

# RURAL PLANNING RURAL ORGANIZATION

## 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**

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. 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. 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.**