LAND OF SKY RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION

RPO Technical Coordinating Committee

Join LOSRPO TCC Meeting

Meeting Id: 824 6125 2058

Passcode: 158661 Call in: 646 558 8656 US

Minutes from the RPO TCC October 8th, 2026 Meeting

Remote and in Person Attendance:

Vicki Eastland	Aaron Bland
William High	Doug Phillips
Steve Williams	Jodie Ferguson
Jeremey Chapman	Daniel Sellers
Troy Wilson	Zack Shuler
Chris Lee	Kevin Bridges
Ashley Minery	John Hunter
Stephen Sparks	Cody Weddle
Hardy Willis	

WELCOME AND HOUSEKEEPING

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Aaron Bland opened the floor for public comment. No public comments were received.

CONSENT AGENDA

3A. August 2026 Meeting Minutes: https://landofskyrpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/10/2026-08_13_RPOTCC_Draft-Minutes.pdf

3B. PROTECT Planning Grant Application and LOSRPO Letter of Support:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) recently opened the FY 2026 Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT) Competitive Grant Program. The program supports efforts to improve the resilience of surface transportation systems to natural disasters, severe weather,

flooding, landslides, and other hazards. Metropolitan Planning Organizations are eligible applicants, and Planning Grants do NOT require non-federal match. Applications are due October 9, 2026.

In Septembers FBRMPO Board meeting, the MPO Board approved staff to pursue a **PROTECT Planning Grant** for the **five-county area** that includes **Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania counties**. If awarded this plan would help to identify and prioritize resilience needs for the region's transportation network. Additionally, as currently structured, if a project identified in a Resilience Improvement Plan (RIP) applies for implementation funds, non-federal match can be reduced by up to seven percentage points.

Staff Recommendations:

Recommend approval of PROTECT Planning Grant Application and LOSRPO Letter of Support

LAND OF SKY RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION

October 2, 2026

Federal Highway Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue,
SE Washington, DC 20590

RE: Letter of Support – French Broad River MPO PROTECT Planning Grant Application

Dear PROTECT Grant Review Committee:

On behalf of **Land of Sky Rural Planning Organization, (LOSRPO),** I am pleased to support the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization's application for a PROTECT Planning Grant to develop a five-county regional transportation resilience planning effort for Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania counties, encompassing the planning areas of both the French Broad River MPO and Land of Sky RPO.

Hurricane Helene demonstrated the vulnerability of Western North Carolina's transportation system to flooding, landslides, severe weather, and other natural hazards. Damage and closures to transportation facilities disrupted travel throughout the region, affected access to homes, businesses, and essential services, complicated emergency response and recovery activities, and demonstrated the importance of having reliable and redundant transportation connections.

The proposed planning effort would provide an important opportunity to build on these experiences and take a regional approach to transportation resilience. We understand that the study is expected to assess transportation vulnerabilities and critical connections, evaluate network redundancy and emergency-access needs, identify and prioritize potential resilience improvements, and develop recommendations for incorporating resilience into future transportation planning and project development. The effort may also result in a formal Resilience Improvement Plan consistent with the PROTECT program.

Transportation systems and natural hazards do not stop at municipal, county, or MPO or RPO boundaries. A five-county approach would allow communities, transportation agencies, emergency-management partners, and other stakeholders to better understand regional vulnerabilities and coordinate strategies for maintaining access and improving the ability of the transportation network to withstand and recover from future disasters.

LAND OF SKY RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Land of Sky Rural Planning Organization supports this application and looks forward to participating in the planning process, including providing relevant information, identifying local transportation vulnerabilities and priorities, and participating in regional coordination as appropriate.

We encourage the Federal Highway Administration to support this regional transportation resilience planning effort through the PROTECT Competitive Grant Program.

Sincerely,

Vicki L. Eastland, Director
Land of Sky Rural Planning Organization

William High moved to approve the agenda, consent agenda including the August 2026 Meeting Minutes and the PROTECT Planning Grant Application and LOSRPO Letter of Support. Ashley Minery seconded and the motion passed upon a unanimous roll call vote.

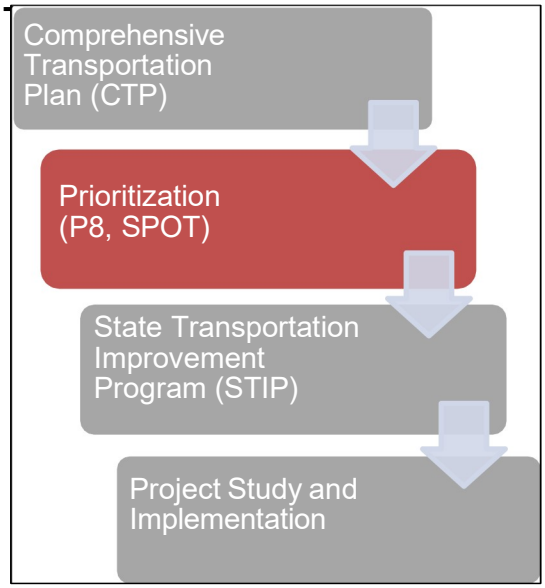
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RPO BUSINESS

4A. LOSRPO Prioritization 8.0 Division Needs Local Input Points (LIP) List

NCDOT updates the STIP on a two-year cycle based on projects selected for funding from the NCDOT Prioritization process. This is the process in North Carolina that helps determine the majority of transportation improvements across the State. The process is dictated by the Strategic Transportation Investments Act (STI) 2012 and is generally designed to be a data-driven, transparent process to determine what transportation projects are funded or not.

RPO's, MPO's and NCDOT Divisions work with local partners to select projects to be submitted for consideration for funding, (inclusion in the next STIP) and on the assignment of Local Input Points, used to boost the scores of projects in the Regional Impact and Division Needs Tiers, and to reflect local priorities.
The outcome of Prioritization 8.0, P8.0 will be the 2028 – 2037 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).
Land of Sky RPO receives 1200 Local Input Points for both Regional Impact and Division Needs. This round LOSRPO flexed 500 LIPs from Regional Impact tier to Division Needs. So LOSRPO has 1700 Division Needs LIP's this round. Currently there is more funding available at the Division Needs tier and several lower cost projects at that tier.



- Review of Outcomes of Statewide Mobility and Regional Impact
- Discuss Draft local input points for Division Needs projects

Statewide Mobility Projects
Statewide Mobility projects are programmed solely based on the quantitative score. Only one project in the LOSRPO/FBRMPO region that scored well enough for

programming with available funding in P8- the **I-40 Managed Lanes project from Exit 44 to Exit 27**. The I-40 Express lanes project is wholly in the FBRMPO, and this project directly benefits LOSRPO as well as WNC as a whole.

Regional Impact Projects
Regional Impact projects are programmed 70% based on quantitative score, 30% on input from planning organizations and NCDOT Divisions. Only one project that LOSRPO supported with Regional Impact Local Input Points was selected for inclusion in the DRAFT 2028 – 2037 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

- NC 191 (Brevard Road), Glenn Bridge Road, Avery Creek Road- Improve Intersection

Local Input Points

The RPO is consulting with local partners. Changes may be made to priorities based on input from local partners.

Division Needs Projects

Below is a list of all Division Needs Projects in (or partially in) the RPO, sorted based on Quantitative score. This list includes nine Regional Impact Projects considered for cascading. Additional information on recommended DRAFT assignment of Local Input Points will be sent out after final county priority discussion.

***** Please see agenda pages 5 to 10 for all projects listed : https://landofskyrpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/10/LOSRPO-TCC-10082026-Agenda.pdf ****

Next Steps
After the RPO TCC approves the DRAFT Division needs Local Input Point Assignment, it will go the LOSRPO TAC next week for their approval. RPO staff will advertise the DRAFT Division Needs Local Input Points Assignment List.

Current timeline for P8.0.

Prioritization Task	Estimated Date
Prioritization Workgroup meets	October 2024 - June, 2025
NC Board of Transportation Adopts Methodology	July, 2025
SPOT Online Go-live Project submittal window opens	July 2025 – September, 2025
NCDOT Data Review and Scoring	October 2025 – April, 2026
Project Prioritization Public Survey (TPD)	Winter - Spring 2026
DRAFT Statewide Programmed Projects and SPOT Scores Released	End of May 2026
Regional Impact Local Input Points Window	June - August, 2026
DRAFT Regional Impact Programmed Projects Released	Sept, 2026
Division Needs Local Input Points Window	October – November, 2026
Program Division Needs Projects	December 2026 – January 2027
DRAFT 2028-2037 STIP Released	January - February 2027

Staff Recommendations:
Recommend Draft List to TAC.

Discussion did not occur

Steve Williams moved to recommend the LOSRPO Prioritzation 8.0 Division Needs LIP List to the Board. William High seconded and it passed upon a roll call vote.

Item 4B: NCDOT Transportation Planning Branch TPB Transylvania Co. CTP Presentation:
Daniel Sellers, NCDOT Transportation Planning Division, provided an update and overview of the Transylvania County Comprehensive Transportation Plan, CTP, at the August RPO TCC and TAC meetings in advance of endorsement by the RPO

TCC/TAC. The Transylvania County CTP has been adopted by the Transylvania County Board of Commissioners and both the City of Brevard Council and the Town of Rosman Board of Aldermen and Alderwomen. LOSRPO staff have advertised Transylvania County CTP in accordance with the RPO Public Involvement Plan. RPO staff have received no comments from the public at the time of drafting this agenda.
Today Daniel Sellers will present the Final Transylvania County CTP for recommendation from the RPO TAC Endorsement at the TAC meeting next week.

Staff Recommendations:
Recommend RPO TAC Endorse the Transylvania County CTP

Discussion did not occur.

Steve Williams moved to recommend the TAC endorse the Transylvania County CTP. Ashley Minery seconded the motion and it passed upon a roll call vote.

4C. NCDOT I-40 Express Lanes Update:
Kevin Bridges with NCDOT will provide an update on the proposed I-40 Express Lanes project between Exit 7 in Haywood County and Exit 44 in Buncombe County. Previously proposed as a conventional widening project, I-6054 was submitted to Prioritization 8.0 (P8) as an express lane project and scored well enough to be programmed in the Statewide Mobility Tier. The project is expected to advance into engineering, with construction funding still uncertain.
Managed lanes have been considered along this corridor for several years, and the FBRMPO Board requested a feasibility study in January 2024. This update will give the Board and TCC an opportunity to discuss NCDOT's approach to project development, tolling, and financing, including how lessons from the I-77 Express Lanes project could inform the process.

Information Only.
Discussion did not occur

PUBLIC COMMENT

Aaron Bland opened the floor a second time for public comment. No public comments were received.

REGULAR UPDATES

A. NCDOT Division 13 and 14 updates — Division Staff

https://landofskyrpo.org/division-13-updates/
https://landofskyrpo.org/division-14-updates/

B. NCDOT Transportation Planning Division Updates — Daniel Sellers/John Hunter
https://landofskyrpo.org/ncdot-tpd-news/

C. IMD — Nikki Abijah
D. Staff Updates — Vicki Eastland

ADJOURNMENT

***Aaron Bland adjourned the meeting at 11:00AM as there was no* further business.**

Upcoming Meetings
Land of Sky RPO TAC and TCC JOINT Meeting: Thursday November 19th, 2026 at 11:30 AM at the Land of Sky Regional Council Offices 339 New Leicester Hwy, STE 140, Asheville NC 28806