

# RURAL PLANNING RURAL ORGANIZATION

## RPO Technical Coordinating Committee

May 9, 2019 – 10:00 A.M., Land of Sky Regional Council

### Minutes

#### **Attendance:**

Daniel Cobb	Vicki Eastland	Nick Kroncke	Zia Rifkin
Troy Wilson	Jodie Ferguson	Joy Fields	William High
Wanda Austin	Steve Williams	Stephen Sparks	Matt Cable
Chris Lee	Lonnie Watkins	Chris Medlin	Jeff Moon

#### **WELCOME AND HOUSEKEEPING**

Chair Daniel Cobb called the meeting to order at approximately 10:00am; he welcomed everyone in attendance and requested introductions. He communicated that the agenda was presented for approval with no modifications requested.

***Matt Cable moved to approve the agenda as presented. Jodie Ferguson seconded and the motion carried as all were in favor.***

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comments were made.

#### **ADOPTION OF THE PREVIOUS TCC MINUTES**

***Matt Cable moved to approve the February 14, 2019 TCC minutes as presented. Steve Williams seconded and as all were in favor, the motion carried.***

#### **RPO BUSINESS**

**State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) Presentation:** Stephen Sparks shared a presentation on NCDOT's State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP). He communicated that when the STI was signed into law in 2013, it designated three funding streams. Funds utilized by NCDOT come from the gas tax, DMV fees and highway use tax. These funds are distributed among the funding streams. He explained that the funding for the highway use tax comes from vehicle taxes (3% on purchase of a vehicle). The highway fund holds funds for highway maintenance, among other uses. The highway trust fund contains the funds that are utilized to fund the STIP, among other things. Funding is received from the federal government and an annual appropriation is made by the General Assembly (GA), as well. Vicki Eastland explained that the GA set a floor that the funding would not go below a certain level a couple of years ago. Stephen shared that the FAST Act stipulated a flat amount of funding and gas tax revenue is added to that to make the annual appropriation in the federal budget. STIP expenditures include administrative costs, and funding for the RPOs and MPOs. Other items are funded STIP monies, as well. Funding for the STIP covers cost increases and overruns for projects that are currently under construction. Statewide Mobility projects is funded first including bridges. The funding for Division Needs projects is divided evenly

among all NCDOT divisions. The new STIP is then funded after all ongoing Division Needs obligations have been met. Stephen reviewed the timeline for funding as projects are scored and approved for inclusion in the STIP. The draft 2020-2029 STIP was released in January 2019 and \$27.8 billion dollars is planned for the 2020-2029 STIP. Projects in draft 2020-2029 STIP (selected through STI-p.3, p.4, and p5.0). All roadway projects in the state, programmed through prioritization, are funded through the STIP. Per capita funding for divisions in the STIP show that divisions 13 and 14 fare better due to the I-26 projects. The draft 2020-2029 STIP also schedules adjustments to projects (scope changes, etc.). NCDOT is working to improve cost estimations in the STIP by conducting express designs, utilizing corridor development engineers, and improved project scopes when submitting projects, and includes an NCDOT policy for reprioritization of committed projects when cost estimations rise greatly. He noted that the committed window in the STIP has been increased to the first 6 years for projects, which are committed.

***Informational item only. No action required.***

"So, Your Project is Funded, Now What?" Steve Williams shared a presentation on the process that happens once a transportation project is funded by NCDOT. He noted that it takes a long period of time from project prioritization to it being funded. He shared about the project life cycle, noting that all projects are "stored" in plans developed by RPO member governments in the transportation planning region. Steve shared about project planning, which is either done by the divisions or overseen out of Raleigh. He noted that over time, more and more projects are being handled by the divisions. A project kickoff meeting is the start of project development. In the RPO region, project development begins with a stakeholders meeting. At this point in the process, available traffic information is utilized as are environmental reports. The purpose and need statement is also developed for projects, which utilizes information collected from stakeholders and public input. Moving into the design phase, technical services include noise analysis, among other analyses. Plans proceed until projects are "let". Public workshops are included in the planning and analysis phase. Along the way, designs are submitted for review as part of the continuous process of project development. Traffic management determines how traffic would be moved around construction zones. The mountainous region allows for variances to normal construction zones. The design exceptions checklist protects the engineer(s) when designs vary from accepted norms. When consultants submit the 25% plans, things heat up, including another level of review by NCDOT divisions. At this point, plans are good enough to start working hydraulic plans, which includes another round of reviews and geo-technical recommendations. Very preliminary quantities are beginning to be firmed up, including structure plans, utility plans, etc. combined field inspection is when all entities provide feedback to consultants to address concerns about projects. When plans are complete, ROW acquisition occurs. Utility relocation occurs at this point. Ninety-100% plans are very similar and include structure plans, pavement marking plans, and other plan elements that are submitted for review. Final plans are submitted when all reviews are completed and adjustments to plans are made. Permits are given once a project lets. The goal is to deliver quality plans and receive accurate bids from potential contractors. Other goals include reducing cost overruns and bringing projects in on time. Having a good set of plans also increases construction zone safety. Community involvement is important throughout the process, and, ultimately, the process is supposed to be transparent. Integrated Project Delivery (IPD) does a lot of the environmental work up front, before the design process begins.

Discussion occurred about the environmental process, including the Nepa merger process and concurrence. Vicki shared that the presentations would be provided to LOSRPO members.

**Informational only- no action required.**

LOSRPO FY 2020 Planning Work Program (PWP) Approval: Vicki Eastland reviewed the FY 2019/2020 PWP with the TCC. She explained that the PWP is very similar to last year's work program. She shared that the RPO would be working with the MPO on the CTP for the rural areas of Buncombe and Haywood County as well as the CTP for Transylvania County. The total for the PWP for FY 19/20 is \$132,969, which includes 80% federal funds and 20% match from member governments.

**Stephen Sparks moved to recommend that the LOSRPO TAC approve the FY 2019/2020 Planning Work Program. Matt Cable seconded and the motion carried without further discussion.**

SPOT5.0 and SPOT 6.0 Updates: Vicki Eastland shared an update on the upcoming schedule for Prioritization 6.0 timeline and the next steps for LOSRPO. She noted that the workgroup has wrapped up and recommendations have been sent to the Board of Transportation for SPOT6.0. The workgroup has recommended that projects in the first six years of the STIP are considered committed not the first five as in previous rounds. This could change going forward. Vicki noted that local meetings would begin in June and the draft list must be completed by August. Projects would be entered into the SPOT tool in September and final projects are approved in October.

Vicki also reviewed when local input points are due for Division Needs and Regional Impact. The schedule is included in the methodology. She explained about flexing points from one tier to another, which would be the only change to the scoring methodology.

**Information item only- no action required.**

### **REGULAR UPDATES**

NCDOT Division 13 and Division 14 Updates  
Legislative Updates  
Staff Updates

Chair Cobb introduced Brian Brighthill, a new employee with the City of Brevard

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comments.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Joy Fields moved to adjourn the meeting. Steve Williams seconded and the meeting adjourned.**