

Prioritization Subcommittee Meeting Minutes January 28, 2016 Land of Sky Regional Council Offices

ATTENDING

Julie Mayfield, City of Asheville
Elizabeth Teague, Town of Waynesville
Josh O'Conner, Buncombe County
Autumn Radcliff, Henderson County

Claudia Nix, Blue Ridge Bike Club
Mariate Echeverry, City of Asheville
Ed Greene, NCDOT Division 14
Matt Champion, Henderson County

Non-Voting

Tristan Winkler, FBRMPO
Brendan Merithew, NCDOT TPB
Lyuba Zuyeva, FBRMPO

I. Welcome and Housekeeping

Agenda and Minutes Approval

Josh O'Conner asked for a motion and second to approve the agenda and minutes. Motion to approve: Elizabeth Teague Second: Mariate Echeverry. All in favor- agenda and minutes from December meeting were approved.

II. Public Comment

No public comment at this time.

III. Business

III-A. SPOT Prioritization Methodology

Tristan Winkler discussed the draft methodology. The goal would be for the Prioritization Subcommittee to approve the methodology today, prior to MPO Board adoption in March. Tristan highlighted that the MPO SPOT methodology will be used to inform the Board's decision to allocate 1800 Regional Project points and 1800 Division Project points across projects. Currently the methodology specifies that the MPO will assign a full 100 points to any project that receives points, if the project is in the MPO planning region. Partial points may be allocated to a project that crosses regional boundaries.

Next Tristan reviewed the quantitative score criteria. In April, NCDOT SPOT scores will become available and MPO staff will hold the local meetings to apply the local priority points. In late April, final MPO Methodology scores will be available and in May the MPO Board is expected to adopt the SPOT points assignment for Regional tier project. The MPO points assignment will account for 15% of total Regional project SPOT score.

A discussion followed about public input for SPOT. Tristan Winkler clarified that MPO staff will post for public input the draft allocation of MPO points. Prior to MPO TCC and Board meetings in May of 2016, MPO staff will publish an ad—aiming for 21 days, but a minimum of 14 days prior to Board adoption required. The MPO TCC and Board can recommend changes to advance or slow down a particular project separately from what the scoring methodology indicates. MPO staff will bring a summary of comments received to TCC and Board. Mariate Echeverry offered a suggestion to present the methodology in a way that is easy to understand for the general public, when publishing the points assignment. Other suggestions included checking in with other MPOs how they present their methodology for public comments, and also including a map of SPOT projects. MPO staff will bring to the next meeting a couple different ideas. Discussion followed about presenting the SPOT methodology—it has to be posted for the public input separately from the final points assignment. Tristan Winkler-staff will work on maps and additional marketing materials. Julie Mayfield-suggestion to add a Green Drinks presentation.

Don Kostelec—there is a more global issue with the SPOT projects not reflecting the MTP plan. Discussion followed about whether the MTP should be the ultimate filter, or whether CTP plan identification is sufficient. Lyuba Zuyeva-it is likely that the MTP will have to be amended in any case because with the FAST Act and the new statewide funding allocation, fiscal assumptions are changing. Tristan noted that other MPOs across the state are struggling with this process as well. Elizabeth-projects that are showing up that are not in the MTP are likely to have been vetted through the local process or other planning processes.

Autumn Radcliff suggested that public input materials identify which projects are in which county. Also landmarks might help for termini of projects, and keeping the numbering simple-instead of the long SPOT ID.

Josh O'Conner posted a question about SPOT methodology changes and how much staff time it takes to make the needed changes for methodologies and public input materials—would like to see a record for next SPOT cycle.

Don Kostelec-suggestion to set up a general public input drop-in meeting where all different types of transportation issues could be addressed.

Mariate Echeverry-encouraged to expand the number of public outreach strategies. Lyuba Zuyeva and Tristan Winkler noted that the Citizens Advisory Committee next meeting will be focused on improving the public outreach materials including the website layout. Claudia Nix-suggestion to send out info through the Coalition of Asheville Neighborhoods and other similar neighborhood organizations across the region. Don Kostelec-from doing a review of medium-size MPOs, nobody has really figured out public outreach issues for SPOT. This is difficult material to make relevant to the public.

Going back to SPOT Methodology, Tristan indicated that when the previous draft methodology was sent to the SPOT Office for review, the comments came back indicating that Intersection projects can not use roadway safety segment data. However, intersection safety data is available other than Density score is not available. So for intersections' safety score, the suggestion is to update score to crash rate and

crash severity only, which will include the weight of those two criteria for Intersections safety score. NCDOT Safety Unit calculates the scores. Those safety crash data are provided for the entire state, and it's fairly commonly used across the U.S. Don Kostelec-suggestion that if bike ped crashes are being used for scoring but there is no commitment to improve bike ped safety on a project, those bike ped crashes should not be supporting a widening project. Tristan Winkler—due to the NCDOT Complete Streets policy, we expect that complete streets elements will be included on the widening projects. However, the MPO SPOT methodology also gives more points to projects that overlap with an adopted bicycle and/or pedestrian plan, in which case those recommended elements have a much higher likelihood of being incorporated. Further discussion followed about accounting for bicycle and pedestrian safety as part of SPOT methodology—might be something to consider for the next round of SPOT. Difficult to identify specific safety impacts without knowing the final design, which is not yet available at the time of project prioritization. Overall the group was in support of safety changes. Tristan highlighted that one of the goals was to make the methodology simpler to understand.

Next Tristan highlighted the next proposed change to the methodology regarding the local priority points. After the last discussion, it was decided that MPO will hold countywide meetings and local jurisdictions could also choose to allocate their points separately from the county consensus, based on municipality population. Last time MPO staff were considering assigning 900 local input points—but that would result in some jurisdictions having more points than projects. Because the MPO has 1800 points to allocate total, and 25% of methodology comes from local priority points, allocation of 450 local priority points instead of 900 forces a decision about which projects are the true priority. Lyuba brought up a question about allowing “veto power” to local jurisdictions to prevent other jurisdictions from assigning points to a project in their boundary. Concerns were raised with the veto rule—this could be shielding a jurisdiction from the impacts of regional infrastructure improvements that are needed, the subcommittee decided against “veto power” for SPOT projects. The group was in support of limiting the total local priority points to 450 points and recommended not mandating that full 25 local priority points be assigned per project.

Tristan Winkler-question about set-aside for bicycle and pedestrian and transit projects at the Division level. Discussion followed about allowing less than 100 points per project. Tristan-can add language allowing less than 100 points assigned at the Board's digression. Airport projects are expected to be funded at the statewide tier, but there could be projects that cascade—for example, the Airport's fire-fighting truck needs to be replaced. The group was in support of not allowing projects to cascade automatically, cascading and assigning points to an airport project will be at the Board's discretion.

The methodology discussion concluded. Tristan Winkler-will post the methodology on February 10th, March 24th is expected MPO Board approval date with a public hearing for the methodology. April 1st is when statewide and regional scores are released. In May will be the public input period for MPO Regional Projects points assignment. Division-level projects points assignment will be finalized in September of 2016.

III-B STP-DA and TAP-DA Call for Projects

Tristan Winkler-this spring (2016), FBRMPO STP-DA and TAP call for projects will be allocating a larger amount of federal than usual—at around \$13 million. RADTIP project and the Craven Street Bridge previously had STP-DA and TAP funds assigned which have now been replaced with other sources of funding in the STIP, so this freed up additional 5.4 million for the current call for projects. MPO staff would like to open the call for projects April 1st. In the past, we have had an issue with programming all the funds. With 12.8 million, this requires a lot of local match. Those funds can be used for capital projects as well as planning studies. Josh O’Conner-having more funds available might help with identifying potential projects to be submitted, in the past larger projects were discouraged. MPO staff are envisioning the current draft call for projects timeline to close in June. Or, this could be a rolling application if not enough applications are submitted through June. Josh O’Conner-recommendation to ask for a pre-application or an informal letter of interest to identify which applicants might be interested. Don Kostelec-could also be more proactive with programming. For example, resurfacing and overlay funding, curb ramp replacements and bus stops could be packaged together. Tristan Winkler-would be open to it, as long as projects are on a collector or above, not on local roadways. Overall the group was in support of either a preliminary email of interest or a conversation with MPO staff before putting in an LAPP application. Josh O’Conner-suggestion to also let local government staff know in advance which data might be required for the information submittal. Tristan Winkler-suggestion to set-aside 10% contingency for cost overruns, because local jurisdictions might not always know beforehand what the exact cost estimate would be. Mariate Echeverry-suggestion to make sure that the cost changes are not automatic, but would still have to be approved by the Prioritization Subcommittee, TCC and MPO Board. Josh O’Conner-suggestion to add to the application a question about where the local contingency funds are going to come from—likely due to the time delay, the cost estimates are going to come in higher at the time the contracts are signed. Mariate-suggestion to give local jurisdictions a deadline to contact MPO staff. Autumn Radcliff-10% contingency might not be enough. NCDOT requests 15% for administration of projects. 20% contingency might be more reasonable. Don Kostelec—hard to estimate per-square foot cost of ROW acquisition in our region, based on land use. Mariate-evaluation process should check for cost estimates. Don-suggestion to look at bid item averages on NCDOT website. Per-mile sidewalk cost with curb and gutter is much different than per-mile cost for a sidewalk without curb and gutter. Elizabeth Teague-for smaller towns without engineering staff, this is particularly difficult. Recommendation for additional capacity building and training.

III-C Subcommittee Members Election

Meeting adjourned.