

**Prioritization Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes
November 15, 2016
Land of Sky Regional Council Offices**

ATTENDING

Josh O'Conner, Buncombe County
Josh Harrold, Town of Black Mountain
Matt Champion, Henderson County

Non-Voting

Tristan Winkler, FBRMPO
Lyuba Zuyeva, FBRMPO
Autumn Radcliff, Henderson County
Mariate Echeverry, City of Asheville
Kristina Solberg, NCDOT Division 13
Ricky Tipton, NCDOT Division 13
Cole Hood, NCDOT Division 13
Brian Burch, NCDOT Division 14

I-A // Welcome and Introductions, Approval of Agenda

Josh O'Conner opened the meeting with a round of introductions. No quorum present at this meeting.

I-B // October 11, 2016 Minutes

Adoption of minutes from October 11, 2016 meeting was deferred.

2 // Public Comment

No public comment

3-A // STBG Projects-Biltmore Avenue

Tristan Winkler gave an overview of the current status of Biltmore Avenue complete streets project. A preliminary analysis of traffic numbers was done, which indicated that a feasibility study is needed prior to moving into PE. A feasibility study that would include both McDowell Street and Biltmore Avenue is preferred. NCDOT already had a feasibility study funded for McDowell Street. After talking with NCDOT Bike Ped Division, they are willing to combine the two studies and fund the initial portion and allow the MPO (and the local match from local sponsor) to cover the balance of the study cost due to scope increase. This will combine Biltmore, McDowell and Broadway into one feasibility study. In response to a question from Mariate, Tristan indicated that the study scope and budget will be revised and confirmed. MPO STBG funds would need to be allocated and flexed to MPO PL funds, and a UPWP amendment will be need for MPO PL Funds to be allocated. Likely around \$150,000 in additional planning funds will be needed.

3-B // MTP Amendments-Financial Plan

Tristan Winkler gave the background for the need to amend the MTP 2040 plan. A lot of projects have been submitted through the SPOT prioritization process and might get funded which are not actually in the MTP 2040. MPO staff is working to address the fiscal constraint portion in order to open up room for more projects in the MTP, after taking the new state transportation funding and the FAST Act into account. Tristan Winkler next reviewed some of the financial constraint assumptions for the amended fiscal constraint draft. FBRMPO population accounts for 4% of the state population, which is how MPO staff are projecting statewide mobility funding. FBRMPO is not expected to bring down any more statewide mobility project funding within our region other than what is already in the MTP as committed projects and sibling projects. However, it would be best to show additional needed projects (not in the fiscally constrained plan) as an attachment to MTP 2040 that could be added should the MPO funding increase. In horizon tiers 1 and 2 FBRMPO drew down a larger portion of statewide funding for projects than expected (closer to 10%). Some regional-level funding is projected to be available-again, based on the MPO population, as a percentage of our funding region. Division-level funding will be available in outer years, especially in Division 13, where around \$140 million is projected to be available. In Division 14, Balfour Parkway will take up a large chunk of funding in Horizon tier 3 which would spill over into horizons 4 and 5. For horizons 1 and 2, if there is more funding allocated than projected, the working assumption is that this does not impact future tiers—this just means that our region's projects

scored very competitively in that particular round. For future horizons, we can not make that assumption yet. For the purposes of fiscal constraint analysis, \$175 million for Balfour Parkway is diminishing the funds leftover in Division 14 for horizons 4 and 5—about \$17.5 million is remaining

3-C // MTP Amendments-Project Evaluation

Tristan Winkler indicated that the MPO Staff have started looking at statewide and regional projects to see how well they score using existing SPOT methodology, for possible inclusion in the MTP. Local priority points in SPOT Methodology provide a form of geographic equity—this is not reflected in the current score. Three statewide mobility projects considered so far are not scoring well—they do not get the benefit of bike ped score and also when comparing against the existing sewer and water infrastructure, they do not score well (and perhaps this criterion is not as applicable to the statewide mobility projects). In response to a question about unfunded section of I-26 Widening, Tristan Winkler indicated that siblings of I-26 projects are already in the MTP 2040. The spreadsheet distributed showed projects from the CTP, including regional impact projects and some statewide mobility projects that are not yet in the MTP. Today, MPO staff are looking for input re: projects of particular importance or those that might need to come off the list. In response to a question about congestion score, Tristan Winkler indicated that congestion score is split into four categories, with the first 20 points allocated for .80 or higher v/c, plus other SPOT 4 methodology parameters. Discussion followed about NC 280 congestion score from I-26 to US 25.

Josh O’Conner—a lot of the projects towards the top will be connected to I-26; if they are not addressed now they will be even worse after I-26 goes to construction. Rick Tipton—for corridors under 20-25k AADT, Access Management is going to have a limited impact. Sand Hill/Sardis Road project might have more “bang for the buck”. Tristan Winkler noted that the CTP does not have many new location projects. An access road in Black Mountain is recommended. Rick Tipton—improvements to Emma Road, for example, could be helpful. Further discussion followed about the need for better connectivity between Sweeten Creek Rd and Hendersonville Road. Josh O’Conner—people are creating their own work-arounds around I-26 congestion. Discussion about Haywood Road through West Asheville—this corridor is included in the AIM plan for improvements, and might be a “casualty of its own popularity.” Mariate Echeverry noted that increasing the modal split along the corridor would help.

Tristan Winkler continued with Statewide Mobility funding discussion—this is the hardest tier of funding to predict (got closer to 10% during the first 10 years of funding). MPO staff would recommend showing an unfunded /not fiscally constrained list of statewide mobility projects in case additional funding becomes available. Breaking out a separate interchange at US 74A from I-40 widening might be helpful, in case the full I-40 widening does not get funded. Rick Tipton—I-26 Connector will take care of I-40 widening section from Brevard Road to Exit 44—so I-40 widening east of Brevard Road can be shown, as a shorter section. US 74A interchange could be a separate project. Discussion followed about I-40 West to US 74 in Haywood County—this is a long corridor. Potential sections could be Exit 44 to Liberty Road, Liberty Road to about Buncombe-Haywood line, Buncombe-Haywood line to Clyde. Suggestion to make one of the break at the end of the climbing lane. Tristan Winkler—predominant truck movement is up I-26 and west on I-40. I-40 east is important but carries only about half of the truck volume as compared with I-40 west. Freight crashes are also on the rise in our region—partially due to the economy

being on the rise. With statewide mobility projects, freight component is important for a successful statewide project. US 19/23/74 in Haywood County from NC 209 to Dellwood Road is another statewide project, this is a short section with strange on- and off-ramps and safety issues. Close to the hospital.

Question about Sardis Road project. Tristan—projects already moving through SPOT and will continue to be considered, so this project automatically will stay in to be considered for MTP amendments. A lot of public comments coming to the MPO. Discussion about I-26 traffic and I-40 West traffic diverting to Sardis/Sand Hill Road. Josh O’Conner noted that due to the developable land use constrains in our region, wherever there is water, sewer and roads, that area will see more development. Land use control is likely not a reality. The group noted that there is a desire to expand the tax base.

3 D. // Congestion Management Process

Tristan Winkler-MPO staff will be looking at HERE data for congestion-having a difficulty linking the data to the GIS file. With the computer upgrades, might be better able to deal with large files. MPO staff are starting to look at land use connectivity. Walking and transit use is strongly correlated with land use diversity and intersection density. MPO staff have mapped intersection density by block group across the region. Not surprisingly, downtown areas and core urban areas, older urban centers, have more walkability. MPO staff do not have access to Network Analyst and are not able to use raster data-which is why the data comes out “chunky” at the block group level. For example, Black Mountain has some larger block groups which wash out the better connectivity in downtown area.

Destinations per square mile also highlight the same downtown and urban core areas—other areas that are developing rapidly are popping up. MPO staff will be overlaying CMP corridors over those areas to determine where multi-modal strategies are more likely to be successful—where there is a higher potential for walkability and transit use.

3 E. // Subcommittee Schedule for 2017

The current meeting schedule reflects Tuesday prior to the TCC, no meetings in July or December. If there is a light agenda we can cancel the meeting. Our next meeting is January 10th, 2017

Meeting adjourned.