

French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization
Prioritization Subcommittee
September 26, 2013
Minutes

Attending

Eddie Henderson, Town of Fletcher
Ed Green, NCDOT Division 14
Don Kostelec, Kostelec Planning
Larry Freeman, Mills River
Doug Dearth, Town of Waynesville
Josh King, LOSRPO/FBRMPO

Paul Black, FBRMPO
Lyuba Zuyeva, FBRMPO
Claudia Nix, Blue Ridge Bicycle Club
Marc Hunt, City of Asheville
Mariate Echeverry, City of Asheville
Josh O’Conner, Buncombe County

WELCOME AND HOUSEKEEPING

Josh King opened the meeting and with a round of introductions. Nine members were present.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment

BUSINESS

Election of Officers, Subcommittee Makeup

Paul Black indicated that during the last meeting, Marc Hunt and Larry Freeman were proposed as potential officers. Josh O’Conner-motion to approve Marc Hunt as chair, Larry Freeman as vice-chair. Larry Freeman-second. Motion carried.

Session Law 2012-84 and MPO Requirements for STIP Process: Quantitative and Qualitative Criteria

Josh King explained that MPOs and RPOs have to develop a methodology for prioritization of highway projects for SPOT 3.0 and pointed to the list of quantitative and qualitative criteria which NCDOT has suggested as potential criteria for MPO and RPO local ranking—at least one from each category must be included. Josh King gave an overview of some criteria being considered by LOSRPO; some of those are already being considered by NCDOT as part of SPOT Score. Policy is one of the items that could be important—a Land Use Plan supportive of the network could be considered. “Special Considerations” could be a catch-all for other items hard to measure and quantify. For example, a project that completes the final phase of a larger corridor could add up to points.

Paul Black-staff have a hard time reconciling the SPOT prioritization criteria to MPO LRTP goals; those goals might need to be reworked in the next update. A better solution might be to try to look at the projects from the previous lists of ranked projects for SPOT 1 and 2 and try and reverse engineer why they are important. High volume through travel corridors are important (such as I-26), and having a redundant network on more local roads is important—Balfour Parkway and Sweeten Creek Road would fall in this category. The geographic equity is another item to consider. Don Kostelec-when working on the Congestion Management piece of the last LRTP update, that was part of the discussion as to how to create goals which could have measurable outcomes. Last time it was too late in the process.

Josh King-reminder that currently, MPO score will account for 15% of overall score for regional level projects and 25% of overall score for division level projects. Paul Black—it looks like based on latest discussions with SPOT Work Group, the Division score portion would be smaller and MPOs would have a slightly higher piece of the overall score. Don Kostelec-concern whether the Divisions can fully appreciate multi-modal projects which are not

on the state network. Paul Black- for highway and bike ped items, many Divisions are now more involved in multi-modal transportation. Paul Black added that the Technical Corrections Bill requires that Divisions will have to come up with a public review process for their scores assigned. Marc Hunt-overall, this process will be helpful to be more thoughtful to evaluate the criteria. It will be helpful to compare notes with Divisions. Paul Black-already set up a meeting to review the list of projects with Division 13. Probably need to set up a similar meeting with Division 14. Josh King-in my experience with other two SPOT rounds, the second round worked better in terms of MPOs and RPOs coordinating with Divisions. Paul Black-some Divisions have multiple MPOs and RPOs to participate on, up to 6-7. That is a large staff burden. We appreciate Division staff time and presence.

Marc Hunt-posed question to the group with regards to future meeting dates. The fourth Thursday prior to MPO Board/RPO TAC meetings at 10 AM was approved by the members present as the meeting date/time going forward.

Discussion of Goals from CTP, LRTP and CMP

The subcommittee discussed geographic equity. Could set up a quota system based on population and/or equal share. Mariate Echeverry-what about connections which have a regional importance rather than local importance? Paul Black-hard to quantify. Marc Hunt-would be cautious to prioritize regional connectivity for bike ped projects where a facility in a specific municipality might be needed first. Paul Black-can consider other measures. Mariate Echeverry-what about commute patterns. Paul Black-how to quantify? This subcommittee needs to decide not just what is important, but what is measurable. Don Kostelec-need to look at a specific time period. Larry Freeman—concern that a small municipality might have its interests overshadowed by a large project going through it.

Marc Hunt-suggestion to look at land use. Paul Black-not all jurisdictions have land use planning, how would we evaluate? As an example, New Leicester Highway corridor was shown as a growth corridor on the Land Use Plan. Doug Dearth-a jurisdiction without a strategic plan might not be ready for a roadway project. Discussion of a pre-screening of projects based on local plans. Paul Black-the CTP could be a pre-screen tool. Don Kostelec-LRTP update presents an opportunity to measure how well the communities are working towards an overall plan. It might be helpful to assign bonus points to communities which are working in the right direction. Discussion about GroWNC potentially being used as a criteria of project consistency with a regional plan—however not all counties have agree to participate in the GroWNC planning process. Paul Black-there is a potential to assign points based on how many plans a project is consistent with. Josh O’Conner-would prefer to avoid conflict and divisiveness between jurisdictions based on the presence of a land use plan.

Don Kostelec-example of considering the Liberty Road interchange area, this is a large investment and no zoning for the surrounding area. This creates a lot of uncertainty for inconsistency between transportation investment and possible land use. Marc Hunt-we have had rounds of forecasting with Linking Lands and with GroWNC, we might have more predictability using existing studies on the shelf. Don Kostelec-maybe require different levels of screening for different magnitude of investment (\$2 million vs. \$30 million). Josh O’Conner-additional land use controls to consider, such as watershed regulations and steep slope regulations, not just land use plan and zoning. Paul Black-staff could draft a pre-prioritization screening, so that projects in the LRTP and CTP start with an advantage. Josh O’Conner-would ask for a narrative from the local jurisdiction regarding how their land use regulations apply.

Josh King-suggestion to decouple goals and objectives from the future prioritization criteria discussion.

Marc Hunt-requested to see a list of timeline with target milestones for prioritization work between now and April, to go out with next agenda packet. Will have October and November meetings, not one in December and then meetings in January and February. Josh King-staff will develop a timeline for October meeting.

Eddie Henderson-is there a time to consider how specific projects impact the rest of the region and not the direct jurisdiction? For example, what we are doing in Henderson County we are trying to determine how individual municipality projects have a bigger overall impact at the county level. This could cut out a lot of “busy” process out. The only way to do it is to sit down with local boards and the stakeholders/general public of an area. Paul Black-the challenge is to assign numeric values to this aspect. NCDOT is requiring MPOs and RPOs to assign specific quantitative and qualitative criteria.

Ed Green-in Division 13, we used a list of factors last time. Can we use it as a starting point and select the ones that are data-driven, so that we don’t have to reinvent the wheel. Paul Black-part of our problem is that there was not a factor-driven process in the past. Now trying to select a list of criteria for the FBRMPO that would help us arrive at something that looks like out past lists of projects. Josh King—will bring an exercise to write out the important criteria at the next meeting. Paul Black-is there interest to break up the current prioritization list into tiers? One criteria would be a regional equity, and working on a 10-year list of finished projects, which will help with regional equity. Don Kostelec-how does the process account for multi-modal needs on a corridor? Also the cost-benefit factor considered by NCDOT does not account for loss of taxable property, how would we account for this? Josh O’Conner—could we resend the list of criteria used by other MPOs and to have members select the ones that they absolutely support or absolutely do not support for our region. Josh King-all materials posted on the ftp site (<ftp://landofskygis.org/MPO/PrioritizationSubcommittee/>). Many other RPOs are looking at their prioritization process and trying to figure out how to measure what is important. Paul Black-FBRMPO will also have to have a local process to develop the statewide projects, even though our score would not account for NCDOT overall score. Have to have a process to select projects for the Metropolitan TIP; if it does not match the state STIP, a project can not advance. Will have to have something in place by summer 2015.

Marc Hunt-request of summary of what will happen for next meeting. Josh King-will prepare future meeting schedule/timeline with key milestones; pre-meeting packet with exercise to arrive at current individual prioritization factors; and will continue with the discussion of the goals as a separate item from prioritization criteria. Marc Hunt-request for a brief overview during the MPO Board of where the subcommittee is headed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

Meeting adjourned. Next workgroup meeting set for Thursday, October 31th at 10 AM.