

French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization
Minutes from the Governing Board Meeting on September 17th, 2026

Attendance:

In-Person and Remote via the Zoom Platform:

Kim Roney	City of Asheville
Archie Pertiller	Town of Black Mountain
Drew Ball	Buncombe County
Parker Sloan	Buncombe County
Jim Player	Town of Fletcher
Brandon Rodgers	Haywood County
Kevin Ensley	Haywood County
Jennifer Hensley	City of Hendersonville
George Banta	Town of Laurel Park
Drew Stephens	Town of Biltmore Forest
Susan Bean	Urban Transit
Mark Endries	Town of Weaverville
Jim McAllister	Town of Woodfin
Tim Anderson	NCDOT
Doug Phillips	NCDOT Div 13
Steve Williams	NCDOT Div 14
Beau Waddell	BOT Div 14
Tim Anderson	NCDOT
Wesley Grindstaff	NCDOT
Matt Wechtel	Madison County
David White	Rural Transit
Emily Whitmire	Village of Flat Rock
Sage Turner	City of Asheville
Stephen Sparks	NCDOT
John Hunter	NCDOT TPO
Nathan Moneyham	NCDOT

Members without Representation present:

BOT Div 13
Town of Clyde
Town of Canton
Town of Mars Hill
Henderson County
Town of Maggie Valley
Town of Mills River
Town of Montreat
Town of Waynesville

Additional Attendees:

Tristan Winkler (FBRMPO) Daisy O'Connor (FBRMPO)
Sandy Broadwill(FBRMPO) Asha Rado (LOSRC,Minutes)
Theresa Buckwalter (McAdams)

Hannah Bagli (FBRMPO)
Amber Flossen (Public)

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS & ROLL CALL

Jennifer Hensley called the meeting to order at 1:04 PM and welcomed everyone. She 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

Jennifer Hensley opened the floor for public comment.

Amber Fossen-Town of Fletcher she is here to ask the board to support and prioritize sidewalks on fanning bridge road. She spoke on how much her family and especially her kids would love to have a way to walk safely to other neighborhoods and to popular places to visit in fletcher. Looking for a safer way to connect from the neighborhood. Mentioned the road has some speed advisory and curve signs. Would like to see it become a corridor to provide a more social and independent community.

CONSENT AGENDA

3A. August 2026 Meeting Minutes:

https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/2026_08_20_MPO.DRAFT_Board_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

Jim McAllister moved to approve the TAC Agenda, consent agenda including the August 2026 Meeting Minutes, the Letter of Support for the City of Asheville Low/No Grant Application. Jim Player seconded the motion which passed unanimously upon a 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) to
- Upward Road. Submitted for P8.
- Elkwood Road Modernization from NC 251 (Riverside Drive) to US 25 (Merrimon Avenue). Submitted for P8.
- US 19/23 (New Clyde Highway/Carolina Boulevard) from NC 215 to Smathers Street. Submitted in past rounds.

Discussion around if (Listen for road name) was already an existing rd or if it was a new road. DOT brought a safety project to the board because there are a number of safety issues along corridor

Mark Endries moved to approval the P8 Express Design Assignments. Jim McAllister seconded the motion 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 authorizing staff to develop and submit an application for a PROTECT Planning Grant.

TCC Recommendation: Approve authorizing staff to develop and submit an application for a PROTECT Planning Grant

Discussion on the benefits of having this plan in place and what it enables us to do. It helps identify additional projects that are out there that might need additional attention and help MPO prioritize some of these.

Mark Endries moved to approve staff to develop and submit application for the PROTECT Planning Grant. Susan Bean seconded the motion and it passed upon unanimous roll call vote..

4C. [Woodfin-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: Consider adoption of the Woodfin to Weaverville Greenway Feasibility Study.

TCC Recommendation: Adopt the Woodfin to Weaverville Greenway Feasibility Study

Discussion occurred around the closing of Craggy prison. Discussion of how these types of greenways work in other places. Discussion around how Buncombe County has various greenway studies and something of a challenge is acquiring the right of way to build these. Discussion over ranking and scoring the difficulty of the corridor getting right away acquisition.

Jim McAllister moved to adopt the Woodfin to Weaverville Greenway Feasibility Study. Parker Sloan 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 the opening the JARC and 5310 Call for Projects by the FBRMPO Board.

Requested Action

Consider opening the JARC and 5310 Call for Projects.

TCC Recommendation: Open the JARC and 5310 Call for Projects

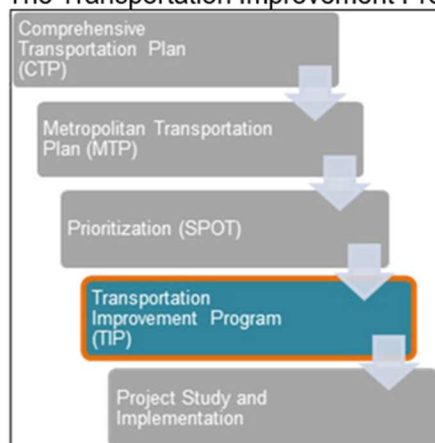
Discussion occurred around what the 90/70.1 say and what the purpose of that is. They are regulations that go along with each. They are relatively newer.

Mark Endries moved to approve opening the JARC and 5310 Call for Projects. Jim McAllister 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 did occur around if a project will die out of old age or get cancelled. We are looking at policies on if we can cancel them. Projects seem to run into problems or challenges along the way. Discussion around bus stop hurdles. Projects cost more, revenues are not increasing and timelines are getting stretched out.

Jim McAllister moved to approve the Amendments to the 2026-2035 TIP. Susan Bean seconded the motion and it passed upon a roll call vote.

5A. I-26 Connector Project Update: What is the I-26 Connector?

The I-26 Connector (I-2513) is a highway project in Buncombe County that aims to provide improvements to I-26, I-240, and parts of I-40. The project is split into several different sections (generally described below):

Section AA- Pavement rehabilitation on I-40 from roughly Sand Hill Road to Monte Vista Road. (STIP Status: Funded)

Section AB- I-26/I-40 AND I-40/US 19/23 (SMOKEY PARK HIGHWAY) INTERCHANGES. CONSTRUCT THE FOLLOWING IMPROVEMENTS: WIDEN I-40 EASTBOUND TO I-26 EASTBOUND RAMP, WIDEN I-26 WESTBOUND BETWEEN I-40 RAMPS, CONSTRUCT NEW I-40 WESTBOUND TO US 19/23 (SMOKEY PARK HIGHWAY) NORTHBOUND RAMP. (STIP Status: Funded)

Section AC- Widen I-26/I-240 from I-40 to Haywood Road (STIP Status: Funded)

Section B- Highway Widening and New Bridge Construction over the French Broad River from Haywood Road to Broadway Avenue. (STIP Status: Funded)

Section C- Final Improvements to the I-26/I-40/I-240 interchange. (STIP Status: NOT Funded)

Section D- modernization and complete streets improvements to Riverside Drive (STIP Status: Funded)

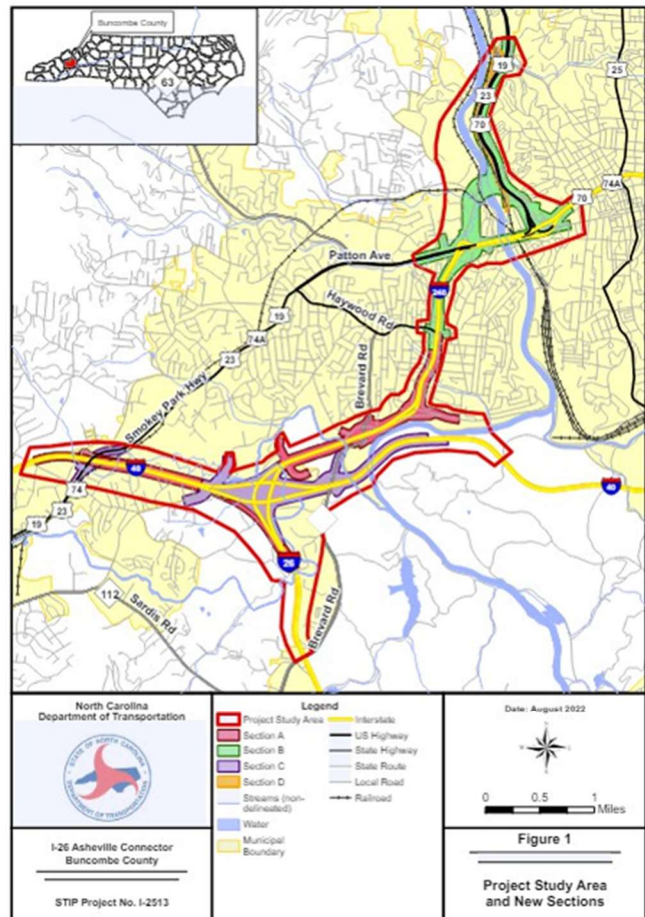
The project also includes additional improvements that have been requested by the City of Asheville, including multimodal infrastructure and aesthetic enhancements.

Update

Nathan Moneyham, NCDOT Division 13 Construction Engineer, will provide an update.

Information Only.

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.

Information Only.

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. Points of Business/Discussion:

- 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 within current group composition

MPO Studies Status

Study	Managing Entity	Year Programmed	Status
Woodfin-Weaverville Greenway Study	Town of Woodfin	2025	Closing Out
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	Contracting Underway
Staffing & Compensation Study	LOSRC	2024	Not Started
MPO Strategic Plan	FBRMPO	2027	RFLOI Drafted
US 64 (Four Seasons Boulevard) Corridor Study	FBRMPO	2027	Not Started
Buncombe County Transit Plan	FBRMPO	2027	Not Started

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

6D. Legislative Updates:

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Jennifer Hensley opened the floor again for public comment. No comment was heard.

ADJOURNMENT

Jennifer Hensley adjourned the meeting at 2:55PM as there was no further business before the Board.