

Technical Advisory Committee
Hybrid Meeting with the Zoom Platform
August 25, 2022 – 11:30 A.M.

Minutes

Remote Attendance:

Chair Matt Wechtel (Madison Commission)	Vicki Eastland (RPO Coordinator)
Jane Pies (minutes)	Troy Wilson (NCDOT Division 13)
Mac Morrow (Brevard Council)	Stephen Sparks (NCDOT Division 13)
Steve Williams (NCDOT Division 14)	Kevin Ensley (Haywood Commission)
Hannah Cook (NCDOT Division 13)	Larry Chapman (Transylvania Commission)
Billy Clarke (NCBOT)	Mark Gibbs (NCDOT Division 13)
Paul Justus	

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Matt Wechtel called the meeting to order at 11:33am 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. No conflicts 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

Chair, Matt Wechtel requested approval of the consent agenda, which included the March 24, 2022 minutes, the Modification to the 2020-2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the Amendments to the FY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program, and today's TAC agenda. ***Larry Chapman moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Mac Morrow seconded the motion which passed unanimously upon a roll call vote.***

RPO BUSINESS

NC Clean Transportation Plan

Jen Weiss with NCDOT presented 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.

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.

Clean Transportation Plan Presentation: <https://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/French-Broad-River-MPO-8.25.2022.pptx>

Information only. No action required.

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
- 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

- § 241 12; 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)]

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)]

Tristan Winkler presented on Safe Streets for All Action Plan and Grant Application.

Mac Morrow moved to approve an RPO/MPO Action Plan Grant Application. Larry Chapman seconded the motion. The motion passed upon a roll call vote unanimously.

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

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**

Information only no action requested

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were received.

REGULAR UPDATES

NCDOT Divisions 13 and 14 updates: presented and on website www.landofsky.org

NCDOT Transportation Planning Division updates: presented and on website

www.landofsky.org

NCDOT Integrated Mobility Division Staff provided updates

LOSRPO Staff provided updates

ADJOURNMENT

Matt Wechtel called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:56 PM. **Larry Chapman moved to adjourn. Matt Wechtel seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**