

RURAL PLANNING RURAL ORGANIZATION

RPO Technical Coordinating Committee

March 11th, 2021 – 10:00 A.M., Zoom Platform

Agenda

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Welcome and Introductions

William High

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

3. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Minutes from the RPO TCC October 8, 2020 Meeting
- B. Agenda Approval/Modifications

William High

4. RPO BUSINESS

- A. NC First Commission Final Report Presentation
- B. LOSRPO and SWRPO FY 2022 CMAQ Funding Allocation
- C. LOSRPO DRAFT FY2022 PWP
- D. Prioritization 6.0 (SPOT 6.0) Update

Amna Cameron
Vicki Eastland
Vicki Eastland
Vicki Eastland

5. REGULAR UPDATES

- A. NCDOT Division 13 and 14 Updates
- B. Transportation Planning Division Updates
- C. Staff Updates

Division Staff
Daniel Sellers
Vicki Eastland

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

7. ADJOURNMENT

Upcoming Meetings

Land of Sky RPO TAC – Thursday March 25th, 2021 - 11:30 PM Zoom Platform

Land of Sky RPO TCC- Thursday May 13th, 2021-10:00 AM Location to be Determined

3. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes from the RPO TCC October 8, 2020 TCC Meeting

RPO Technical Coordinating Committee

Virtual Meeting

October 8, 2020 – 10:00 A.M.

Minutes

Remote Attendance:

Chair William High	Vicki Eastland	Norris Gentry	Troy Wilson
Cole Sutton	Steve Cannon	Stephen Sparks	Forrest Gilliam
Brendan Merithew	Hannah Cook	April Alm	Kate Hayes
Steve Williams	Tristan Winkler	Chris Medlin	Cole Sutton
Marshall Williams	Erica Anderson	Aaron Bland	Daniel Sellers

In-Person Attendance at Land of Sky Office:

Zia Rifkin

WELCOME AND HOUSEKEEPING

Chair High called the meeting to order at approximately 10:00am, welcomed everyone attending remotely and in-person, and called the roll. A quorum was announced to conduct business.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were made.

CONSENT AGENDA

Steve Williams moved to approve the consent agenda, consisting of the agenda and the June 11, 2020 TCC minutes. Forrest Gilliam seconded, and the motion passed upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.

RPO BUSINESS

Rural Transit Providers FTA 5310 Elderly and Persons Living w/ Disabilities Application RPO Letters of Support:

NCDOT Public Transit Division (PTD) requires public transit providers to reach out to their MPO/RPO planning partners for letters of support for their applications for Federal Transit Agency (FTA) Section 5310 funds. The (FTA) Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility for seniors and Individuals with Disabilities provides funds for programs and projects that aim to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities by removing barriers to transportation services and expanding mobility options.

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Due to several factors, COVID-19, CARES Act funds additional reporting burdens etc. The Grant filing deadline has been pushed back to December 1. This deadline is usually in November. Due to this delay, some systems do not have their grant request numbers finalized. The RPO TCC and TAC will not meet again before the December deadline. There is no action required today, this is just a reminder that RPO staff will provide the transit systems and any other eligible applicant, i.e., the Land of Sky Senior Companion Program, with letters of support.

Information only. No action requested.

Resolution to Adopt the Hellbender Regional Trail Plan

Tristan Winkler, FBRMPO Director, provided a presentation to the TCC on the Hellbender Regional Trail Plan, which is a regional plan with a goal of documenting a vision of a connected trail system based on locally adopted plans stitched together, as well as a brand for the system.

The development of the plan was guided by the Regional Trail Workgroup comprised of the MPO's Prioritization Subcommittee and advocates appointed to represent Buncombe, Henderson, Haywood, Transylvania, and Madison counties. Additional local staff that play a major role in trail development in the region were invited to attend these meetings, as well as representatives from local governments and non-profits across the region

The workgroup developed, vetted, and approved the Hellbender Regional Trail Plan, based primarily on locally adopted plans for greenways, multi-use paths, and other bike/ped facilities focused on paved trails but with exceptions for other infrastructure, where necessary. Sections of the Hellbender that do not currently exist in a locally adopted plan include the link from Weaverville to Mars Hill, a short section through Downtown Canton along Park Street, and a section from the Pigeon River to Lake Junaluska in Haywood County.

Due to COVID-19, traditional in person public meetings, workshops and presentations were not possible. The draft plan was emailed to various stakeholder groups and media outlets requesting groups share with their networks.

A total of 363 comments were received during the public comment period for the Hellbender Regional Trail Plan.

349 responses or (96%) expressed support. Common themes included: Health/wellness, community benefit, economic opportunities, tourism benefits, safety of users, environmental protection, congestion mitigation, and increased connectivity/accessibility

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9 responses or (2.5%) were impartial with questions of timeline/implementation, inclusion of local trail networks, preference for impervious surface, rails-to-trails questions, and inclusion of broadband connectivity

5 responses or (1.3%) disapproved or raised concerns citing Right-of-Way impacts, concerns about crime, degradation of environment and issues with name/branding.

At their September 2020 meeting, the FBRMPO Board approved the adoption of the Hellbender Regional Trail.

The Hellbender Regional Trail Plan is available here:

<http://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/multimodal/>

Discussion occurred regarding how the Hellbender Regional Trail Plan ties into the Great State Trail Plan. Tristan Winkler communicated that the State group is looking for routes of regional significance. Vicki Eastland shared that there are areas in the region that do not have local plans in place and the adoption of the Hellbender Regional Trail Plan could supplement those areas and improve funding assistance.

Norris Gentry moved to recommend the LOSRPO TAC adopt the resolution for the Hellbender Trail Regional Plan at their October 22, 2020 meeting. Steve Williams seconded, and the motion carried upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.

NCDOT STIP Revision/NCDOT Funding:

Due to several factors influencing NCDOT revenues, a revised 2020 – 2029 STIP was presented to the North Carolina Board of Transportation (NCBOT) at their September meeting. The NCBOT voted on this revised document at their October 7 meeting.

Hannah Cook, NCDOT Senior Program Engineer- Western STIP Region, provided a presentation explaining the factors affecting revenues and the project scheduling impacts for LOSRPO projects. She communicated that even before the pandemic, the State was already facing budget issues due to storm response and legal settlements. With the addition of the COVID response, revenues were devastated. With the enactment of HB-77, STIP related changes included shifts in revenue, the allowance of a \$700M Build NC Bond sale in FY 21, an increase in the amount of GARVEE Bonds available, which could lead to an estimated \$2B increase in the NCDOT budget. Concerning project cost increases; there have been over \$3B in cost increases since September 2019, primarily from projects selected in P3.0 and P4.0. There has also been a large increase in right-of-way estimates, especially in urban areas. Improvements underway include reviewing all cost estimates in the STIP, updating many estimates, and improving internal processes to ensure latest cost data is known for projects.

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Project schedule changes include many projects that have been paused due to cash-flow issues. Those will take time to restart, possibly up to a year or more. She also shared that relocating utilities can be a complex and lengthy process and the importance of programming enough time in the STIP for those activities. NCDOT needed to reprogram the STIP to meet federal requirements (and not jeopardize federal funding), provide realistic delivery schedules, and to update projects funded with BUILD NC and GARVEE Bonds due to HB- 77. The reprogramming process includes starting with a revised STIP budget and the programming of \$700M in FY21 BUILD NC Bonds first, which could be used on active construction projects and frees up traditional revenue sources for other projects. Constraints that had to be considered included annual fiscal constraint and STI law constraints. Reprogramming parameters considered included active USDOT grant commitments, realistic project delivery status, and recent substantial cost

increases. Prioritization scores were considered, where possible to help determine funding priority for already committed projects across the NCDOT Divisions.

Hannah Cook reiterated that the reprogrammed STIP was a good starting point. Adjustments can be made as long as constraints are met. This process is similar to the typical draft STIP development. She noted that the schedules in the draft STIP, presume \$700M of BUILD NC Bonds sold in Fall 2020. The FAST Act expired September 30, 2020, so likely a continuing resolution will happen that would keep funding flat for the coming fiscal year. Additional costs increases are anticipated and the full effects of COVID is not known at this time.

Hannah Cook reviewed the status of some of the key projects in the LOSRPO region including A-0010AA, R-5837, and R-5799, R-5800, R-5919 and R-5921, which have all had their schedules pushed out, sometimes into unfunded years of the STIP. These are not all the projects shifted and she invited LOSRPO members to reach out with questions about specific projects.

Discussion occurred regarding the potential sale of the BUILD NC Bonds and NCDOT staff shared that the sale of those has been approved to move forward. Additionally, the FAST Act funds, which were set to expire September 30, 2020, have been extended for one-year and the intention is to take up reauthorization during the Spring 2020 session of Congress.

Information only. No action required.

SPOT6.0 Update:

Vicki Eastland provided an update on potential changes to the Prioritization 6.0 timeline and process. She reviewed the available funding for P6.0 as of July 17, 2020, noting that the funding levels presented do not consider cost increases received since July 17. Vicki

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Eastland shared that additional costs increases have led to both the Regional and Division Needs tiers in each Division being overspent. A comparison of available funding for P5.0 versus P6.0 was provided, and it was noted that the SPOT Workgroup was provided with some options, including not making any changes, to pause/re-assess after quantitative scoring, to push out the STIP by one-year, or to push out the STIP by one-year with a second submittal window. Vicki Eastland also noted that currently, consultants are not onboard to do the work. She provided an updated P6.0 schedule, noting that more information should be available in the coming months. Vicki Eastland shared a breakout of HB 77, providing the dollar amounts allocated for different NCDOT funding categories. She concluded that funding was grim due to the COVID situation and the gas tax due to vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

Discussion occurred regarding funding allocations to the Divisions for Regional Impact projects and NCDOT staff noted that the level of funding committed in prior rounds of prioritization also needs to be considered when looking at the level of funding overspent. Vicki Eastland noted that high-dollar projects in the region were cascaded into the Regional Impact tier. She encouraged TCC members to confer with their elected officials about cascading projects and how that might not be the best idea moving forward.

Information only. No action requested.

REGULAR UPDATES

NCDOT Division 13 and Division 14 provided updates.

The TPD provided an update.

Vicki Eastland shared Legislative Updates.

Vicki Eastland provided a staff update.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were received.

ADJOURNMENT-

Chair High adjourned the meeting, as there was no further business.

Staff Recommendation:

Review and adopt the minutes.



4. RPO BUSINESS

Item 4A Presentation on NC First Commission Recommendations

The NC First Commission was created in March 2019. Comprised of 13 members of diverse backgrounds, with expertise in finance, business, and public policy, one of which was Henderson County Commissioner and former FBRMPO Chair William Lapsley, P.E.

The committee was tasked with evaluating NC's current and future transportation investment needs and advising the Secretary of Transportation of new or better options to ensure financial resources are available in the future. With increased fuel efficiency, the projected increase in electric and hybrid vehicles the committee looked for solutions to declines in gas tax and other transportation revenues. This included researching emerging trends and the impacts of new technologies and changing demographics would have on NC's current funding model.

The final report was released on January 8th, 2021 and includes an identified need for an additional \$20 billion needed over the next ten years to maintain and improve existing infrastructure. To address this funding short fall, the report includes long-range transportation funding recommendations to provide more sustainable transportations funding to North Carolina in the future.

The final report and summary presentation are available here:

<https://www.ncdot.gov/about-us/how-we-operate/finance-budget/nc-first/Pages/final-report.aspx>

Staff Recommendation:

No action required, information only.

Item 4B LOSRPO and SWRPO FY 2022 CMAQ funding allocation

In prior years, the Land of Sky and Southwestern RPOs LOSRPO and SWRPO have been allocated \$100,000 in Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds from the NCDOT (\$50,000 each year). This round, NCDOT has made a total of \$200,000 available, \$100,000 for each RPO. Land of Sky RPO staff, working with LOSRC Regional Clean Air Campaign and Land of Sky Clean Vehicles and Clean City's staff has consulted with staff of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and Southwestern Commission about the availability and potential uses of these funds. The National Park is requesting \$100,000 to continue its air quality education and outreach work within the Park for three years. These funds will account for SWRPO's \$100,000. The Land of Sky Regional Council is requesting \$100,000 to continue the work of its Regional Clean Air Campaign and Land of Sky Clean Vehicles Coalition for two years. Land of Sky's work includes public education and outreach on reducing emissions from mobile sources, technical assistance to fleets in the region on alternative fueled and advanced technology vehicle options, and assistance securing grant funding for green fleet projects. These funds will account for LOSRPO's \$100,000. Applications to the NCDOT are due March 15, 2021.

Land-of-Sky RPO Resolution Endorsing Candidate CMAQ Project Proposals

WHEREAS the FAST Act of 2015 continues the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ); and

WHEREAS CMAQ is a Federal program that funds transportation projects and programs in air quality non-attainment and maintenance areas to help achieve and maintain national standards for pollutants; and

WHEREAS the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) administers the CMAQ program on behalf of non-attainment and maintenance areas within North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, the Land-of-Sky Rural Transportation Planning Organization (RPO) has administered a CMAQ project selection process among the area jurisdictions in air quality non-attainment and maintenance counties; and

WHEREAS, NCDOT has allocated a total of \$100,000 of CMAQ funds to the Land of Sky region for FY 2022-2023; and

WHEREAS the following candidate projects have been prioritized and allocation amounts have been approved recognizing the local entities are responsible for a 20% match and

WHEREAS the following candidate project proposals meet the requirements of CMAQ and the guidelines established by NCDOT to administer the program; and

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CMAQ Allocation FY 2022-2023					
	Prioritized Project	CMAQ Funding FY 2022	CMAQ Funding FY 2023		Total Cost
1	LOSRC Air Quality Outreach & Education	\$50,000 (\$12,500 local match)	\$50,000 (\$12,500 local match)	\$125,000.00	\$100,000 (\$25,000 local match)

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Land-of-Sky RPO endorses the attached listing of proposed CMAQ candidate projects provided here on this, the 25th day of March 2021.

ADOPTED: This the 25th day of March 2021.

Commissioner Matthew Wechtel, Chairman, Land-of-Sky RPO TAC

ATTEST:

Vicki L. Eastland, Land-of-Sky RPO

Staff Recommendations:

Review and vote to recommend adoption to TAC at their March 25 Meeting.

Item 4C LOSRPO DRAFT FY 2022 Planning Work Program PWP

LOSRPO staff has developed the DRAFT LOSRPO Planning Work Program, (PWP) and submitted the FY 2021-2022 Draft PWP to NCDOT TPD for review. Due to COVID 19 and NCDOT financial uncertainty, some ongoing work products are still underway. For example, SPOT6.0. Like most years, the PWP is a continuation of ongoing RPO projects. The FBRMPO Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) update as well as the Transylvania County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) are still underway, so funding is still allocated to the CTP category. LOSRPO staff serve on a few statewide work groups and committees, as well as ones with more regional significance therefore there is a sizable percentage of the planning funds in the General Transportation category. SPOT 6.0 is ongoing so there is a significant amount of funding in Prioritization. Data Collection, Project Development and Admin make up the bulk of the remaining funding except for RPO Direct charges, Travel, and indirect funds.

Staff Recommendation:

Recommend DRAFT PWP and forward to LOSRPO TAC for final approval at the March 25 meeting.

FY 2021-2022
PLANNING WORK PROGRAM
Narrative
LOS Rural Planning Organization

I. DATA COLLECTION AND ASSESSMENT		
I-1 DATA COLLECTION AND ASSESSMENT		\$ 10,000.00
I-1.1	Highway Conduct CTP Needs Assessment and other hwy data assessments as needed	
I-1.2	Other Modes RPO staff will continue to work with members to conduct bike/ped counts where requested/Continue work w/ Public Transit Providers	
I-1.3	Socioeconomic RPO staff will continue to track SE data	
I-1.4	Title VI RPO staff will continue to track Title VI data	
II. TRANSPORTATION PLANNING		
II-1 COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (CTP) DEVELOPMENT		\$ 10,000.00
II-1.1	Develop CTP Vision RPO staff will work w/TPD and Counties on CTP updates, wrap up Transylvania Co and FBRMPO, potentially start Madison County	
II-1.2	Conduct CTP Needs Assessment RPO staff will work w/TPD and Counties on CTP updates, wrap up Transylvania Co and FBRMPO, potentially start Madison County	
II-1.3	Analyze Alternatives and Environmental Screening RPO staff will work w/TPD and Counties on CTP updates, wrap up Transylvania Co and FBRMPO, potentially start Madison County	
II-1.4	Develop Final Plan RPO staff will work w/TPD and Counties on CTP updates, wrap up Transylvania Co and FBRMPO, potentially start Madison County	
II-1.5	Adopt Plan RPO staff will work w/TPD and Counties on CTP updates, wrap up Transylvania Co and FBRMPO, potentially start Madison County	
II-2 PRIORITIZATION		\$ 15,500.00
II-2.1	Project Prioritization RPO staff will conduct all necessary work for SPOT6.0	
II-3 PROGRAM AND PROJECT DEVELOPMENT		\$ 7,000.00
II-3.1	STIP Participation RPO staff will review and provide comment on STIP results of SPOT5.0 and SPOT6.0	
II-3.2	Merger / Project Development RPO staff will continue to participate in the design process of projects in our region	
II-4 GENERAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING		\$ 25,400.00
II-4.1	Regional and Statewide Planning RPO staff serves on a number of NCARPO statewide committees, this work will continue. Attend NCARPO meetings, NCAMPO conference, National RPO-NADO participation, FBRMPO meetings,	
II-4.2	Special Studies, Projects and Other Trainings RPO staff will continue planning for CMAQ, Park n Ride counts and surveys, Hellbender Regional trail wg, and other regional and statewide planning projects and other special studies as needed.	
III. ADMINISTRATION OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND POLICIES		
III-1 ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES		\$ 14,000.00
III-1.1	Administrative Documents RPO staff will maintain RPO admin documents, PWP and quarterly invoices and annual report	
III-1.2	TCC / TAC Work Facilitation; Ethics Compliance RPO staff will facilitate TCC/TAC	
III-1.3	Program Administration Other necessary administrative issues.	
IV. DIRECT COSTS		
IV-1 PROGRAMMATIC DIRECT CHARGES		\$ 1,500.00
IV-1.1	Program-wide Direct Costs NADO dues, Website fees, GIS account maintenance, RPO equipment and maintenance as needed	
IV-2 ADVERTISING		\$ 1,000.00
IV-2.1	News Media Ads Prioritization ads other ads as needed for public involvement	
IV-3 LODGING, MEALS, INCIDENTALS		\$ 3,000.00
IV-3.1	Hotel Costs Travel to 4 NCARPO quarterly meetings and the annual MPO Conference. Travel to Statewide workgroup meetings other conferences/trainings NCAUG, other GIS trainings, NADO Rural Transportation Conference	
IV-3.2	Meal Costs Per diem	
IV-3.3	Incidentals Parking fees	
IV-4 POSTAGE		\$ 20.00
IV-4.1	Mailings As needed for Title VI and other correspondence	
IV-5 REGISTRATION / TRAINING		\$ 1,284.00
IV-5.1	Conference Registration NCAMPO Conference, GIS conferences, NADO Rural Transportation conference etc,	
IV-5.2	Meeting / Workshop / Training Fees other conferences/trainings NCAUG, other GIS trainings,	
IV-6 TRAVEL		\$ 6,000.00
IV-6.1	Mileage Reimbursement Travel including any trips that are not within staffs normal commute.	
IV-6.2	Car Rental Costs When it is cost effective to rent a car verses taking a personal vehicle.	
IV-6.3	Other Travel Expenses	
V. INDIRECT COSTS		
V-1 INDIRECT COSTS APPROVED BY COGNIZANT AGENCY FY 18-19		\$ 38,265.00
V-1.1	Incurred Indirect Costs Based on Indirect letter provided to NCDOT	
TOTAL		\$ 132,969.00

Approved by the TAC on: _____ 20__

Signature, TAC Chairman

Signature, RPO Secretary

Item 4D Prioritization 6.0 (SPOT 6.0) Update

The TCC members will be provided an update on potential changes to the Prioritization 6.0 timeline.

Prioritization Task	Estimated Date
Final Project List Approved by LOS TAC	March 2020
SPOT Online Closes for submitting projects	July 31 st , 2020
DRAFT Identified Needs Due for Hwy Projects	September 11 th , 2020
Area Specific Weights due	October 23 rd , 2020
Final Identified Needs and Complete Streets Project sheets due for all projects (Hwy and Non-Hwy)	April 23 rd , 2021
Quantitative Scoring completed	July, 2021
Local Input Point Assignment Methodologies Due	July 30 th , 2021
Prioritization Workgroup meeting	August, 2021
The remaining dates are TBD pending Prioritization Workgroup meeting outcome after quantitative scoring is complete. ***	***Summer/Fall 2021
DRAFT Programmed Statewide Mobility Projects and Quantitative Scores for all projects released	End of August 31 st , 2021
Local Input Points for Regional Impact Projects Due	November 30 th , 2022
DRAFT list of Programmed Regional Impact Projects	End of January, 2022
Local Input Points for Division Needs Projects Due	May 1 st , 2022
DRAFT 2023 – 2032 STIP Released	August 2022

Staff Recommendation:

No action required, update only.

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5. REGULAR UPDATES

- D. NCDOT Division 13 and 14 updates
- E. Transportation Planning Division Updates
- F. Staff Updates

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ADJOURNMENT

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