

RURAL PLANNING RURAL ORGANIZATION

RPO Technical Coordinating Committee

Virtual Meeting via the Zoom Platform

February 10, 2022 – 10:00 A.M.

Minutes

Remote Attendance:

Chair William High	Vicki Eastland	Brendan Merithew	Wes Jamison
Aaron Bland	Chris Lee	Stephen Sparks	Alexius Farris
Jodi Ferguson	Chris Medlin	Wanda Austin	Hannah Cook
Steve Williams	Daniel Sellers	Marshall Williams	Allen McNeill
Lonnie Watkins	Troy Wilson	Lonnie Watkins	Jane Pies (minutes)

WELCOME AND HOUSEKEEPING

Chair High called the meeting to order at approximately 10:00am, welcomed everyone attending remotely, and roll was called. A quorum was announced to conduct business.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were received.

CONSENT AGENDA

Chair High moved to approve the consent agenda, consisting of the agenda and the September 9, 2021, TCC minutes. Jodi Ferguson seconded, and the motion passed upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.

RPO BUSINESS

LOSRPO Draft PWP

LOSRPO staff has developed the DRAFT LOSRPO Planning Work Program, (PWP) and submitted the FY 2023 Draft PWP to NCDOT TPD for review. Like most years, the PWP is a continuation of ongoing RPO projects. The Transylvania County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) is still underway, the changes to the Complete Streets implementation Policy have caused additional delays in finalizing the Transylvania County CTP. There is a sizable percentage of the planning funds in the General Transportation category, LOSRPO staff serve on a few statewide work groups and committees, as well as ones with more regional significance, this is also the category that special studies and other general planning activities fall into. Development of the 2024 – 2033 STIP as well as beginning SPOT 7.0 later this calendar year results in a significant amount of funding in Prioritization. Data Collection, Project Development and Admin make up the bulk of the remaining funding except for RPO Direct charges, Travel, and indirect funds.

Vicki Eastland shared that work is being done to complete the Transylvania County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP), with hopes of being able to start on the Madison County CTP soon thereafter.

This item will come back to TCC in the March meeting for a recommendation for approval.

Information only no action requested.

P6.0 Quantitative Scoring Results:

As everyone knows, there will be no new projects programmed from Prioritization round 6, P6.0 or SPOT 6.0, because of limited funding projected to be available in the 2024- 2033 timeframe.

In November, NCDOT SPOT Office completed the quantitative scoring process for projects submitted in SPOT6.0. Today NCDOT Corridor Development Engineers Stephen Sparks, PE Division 13, and Troy Wilson, PE Division 14, will present the SPOT6.0 score results.

Stephen Sparks (NCDOT Division 13) reviewed that in 2019, projects to be in P6.0 were tested and entered in SPOT Online. These projects have been halted but did receive quantitative scores. Stephen Sparks shared how the projects are scored and stated that the higher the score the more likely the project is to be funded. Projects are scored using 3 tiers of funding categories, including Statewide Mobility, Regional Impact and Division Needs. Projects in the Statewide Mobility category are scored from 0 – 100 using quantitative data. No local input is considered from the Division or MPO/RPO. Under Regional Impact, the project is scored from 0-70, with 15% of input coming from Division and 15% coming from MPO/RPO. In Divisional Needs, projects are scored at 50% with 25% of input coming from the Division and 25% coming from MPO/RPO. Stephen Sparks spoke on the Prioritization Round score comparison between P4.0/P5.0 and P6.0 and why there are some differences. Differences may come from scaling, economic competitiveness, travel time savings calculations, the testing spreadsheet used and that Division Needs Modernization Projects in P6.0 used a different scoring criterion.

Troy Wilson shared about SPOT 7.0 project evaluation and the importance of being specific when defining purpose, need and solutions for highway projects, bike and pedestrian projects and transit projects. Troy Wilson stated that currently, NCDOT is working on express designs, including projects submitted in P6.0, carryover projects, potential projects likely to be submitted in P7.0 and is updating project estimates. Project testing is being done by spot tool, refining project details, evaluating impacts, and testing with differing area-specific criteria weights. He spoke on P7.0 unknowns like the P7.0 impacts from Covid to P7.0 data.

Information only. No action requested.

NCDOT STIP Program Updates:

Hannah Cook, PE, Division 13 Planning Engineer will provide an update on the status of the NCDOT 2024 – 2033 STIP development process including Prioritization Work Group and Board of Transportation Decision Points and next steps.

Hannah Cook shared that a cost review of the 2020-2029 STIP completed in Spring/Summer of 2021 revealed that for the 450 projects statewide, project costs did not equal a fiscally constrained STIP. There were billions in cost increases, with the STIP being overprogrammed by \$11B before the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) in October 2021, and \$8B overprogrammed after IIJA in January 2022. In fall of 2021, NCBOT decided to halt the P6.0 process. No funding would be available for new projects. Available funding based on the 2024-33 timeframe reflects accounting for 3% inflation, compared to 1% in the past. Project cost evaluations are always ongoing until a project lets for construction and there is an award amount.

Hannah Cook stated that the Prioritization Workgroup is instrumental in how the next STIP will be developed. This group sets the parameters of the prioritization process that are not strictly defined by STI law. Overall goals include developing a trustworthy and dependable STIP, producing a 2024-2033 STIP using current STIP project list with a transparent process, having an opportunity to fund new projects in P7.0 scoring (all 22 categories) and ensuring the process is grounded in state/federal requirements.

Hannah Cook shared that there are 3 main decisions in developing the 2024-2033 STIP. Decision point one involves using the traditional STIP development method. In this method, projects will be removed to match the budget. Decision two involves the selection of delivery projects. A project set may be selected if it is let by FY26 or before, grants are awarded, and ROW is underway. Finally, decision three includes the project selection method. A "Programming P3-P4-P5" Approach with flexibility was used. Both the Prioritization Workgroup and the NCBOT came to consensus on these decision points.

Next steps for the STIP Unit involve developing the Preliminary Draft 2024-2033 STIP, message development, partner education in Spring 2022, involving the public and STIP coordination meeting with MPOs & RPOs in mid-2022.

Information only. No action requested.

REGULAR UPDATES

NCDOT Divisions 13 and 14 provided construction and project development updates. The Transportation Planning Division (TPD) provided an update. NCDOT Integrated Mobility Division LOSRPO Staff provided an update.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were received.

ADJOURNMENT-

Chair High adjourned the meeting at 11:38am as there was no further business.