

LAND OF SKY

# RURAL PLANNING RURAL ORGANIZATION

## RPO Technical Coordinating Committee

October 13th, 2022 – 10:00 A.M., Land of Sky Regional Council and Zoom Platform.

[Join LOSRPO TCC meeting](#) or call in: (301) 715-8592

Meeting Id: 893 4090 4613

Passcode: 980090

## Agenda

### 1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Welcome and Introductions, Agenda Approval/Modifications William High

### 2. PUBLIC COMMENT

### 3. Consent Agenda

- A. Minutes from the RPO TCC August 11, 2022, Meeting William High
- B. Letter of Support - Above the Mud Reconnecting Communities Planning Grant
- C. Letter of Support – Ecusta Trail NSFLTP Grant Application

### 4. RPO BUSINESS

- A. LOSRPO 2023 meeting calendar Vicki Eastland
- B. I-4700 Presentation: Blue Ride Parkway Bridge/I-26 Nathan Moneyham, NCDOT
- C. Upcoming potential funding opportunities SPR/CRP Vicki Eastland

### 5. REGULAR UPDATES

- A. NCDOT Division 13 and 14 updates Division Staff
- B. Transportation Planning Division Updates Daniel Sellers
- C. NCDOT Integrated Mobility Updates Alexius Farris
- D. Staff Updates Vicki Eastland

### 6. PUBLIC COMMENT

### 7. ADJOURNMENT

## Upcoming Meetings

**Land of Sky RPO TAC – Thursday October 20th, 2022 - 11:30 AM LOSRC Offices and Zoom**

**Land of Sky RPO ICC - Thursday February 9th, 2023 – 10:00AM LOSRC Offices and Zoom**

### **3. Consent Agenda**

#### A. Minutes from the RPO TCC March 10, 2022, TCC Meeting

#### **RPO Technical Coordinating Committee**

Hybrid Meeting with the Zoom Platform

August 11, 2022 – 10:00 A.M.

#### **Minutes**

#### **Remote Attendance:**

Chair William High	Vicki Eastland	Stephen Sparks
Jodi Ferguson	Chris Lee	Brendan Merithew
Forrest Gilliam	Kate Hayes	Allen McNeill
Jane Pies (minutes)	Daniel Sellers	Erica Anderson
Steve Williams	Troy Wilson	Alexius Farris

#### **WELCOME AND HOUSEKEEPING**

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

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comments were received.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

***Jodi Ferguson moved to approve the consent agenda, consisting of the agenda and the March 10, 2022, TCC minutes. Forrest Gilliam seconded, and the motion passed unanimously upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.***

#### **RPO BUSINESS**

#### **Item 4A: NC Clean Transportation Plan**

Jen Weiss with NCDOT will present on the NC Clean Transportation Plan at the October 2022 meeting. The NC Clean Transportation Plan 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.

**Information only. No action required. Presentation will occur at the October meeting.**

## **Item 4B: 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

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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.

Tristan Winkler presented on Safe Streets for All. A joint application is recommended across the region. Safety trends in our area are trending in the wrong direction, with too many motorcycle, bike and truck involved crashes. This puts an additional burden on local hospitals. An Action Plan is required to pursue the funds. NCDOT Safety Unit and a local non-profit are potential funders for the local match for the plan. Applications are due September 15, 2022.

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***Jodi Ferguson moved to recommend approval for an RPO/MPO Action Plan Grant Application. Allen McNeill seconded, and the vote carried unanimously.***

## **Item 4C: DRAFT 2023-2034 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.

**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 required.**

### **REGULAR UPDATES**

NCDOT Division 13 & 14 construction and project updates given	Division Staff
NCDOT Transportation Planning Division updates given	Daniel Sellers, PE
NCDOT Integrated Mobility Division updates given	Alexius Farris
Staff Updates given	Vicki Eastland

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comments were received.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

***Chair High adjourned the meeting at 11 AM as there was no further business.***

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### **3. Consent Agenda**

#### **B. Letter of Support - Above the Mud Reconnecting Communities Planning Grant**

The City of Hendersonville has been working with the French Broad River MPO on a planning grant application through the new Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program for its Above the Mud project. The Above the Mud project consists of four phases:

1. Build a new multi-use path to connect the Ecusta Trail to the Oklawaha Greenway
2. Improve the resiliency of flood-prone sections of the Oklawaha Greenway
3. Improve the pedestrian environment along 7th Avenue through Phases II & III of the 7th Avenue Streetscaping Project
4. Determine other crossings and improvements that may strengthen the connection between 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Downtown Hendersonville, the Ecusta Trail, and other nearby destinations

A letter of support has been provided from the Land of Sky RPO TAC Chair

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*October 10, 2022*

*Office of the Secretary of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, DC, 20590*

*To Whom it May Concern:*

*Land of Sky Rural Planning Organization (LOSRPO) offers support for the City of Hendersonville's application for a Planning Grant being submitted to the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program. We support this grant application and the focus of this plan to improve the safety and mobility of residents and travelers in Western North Carolina.*

*LOSRPO understands the need to improve the connectivity of the region by removing barriers that have disconnected parts of Hendersonville from the rest of the City. The construction of US 64, like many arterials around the region and country, were built to improve the travel times of commuters and travelers but while many residents have enjoyed the benefits of these arterials, others have been disconnected, isolated, and left behind.*

*The Above the Mud project helps to reconnect a growing part of Hendersonville, 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, that is becoming a destination for many, by building safe and resilient infrastructure for bicyclists and pedestrians and transforming 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue to be a more pedestrian-friendly corridor. The connection between the Oklawaha Greenway and the Ecusta Trail will connect two major greenways that would open up access to destinations throughout Henderson County and enable more residents to travel in a healthier and more sustainable way.*

*LOSRPO supports the City of Hendersonville's request for federal funding for a Planning Grant through the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program. This plan will have significant benefits by helping to build a more resilient and equitable transportation network.*

*Sincerely,*

*Matthew Wechtel, Commissioner, Madison County, NC  
Chair, Land of Sky Rural Planning Organization*

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D. Letter of Support - Ecusta Trail NSFLTP Grant Application

The City of Brevard has been working with Henderson County and NCDOT as well as the Land of Sky RPO and French Broad River MPO on a grant application for the Nationally Significant Federal Lands and Tribal Program (NSFLTP) to provide construction funding for the Ecusta Trail in Transylvania County and parts of Henderson County.

A letter of support will be provided by the Land of Sky RPO TAC Chair



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October 10, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, DC, 20590

*RE: FY2022 NSFLTP Grant Application – Ecusta Rail Trail: A Multimodal Gateway to the Pisgah National Forest and the Blue Ridge Parkway*

*Dear Secretary Buttigieg:*

*The Land of Sky Rural Planning Organization, (LOSRPO) strongly supports the NSFLTP grant application for the Ecusta Rail Trail: A Multimodal Gateway to the Pisgah National Forest and the Blue Ridge Parkway, which is the result of a collaboration between the City of Brevard, Henderson County, City of Hendersonville, the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), Friends of the Ecusta Trail, Conserving Carolina, and other local stakeholders.*

*The Ecusta Rail Trail will be an active transportation and recreation corridor that improves access to jobs and public resources. The Ecusta Rail Trail will provide opportunities for low-income communities, and new connections to the Pisgah National Forest and the Blue Ridge Parkway. As part of a statewide and regional greenway spine identified in the NCDOT Great Trails State Plan, this project will connect to the recreational hiking and mountain biking epicenter of the Pisgah National Forest, bringing economic development, tourism, and equitable access to the region and its residents.*

*The LOSRPO recognizes the need for a safe non-highway network for residents and visitors of Western North Carolina to access natural resources like the Pisgah National Forest and the Blue Ridge Parkway. Once completed, the Ecusta Rail Trail will connect to the existing City of Brevard path entering the Pisgah National Forest on the Estatoe Trail. The Estatoe Trail connects to several miles of trails and forest roads in the Pisgah National Forest connecting to the Blue Ridge Parkway. There are many recreation destinations located nearby. By providing non-motorized access to this area, it will help reduce the number of vehicles entering the area and the need for additional parking at key destinations and the strain on natural resources.*

*By supporting these efforts, USDOT can showcase a project that aligns closely with the objectives of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill, including enhancing access to opportunities for historically marginalized communities, creating an equitable*

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*transportation system that works for everyone, creating jobs and economic opportunity to an area where the local paper mill industry has disappeared, repurposing a railbanked and recently acquired rail corridor, and transitioning to a more environmentally conscience network that prioritizes non-motorized users.*

*This project will deliver healthy, climate-friendly, resilient, and integrated transportation and recreation options for residents and visitors of Brevard, Hendersonville and Henderson County the Pisgah National Forest, and the Blue Ridge Parkway.*

*Thank you for considering our application for NSFLTP Program funding.*

*Sincerely,*

*Matthew Wechtel, Commissioner, Madison County NC  
Chair Land of Sky RPO*

**4. RPO Business**

**Item 4A: LOSRPO 2023 meeting calendar**

<b>LOSRPO TCC Meetings 2023</b>	<b>LOSRPO TAC Meetings 2023</b>
February 9 <sup>th</sup> 10AM LOSRC and ZOOM	February 16 <sup>th</sup> 11:30AM LOSRC and ZOOM
March 9 <sup>th</sup> 10AM LOSRC and ZOOM	March 16 <sup>th</sup> 10AM LOSRC and ZOOM
May 11 <sup>th</sup> 10AM LOSRC and ZOOM	May 18 <sup>th</sup> 10AM LOSRC and ZOOM
August 10 <sup>th</sup> 10AM LOSRC and ZOOM	August 17 <sup>th</sup> 10AM LOSRC and ZOOM
September 7 <sup>th</sup> 10AM LOSRC and ZOOM	September 14 <sup>th</sup> 10AM LOSRC and ZOOM
October 12 <sup>th</sup> 10AM LOSRC and ZOOM	October 19 <sup>th</sup> 10AM LOSRC and ZOOM

Meetings will be held at the  
 Land of Sky Regional Council Office,  
 339 New Leicester Hwy, Suite 140  
 Asheville, NC 28806

Meeting Schedule subject to change based on required deadlines for RPO business

**Staff Recommendations: No action required information only**

**Item 4B I-4700 Presentation: Blue Ride Parkway Bridge/I-26**

The I-4700 project is the widening of I-26 from I-40 to NC 280 (Airport Road). A big part of the project is the removal and replacement of the Blue Ridge parkway Bridge. Nathan Moneyham, Division Construction Engineer, NCDOT Division 13 will provide a presentation on the planned process of the bridge replacement.

**Staff Recommendations: No action required information only**

**Item 4C Upcoming potential funding opportunities Carbon Reduction Program CRP/State Planning and Research SPR**

There are a couple of funding sources that will be available this winter. The Carbon Reduction Program, established in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law BIL, and the State Planning and Research program funding. Below is some information on both programs.

**FHWA CARBON REDUCTION PROGRAM**  
**Program purpose**

The Infrastructure Investment Jobs Act also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) establishes the Carbon Reduction Program (CRP), which provides funds for projects designed to reduce transportation emissions, defined as carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions from on-road highway sources. *Statutory citation: § 11403; 23 U.S.C. 175*

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## **Funding features**

### **Apportionment of funds**

As under the FAST Act, the BIL directs FHWA to apportion funding as a lump sum for each state, which is then subdivided among apportioned programs.

Each state's CRP apportionment is calculated based on a percentage specified in law. [23 U.S.C. 104(b)(7)] (See "Apportionment" fact sheet for a description of this calculation.) States with low population density will have a reduced set-aside under certain conditions (more below). [23 U.S.C. 149(k)]

### **Transferability to Other Federal-aid Apportioned Programs**

A state may transfer up to 50% of CRP funds made available each fiscal year to any other apportioned program within the state, including the National Highway Performance Program, Surface Transportation Block Grant Program, Highway Safety Improvement Program, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program, National Highway Freight Program, and [NEW] Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT) Formula Program. Conversely, subject to certain limitations, a state may transfer up to 50% of funds made available each fiscal year from each other apportioned program in the State to CRP. [23 U.S.C. 126(a)] (See other program-specific fact sheets for additional details.)

### **Suballocation**

65% of a state's CRP apportionment is to be obligated in the following areas in proportion to their relative shares of the state's population. [§ 11403; 23 U.S.C. 175(e)(1)(A)] Funds attributed to an urbanized area may be obligated in the metropolitan area established under 23 U.S.C. 134 that encompassed the urbanized area [23 U.S.C. 175(e)(2)]:

- *Urbanized areas with an urbanized area population greater than 200,000:* This portion is to be divided among those areas based on their relative share of population, unless the Secretary approves a joint request from the state and relevant MPO(s) to use other factors. [§ 11403; 23 U.S.C. 175(e)(1)(A)(i) and (e)(3)]
- *Urbanized areas with an urbanized area population of at least 50,000 but no more than 200,000:* This portion is to be divided among those areas based on their relative share of population, unless the Secretary approves a joint request from the state and relevant MPO(s) to use other factors. [§ 11403; 23 U.S.C. 175(e)(1)(A)(ii) and (e)(3)]
- *Urban areas with population at least 5,000 and no more than 49,999.* [§ 11403; 23 U.S.C. 175(e)(1)(A)(iii)]
- *Areas with population of less than 5,000.* [§ 11403; 23 U.S.C. 175(e)(1)(A)(iv)]

The remaining 35% of the state's CRP apportionment may be obligated in any area of the state. [§ 11403; 23 U.S.C. 175(e)(1)(B)]

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Over the period of FY22-26, states are required to make available to each urbanized area with a population of at least 50,000 obligation authority for the suballocated CRP funding. [§ 11403; 23 U.S.C. 175(e)(6)]

## **Eligible activities**

CRP funds may be obligated for projects that support the reduction of transportation emissions, including, but not limited to– [except as noted, § 11403; 23 U.S.C. 175(c)(1)]

- a project described in 23 U.S.C. 149(b)(4) to establish or operate a traffic monitoring, management, and control facility or program, including advanced truck stop electrification systems;
- a public transportation project eligible under 23 U.S.C. 142;
- a transportation alternative (as defined under the Moving Ahead for Progress under the 21st Century Act [23 U.S.C. 101(a)(29), as in effect on July 5, 2012]), including, but not limited to, the construction, planning, and design of on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other nonmotorized forms of transportation;
- a project described in 23 U.S.C. 503(c)(4)(E) for advanced transportation and congestion management technologies;
- deployment of infrastructure-based intelligent transportation systems capital improvements and the installation of vehicle-to-infrastructure communications equipment;
- a project to replace street lighting and traffic control devices with energy-efficient alternatives;
- development of a carbon reduction strategy developed by a State per requirements in 23 U.S.C. 175(d);
- a project or strategy designed to support congestion pricing, shifting transportation demand to nonpeak hours or other transportation modes, increasing vehicle occupancy rates, or otherwise reducing demand for roads, including electronic toll collection, and travel demand management strategies and programs;
- efforts to reduce the environmental and community impacts of freight movement;
- a project that supports deployment of alternative fuel vehicles, including–
  - acquisition, installation, or operation of publicly accessible electric vehicle charging infrastructure or hydrogen, natural gas, or propane vehicle fueling infrastructure; and
  - purchase or lease of zero-emission construction equipment and vehicles, including the acquisition, construction, or leasing of required supporting facilities;
- a project described in 23 U.S.C. 149(b)(8) for a diesel engine retrofit;
- certain types of projects to improve traffic flow that are eligible under the CMAQ program, and that do not involve construction of new capacity; [§ 11403; 23 U.S.C. 149(b)(5); and 175(c)(1)(L)]

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- a project that reduces transportation emissions at port facilities, including through the advancement of port electrification; and
- any other STBG-eligible project, if the Secretary certifies that the State has demonstrated a reduction in transportation emissions, as estimated on a per capita and per unit of economic output basis. (Note: FHWA will issue guidance on how the Secretary will make such certifications.) [§ 11403; 23 U.S.C. 133(b) and 175(c)(2)]

### **Coordination in Urbanized Areas Other Than Transportation Management Areas**

Before obligating CRP funds for an eligible project in an urbanized area that is not a transportation management area, a state shall coordinate with any MPO that represents the urbanized area prior to determining which activities should be carried out under the project. [§ 11403; 23 U.S.C. 175(e)(4)]

### **Consultation in Rural Areas**

Before obligating CRP funds for an eligible project in a rural area, a state shall consult with any regional transportation planning organization or MPO that represents the rural area prior to determining which activities should be carried out under the project. [§ 11403; 23 U.S.C. 175(e)(5)]

### **Statewide Planning and Research SPR**

Each year, NCDOT receives Statewide Planning and Research (SPR) funds from the Federal Highway Administration. NCDOT uses these funds primarily to fund the activities of the NCDOT Transportation Planning Division and NCDOT Research & Development Office, as well as the RPO program. However, any remaining funds left over are available for MPOs and RPOs to apply for. These competitive funds must be used for planning activities (not design or construction) and require a local match. The amount of local match varies based on the presence of Tier 1 and Tier 2 counties within each MPO or RPO—since LOSRPO includes at least one Tier 2 county, any SPR-funded project in our area would require a 10% local match (with the state picking up 10% and the federal funds paying 80%).

NCDOT typically opens the window for RPOs and MPOs to submit projects for SPR funding in the December/January timeframe and has told us the deadline will be at the end of February 2023. We do not yet know how much funding will be available.

If successfully awarded funding, any project would be administered by LOSRPO through an amendment to our annual Planning Work Program. The matching funds would be paid by the applicable local government(s).

LOSRPO would like to hear from any local governments that would like to apply before January 15th, 2023.

**Staff Recommendations: No action required information only**

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## 5. REGULAR UPDATES

- A. NCDOT Division 13 and 14 updates
- B. NCDOT Transportation Planning Division Updates
- C. NCDOT Integrated mobility Division
- D. Staff Updates  
Eastland

Division Staff  
Daniel Sellers, PE  
Alexius Farris  
Vicki

## 6. PUBLIC COMMENT

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