

Meeting Agenda

RPO Technical Advisory Committee
August 25th, 2022 – 11:30 – Land of Sky Regional Council and Zoom Platform

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Meeting ID: 861 0190 2243 Passcode: 464663
or Call in: (301) 715 8592

1. WELCOME AND HOUSEKEEPING

- A. Welcome and Introductions
- B. Ethics Statement

Matt Wechtel
Matt Wechtel

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

3. Consent Agenda

Minutes from the RPO TAC March 25th, 2022, Meeting
Agenda Approval/Modifications

Matt Wechtel

4. LAND OF SKY RPO TAC BUSINESS Items

- A. NC Clean Transportation Plan
- B. Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Action Plan
- C. NCDOT DRAFT 2023-2034 STIP Update

Jen Weiss, NCDOT
Vicki Eastland
Vicki Eastland

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

6. REGULAR UPDATES

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

Tim Anderson/Wanda Austin
(or designee)
Daniel Sellers, PE
Alexius Farris
Vicki Eastland

7. ADJOURN LOSRPO MEETING

Matt Wechtel

Upcoming Meeting

Land of Sky RPO TCC – Meeting on October 13, 2022 – 10:00 AM Land of Sky Regional Council and Zoom

Land of Sky RPO TAC – Meeting on October 20, 2022 – 11:30 AM Land of Sky Regional Council and Zoom

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.

Technical Advisory Committee

Virtual Meeting via the Zoom Platform

March 24, 2022 – 11:30 A.M.

Minutes

Remote Attendance:

Chair Matt Wechtel (Madison Commission)

Jane Pies (minutes)

Mac Morrow (Brevard Council)

Steve Williams (NCDOT Division 14)

Hannah Cook (NCDOT Division 13)

Billy Clarke (NCBOT)

Paul Justus

Vicki Eastland (RPO Coordinator)

Troy Wilson (NCDOT Division 13)

Stephen Sparks (NCDOT Division 13)

Kevin Ensley (Haywood Commission)

Larry Chapman (Transylvania Commission)

Mark Gibbs (NCDOT Division 13)

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Matt Wechtel called the meeting to order at 11:30am and welcomed attendees. He read the Ethics Statement, and inquired if there were any conflicts, which could preclude TAC members from participating in and voting on any business items, to state such for the record, and to refrain from participation in the matter. None were heard from the TAC members.

Vicki Eastland called the roll and quorum was announced.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were received.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Meeting Agenda

Chair Wechtel requested approval of the consent agenda, which included the February 24, 2022, minutes, and today's TAC agenda. **The LOSRPO TAC reached agreement for approval by consensus.**

RPO BUSINESS

LOSRPO PWP

LOSRPO staff shared the DRAFT 2023 LOSRPO Planning Work Program, (PWP) with the TCC and TAC at their February meetings. There have been no changes made. The PWP is a continuation of ongoing RPO projects. The funding is divided across the following categories.

- Transylvania County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP)
- General Transportation category,
- Development of the 2024 – 2033 STIP
- SPOT 7.0
- Data Collection,
- Project Development and
- RPO Admin
- RPO Direct charges, Travel, and indirect funds.

Larry Chapman moved to adopt the LOSRPO FY 2023 Planning work Program (PWP) as presented. Billy Clarke seconded the motion which passed unanimously upon a roll call vote.

Elect new TAC Chair and Vice Chair

At this time, both LOSRPO TAC Chair Matt Wechtel, (Madison Commission) and Vice Chair Kevin Ensley, (Haywood Commission) have served their two-year terms as laid out in the LOSRPO By-laws. Therefore, the TAC needs to hold an election of officers. The RPO Bylaws state that officers will serve a term of two years and can serve consecutive terms if they wish and the TAC so desires.

Motions were made and seconded to renominate Matt Wechtel for Chair and Kevin Ensley for Vice Chair. They were reinstated unanimously upon a roll call vote.

NCDOT Complete Streets Update

Over the past few months, NCDOT staff have been working internally on updates to NCDOT's Complete Streets implementation approach. The Complete Streets Policy, originally adopted by NCDOT in 2012 and updated in 2019, is not changing, but NCDOT is proposing changes to how the policy is implemented. A new project evaluation methodology and flowchart were recently developed. Information provided in the pages linked below show a summary of the changes and next steps. This information was shared with LOSRPO staff as well as the North Carolina Association of RPOs in the past few months.

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Updated NCDOT Documents:

- [NCDOT's Complete Streets Implementation Guide](#)
- [NCDOT's Complete Streets Project Evaluation Methodology](#)

NCDOT Division 13 Planning Engineer, Hannah Cook, presented on NCDOT's Complete Streets changes. Hannah Cook went over Complete Street's goals, the evolution of Complete Streets in NC, implementation challenges and offered a summary of new implementation guidance for project development. She also discussed next steps and resources. She stated that the Complete Streets policy itself isn't changing, the department is only updating the guidance on how to implement the policy.

Complete Streets goals include reducing pedestrian crashes and unsafe conditions, improving access and mobility for those without a vehicle, enhancing quality of life by providing transportation choices, and ensuring that NCDOT has an equitable transportation system that works for everyone. Complete Streets are important in NC as over 600,000 people are in households without a vehicle and about a million have limited access to a vehicle.

Hannah Cook added that key challenges to implementation of the Complete Streets Policy include inconsistent implementation across divisions, lack of standard and a need to streamline, policy gaps in key areas, limited metrics, data and tracking and a need for enhanced training. These challenges led to a coordinated effort in 2021 to update the implementation guidelines. Proposed implementation improvements include a new project evaluation methodology to identify multimodal needs, selecting the appropriate facility type and assess impacts, and making modifications to the Implementation Guide to integrate new evaluation methodology to clarify key guidance areas.

The Complete Streets Project Evaluation Methodology process serves as guidance to aid in the evaluation of highway projects for Complete Streets elements. The five steps of this process include initial screening and data input, transportation need determination, facility type selection and final analysis. Hannah Cook shared several items for ongoing discussions on key issues, to include:

1. Maintenance of separated multimodal facilities, particularly outside municipal boundaries
2. Inclusion of complete streets elements on maintenance projects
3. Harmonization of complete streets processes with the Project Delivery Network (PDN) including Planning and Express Design
4. Alignment of pedestrian/bike need determination between CTP and Complete Streets methodologies
5. Local coordination when determining bike/ped needs and choosing facility
6. Determining costs and benefits of complete streets elements
7. Incorporation complete streets elements in projects prior to programming

Three work groups have been set up by NCDOT to help address these key issues.

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Representatives from Divisions, other units and MPO/RPOs are included. Discussions are anticipated to occur between the end of March and July of this year.

Next steps in the process were shared by Hannah Cook. Continued training and outreach on the methodology and resources will occur. Work groups will convene and develop update recommendations. Updates will be made to Complete Streets resources as necessary and provide revised guidance and/or trainings. NCDOT will continue to collect data, monitor implementation, and identify additional improvements to guidance for planning, prioritization, project development, and maintenance activities.

Information only no action requested

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were received.

REGULAR UPDATES

NCDOT Divisions 13 and 14 updates available on website:

<http://landofskyrpo.org/> and provided at the meeting

NCDOT Transportation Planning Division updates available on website:

<http://landofskyrpo.org/> and provided at the meeting

NCDOT Integrated Mobility Division Staff provided an update

LOSRPO Staff provided updates

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Wechtel called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. ***Kevin Ensley moved to adjourn. Billy Clarke seconded the motion which passed unanimously.***

Staff Recommendation: Review and approve the March 24th, 2022, TAC meeting Minutes

4. LAND OF SKY RPO TAC BUSINESS

Meeting Agenda

Item 4A: NC Clean Transportation Plan

Jen Weiss with NCDOT will present on the NC Clean Transportation Plan, which is currently in progress.

From the [project website](#):

In January 2022, Gov. Roy Cooper signed [Executive Order 246 \(EO 246\)](#), "North Carolina's Transformation to a Clean, Equitable Economy," setting the course for North Carolina's continued work to reduce economy-wide greenhouse gas emissions, advance environmental justice and create good paying jobs throughout the state. This executive order builds upon 2018's [Executive Order 80](#), which established a goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40 percent and increase zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) adoption to 80,000 vehicles by 2025.

EO 246 Goals

- Reduce economy-wide greenhouse gas emissions to at least 50 percent below 2005 levels by 2030 and achieve net-zero emissions no later than 2050.
- Increase the total number of registered, zero-emission vehicles to at least 1,250,000 by 2030 and increase the sale of ZEVs so that 50 percent of in-state sales of new vehicles are zero-emission by 2030.

Clean Transportation Plan

As part of EO 246, the N.C. Department of Transportation is tasked with developing a Clean Transportation Plan (NCCTP) within 15 months of the order. The NCCTP will recommend actionable strategies for decarbonizing the transportation sector and shall address:

1. Availability, sales, and usage of zero-emission vehicles to levels beyond current market projections, including a focus on medium- and heavy-duty ZEVs.
2. Reductions in vehicle miles traveled.
3. Investment in clean transportation infrastructure.
4. Equitable access to clean mobility options.
5. Increased availability of non-vehicle transportation modes.
6. A transition to zero- and low-emission fuels.
7. Other relevant topics.

Meeting Agenda

To create the NCCTP, NCDOT will be collaborating with stakeholders to create plans for the rapid decarbonization of North Carolina's transportation sector. This process will take into consideration the diverse viewpoints of all stakeholders and the potential impacts of each recommendation.

Staff Recommendations: No action required information only

Item 4B Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Action Plan

What is Safe Streets for All?

[Safe Streets for All](#) (SS4A) is a new grant program offered through USDOT that was created as part of the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law aiming at achieving zero roadway death and serious injuries. It is a discretionary grant, meaning eligible entities may apply directly to USDOT for funding and USDOT makes awards based on the merits of proposals and other factors to ensure some level of geographic equity. \$5 billion is expected to be made available over the next five years for this program.

The Safe Streets for All program makes different types of funding available to help improve safety.

- Develop or update a comprehensive safety action plan (Action Plan).
- Conduct planning, design, and development activities in support of an Action Plan.
- Carry out projects and strategies identified in an Action Plan.

However, jurisdictions may not apply for implementation funding unless there is an Action Plan in place. A couple of jurisdictions have plans that have some parts of an Action Plan, but as of this writing, none have enough to be eligible to apply for implementation funds.

Proposed Application for the Region

The Land of Sky RPO staff recommends submitting a joint application for an Action Plan with the French Broad River MPO. This would create a five-county Action Plan for Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania counties, enabling jurisdictions in those areas to apply for implementation funds. This plan would include the following general elements:

- Community & Stakeholder Engagement
- Crash and Risk-Based Analysis

Meeting Agenda

- Safety Hot-Spot Identification
- Project Recommendations
- Programmatic Recommendations

The current draft budget is for \$400,000 total. \$320,000 would be covered by the federal share (if successful) and \$80,000 would be required to come from non-federal sources. The NCDOT Safety Unit plans to make some State funding available for local match and MPO staff has been in discussions with other organizations to potentially alleviate or fully provide the local match as well.

Information from the FHWA Fact Sheet:

Program Purpose

BIL establishes the new Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) discretionary grant program, which supports local initiatives to prevent death and serious injury on roads and streets, commonly referred to as "Vision Zero" or "Toward Zero Deaths" initiatives. The SS4A program supports the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) [National Roadway Safety Strategy](#) and a goal of zero deaths and serious injuries on our nation's roadways.

Statutory Citations

- § 24112; Division J, Title VIII, Safe Streets and Roads for All Grants heading

Funding Features

Type of Budget Authority or Authorization of Appropriations

- Advance appropriations from the General Fund; not subject to any limitation on obligations.

[Division J, Title VIII]

- Authorization, subject to appropriation, from the General Fund. [§ 24112(f)(1)]

Set-asides

- For each of FY22-26, DOT may retain and use for administrative expenses up to 2% of the amounts made available for the SS4A program. [§ 24112(f)(2)]

Distribution of Funds

- Not more than 15% of the funds made available to carry out the program for a fiscal year may be awarded to eligible projects in a single State during that fiscal year.
- For each of FY22-26, DOT must award not less than 40% of SS4A funds made available for that fiscal year to projects to develop comprehensive safety action plans. [§ 24112(c)(2)]

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Availability of Funds

- Amounts made available under a grant under the program shall remain available for use by the grant recipient until the date that is 5 years after the date on which the grant is provided.

[§ 24112(f)(3)]

Federal Share

- The Federal share of the cost of an SS4A project shall not exceed 80% [§ 24112(e)]

Eligible Activities

SS4A funds may be used to:

- Develop a comprehensive safety action plan;
- Conduct planning, design, and development activities for projects and strategies identified in a comprehensive safety action plan; or
- Carry out projects and strategies identified in a comprehensive safety action plan [§ 24112(a)(3)]

Program Features

This is a new program established under the BIL.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are:

- A metropolitan planning organization;
- A political subdivision of a State;
- A federally recognized Tribal government; and
- A multijurisdictional group of entities described above. [§ 24112(a)(2)]

Selection Considerations

When awarding SS4A grants, the BIL requires DOT to consider the extent to which an eligible applicant, and each eligible project proposed to be carried out by the eligible applicant, as applicable:

- Is likely to significantly reduce or eliminate transportation-related fatalities and serious injuries involving various road users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation users, motorists, and commercial operators, within a timeframe proposed by the eligible entity;
- Demonstrates engagement with a variety of public and private stakeholders;
- Seeks to adopt innovative technologies or strategies to promote safety;
- Employs low-cost, high-impact strategies that can improve safety over a wider geographical area;
- Ensures, or will ensure, equitable investment in the safety needs of underserved communities in preventing transportation-related fatalities and injuries;
- Includes evidence-based projects or strategies; and
- Achieves such other conditions as the Secretary considers necessary. [§ 24112(d)(3)]

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Action Required: Consider Approval of an RPO/MPO Action Plan Grant Application

TCC Recommendation: Approve

Item 4C NCDOT 2023 – 2034 DRAFT STIP Update

The Prioritization process for the development of the 2024-2033 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) has had a number of changes take place over the last month.

Financial Changes: The State budget includes a provision to begin transferring a percentage of State sales tax revenues to transportation funds. This is projected to generate \$4-6 billion over the next ten years. This additional funding has resulted in some projects being put back into the 2024-2033 STIP that were initially removed but not all the removed projects, and some project schedules have been adjusted. No projects in LOSRPO that were removed from the current 2020 – 2029 STIP were added back into the DRAFT 2024 – 2033 STIP, however, some project schedules have changed and some regionally significant projects within the FBRMPO have been added back on to the DRAFT STIP including:

Buncombe County

- U-5832 – Modernization of NC 81 (Swannanoa River Road) from Biltmore Avenue to US 74A (South Tunnel Road)
- U-2801A – Widening of US 25A (Sweeten Creek Road) from US 25/NC 280 to Rock Hill Road
- A-0010AA – Widening and Modernization of Future I-26 from Broadway to Weaver Boulevard

Haywood County

- U-4712 – Widening of South Main Street from US 276 to Hyatt Creek Road
- U-6158 – Intersection Improvements to US 276/Crymes Cove Road/Raccoon Road
- U-6159 – Access Management to US 276 (Russ Avenue) from US 23/74 to US 19 (Dellwood Road)

Buncombe/Haywood County

- U-6048 – Modernization of US 19/23 from Chestnut Mountain Road (Haywood County) to Wiggins Road

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Schedule Changes: due to the new funds being made available, the Prioritization Workgroup has recommended the deadline for proposing swaps be delayed until March 17, 2023.

General Schedule Moving Forward:

Revised Draft 2024-2033 STIP Released: Press release sent **August 8, 2022**

Project Swaps Due: **March 17, 2023**

State BOT Considers 2024-2033 STIP for Adoption: **May 2023**

Staff Recommendations: No action required information only

Public Comment

6. REGULAR UPDATES

NCDOT Division 13 and 14 updates

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

Transportation Planning Division updates

NCDOT Integrated mobility Division

Staff Updates

NCDOT Staff

Daniel Sellers

Alexius Farris

Vicki Eastland

ANNOUNCEMENTS, NEWS, SPECIAL UPDATES

7. ADJOURN LOSRPO TAC MEETING

Matt Wechtel

Upcoming Meetings

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