

**Land of Sky Regional Council
November 30, 2022
Regular Meeting**



When joining the virtual meeting, Delegates are requested to mute themselves and to un-mute for discussion or moving on orders of business.
Delegates are requested to state their names when moving on orders of business. Thank you!

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order (12:30pm)**
- II. Invocation**
- III. Pledge of Allegiance**
- IV. Roll Call**
- V. Consent Agenda**
 - A. Modification/Approval of Agenda
 - B. Approval of the Previous Minutes (October 2022)
- VI. Comments by the Chair and Delegates Roundtable**
- VII. Public Comment**
- VIII. Recognition**
 - A. Duke Energy Foundation check presentation
- IX. 2022 Awards Presentation**
 - B. Robert E. Shepherd Excellence in Local Government Award
 - C. Charles H. Campbell Regional Leadership Award
 - D. Robert G. Parrish, Sr. Intergovernmental Relations Award
 - E. Special Recognition
- X. Executive Director's Report**
- XI. Important Dates**
 - A. Next regularly scheduled Board meeting is planned for January 25, 2023.
- XII. Adjournment**



BOARD OF DELEGATES AGENDA ITEM

- Subject:** Consent Agenda
- Item Number:** V. Consent Agenda:
A. Modification/Approval of the Board's Agenda for November 30, 2022
B. Approval of Minutes from the October 26, 2022, Regular Meeting
- Responsible Party:** Zia Rifkin, Administrative Services
- Attachment(s):** Minutes from the October 2022 Regular Meeting
- Background:** Item B. October 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes Recap:
Quorum was present to conduct business at the October 2022 meeting and the minutes provide a recap of the Chair's comments and Delegates' updates from around the region. Presentations included a presentation from Sarah Grymes, Vice President of DHT's Impact Housing; Will Parry-Hill, Manager of Government and Industry Relations with the NC Housing Finance Agency; and a Non-Partisan Candidates Forum for NC-11 with Jasmine Beach-Ferrara and David Coatney in attendance.
- Staff Recommendation:** Recommend approval of the Consent Agenda
- Suggested Motion(s):** Move to approve the Consent Agenda, as presented.

**Land of Sky Regional Council
Board of Delegates
Regular Meeting**

October 26, 2022

Minutes

- I. Call to Order – Vice Chair Gentry called the meeting to order at approximately 12:30pm.
- II. Silent Invocation – A moment of silence was observed, and an invocation provided by Mayor Harris.
- III. Pledge of Allegiance – Vice chair Gentry led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- IV. Roll Call – Nathan Ramsey called the roll. The following members were present: Tim Love, William Lapsley, John Mitchell, Norris Gentry, Michael Garrison, Ja Chappell, Larry Chapman, Sandra Kilgore, Larry Harris, Maureen Copelof, Barbara Jeter, Preston Blakely, Barbara Volk, Deb Bridges, Daniel Cobb, Mason Blake, Elisabeth Ervin, and Brad Guth

Guests Present – Sarah Grymes, Will Parry-Hill, Susan Russo-Klein, Sam Jenkins, April Riddle, Robin Ramsey, Hugh Jack, Jasmine Beach-Ferrara, and David Coatney

A quorum was present to conduct business.
- V. Consent Agenda – The consent agenda, consisting of the Board's October agenda, and the minutes of the September 28, 2022, meeting was presented for approval.

Vice Chair Gentry moved to approve the consent agenda including the September 28, 2022 minutes and today's agenda as presented. Larry Harris seconded, and the motion carried upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.
- VI. Chair's Comments and Delegates Roundtable -
Vice Chair Gentry encouraged Delegates to share information of interest from their jurisdictions.

Delegates Roundtable -
Buncombe County Manager's Office Tim Love – Shared that Buncombe County is hosting the Asheville Championship in Asheville on November 12 and 13. This is the second year out of a three-year slate. Schools competing include Elon, Harvard, and Louisiana.
Commission Chair William Lapsley – Shared that Henderson County received notice that Pratt & Whitney is having its ribbon cutting on November 16. Henderson County is excited to hear this announcement as a lot of community members will work at the facility.
Economic Development Representative Brad Guth – Shared that Madison County has a short-term rental moratorium that may end in December. The County is in the process of hiring a new planner and code enforcement official. The Commissioners are discussing implementing a moratorium on a bio-mass facility. He announced that April Riddle has joined EDPNC covering WNC. Finally, work is ongoing at the Veterans Park.
Commission Chair Jason Chappell - Shared that Transylvania County has entered into an agreement with Vyve Broadband to enable the provision of public Wi-Fi at the Rosman Community Park. He noted that Transylvania County is a wonderful place and to come visit and spend your dollars.
Council Member Sandra Kilgore - Shared that the City of Asheville voted to approve an ordinance providing the Walton Street Park with historic designation. The park was built in 1938 and the pool added in 1947. The park fell into disrepair, but the community wants the park rebuilt and maintained into the future. Council also approved the Closed Gap Plan that prioritizes the way funding is used to have the greenways work with the ADA and pedestrian plans. The hope is that this will help with financing. Changes were made to the UDO to

allow existing manufactured homes to be replaced, which is a great resource to increase affordable housing in the community.

Mayor Larry Harris – Shared that the Town of Black Mountain is working on a lot of projects, trying to pull together the UDO and dealing with hot topics such as short-term rentals. Additionally, work is ongoing to process projects that are funded with ARPA dollars and it's a challenge to get those done due to supply chain issues. It's a beautiful time of year in the Town!

Mayor Maureen Copelof – Shared that the City of Brevard's Mary C. Jenkins Community Center is officially open. It's also a cultural center and there are a lot of historical displays to educate on the history of the community. The Center also provides rental space that is available for events. The City is having a Halloween Fest this Saturday on Main Street including a costume contest, pumpkin carving contest, and Smart Start Sesame characters with several streets closing for the event. The City successfully approved an affordable housing complex (60 units) and this is the first time that tax credits have been used. Contracted with DFI to analyze three additional sites in the City to see if those would be appropriate for affordable housing. Submitted a grant requesting \$21 million for Ecusta Trail, partnering with other jurisdictions and organizations for this grant application.

Town Commissioner Barbara Jeter – Shared that the Village of Flat Rock had a successful shred day, and this coming Monday is a volunteer appreciation luncheon for those who commit their time to The Park. About 40 master gardeners are included on the volunteer roster. Council plans to look at approving a mini-forest concept between the Village and a housing association this could assist with noise abatement.

Mayor Preston Blakely – Shared that the developer backed out of the Town Center project. He noted that Police Cadet positions are available for BLET students to help attract more law enforcement officers.

Mayor Barbara Volk – Shared that the City of Hendersonville has approved a developer to receive tax credits for an affordable housing development. The City Clerk position should soon be filled as the last stages of interviews are happening to fill that position. The City has agreed to use ARPA funds (\$2 million) towards nonprofit projects. Many varied and worthwhile projects are under review. The Bear Auction was successful and raised over \$140 thousand this year. More than \$100 thousand of the funds raised will go to the nonprofits that sponsored the bears. Monday is the Treat Street Carnival with a costume contest. Finally, the first Saturday in December will be the first nighttime Christmas Parade.

Town Commissioner Deb Bridges – Shared that the Town of Laurel Park is moving forward with a couple of big projects and expecting pricing back on the Laurel Green Stream Restoration Project. The Town is also receiving responses from architects regarding the new Town Hall on Highway 64. A new Town Hall is a big project to get initiated. The Town approved a budget amendment to allow for the design of the new Town Hall and for repurposing the current facility. It's an exciting time in the Town. Parks and Greenways have been very busy in conjunction with Little Laurel Green Stream restoration. The Town has an event coming up to plant 100 plants in Laurel Green and the community is invited to help accomplish this goal. The Public Works department is very busy and beginning leaf collection. Brush collection is for residents and a couple of neighborhoods (HOAs) really take advantage of the service. It's been a gorgeous fall in the Town with a lot of color (but it's not lasting long enough)! Commissioner Bridges encouraged everybody to investigate the Firewise Communities program that encourages wildfire mitigation. This is also a great way to involve the communities with the fire departments and other neighborhoods. Information on Firewise available from the NC Forestry Service (<https://www.resistwildfirenc.org/>). Funding is available for Firewise. Lastly, Chief Trotter with the Police Department is leaving and doing a trunk retreat on Friday and everyone is invited.

Town Manager Daniel Cobb – Shared that the Town of Mills River hosted its first installment of Movies In the Park last week and showed the film Hocus Pocus. A second shelter being constructed at The Park is almost done. The Town is currently hiring for a permit technician. Over the past couple of month, the Town has been making some serious investments in a new website that will include permitting software so folks can pay for their permits online. Additionally, an online payment platform for Parks and Recreation will be available, too. The Town is looking for input from the public on using the ARPA funds. Lastly, work continues on the Bike/Ped Plan.

Town Commissioner Mason Blake – shared that the Town of Montreat experienced five different incidents last year where bear-hunting dogs chased bears into surrounding neighborhoods. In response to this, the

Town has passed five different ordinances to protect the neighborhoods and punish those who allow hunting dogs to run loose in the residential areas.

Town Commissioner Elisabeth Ervin – Shared that the Town of Woodfin hired a planning director and a quantum engineering consultant. Yesterday, the Town hosted an interest meeting to establish a path forward to name the Blueway/Greenway Wave in honor of a member of the Hunt family who passed in a waterway accident.

VII. Public Comment -

Vice Chair Gentry called on April Riddle for an update on her new position. April shared that she is now at EDPNC working as the Existing Industry Expansion Manager for the Western Region, and she encouraged anyone with needs to reach out for assistance. Robin Ramsey shared that she is still working for Senator Burr and transitioning to Senator Tillis' office. An opportunity for public comment was offered, but none were received.

VIII. Presentations/Recognition -

A. Dogwood Health Trust -

Sarah Grymes, Vice President of Impact Housing for Dogwood Health Trust shared with the Board about the work going on to address housing needs in the region. Her presentation included a review of DHT priorities, and it noted that housing work is conducted by listening, bringing partners together, helping partners leverage funding, catalyzing initiatives that do not displace families from their homes and working to prevent gentrification, providing grants and impact investment to non-profit housing developers, counties or municipalities that are working to invest and build up existing communities. Over \$30 million in grants distributed in the past year and on target to distribute \$25 million in the current year. Full cycle housing includes equity and housing counseling. Post Covid, there's a lack of workers for the construction sector and high construction costs coupled with rising interest rates. The region is losing more housing stock than is being gained, and people rapidly relocating to the region and a severe lack of infrastructure and developable land in the region all impact affordable housing efforts. Impact Housing works to leverage federal, state, local and private funds into the region and brings partners together to benefit the initiative and encourage collaboration across the region, the State and the US.

Impact Housing concentrates on healthy and safe revitalization, supportive housing, safe housing, and affordable housing. One goal of Impact Housing is to create and preserve supportive housing rental units for people considered hard-to-house that includes disabled, seniors, reentry, and SUD populations, etc. Another goal is to create/preserve senior housing leveraging HUD funding. The Clinchfield Mill project was provided as an example of revitalization to develop senior housing through use of the HUD D4 221 loan program and Historic Mill credits through a public/private partnership. Another goal is to create/preserve affordable housing units by using the 9% low-income housing tax credit (City of Brevard has used this incentive) program through established strategic partners to create affordable rental housing and through the economic opportunity team by working with community colleges and high schools.

B. NC Housing Finance Agency –

Will Parry-Hill, Manager of Government and Industry Relations with the NC Housing Finance Agency shared about the work that the agency is doing to provide good housing for the residents of North Carolina. The agency was created in 1973 by the GA to take advantage of tax-exempt bonds to provide loans for veterans and others whose needs are not met in the market by leveraging partnerships and private capital. The NC Housing Finance Agency is a self-supporting, quasi-independent State organization with a board of directors, which can issue bonds evaluated by rating agencies. Work is done through partnerships and the agency has financed over \$30 billion in real estate. Five main lines of business are available: home ownership, rental housing investments through housing credits, housing bonds and agency loans.

Will Parry-Hill noted that there is a housing shortage everywhere. Housing Preservation is another line of business that provides urgent repairs and displacement prevention assistance. Housing Preservation includes essential single-family home rehabilitation and disaster recovery work. The Supportive Housing

Development program and Integrated Supportive Housing program are efforts that can address the needs of those who are difficult to house. The agency provides free help to homeowners facing foreclosure and over 18,400 foreclosures have been prevented. The Homeowner Assistance Fund was created through ARPA to help prevent mortgage delinquencies, defaults, displacements, and foreclosures due to Covid. The State received an allocation of \$273.3 million for that program.

C. NC-11 Non-Partisan Congressional Candidates Forum -

Land of Sky Regional Council hosted a non-partisan Candidates Forum for NC-11 candidates vying for a congressional seat in the US House of Representatives. The forum was moderated by Susan Russo-Klein, Land of Sky's legal counsel and Sam Jenkins, with Roberts & Stevens, P.A. Susan Russo-Klein shared that COGs are non-partisan and candidates have agreed to ground rules for this forum.

Opening Statement -

Jasmine Beach-Ferrara gave her opening statement and shared that she is a working mom of three and a minister and in her second term as a Buncombe County Commissioner. She shared that she approaches this campaign in a different way that includes caring about everyone in the district regardless of vote. Believes in WNC. Her background in ministry has been her very best guide and means showing up everywhere, every time. Canvassing and asking folks what is important to people and listening to everyone's experiences. Issues that are front and center in everyone's lives include broadband access, inflation, housing, etc.

David Coatney gave his opening statement and shared that he is aligned more with classical liberalism, believing in a free-market and social justice issues. Overall, he shared that he is a pragmatist, surveying the political landscape to work with those who can help get things passed for the benefit of the region. Small business owner since 2005 providing services to help other small business owners. Supports a fair tax and would push for small businesses to be treated like individuals, based on annual revenue. Happily married for 10 years, which is a part of the reason he is particularly interested in immigration reform.

Question and Answers -

What is the government's role in supporting affordable housing?

David Coatney responded that a return to a more pre-pandemic housing market would help with the affordable housing issue. Tremendous impact from nonprofits, who need more funding to address the issue. Most of what needs to happen needs to happen at the local level- such as addressing restrictive zoning, etc.

Jasmine Beach-Ferrara responded that everybody deserves a safe secure home. This is an issue that everyone is talking about. This issue demands a coordinated federal, state, and local response. At the federal level, there is an expansion of the housing tax credit program and workforce and veterans housing programs. Worked as part of a bi-partisan team to address this issue. Aggressive efforts to build affordable units and prioritize teachers and those who work for the community who cannot afford to live in the community they serve. Collaborate to bring everyone to the table together.

Addressing the bi-partisan infrastructure legislation?

Jasmine Beach-Ferrara responded that this is the type of federal action that is bringing funding into areas to assist with infrastructure needs. People are suffering because they cannot access affordable broadband. The Infrastructure Bill and ARPA help to address these issues. Roads, congestion, quality of life issues and the need to create good jobs that support people- daily life is impacted by infrastructure issues.

David Coatney responded that one in every four dollars should address infrastructure needs. Need to be more efficient in structuring telehealth, remote work, and would like to see more funding for satellite internet. Reliability in inclement weather. Take funding and put it to developing satellite technology. Laying fiber optic cable is not an efficient means to reach everybody.

Funding for human needs programs for seniors (Medicare/Social Security)?

David Coatney responded that the current level of discretionary spending is not sufficient. Move to a privatized system and he stated that he believes that those who pay in should be able to access their funds by providing an optional public system.

Jasmine Beach-Ferrara responded that funding for human needs for seniors- there is a need to be doing everything possible to care for and honor seniors. These are pressing issues and she stated her opposition to any talk of cuts to Social Security and Medicare. Folks need to have the security to know that these programs will be available. Regardless of political affiliation, this is a concern for everyone. These programs are promises that have been made to people and these promises need to be honored.

Government's role in establishing workplace policies?

Jasmine Beach-Ferrara responded that policies are needed to protect people who work for a living. There is a continued need to provide these protections for workers. When workers can have one job and be able to respond to emergencies, it strengthens the business and the workers. Need to have someone in congress who understands that the right policies can make a difference in peoples' lives.

David Coatney responded that policies need to be made at the local level. These are healthy conversations to have but need to be had at the local level.

Closing Remarks -

Jasmine Beach-Ferrara closed by remarking, at an early voting site this morning, I met a voter who was scheduled to have surgery. They wanted to vote before that event. She noted it's important to show up for this moment to protect our democracy, etc. What matters to people is showing up for each other, even if we don't fundamentally agree with each other. This election is not a typical election, and the area needs effective representation who will partner with local government to fight for peoples' priorities. Create room at the table for everyone. For too long, a message of divisiveness. Brings to this race a track record of serving everyone and commitment on how to move forward together.

David Coatney closed by remarking, thank you for this opportunity. I would rather run for something than against someone. Looking for solutions to the problems. Positions are taken as a matter of principle, not because of pressure to be one side or the other. Need to remember that representatives are elected to serve everyone in their district, not just the ones who voted for them. Vowed to be there for every vote. Acknowledged that the country is going through a difficult period, but this is the time that pushes us forward, to a better place as in the ideals that all men are created equal, and the consent of the governed- he loosely quoted from Langston Hughes 'Freedom's Plow.'

IX. Executive Director's Report

Delegates and guests were encouraged to reach out to Nathan Ramsey with any questions or comments regarding the report, which is available in the meeting packet.

Nathan Ramsey shared that LOSRC received three Impact Awards by NADO for Livable Appalachia (Area Agency on Aging), Tunnel Road Corridor Study (FBRMPO) and the Digital Inclusion Plan for WNC (ECD).

X. Important Dates –

A. The next Board of Delegates is November 30, 2022 in-person at the Land of Sky Offices and through Zoom. The November 30 meeting includes the annual awards presentation for the Charles H. Campbell Regional Leadership award, the Robert G. Parrish Intergovernmental Relations Award, and the Robert E. Shepherd Excellence in Local Government Award.

XI. Adjournment –

Vice Chair Gentry adjourned the meeting as there was no further business.

Respectfully submitted by Zia Rifkin



BOARD OF DELEGATES AGENDA ITEM

- Subject:** Executive Director's Report
- Item Number:** X. Executive Director's Report
- Responsible Party:** Nathan Ramsey, Executive Director
- Attachment(s):** Executive Director's Report for November 30, 2022
- Background:** The Executive Director's Report provides updates and relevant information regarding projects and initiatives for LOSRC Departments/Agencies.
- Staff Recommendation:** N/A.
- Suggested Motion(s):** N/A

1. Finance

- We are hiring an Accounts Receivable Clerk to increase our finance capacity.
- FY21-22 audit process is underway. Audit is due December 1.
- Final numbers on unrestricted fund balance appropriation should be available soon. This number is key for the Council as the larger the amount, the more flexibility available to the organization.

2. Economic & Community Development & Transportation Planning

Welcome!

We welcome Traci Thompson as our new Housing Planner. Welcome, Traci!

Kudos!

- Congratulations to Rosman and Mars Hill for completing the RC2 (Rural Community Capacity Building) Program through NC Commerce.
- Congratulations to Brevard for receiving a Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) grant for engineering and design for Ecusta Trail in Transylvania County.
- Congratulations to Madison County for Building Reuse for Highland Metalworks.
- Congratulations to French Broad Electric Co-Operative for their GREAT grant in Madison County
- Congratulations to Zitel Broadband for their GREAT grant in Transylvania County
- Congratulations to City of Asheville for their \$4.2M Low-No grant to support clean transportation fleet technologies.
- Congratulations to VW Grant Awardees in the region:
 - Transylvania Economic Alliance
 - Transylvania Habitat for Humanity
 - Town of Waynesville
 - Town of Hayesville

Upcoming Events

- Drive Electric EV car show – Sept. 25
- Creative Manufacturing Event – Sept. 26
- NCEDA Conference – Oct 3-4
- NC Fall Floodplain Institute – Oct 12-14
- NADO Training Conference – Oct 15-18
- Buncombe County Careers on Wheels – Oct. 17
- Clean Cities Emergency Response Training – Oct 21
- National Adaption Forum – Oct 24-27
- Clean Cities/Transpo - VMT panel – Oct. 31
- Propane in the Park – Nov. 2
- Transportation Summit – January 17-19

Transportation

1. MPO & RPO staff continue to work with local partners and NCDOT on project design and development.

2. Staff is assisting in TAB, STIP and CTP development and Board meetings.
3. RPO staff serving as NCARPO Association President, the NCARPO is the statewide organization representing Rural Transportation Planning Organizations in NC.
4. RPO staff is also serving on the new NCDOT EV/Clean Energy Committee.
5. RPO, MPO and ECD staff are assisting several communities write grants for transportation projects, including RAISE, FLAP, and the IJA Discretionary Funds.
6. MPO and RPO staff are serving on the state's Prioritization Workgroup with other representatives from MPOs, RPOs, and NCDOT.
7. The MPO is providing funding to several special studies in the region getting ready to begin in FY 2023: Fonta Flora Trail Feasibility Study, Reed Creek Greenway Extension Feasibility Study (City of Asheville), Patton Avenue Corridor Study, and the Buncombe County Multimodal Master Plan.
8. The MPO is managing the Haywood County Greenway Master Plan; expected to wrap-up by January
9. The MPO is providing funding for on-going studies at the City of Asheville, including the purchase of bicycle and pedestrian counters and the Biltmore/McDowell study.
10. MPO staff is serving on a Locally Administered Projects Program committee with NCDOT to provide policy recommendations to achieve better success rates and more on-time delivery of LAPP projects.
11. MPO & RPO staff continue to update local governments on NCDOT's financial situation and the Draft 2024-2033 STIP. A public survey is planned to be distributed by the MPO in November.

Broadband

1. LOS partnered with NC DIT and the Division of Rural Health to distribute hotspots with 12 months service and digital literacy training for telehealth programs in WNC. To date 146 hotspots have been distributed to programs in three counties.
2. LOS is partnering with the Institute of Emerging Issues and Dogwood Health Trust to assist development and implement Digital Inclusion Plans in WNC with COGS across the region.
3. LOS received funding from Buncombe County to provide Wi-Fi in several Housing Authority of the City of Asheville (HACA) residential buildings. Staff received an update from the sub-consultant, Elawuit, that installation is proceeding as scheduled.
4. LOS is working with NEMAC to develop a broadband planning tool. The tool is aimed to consolidate many of the various data sources into a project planning catalyst for future broadband projects in the region.
5. LOS staff worked to set up public WIFI in the Broad River area of Buncombe County. Staff partnered with fire department and Skyrunner to implement this project.
6. LOS staff supported providers in the region with GREAT grant assistance leading to 21 applications across the region. To date award announcements in Madison, Transylvania, Buncombe, and Henderson have been made. We are hopeful to gain additional awards in the coming weeks. If your community wants to start working on CAB please get in touch with Sara Nichols.
7. LOS is supporting hot spot access to 325 individuals across WNC through Student Connect program thanks to the support of Dogwood Health Trust.

Community Development/Water, Sewer, Stormwater Infrastructure

1. Staff is attending the RC2 training with Mars Hill and Rosman sponsored by NC Commerce's Rural Transformation Fund. The training is being held in Boone and remotely by Appalachian State. The towns will be identifying a vision and priorities for economic and community development.
2. Staff is developing RTFG applications for Rosman, Mars Hill and potentially other communities for parks and recreation, trails, parking and community revitalization.
3. Staff submitted an ARC application for sewer extension on behalf of Marshall.

4. LOSRC will be submitting a full application NCLWF (Land and Water Fund) Flood Risk Reduction Grant Program on behalf of COH, and is continuing to support project development, including an associated DEQ LASII stormwater construction grant.
5. LOSRC is submitting a 205j grant for Weaverville to map the stormwater system as well as address a few different stormwater management issues.
6. Staff is continuing to support Fletcher, Weaverville, Montreat and Woodfin with their MS4 (municipal separate storm sewer system) permit compliance.

Housing

1. LOSRC was awarded a grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission, matched with a grant to Southwestern Commission from the Dogwood Health Trust, to create a WNC Housing Asset Inventory for the western 18 counties. This project will be completed through a multi-COG effort.
2. LOSRC was awarded a grant from Cares at the UNC-CH School of Social Work in partnership with North Carolina Money Follows the Person (MFP), for the initiative titled Building Capacity for Home and Community Based Services through Collective Impact. The project is called Remain at Home - Accessibility Assessment Program, in partnership with the Institute for Preventative Care and Advocacy, Mountain Area Health Education Center, RL Mace Universal Design Institute.
3. LOSRC has completed an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice for COH and is working on one for Buncombe County in the context of their CDBG grants.

Economic Development/Workforce

1. Staff submitted the I26 Interchange/Access Road application to EDA to request \$2 million in funding on behalf of NCDOT. Staff assisted NCDOT receive \$2.5 million from ARC's Access Road fund.
2. Draft report for the Creative Manufacturing Sector Development plan are currently being reviewed by the core steering committee.
3. The Draft report for the Regional Economic Collaboration and Analysis led by the Region's Chambers of Commerce and business sector is under review by the Advisory Committee. Ernst and Young was selected as the Consultant for this effort and is being funded by the EDA and Dogwood Health Trust. Full results will be shared broadly.
4. Staff and partners have completed the analysis and final products with Outdoor/Recreation Sector manufacturers to determine opportunities in supply chains, workforce and economic diversity in cooperation with High Country Council, Southwestern Commission and Riverbird Research. <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/291e98f0291643c49a6462395ec3e6e5>
5. We continue to partner with the Chambers of Commerce, Small Business Support Agencies, nonprofits, and economic developers to assist small businesses through COVID-19 impacts.
6. The TDM Coordinator is working with Workforce, Inspire, and employers to develop a vanpool for under-resourced individuals to access job sites.
7. LOSRC's Waste Reduction Partners program is providing free water-use management assessments for large customers of the City of Asheville's Water Resources Department. These on-site assessments help identify utility costs savings for the City.

Resilience/Hazard Mitigation

1. Staff is serving as a Steering Committee member for the statewide RISE project and for the NC Resilience Clearinghouse, both for NC Department of Public Safety, NC Office of Recovery and Resilience.
2. NCDPS is seeking letters of interest for the FEMA BRIC and Flood Mitigation Assistance 2022 funding round, these are due on 10/3/2022. Please contact Mary Roderick to discuss project ideas.
3. LOSRC has developed a work plan for the COG Disaster Recovery Grant, and will be reaching out to communities to provide a range of hazard recovery and resilience services over the next two years.

Clean Cities/Clean Vehicles

1. Clean Cities Program is assisting local governments prepare for VW Settlement projects. During the first round of settlement funding released in 2020, the Land of Sky Clean Vehicles Coalition helped the region bring in more than \$4.1 million in grant funding to support purchases of new clean vehicles and EV infrastructure. During the second round of funding, all of the applications that LOS staff assisted with under the Level 2 Public Access Program were funded. Staff also assisted with applications for the DC Fast Chargers and Level 2 Multi-Unit Dwelling programs. Please contact Sara Nichols with questions on how to apply for more than \$68 million in state funding available for clean fleets: sara@landofsky.org
2. LOS received CMAQ funding to continue support of air quality outreach initiatives in WNC.
3. Staff supported applications for the EPA school bus rebate for Buncombe and Madison County Schools.
4. Cherokee Clean Vehicles participated in the first electric school bus in North Carolina ribbon cutting, including a visit from Governor Cooper and Administrator Reagan. Staff recently helped with a training for school leadership including a school bus drag race.
5. Staff are partnering with the Blue Ridge Electric Vehicle Club to host an electric vehicle car show for National Drive Electric Week.
6. CVC staff, Paul Moon, applied for and was accepted into the DOE national equity program to deep dive into equity in alternative fuel conversations with leading experts. Paul has been attending national level training over the last few months to gain perspective on how our work can incorporate DEI priorities in our region.
7. Staff supported the French Broad Electric Membership Corporation is submitting a Clean Fuel Advanced Technology Application for DC Fast Charging to North Carolina Clean Energy Technology Center.

Waste Reduction Partners

1. Staff conducted an environmental assessment with the American Red Cross to perform ESG sustainability assessments at pilot sites in North-Carolina, beginning with the Asheville, WNC Chapter.
2. WRP engineers are working with Eaton's Avery Creek manufacturing site to identify energy projects to address corporate carbon emission reduction goals.
3. WRP staff completed an energy efficiency assessment for the Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit in Marshall on September 7.

Planning Services

1. Staff continue to work with area communities providing land use planning and zoning assistance. Towns include Hot Springs, Mars Hill, Marshall, Montreat, Woodfin, Flat Rock, Maggie Valley, Montreat, Clyde, Canton, and Andrews. Note that we are partnering with Southwestern Commission, Region A staff to assist with communities in their region as well.

Grants & Project Development

1. Staff are working with several jurisdictions to support ARPA projects and administration. Please connect with Erica if you would like to learn more: erica@landofsky.org ARPA information can be found here: <https://www.nc.gov/agencies/pandemic-recovery-office/american-rescue-plan-act-information-and-resources>
2. Staff have been working with Sister Councils of Government on ARPA, Resilience and Multi-regional projects. Partnerships include sharing ARP policies, ordinances, and guidance; grant development; developing scopes of work and project delivery for ARPA State funds; budgeting and project development for housing, transportation and broadband tech assistance.
3. Staff continues working with several local governments and partners on applications for economic development, community development, transportation, and infrastructure implementation

with BRIC/FEMA, EDA, and foundations. These projects will support transportation connections, resilience, job growth, industry expansion, and place-based development.

4. The NCGS 160D requires all Comprehensive Plans be updated to meet the new guidelines by July 1, 2022. (i.e. Municipalities and Counties must have a “reasonably-maintained” [updated within last 5-10 years] Comprehensive Plan in effect in order to legally continue having local zoning/development regulations. At minimum, a reasonably updated Land Use Plan must be in place by July 1, 2022 as a rational nexus to zoning/development regulations. (see Town of Canton’s phased-approach, Phase 1: Land Use Plan by July 1, 2022; Phase 2: Other Comprehensive Plan elements to be included after July 1, 2022)

Please contact erica@landofsky.org if you have questions or would like assistance updating your plans.

3. Aging

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – The Area Agency on Aging is in the process of completing contracts for our Supportive Services and Family Caregiver Support Program providers. We are currently still waiting on approval from the Division of Aging and Adult Services for our direct services waivers.

Family Caregiver Support Program

- Staff was interviewed along with staff from Council on Aging of Buncombe County by WRES radio station and discussed helpful tips and awareness for family caregivers.
- Staff awarded American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) contracts to providers totaling \$213,364.
- Staff helped facilitate in-person caregiver and care receiver support groups in Hendersonville. There were 9 caregivers and 4 care receivers who participated 2 meetings.
- Staff started offering \$500 Respite Vouchers to family caregivers in Transylvania County. So far there are 4 caregivers who have received vouchers.
- Staff did a presentation on respite vouchers at a dementia support group in Transylvania County.

Foster Grandparent Program

- Number of active volunteers: 29 volunteers are working one-on-one with children ages infant to 13 years old.
- Number of volunteers waiting on paperwork, placement, etc.: 5 volunteers wait for their schools to reopen to volunteers so that they can return to service. Two potential volunteers are in the process of enrolling in the program.
- Number of active stations (schools, day cares, etc.): 10
- Number of stations waiting to sign MOU, volunteer placement, etc.: 3 of the schools, Head Start Centers, and childcare centers have not yet allowed volunteers to return to service.
- Recruitment efforts (press releases, presentations, etc.): Volunteer recruitment efforts are currently on pause until we have schools open to be able to place them. We are hoping to be able to resume recruitment in the new year.
- In-service/training update: On November 15, Foster Grandparent volunteers attended in-person in-service training at Land of Sky Regional Council. Volunteers learned more about the Healthy Opportunities Pilot from Vicki Jennings and the WISH collaborative from Paul Moon. In December volunteers will celebrate the Holiday Season at our December 13 in-service meeting.

Health Promotion and Disease Prevention

- Staff has worked closely with NC Center for Health and Wellness and Area AAA to develop the Rx referral tool and Rack cards to provide to clinicians, community program managers, AAAs, and patients to help increase and improve the handling of fall program referrals.
- Staff has partnered with Healthy Aging NC to provide Statewide Virtual Training for Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention that will be hosted at Land of Sky Regional Council on December 15th.
- AAA congratulates two new leaders that completed training in November for Chronic Disease Self-Management and Walk with Ease.
- Monthly Tai Chi for arthritis and Falls continues monthly at senior centers and has seen an increase in attendance.
- Staff held the first Health Fair post-COVID at Asheville Terrace Apartments helping to distribute resources from almost 20 community partners and providing COVID boosters and/or flu shots to 27 individuals.
- Staff and Asheville Terrace Community Health Workers continue to partner with MANNA, Trader Joe, and OLLI volunteers to bring nutrition to residents. In October, 94 bags of groceries were distributed to residents, and 258 “Neighbor Knock” visits were conducted.

Home and Community Care Block Grant: October 2022 Report of Services Provided

- Adult Day Care/Health Days = 1,015
- Meals – delivered/congregate = 70,656
- In-home Aide hours = 5,316
- Legal Services hours = 494
- Transportation trips = 16,951
- Home Improvement Projects = 12

Money Follows the Person (MFP) Community Inclusion (serves 37 Western Counties):

- Staff completed in-person Skilled Nursing Facility Visits for 7 Counties (Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Madison, Mitchell, Watauga, Yancy.) Provided applications packets, training, and materials.
- Staff provided Webinars to Facility and County social workers and staff regarding program updates
- Staff attended and presented comment at the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services Listening Sessions for the 2023-2027 State Aging Services Plan.
- Staff attended Mountain Area Health Education Center’s Annual Geriatric Summit as an exhibitor providing information regarding all Area on Aging Services for Region B.

Money Follows the Person – Western counties: Buncombe, Henderson, Transylvania, Polk, Madison, McDowell, Rutherford, Mitchell, Madison

- The current caseload for the Western counties is seven.
- All seven clients on the Western caseload are waiting for housing.
- One client will transition in November 2022.

Money Follows the Person – Central counties being served: Forsyth, Davidson, Surry, Davie, Stokes, Yadkin

- The current caseload for the Central counties is eight.
- Six of the eight clients on the Central caseload are waiting for housing.

FY 23:

- Money Follows the Person added a total of six new clients in October 2022.
- Six clients withdrew in October 2022.
- One client transitioned in October 2022.

Ombudsman Program

- Ombudsmen attended the North Carolina Long Term Care Ombudsman Association Meeting.
- Ombudsmen working with Community Advisory Committees to increase opportunities for volunteer recruitment.
- Ombudsman participated in outreach to provide information on the Ombudsman Program as well as the Community Advisory Committee.
- Ombudsmen working on updating in-service opportunities to provide long term care facility staff.

Outreach and Assistance

- November is National Family Caregiver Month and working with our two caregiver programs we are highlighting Family Caregivers all month long via our Facebook page and our WNC Aging Update Newsletter.
- Staff are working on having more regular and constant Facebook presents.
- Staff are working on updating the AAA PowerPoint to reflect the new and updated programs we offer. This will allow any AAA staff member to be able to present a uniform PowerPoint presentation to other groups and organizations.
- Staff are working on updating program outreach materials. Currently working with Foster Grandparent Program and Senior Companion Program to create a new rack card for outreach to get new volunteers apart of the programs. Along create something for the Regional Advisory Aging Council to help get new members involved.
- Continued education on programs and resources within the region to help older adults age with choice. One way of doing this is getting certified as an option counselor through the state to better assist older adults.

Project C.A.R.E. (Caregiver Alternatives to Running on Empty)

- Staff distributed 74% of the State respite funds (\$43,000) allotted to the western region.
- 45% of the distributed funds have been utilized by caregivers.
- Staff applied for and received \$52,000 in American Rescue Plan Act funds for caregiver respite in the Land of Sky region to be utilized by the end of September 2024.
- Staff provided information and referral/assistance services to 278+ callers since July 1.

Senior Companion Program

- Number of active volunteers: 58
- Number of volunteers waiting for placement: 0
- Number of active stations:9
- Recruitment efforts: Three in process. Working on a power point, new rack cards and scheduling recruitment opportunities for Madison and Transylvania

In-service/training update: No in service in November. Celebration of volunteers in December with lunch, gift

4. Administration

- Hosted a regional health forum with each of the counties, MAHEC, Vaya Health, NC Association of County Commissioners, Dogwood Health Trust and more to discuss plans for the opioid settlement funding.
- Hosted a broadband forum for the region's local government managers with the NC Department of Information Technology (NCDIT).
- We held an all-staff strategic planning meeting on November 16. Thanks to Erica for facilitating the meeting!
- Nathan will be attending the COG Directors meeting on December 1 and 2.
- Nathan attended the Asheville Chamber GROWTH breakfast with the featured speaker Chris Chung, CEO with EDPNC.
- Nathan attended the John M Belk Endowment's 10-year anniversary celebration in Charlotte. JMBE is providing funding to support the Land of Sky P-20 Council.
- Nathan attended the YMI Cultural Center groundbreaking event.
- Nathan attended the Asheville Chamber's Policy on Tap which featured a discussion about the French Broad River.
- Nathan participated in the EDPNC Western Prosperity Zone road tour in Brevard.
- Nathan presented the regional workforce survey to the Brevard Rotary Club.
- Nathan attended the Early Childhood Education forum in Flat Rock hosted by the Children & Family Resource Center.
- Nathan attended the Veteran's Day ceremony at the Charles A George VA Medical Center. The ceremony is hosted in partnership with the City of Asheville.
- Nathan was a panelist at the ARC Appalachian Leadership Institute meeting in Asheville.
- Christina is designing the LOSRC FY21-22 Annual Report.

5. Workforce

- Region's unemployment rate of 2.7% for September 2022, metro has the #1 lowest unemployment rate in NC. Our region now has more people working, more jobs and more people in our labor force than at any time pre-pandemic. There are 7,983 more people working in the region compared to September 2021 and 2,734 more people working compared to August 2022.
- Annual recognition event will be held on Tuesday, December 13 at the WNC Agricultural Center in Fletcher.
- Pratt & Whitney groundbreaking held on Wednesday, November 16. MAWDB has supported this economic development project in various ways including providing virtual training software to AB Tech.*+
- Board has received \$1,304,000 in ARPA funding to support re-entry, substance use disorders and small businesses. Our board received the #2 highest amount of funding compared to other workforce boards in NC. The small business grant application was submitted in partnership with NC IDEA and NC Community College System.
- We are awaiting word on application for a \$4 million USDOL grant to serve youth in 11-counties in NC and 10-counties in TN.
- We are working with the Asheville Chamber to implement Accelerate Buncombe which will provide paid training for high-demand career fields.
- We hosted the WNC Career Expo on October 11 in partnership with the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce at the WNC Agricultural Center in Fletcher. Over 100 employers participated and around 350 job seekers attended.
- Several workforce staff supported MFG Day event at Borg Warner hosted by the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce. Over 300 middle school students attended the event.

- Nathan met with GE staff in Greenville SC as well as other sites around the nation on best practices for workforce development.

5. Strategic Initiatives

- **Mountain Mobility** – Passenger trips in October were down slightly – about 3.5% - from September, which is typical when the weather begins to turn colder. Our Trailblazer services in Black Mountain, Enka-Candler and North Buncombe were also slightly down – 159 (almost 8%) from October. Mountain Mobility continues to feel the effects of a sluggish workforce as we continue to recruit vehicle operators for approximately 8 full and part-time positions.
- **Healthy Opportunities** – The Healthy Opportunities Pilot Program has approved Land of Sky to offer housing services in addition to transportation. Our contract states we can provide assistance with housing inspections, move-in support, utility set-up and deposits and healthy home goods. We are still working n the process of how these services will be delivered, but we may be able to start receiving referrals as early as January. For Transportation, we received 12 referrals in October.
- **ARC INspire** – The team continues to serve individuals recovering from Substance Use Disorder and/or those returning from prison to find successful, long-term employment and supports in the community. In September, two individuals were placed in OJT contracts with local employers, while others were assisted with wraparound supports such as work shoes/clothing, assistance with obtaining employment documents (ID, driver’s license, etc.) and transportation to job interviews and other appointments. Amanda Layton, our newest FT team member, recently completed her Peer Support Specialist certification and is now helping others in the community.
- **NEMT** – Buncombe County anticipates budgeting the same funding for FY23-24. Transfer of additional clients has been delayed. NEMT provided 5317 trips for 539 clients in the month of October 2022.