

Meeting Agenda

RPO Technical Advisory Committee

February 16th, 2022 – 11:30 – Land of Sky Regional Council and Zoom Platform

[JOIN LOSRPO TAC Meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 842 2101 9051 Passcode: 434761
or Call in: (301) 715 8592

1. WELCOME AND HOUSEKEEPING

- A. Welcome and Introductions
- B. Ethics Statement

Matt Wechtel
Matt Wechtel

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

3. Consent Agenda

- Minutes from the RPO TCC October 13, 2022, Meeting
- Letter of Support – City of Brevard Greenway Feasibility Study
- Letter of Support – Active Routes to School
- Letter of Support – Ecusta Trail RAISE Grant Application

Matt Wechtel

4. LAND OF SKY RPO TAC BUSINESS Items

- A. A. CRP Update
- B. Prioritization 7.0 Update and DRAFT Schedule
- C. CMAQ Update
- D. Wildlands Network's Wildlife Connectivity

Vicki Eastland
Vicki Eastland
Vicki Eastland
Nikki Robinson,
NC Project Manager

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

6. REGULAR UPDATES

- A. NCDOT Division 13 and 14 updates
Most Recent Updates <http://landofskyrpo.org/>
- B. NCDOT Transportation Planning Division
- C. NCDOT Integrated mobility Division
- D. Staff Updates and Housekeeping

Tim Anderson/Wanda Austin
(or designee)
Daniel Sellers, PE
Alexius Farris
Vicki Eastland

7. ADJOURN LOSRPO MEETING

Matt Wechtel

Upcoming Meeting

Land of Sky RPO TCC – Meeting on March 9, 2023 – 10:00 AM Land of Sky Regional Council and Zoom

Land of Sky RPO TAC – Meeting on March 16, 2023 – 11:30 AM Land of Sky Regional Council and Zoom

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Item 1B: Ethics Statement

ETHICS AWARENESS & CONFLICT OF INTEREST REMINDER

(To be read by the Chair or his or her designee at the beginning of each meeting)

In accordance with the State Government Ethics Act, it is the duty of every Board member to avoid conflicts of interest. Does any Board member have any known conflict of interest with respect to any matters coming before the Board today? If so, please identify the conflict and refrain from any participation in the particular matter involved.

Consent Agenda

Technical Advisory Committee

Hybrid Meeting with the Zoom Platform

October 20, 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)

Commission)

Vicki Eastland (RPO Coordinator)

Nathan Moneyham (NCODT Division 13)

Stephen Sparks (NCDOT Division 13)

Kevin Ensley (Haywood Commission)

Larry Chapman (Transylvania

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

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. 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 agenda and the consent agenda, which included the August 25, 2022, minutes, the Letter of Support for the Above the

Meeting Agenda

Mud Reconnecting Communities Planning Grant, and the Letter of Support for the Ecusta Trail NSFLTP Grant Application.

Mac Morrow moved to approve the consent agenda. Larry Chapman seconded the motion which passed unanimously upon a roll call vote.

LAND OF SKY RPO TAC BUSINESS

LOSRPO 2023 meeting calendar

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

Information only. No action required.

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 provided a presentation on the planned process of the bridge replacement.

Information only. No action required.

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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*

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.)

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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)]

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;

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- 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)]
- 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

Meeting Agenda

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.

Information only. No action required.

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

LOSRPO Staff provided updates

ADJOURNMENT

Matt Wechtel called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:45 PM.

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Larry Chapman moved to adjourn. Mac Morrow seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Consent Agenda

Resolution of Support – City of Brevard Greenway Feasibility Study Grant through the NCDOT IMD Feasibility Studies Grant Program

The City of Brevard is pursuing an IMD Feasibility Study Grant through the NCDOT IMD Feasibility Studies Grant Program for a feasibility study for a shared use path along SR 1504 (Old Hendersonville Road) from SR 1512 (Ecusta Road) to US 64/276 (Asheville Hwy)

A resolution of support has been requested from the Land of Sky RPO TAC Chair

RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR THE CITY OF BREVARD TO PERSUE AN IMD FEASIBILITY STUDY GRANT THROUGH THE NCDOT IMD FEASIBILITY STUDIES GRANT PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the NCDOT has developed a new discretionary grant program to aid in bridging the gap between conceptual planning and programming of projects through the IMD Feasibility Studies Grant;

WHEREAS, the NCDOT has appropriated \$2.5 million for the IMD Feasibility Studies Grant for FY24;

WHEREAS, the IMD Feasibility Studies Grant requires the project to be identified in a locally or regionally adopted plan;

WHEREAS, the SR 1504 (Old Hendersonville Hwy) Shared Use Path is Identified in the City of Brevard Pedestrian Plan (updated 2018) and the Transylvania County Bike Plan, 2019, as a Transylvania County/Brevard interface project, and in the City of DRAFT Brevard Bike and Pedestrian Plan,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that be it resolved that the TAC of the Land of Sky Rural Planning Organization hereby support the City of Brevard submitting a grant application for an IMD Feasibility Studies Grant through NCDOT.

ADOPTED and approved this the 16th day of February 2023

Commissioner Matthew Wechtel, Chairman, Land-of-Sky RPO TAC

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C. Letter of Support – Land of Sky Regional Council Active Routes to School

NCDOT has made “non-infrastructure” funds available for organizations to apply for Safe Routes to School Coordinators and related activities. This is a position that generally works with schools and students to provide education and encouragement activities while also coordinating with community partners and NCDOT to help improve roadway engineering and traffic enforcement in needed areas. Land of Sky Regional Council is currently planning to apply for three years of funding for a position that would cover Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania counties. There currently is not a dedicated position that covers any communities in those counties. In the past, these positions have provided walking and biking training, held events to celebrate and encourage walking and biking to school, and have coordinated Road Safety Audits with local governments, NCDOT, and other partners to help improve transportation safety.

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

2/16/2023

North Carolina Department of Transportation
1 S. Wilmington St.
Raleigh, NC 27601

To Whom It May Concern:

Land of Sky Rural Planning Organization, (LOSRPO) offers our support for Land of Sky Regional Council (LOSRC) to apply for funding to secure a Safe Routes to School Coordinator, through NCDOT’s Safe Routes to School Program, for the five-county region that includes Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania counties. We support this grant application and the focus of improving the safety of students and their families accessing our region’s schools.

Land of Sky RPO believes strongly in creating an environment that promotes safe, healthy, and equitable transportation for our student population. Tens of thousands of children access schools across Western North Carolina, many of whom face walking and biking conditions that can be less-than-ideal or dangerous. Providing greater training for kids to increase their awareness and confidence to make more trips by walking and biking has been proven to have positive impacts in academic performance as well as safety.

With a Safe Routes to School Coordinator in the region, more children will have the opportunity to have education and encouragement activities for walking and biking

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that is not currently available. This position will not only work with students and parents to improve individual awareness and confidence, but also work with community partners and NCDOT to improve walking and biking conditions where necessary. We believe that having a dedicated coordinator to facilitate the planning, education, and encouragement of active transportation to schools in our region will help improve the well-being of our students and residents and the community's quality of life.

Land of Sky RPO supports LOSRC's request for funding for a Safe Routes to School Coordinator through the Safe Routes to School Program.

Sincerely,

**Mathew Wachtel, Commissioner Madison County, NC,
Chair, Land of Sky Rural Planning Organization**

Letter of Support – Land of Sky Regional Council Active Routes to School

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Meeting Agenda

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With a Safe Routes to School Coordinator in the region, more children will have the opportunity to have education and encouragement activities for walking and biking that is not currently available. This position will not only work with students and parents to

improve individual awareness and confidence, but also work with community partners and NCDOT to improve walking and biking conditions where necessary. We believe that having a dedicated coordinator to facilitate the planning, education, and encouragement of active transportation to schools in our region will help improve the well-being of our students and residents and the community's quality of life.

Land of Sky RPO supports LOSRC's request for funding for a Safe Routes to School Coordinator through the Safe Routes to School Program.

Sincerely,

**Mathew Wachtel, Commissioner Madison County, NC,
Chair, Land of Sky Rural Planning Organization**

Letter of Support – City of Brevard in partnership w/ Henderson County RAISE Grant

The City of Brevard in partnership w/ Henderson County, Hendersonville and NCDOT is pursuing a *Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity* (RAISE) grant through the US Department of Transportation to construct the ECUSTA Rail

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This project represents a potential transformational change for our region, connecting multiple communities from Brevard to Hendersonville. The Ecusta Trail will provide recreational opportunities for users of all ages and abilities, active transportation options to job centers and schools, and opportunities for neighborhood revitalization and tourism-related economic development.

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20590

RE: FY2023 RAISE Grant Application – Ecusta Trail: An Engine for Reimagining Rural Mobility and Economic Recovery

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

The Land of Sky Rural Planning Organization (LOSRPO) strongly supports the RAISE grant application “Ecusta Trail: An Engine for Reimagining Rural Mobility and Economic Recovery,” which is the result of a collaboration between the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), City of Brevard, Henderson County, City of Hendersonville, Friends of the Ecusta Trail, Conserving Carolina, and other local stakeholders.

The Ecusta Rail Trail will provide an active transportation and recreation corridor that improves access to jobs and public resources for several growing communities; increases opportunities for rural, low-income communities; and connects to the Pisgah National Forest. The trail is part of a statewide and regional greenway system identified in the NCDOT Great Trails State Plan.

By supporting this effort, USDOT can showcase a project that aligns closely with the Biden Administration's objectives, including:

- Enhancing access to opportunities for historically marginalized communities,
- Creating a more equitable and safe transportation system,
- Creating jobs and economic opportunity in an area where the local paper mill industry has declined,
- Revitalizing aging and unmaintained rail infrastructure into a major community asset, and
- Transitioning to a more environmentally conscious transportation network that prioritizes non-motorized users.

In summary, the Ecusta Trail will serve as an engine—powering healthy, climate-friendly, resilient, and integrated transportation and recreation options and an economic driver for this region.

Thank you for considering our application for RAISE Program funding.

Sincerely,

Mathew Wachtel, Commissioner Madison County, NC,

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Chair, Land of Sky Rural Planning Organization

Staff Recommendation: Review and approve the Items on the Consent Agenda

4. LAND OF SKY RPO TAC BUSINESS

Item 4A: Carbon Reduction Program Update

The Infrastructure Investment Jobs Act (IIJA) also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) establishes the Carbon Reduction Program (CRP),

Carbon Reduction Program Overview

- States are to develop **Carbon Reduction Strategies**
- **\$6.4 Billion** in formula funding for Fiscal Years 2022 through Fiscal Years 2026
- Funding for **projects to support transportation emissions reductions.**

***Transportation Emissions** means carbon dioxide emissions from on-road highway sources of those emissions within a State (23 U.S.C. 175(a)(2)).

North Carolina's Suballocation

- Funds are available to FY26
- NC has already received FY22 and FY23 amounts
- 35% of funds may be obligated in any area of the State
- 65% of funds apportioned to a State for CRP obligated by population:
 - Urbanized areas over 200,000;
 - Urbanized areas from 50,000 to 199,999;
 - Urban areas from 5,000 to 49,999;
 - **\$4 Million currently available**
 - Other areas less than 5,000.
 - **\$15 Million currently available**
 - \$100,000 minimum project cost
 - 80/20 Plus 10% NCDOT Administration
 - REIMBURSEMENT program, Awarded applicant must fund the project and invoice NCDOT for reimbursement.
- The deadline to submit CRP projects in this first call for projects is March 17th.
- After this call, funds will be available on a rolling call.

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CARBON REDUCTION CALCULATOR	
Project Name	i.e., Left Turn Lane Main/First Street
Estimated project Cost	100000
NCDOT Admin Cost 10%	10000
Estimated Overall Cost	110000
Federal Grant 80%	88000
Local Match 20%	22000

Currently LOSRPO has one project for this round, a section of greenway in Brevard. The greenway crosses property owned by Brevard, the engineering and design are complete along with up-to-date cost estimates.

RPO staff is working with Transylvania County planning staff developing cost estimates for the purchase and installation of two transit shelters for their transit route. RPO Staff is also talking with Mountain Projects, Haywood County Transit staff about some potential software upgrades and other transit related purchases. Madison County Transit was considering CRP funds for propane conversions, but they submitted that as 5311 Capital request to NCDOT, IMD. These projects along with your now requests will be developed and submitted in the rolling call for projects.

RPO Staff are also consulting with NCDOT Division's 13 and 14 on projects to be submitted by them for the 35% spend anywhere funds.

Final submissions will be presented in March along with resolutions of support.

Staff Recommendations: No action required information only, action required in March.

Item 4B Prioritization SPOT7.0 Update

NCDOT's Strategic Prioritization Process, P7.0 or SPOT 7.0 is underway. The statewide Prioritization Workgroup, made up of representatives from NCDOT, MPO's, RPO's, the League of Municipalities, Metro Mayors, NC Rural Center, and others has been meeting since October 2022. The workgroup is developing recommendations on the weights and measures for project scoring to send to the Board of Transportation for their review and adoption.

The number of project submittals and local input points will be approximately the same as in prior rounds. LOSRPO will have 16 project submittals in each mode and 1,200 local input points in both Regional Impact and Division Needs tiers. Population numbers could potentially impact these numbers.

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Any projects that were previously funded in the 2020 – 2029 STIP that lost their “Funded” status due to the NCDOT STIP re-programing, brought about by NCDOT financial challenges, will be considered CARRYOVER projects, and automatically be entered into P7.0. There is also potentially a one-time opportunity for each RPOs and MPOs to select three NEW SPOT6.0 project submittals, that did not get an opportunity to be considered for funding because SPOT6.0 was halted, to be entered into SPOT7.0 as CARRYOVER projects. These three projects also will not count as a submittal. This will be determined at the February 14th workgroup meeting.

RPO Staff will be setting up meetings with local partners and NCDOT Division staff to review previously submitted projects and develop LOSRPO's SPOT7.0 project list.

Below is the current schedule for SPOT7.0. As always, the schedule is subject to change.

P7.0 Schedule.

Prioritization Task	Estimated Date
Prioritization Workgroup meets	October 2022 - June, 2023
NC Board of Transportation Adopts Methodology	June, 2023
SPOT Online Go-live Project submittal window opens	July 2023 – September, 2023
NCDOT Data Review and Scoring (Partner Rev. Feb 2024)	October 2023 – March, 2024
Project Prioritization Public Survey	Winter - Spring 2024
Alternate Criteria Deadline/LOSRPO Local Input Point Methodology Due	April, 2024
DRAFT Statewide Programmed Projects and SPOT Scores Released	End of April 2024
Regional Impact Local Input Points Window	May - July, 2024
DRAFT Regional Impact Programmed Projects Released	August, 2024
Division Needs Local Input Points Window	September – November, 2024
Program Division Needs Projects	December 2024 – January, 2025
DRAFT 2026-2035 STIP Released	End of January, 2025

Staff Recommendations: No action required information only

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Item 4C Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Update

In recent years, LOSRPO has requested NCDOT program CMAQ funds allocated to the RPO for non-attainment of air quality standards in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GSMNP) to the Land of Sky Clean Cities and Clean Vehicles Coalition to be used for regional education and outreach program in the GSMNP adjacent region. This year, the RPO is working with Clean Cities/Clean Vehicles to provide funding for a DC fast charger in the Town of Waynesville. Waynesville is developing the project estimate. There will be a resolution of support for the project at the March TCC and TAC meetings.

Staff Recommendations: No action required information only, action required in March.

Item 4D Wildlands Network's Wildlife Connectivity

In Western North Carolina, a group of stakeholders convened to address wildlife and motorist safety concerns specifically in the region of Great Smoky and Blue Ridge mountains. In June of 2022, Wildlands Network and the National Parks Conservation Association released ["Road Ecology Research and Mitigation Strategies to Improve Wildlife Connectivity and Human Safety along I-40 in the Pigeon River Gorge."](#) One of largest road ecology research projects ever completed in the eastern United States, the report provides 20 detailed mitigation recommendations along Interstate 40 in the Pigeon River Gorge.

Wildlands Network, also released a [scientific study](#) in September 2022, identifying 20 of the highest-priority wildlife crossing sites across North Carolina. This study identified I-40 through the Pigeon River Gorge as the number one priority.

Protecting wildlife from roadway collisions is critical for our state's infrastructure, human safety, and our natural ecosystems. Mitigating wildlife vehicle collisions is complex and expensive, and timing is everything. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act includes unique opportunities for wildlife crossing construction, and NCDOT is supportive of these efforts.

Staff Recommendations: No action required information only

Public Comment

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6. REGULAR UPDATES

NCDOT Division 13 and 14 updates

Most Recent Updates <http://landofskyrpo.org/>

Transportation Planning Division updates

NCDOT Integrated mobility Division

Staff Updates

NCDOT Staff

Daniel Sellers

Alexius Farris

Vicki Eastland

ANNOUNCEMENTS, NEWS, SPECIAL UPDATES

7. ADJOURN LOSRPO TAC MEETING

Matt Wechtel

Upcoming Meeting

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Land of Sky RPO TAC – Meeting on March 16, 2023 – 11:30 AM Land of Sky Regional Council and Zoom