



Land of Sky Rural Planning Organization
Technical Advisory Committee
Minutes – February 28, 2019

Attendees:

Vicki Eastland
Pam Cook
Troy Wilson
Stephen Sparks

Nick Kroncke
Steve Williams
Hannah Cook
Kevin Ensley

Charlie Landreth
Matt Wechtel

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chairman Landreth called the meeting to order, welcomed attendees and requested introductions be made. He read the Ethics Statement, and requested that if there were any conflicts, which would preclude TAC members from voting on business items, to state such for the record, and to refrain from participating in the matter.

NC Moves the 2050 Plan, Presentation: Pam Cook communicated that NCDOT is developing a long-range transportation plan for the state of North Carolina that will establish the transportation vision and goals for the state, while also providing a framework for decision-making and transportation investments. NCDOT is asking for input in shaping the content of this plan, and in helping to identify regional and statewide challenges and opportunities. Currently, "Drivers and Opportunities" are being considered. Additional info about the plan can be found at <https://www.ncdot.gov/initiatives-policies/Transportation/nc-2050-plan/Pages/default.aspx>.

Pam Cook communicated that there have been many changes to transportation in the state over the years, and the current assessment shows where the state is now with regard to transportation planning. She shared that the NC Moves 2050 presentation is meant to provide an opportunity for TAC members to have input into the new plan. Vicki Eastland shared that folks in Madison and Transylvania Counties have commented on the plan and she encouraged TAC members to spread the word that public involvement is needed for the 2050 Plan. Pam Cook noted that it is important for non-governmental agencies to weigh in on the plan, too. She requested TAC members consider some questions regarding transportation services in their communities. Tourism, the economy, funding, and demographics, balancing the needs of workers and non-workers, the needs of the aging community, resiliency, technology, "dig once", etc., among other things, were all noted as concerns.

Matt Wechtel (Madison County) and Kevin Ensley (Haywood County) both commented on I-26/Malfunction Junction, noting that many of the residents in their communities must travel through this interchange to get to work and for other purposes. Chair Landreth added comments about tourism's impacts on the transportation system. Matt Wechtel also mentioned urban-flight due to challenges with housing affordability,

congestion, high taxes, etc., and its impact on the more rural areas in the LOSRPO region. Pam Cook shared that these are important impacts, which could help inform the 2050 Plan.

Brownie Newman brought up autonomous vehicles and wondered about the potential impact those could have on the transportation system.

Mike Hawkins (Transylvania County) submitted a concern prior to the meeting about autonomous vehicles' impact on congestion since those could put more people on the roads. Matt Wechtel shared that the average age of vehicles in the service area of his job is around 10 years old. He commented that autonomous vehicles could be slower hitting the roadways as people replace their old, conventional vehicles. Broadband was also mentioned as a major issue in the western part of the state.

Provide feedback to NCDOT.

Matt Wechtel moved to approve the agenda with a modification for Nick Kroncke to present the Title VI information. Brownie Newman seconded and the motion carried without further discussion.

APPROVAL OF TAC MINUTES

Matt Wechtel moved to approve the minutes from the October 18, 2018 LOSRPO TAC meeting. Brownie Newman seconded and the motion carried without further discussion.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were received.

BUSINESS

LOSRPO Title VI Plan: Nick Kroncke shared about the LOSRPO Title VI Plan. He communicated that Title VI is the federal law that protects individuals and groups from discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin in all programs, services, and activities of a Federal-aid recipient. Other related laws have expanded the Program to protect against discrimination based on age, sex, Limited English Proficiency (LEP), income level, and disability; and creed/religion, where applicable. The intent of the Program is to remove barriers and conditions that prevent minority, low income LEP, and other disadvantaged persons from accessing, participating in, and benefiting from programs and activities of Federal aid recipients. NCDOT is a recipient of Federal financial assistance from the US Department of Transportation. As a recipient of these funds, NCDOT must comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other nondiscrimination authorities. NCDOT is required to have a comprehensive Title VI Nondiscrimination Program to prevent and eliminate discrimination in programs and activities administered by NCDOT. From agenda for transit system, etc. Nick Kroncke shared that notification was received that the draft Title VI plan is acceptable and that is requested to be adopted today.

Brownie Newman moved to adopt the Title VI Plan. Matt Wechtel seconded and the motion carried without further discussion.

Review DRAFT STIP and SPOT6.0 Timeline – Vicki Eastland shared that NCDOT released the Draft 2020-2029 STIP in early January. The Draft was shared with RPO TCC and TAC members. Vicki Eastland shared that NCDOT is holding meetings this week to gather public comments and she will send out more information. Highlights of SPOT5.0 include NC 178-Transylvania County, funded for construction; US 25/70 Superstreet in Madison County funded for planning and design. Also, in Madison County, in the MPO region, Crossroads Parkway is receiving the remaining funding and is currently in ROW. Additional information on other projects is available on the RPO's website. She noted, too, that I-40 in Haywood County is in the developmental STIP for planning and design.

Discussion occurred about having a project funded for planning and design and whether that could improve a project's score during future rounds of prioritization, which was confirmed.

Vicki Eastland shared that Federal Lands Assess Program (FLAP) funds will be released for US 276 in Transylvania County. Also, FLAP funds for- Cove Creek is coming up in FY 2020. In addition, she shared about her work on the SPOT Workgroup and noted that local discussions about new project submittals would begin in May and June. Steve Williams added that the public comment period is open for NCDOT's Draft STIP.

Informational only – no action needed.

LOSRPO State Planning and Research (SPR) Application – Vicki Eastland shared that staff have submitted a grant application to NCDOT Transportation Planning Branch for State Planning and Research (SPR) funds to potentially conduct a feasibility study to examine the viability of consolidating Transit administration and scheduling functions for the County Transportation Systems among the five counties in the Land of Sky RPO region. She provided TAC members with additional information on this potential feasibility study including that there is concern about the impact that the changes to the state's Medicaid program could have on rural transit systems. She also shared about the County Tiers and how those determine the local match required for grants. Vicki Eastland shared that the application submitted was for \$80 thousand in federal grant funds with a required 10% local match and a 10% state match. She noted that the state has advocated rural transit systems consolidating their administrative functions. She noted there is concern with regards to the changes coming to Medicaid and how those could impact rural transit systems.

Informational only. No action required at this time.

REGULAR UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Hannah Cook provided Division 13 updates.

Steve Williams provided Division 14 updates.

Pam Cook provided TPB updates.

Vicki Eastland provided staff updates.

ADJOURNMENT

Kevin Ensley moved to adjourn the meeting. Matt Wechtel seconded and the meeting adjourned.