

# Meeting Agenda

RPO Technical Advisory Committee

October 22nd, 2020 – 11:30 Zoom Meeting Platform

## 1. WELCOME AND HOUSEKEEPING

- A. Welcome and Introductions
- B. Ethics Statement

Matt Wechtel  
Matt Wechtel

## 2. PUBLIC COMMENT

## 3. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Minutes from the RPO TAC June 25th, 2020 Meeting
- B. Agenda Approval/Modifications

Matt Wechtel

## 4. LAND OF SKY RPO TAC BUSINESS ITEMS

- A. Rural FTA 5310 Letters of Support
- B. Hellbender Regional Trail Adoption
- C. NCDOT STIP Revision/NCDOT Funding
- D. SPOT 6.0 Update

Vicki Eastland  
Vicki Eastland  
Hannah Cook, NCDOT Programming  
Vicki Eastland

## 5. PUBLIC COMMENT

## 6. REGULAR UPDATES

- A. NCDOT Division 13 & 14 updates  
Most Recent Updates <http://landofskyrpo.org/>
- B. NCDOT Transportation Planning Division
- C. Staff Updates and Housekeeping

Mark Gibbs/Brian Burch  
TPD Staff  
Vicki Eastland

## 7. ANNOUNCEMENTS, NEWS, SPECIAL UPDATES

## 8. ADJOURN LOSRPO MEETING

Matt Wechtel

Upcoming Meetings:

**Land of Sky RPO TCC Meeting on February 11th, 2021**

**Land of Sky RPO TAC Meeting on February 25th, 2021**

# Meeting Agenda

## Item 1B: Ethics Statement

### ETHICS AWARENESS & CONFLICT OF INTEREST REMINDER

(To be read by the Chair or his or her designee at the beginning of each meeting)

In accordance with the State Government Ethics Act, it is the duty of every Board member to avoid conflicts of interest. Does any Board member have any known conflict of interest with respect to any matters coming before the Board today? If so, please identify the conflict and refrain from any participation in the particular matter involved.

## 2. PUBLIC COMMENT

## 3. CONSENT AGENDA (Approval of June 25, 2020 Minutes & Agenda Approval/Modification)

**Land of Sky Rural Planning Organization  
 Technical Advisory Committee  
 Virtual Meeting via the Zoom Platform  
 Minutes – June 25, 2020**

### Remote Attendees:

Chair Matt Wechtel (Madison County)  
 Troy Wilson (NCDOT Division 14)  
 Jason Chappell (Transylvania County)  
 Stephen Sparks (NCDOT Division 13)  
 Kevin Ensley (Haywood County)  
 Brownie Newman (Buncombe County)  
 Chris Medlin (NCDOT District 2)  
 Allen McNeill (Transylvania County)

Vicki Eastland (RPO Coordinator)  
 Brian Burch (NCDOT Division 14)  
 Maureen Copelof (City of Brevard)  
 Steve Williams (NCDOT Division 14)  
 Jack Debnam (NCBOT-Rural Transit)  
 Erica Anderson (Land of Sky)  
 Allen McNeil (Transylvania County)

### In-Person Attendees (LOS Office):

Zia Rifkin (Staff to the RPO)

## WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Matt Wechtel called the meeting to order at approximately 11:30am and welcomed attendees. He read the Ethics Statement, inquired if there were any conflicts, which would preclude TAC members from voting on business items, for members to state such for the record, and to refrain from participation in the matter.

# Meeting Agenda

Vicki Eastland called the roll and quorum was established. Chair Wechtel requested approval of the agenda, which was modified to move the P6.0 Update to the end of the business items, before the regular updates.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No public comments received.

## **APPROVAL OF TAC MINUTES**

*Jason Chappell moved to approve the minutes from the March 26, LOSRPO TAC meeting. Brownie Newman seconded, and the motion carried upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.*

## **APPROVAL OF MODIFIED AGENDA**

*Maureen Copelof moved to approve the agenda as modified. Jason Chappell seconded, and the motion carried upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.*

## **BUSINESS**

### LOSRPO Planning Work Program (PWP) Amendment

The Land of Sky Rural Planning Organization (LOSRPO) is seeking Transportation Planning Branch approval for the amended FY 2020 Planning Work Program. RPO staff, who reviewed the current fiscal year planning work program and budget, identified shifts of funding necessary to reflect actual work demands through the last three months of the fiscal year, deemed this amendment necessary. The Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) recommended the changes on June 11, 2020. There is no change to the RPO's overall budget and RPO members will not be requested to provide money.

The following changes are recommended for approval:

### IV-3 Lodging, Meals, Incidentals

- Due to the impacts of COVID-19, LOSRPO staff did not undertake the types of travel as staff would normally. For this reason, LOSRPO staff requests to shift funding to programs with ongoing work tasks. There are no changes to the specified deliverables, but the amount of money allocated for Lodging, Meals, and Incidentals is **reduced** by (\$1,744.68).

### IV-5 Registration / Training

- Due to the impacts of COVID-19, LOSRPO staff did not attend anticipated Conferences. For this reason, LOSRPO staff requests to shift funding to programs with ongoing work tasks. There are no changes to the specified deliverables, but the level of funding allocated for Registration/Training is **reduced** by (\$735.00),

### IV-6 Travel

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- Due to the impacts of COVID-19, LOSRPO staff did not undertake the types of travel that staff normally would have undertaken. For this reason, LOSRPO staff requests to shift funding to programs with ongoing work tasks. There are no changes to the specified deliverables, but the amount of money allocated for Travel is **reduced** by (\$3,591.28).

## II-4 General Transportation Planning

- Additional work for NCARPO items and Western RPO Meetings – **increased** by \$1,163.07.

## II-2 Prioritization and Program Development

- Additional work demands for SPOT6.0 – **increased** by \$4,907.89.

***Maureen Copelof moved to approve the PWP amendment. Jason Chappell seconded and the motion carried upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.***

## Resolution of Support: City of Brevard Bike/Ped Planning Grant

City of Brevard staff are submitting for an NCDOT Bicycle/Pedestrian Planning Grant. A resolution of support is required from the RTAC. The deadline for application is June 30, 2020.

### **RESOLUTION ENDORSING THE APPLICATION FOR PEDESTRIAN PLAN FUNDS BY THE CITY OF BREVARDY, NC**

**WHEREAS**, North Carolina General Statutes 136-211 enacted July 6, 2000, provides for the establishment of Rural Transportation Planning Organizations (RPOs) to provide rural entities a cooperative and unified voice in project selection and funding, and enhance their involvement in integrated multi-model transportation planning; and

**WHEREAS**, the Transportation Advisory Committee is the duly recognized transportation decision-making body of the Land-of-Sky Rural Planning Organization; and

**WHEREAS**, the North Carolina Department of Transportation Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation has established a Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant which provides funding to projects that will result in comprehensive local bicycle and pedestrian transportation plans; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Brevard, North Carolina has decided to apply for funding from the Department of Transportation for a comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian plan for the application cycle that ends June 30, 2020; and

**WHEREAS**, the Transportation Advisory Committee finds it in the best interest of the Land of Sky Rural Planning Organization to endorse the City of Brevard's application.

**NOW THEREFORE**, be it resolved that the Land of Sky Rural Planning Organization Transportation Advisory Committee hereby endorses the application by the City of Brevard and, if the project is selected, will provide technical assistance for the duration of the project.

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**ADOPTED:** This the 25<sup>th</sup> Day of June 2020.

Vicki Eastland clarified that this NCDOT grant requires a 20% local match and the City of Brevard would provide the 20% local match funding to the planning grant, should the application gain approval.

**Jason Chappell moved to adopt the LOSRPO Resolution of Support for the City of Brevard's Bike and Pedestrian Planning Grant. Kevin Ensley seconded, and the motion carried upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.**

## P6.0 Update

The Schedule has changed:

Prioritization Task	Estimated Date
Final Project List Approved by LOS TAC	March 2020
SPOT Online Closes for submitting projects	July 31st
DRAFT Identified Needs Due for Hwy Projects	September 11, 2020
Area Specific Weights due	October 23rd
Final Identified Needs and Complete Streets Project sheets due for all projects (Hwy and Non-Hwy)	April 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2021
DRAFT Programmed Statewide Mobility Projects and Quantitative Scores for all projects released	End of May, 2021
Local Input Point Assignment Methodologies Due	June 1, 2021
Local Input Points for Regional Impact Projects Due	August 27 <sup>th</sup> , 2021
DRAFT list of Programmed Regional Impact Projects	End of October, 2021
Local Input Points for Division Needs Projects Due	January 28 <sup>th</sup> , 2022
DRAFT 2023 – 2032 STIP Released	May 2022

## Project List

Both the TCC and TAC approved the final project list at their March meetings. RPO staff continues to enter projects into the SPOT Online tool working with NCDOT Division 13/14 staff as well as SPOT office staff to improve submitted projects.

<http://landofskyrpo.org/prioritization/>

Steve Williams shared about HB 77, which is transportation related and going to referendum. If HB 77 passes, without change from the last version, it would provide \$107M for NCDOT's General Maintenance Reserve. Brian Burch shared that the Bill also provides the governor the authority to sell NC Build Bonds. He noted that the State elected not to put the NC Build Bonds up for sale back in May due to the virus. He also communicated that NCDOT is above the cash floor; how funding might be utilized has not been determined yet.

**Information item only. No action requested**

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## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comments received.

## **REGULAR UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

NCDOT Division 13 & 14 Updates

Staff Updates (Vicki Eastland)

## **ADJOURNMENT**

*Kevin Ensley moved to adjourn the meeting. Jason Chappell seconded, and the meeting adjourned at 12:12pm.*

## **4. LAND OF SKY RPO TAC BUSINESS**

### **Item 4A: 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.

Due to several factors, COVID-19, CARES Act funds additional reporting burdens etc. The Grant filing deadline has been pushed back to December 1st. This deadline is usually in November. Because of 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.

### **Staff Recommendations:**

No action required, information only.

### **Item 4B: Hellbender Regional Trail Adoption**

At the September 2019 RPO TCC meeting, Tristan Winkler, FBRMPO Director, provided a presentation to the TCC on the concept of a regional trail 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.

# Meeting Agenda

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 greenway, multi-use path, 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, increased connectivity/accessibility

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.

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The Hellbender consists of four "lines" that connect the region:

**The Orange Line-** Mars Hill to Blue Ridge Community College (just south of Hendersonville)

**The Gold Line-** Hendersonville to Brevard

**The Blue Line-** Westfeldt Park to Rosman

**The Green Line-** Waynesville to Black Mountain

The Hellbender Regional Trail Plan provides our region a document that connects local plans into a regional system, highlights planned trails that would have a regional significance, and provides a vision for what a regional trail system could look like. Such a system could provide residents and visitors options to get outside to recreate and exercise while also providing

opportunities for environmental enhancements and economic development.

It is important to note that the Hellbender is a long-term vision. Currently there are 12 miles of the estimated 150 miles system on the ground. This is a major infrastructure project spread across multiple jurisdictions. Given current transportation funding policies and investment levels, a 50-year timeframe is realistic for completion of a system of this magnitude.

The adoption of the Hellbender regional Trail Plan is a first step. The Regional Trail work group, FBRMPO, and LOSRPO will continue to raise awareness of on-going activities and consider further marketing and partnerships to assist local and regional efforts for advancing the Hellbender Trail.

The Hellbender Regional Trail Plan is available here:

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



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## RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE HELLBENDER REGIONAL TRAIL PLAN

**WHEREAS**, North Carolina General Statutes 136-211 enacted July 6, 2000, provides for the establishment of Rural Transportation Planning Organizations (RPOs) to provide rural entities a cooperative and unified voice in project selection and funding, and enhance their involvement in integrated multi-model transportation planning; and

**WHEREAS**, the Transportation Advisory Committee is the duly recognized transportation decision-making body of the Land-of-Sky Rural Planning Organization; and

**WHEREAS**, the North Carolina Department of Transportation maintains a Complete Streets Policy whose cost share formulas are based on planned bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure being documented in adopted plans; and

**WHEREAS**, numerous communities in the Land of Sky Rural Planning Organization (LOSRPO) and the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (FBRMPO) have developed bicycle, pedestrian, and/or greenway plans; and

**WHEREAS** the LOSRPO Transportation Advisory Committee supports safe transportation infrastructure for all modes and users.

**NOW THEREFORE**, be it resolved that the Land-of-Sky Rural Planning Organization Transportation Advisory Committee hereby endorses and approves the Hellbender Regional Trail Plan.

**ADOPTED:** This the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of October 2020.

**Staff Recommendations:**

Review and vote to adopt the Hellbender Regional Trail Plan.

**Item 4C: NCDOT STIP Revision/NCDOT Funding**

Due to several factors impacting NCDOT revenues, a revised 2020 – 2029 STIP was presented to the NC BOT at their September meeting. The BOT will/has voted on this revised document at their October 7<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Hannah Cook, NCDOT Senior Program Engineer, Western STIP Region is with us today to provide a presentation explaining the factors effecting revenues and the project scheduling impacts for LOSRPO projects.

**Staff Recommendation:**

No action required. Information only.

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## **Item 4D SPOT6.0 Update**

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

### **Staff Recommendation:**

No action required. Information only.

## **5. PUBLIC COMMENT**

## **6. REGULAR UPDATES**

A. NCDOT Division 13 and 14 updates

NCDOT Staff

Most Recent Updates <http://landofskyrpo.org/>

B. Staff Updates

Vicki Eastland

## **7. ANNOUNCEMENTS, NEWS, SPECIAL UPDATES**

## **8. ADJOURN LOSRPO MEETING**

Matt Wechtel

### **Upcoming Meetings:**

**Land of Sky RPO TCC Meeting on February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

**Land of Sky RPO TAC Meeting on February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021**