division13_September2026_Updates.pdf

Division 14: https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/Division14_September2026_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 August 5th, next meeting October 7th

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

- Grant management update by the City of Asheville including discussion of funds at risk of lapsing.
- Triennial review update
- 5310/JARC call for projects
- Knowledge-sharing opportunities with current group composition

***See below for the MPO Studies and Locally Administered Projects Updates:**

https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/2026_09_10_TCC_Agenda_Packet.pdf

PUBLIC COMMENT

William High opened the floor for public comment. No comment was heard.

ADJOURNMENT

William High adjourned the meeting at 12: PM as there was no further business.

