

**Land of Sky Regional Council**  
**September 28, 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 (August 2022)
- VI. Comments by the Chair and Delegates Roundtable**
- VII. Public Comment**
- VIII. Presentations/Recognition**
  - A. Lew Bleiweis, Executive Director, Greater Asheville Regional Airport Authority
  - B. Dr. Susan Mims, CEO, Dogwood Health Trust
  - C. Erica Anderson, LOSRC Economic & Community Development Director, Regional Resiliency and Strategic Alignment Report
- IX. Executive Director's Report**
- X. Important Dates**
  - A. Next regularly scheduled Board meeting is planned for October 26, 2022.
- XI. Adjournment**



## BOARD OF DELEGATES AGENDA ITEM

- Subject:** Consent Agenda
- Item Number:** V. Consent Agenda:  
A. Modification/Approval of the Board's Agenda for September 21, 2022  
B. Approval of Minutes from the August 24, 2022, Regular Meeting
- Responsible Party:** Zia Rifkin, Administrative Services
- Attachment(s):** Minutes from the August 2022 Regular Meeting
- Background:** Item B. August 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes Recap:  
Quorum was present to conduct business at the August 2022 meeting and the minutes provide a recap of the Delegates' updates from around the region. Charlotte Sullivan was recognized for her service to LOS as the Finance Director and presentations were provided by Brad Spiegel with MountainBizWorks regarding outdoor Recreation Impact in WNC; a Legislative Update from Chris Wall with EQV Strategic; and John Hawthorne with Land O'Sky Chapter Trout Unlimited regarding the Economic Impact of the French Broad River Watershed.
- 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**

**August 24, 2022**

**Minutes**

- I. Call to Order – Chair Fitzsimmons called the meeting to order at approximately 12:30pm.
- II. Silent Invocation – A moment of silence was observed. Chair Fitzsimmons requested that Delegates be mindful that Commissioner Gentry is undergoing a medical procedure today.
- III. Pledge of Allegiance – Chair Fitzsimmons led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- IV. Roll Call – Nathan Ramsey called the roll. The following members were present: Terri Wells, Tim Love, John Mitchell, Matt Wechtel, Jason Chappell, Larry Chapman, Sandra Kilgore, Jonathan Kanipe, Larry Harris, Maureen Copelof, Barbara Jeter, Preston Blakely, Barbara Volk, Deb Bridges, Daniel Cobb, Mason Blake, Patrick Fitzsimmons, Elisabeth Ervin, Brad Guth, and Bob Tomasulo  
  
Guests Present – Robin Ramsey, Brad Spiegel, John Hawthorne, April Riddle, and Chris Wall  
  
A quorum was present to conduct business.
- V. Consent Agenda – The consent agenda, consisting of the Board’s August agenda, which was modified to move the legislative update and the minutes of the June 22, 2022, meeting was presented for approval.  
  
***Terri Wells moved to approve the consent agenda as modified. The motion received a second, and carried upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.***
- VI. Swearing in of Officers and Executive Committee Members –  
The Honorable Calvin Hill, Buncombe County Chief District Court Judge, 28<sup>th</sup> Judicial District administered the Oath of Office to the LOSRC Officers and Executive Committee Members elected for FY22/23.  
  
Chair, Honorable Patrick Fitzsimmons, Mayor, Town of Weaverville  
Vice Chair, Honorable Norris Gentry, Commissioner, Madison County Board of Commissioners  
Secretary, Honorable Maureen Copelof, Mayor, City of Brevard  
Treasurer, Honorable Preston Blakely, Mayor, Town of Fletcher  
Past Chair, Honorable Barbara Volk, Mayor, City of Hendersonville  
County Delegate, Honorable Matthew Wechtel, Commissioner, Madison County Board of Commissioners  
Municipal Delegate, Honorable Sandra Kilgore, City Council Member, City of Asheville  
Minority Representative, Honorable Jason Chappell, Chair, Transylvania County Board of Commissioners  
Aging Delegate, Bob Tomasulo, Regional Aging Advisory Council Chair
- VII. Chair’s Comments and Delegates Roundtable  
Chair Fitzsimmons requested that Delegates share updates and news of interest in their jurisdictions.  
  
Delegates Roundtable  
Commissioner Terri Wells – Shared that Buncombe County has recently secured over a million dollars for conservation work. Additionally, in June, the Commission voted to adopt measures that will be on the ballot in November for conservation and affordable housing.  
Manager John Mitchell – Shared that Henderson County has opened its \$60 million high school early and under budget and work is being done on the Ecusta Trail project. VFW project utilizing ARPA funding has renovations underway. The Opioid Settlement funding should have proposals for programs soon through an RFP process. Work is underway on a playground and the County is working on many other projects.

Commissioner Matt Wechtel – Shared that Madison County has many projects going on and he expressed appreciation to local representatives in the General Assembly for assistance. Building towards plans for a future Judicial Center for the county. Several projects going on including water/sewer projects, and renovations are about to start at the high school.

Commissioner Jason Chappell – Shared that Transylvania County continued their support for the School Resource Program staffed by the Sheriff's Department. Since 2006 the Commission and the Education Board have placed Resource Officers within the local school system. SROs are also at BRCC and Brevard Academy. The County held a roundtable meeting with AG Stein regarding the Opioid Settlement funding.

Council Member Sandra Kilgore – Shared that the City of Asheville voted to accept asset foreclosure funding which is divided three ways between the State, County and the City. The City utilized the funding to procure a DNA analyzer and other needed devices. The City plans to tap into funding to purchase land on Tunnel Road for a 100% affordable housing development. 319 Biltmore for a 51-unit mixed use development including affordable housing and this is the first time the City has entered into a contract with a POC developer.

Town Manager Jonathan Kanipe – Shared that the Town of Biltmore Forest is finishing up a stream restoration project and working on the park masterplan to include new playground equipment. The Town's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary is coming up in 2023 and plans are being made for the celebration.

Mayor Larry Harris – Shared that the Town of Black Mountain is working to deploy the ARPA funds and getting everything in place to develop those projects. Not all ARPA funds are committed yet, but some pricey projects have been undertaken. Working on an update of the Parks/Recreation Plan to assist in deploying additional funds for public projects. The Town is also working on the UDO and addressing short-term rentals and a tree ordinance. He shared too, that the Town is grateful that the community came through the pandemic well and work is being done to address some of the issues that resulted from that situation.

Mayor Maureen Copelof – Shared that the City of Brevard is working on the Comprehensive Land Use Plan and public comment events are coming up. The City is addressing healthcare in rural regions by looking at what is available, what is needed and what could be improved. The Mayor shared that the City is excited about creating the position for an Assistant City Manager. The City is pivoting and going after other funding for the Ecusta trail.

Town Commissioner Barbara Jeter – Shared that the Village of Flat Rock just finished its Comprehensive Land Use Plan and is beginning work on the Park/Recreation Plan. The Village received a grant for an assistant park manager. Upcoming public hearing for spending the ARPA funding.

Mayor Preston Blakely – Shared that the Town of Fletcher working on improvements to the Park, including the addition of Pickle Ball Courts.

Mayor Barbara Volk – Shared that the City of Hendersonville is expanding the Fire Station and renovating Patton Park including Pickle Ball Courts. Also, the City is well underway on the parking garage downtown using pre-formed concrete construction. Looking at a January 2023 opening for that facility, at the earliest or March. The City has two plans going on including the Fire Department Strategic Plan and the Apple Festival is coming up in September.

Town Commissioner Deb Bridges – Shared that the Town of Laurel Park is continuing to study stormwater guidelines for the UDO for steep and very steep properties. The Town held an invasive plants workshop last night with staff from the NC State Cooperative Extension. Some of the invasive plants are really starting to be a problem for the municipality. She shared that the Town is encouraging the community to get onboard with controlling the invasion. The Town is installing fiber optic cable throughout its jurisdiction, which has been a big project. The Parks/Greenway Board and Centennial Committee are continuing to plan and spruce up things for the 2025 Centennial. Regarding the Ecusta Trail, the Town's portion will be completed and open for celebration in 2025. The Town Council has considered its vision for the next 100 years and have come up with some major projects for the community, leading with a new town hall. Two years ago, when the UDO was completed, a new town hall was recommended. The Town has truly outgrown its current space and has acquired three acres on Highway 64 and is planning to release RFQs for the engagement of an architect and plans to evaluate its current and future space needs. The Town is very excited about this development and hopes to complete work in time for its Centennial.

Manager Daniel Cobb – Shared that the Town of Mills River is doing well with many projects going on including new picnic shelters and is pleasantly surprised that everything is ahead of schedule and under budget. Hoping to wrap up the work by early fall. The Town already has Pickle Ball Courts (4) open to the public and heavily used.

Town Commissioner Mason Blake – Shared that the Town of Montreat recently converted to a commission/manager form of government and is searching for a Town Manager. The Town is updating its Comprehensive Plan including public and neighborhood input sessions. The Town is working on a trail design for people with handicaps. Passed an ordinance lately dealing with bears and bear hunters to address issues caused by hunting around the Town.

Mayor Patrick Fitzsimmons – Shared that the Town of Weaverville is working on renovations to the park including Pickle Ball Courts.

Town Commissioner Elisabeth Ervin – Shared that the Town of Woodfin is continuing to work on slope/steep slope ordinances. Started the application process with a proposal for a large development, which would fall under the new ordinances. There's a White-Water Wave model in Prague and the Town is working through the process to address any issues that might occur when a similar model is constructed on the French Broad River.

Nathan Ramsey shared that George Morosani has tendered his resignation to the Board after 34 years of service.

Economic Development Representative Brad Guth – Shared an update on the governor's announcement for 17 jobs and \$5 million in investment in Madison County.

Regional Aging Advisory Council Chair Bob Tomasulo – Shared that the next RAAC meeting is at 10am on September 8 in Mills River. Please reach out to LeeAnne Tucker to RSVP.

VIII. Public Comment -

Chair Fitzsimmons called for public comments. No public comments were made.

IX. Presentations/Recognition –

A. Recognition of Former Land of Sky Regional Council Finance Director Charlotte Sullivan - Chair Fitzsimmons shared the Boards appreciation for her years of work supporting Council. Nathan Ramsey remarked on her dedicated service and leadership. He noted that the organization was honored to have Patricia Roseburg in the interim position and Charlotte is assisting with the transition. Charlotte Sullivan accepted her recognition gracefully.

B. Outdoor Recreation Impact in WNC –

Brad Spiegel, Building Outdoor Communities Specialist with Mountain BizWorks shared that the nonprofit has a brand call Made X MTNS WNC that consists of three pillars- grow the outdoor industry, empower regional storytelling, and building outdoor communities. Today's focus will be on growing the outdoor industry. He noted that major funders for this initiative are ARC, DHT and Mountain BizWorks. Growing the outdoor industry includes economic development, quality of life, connectivity, equity, stewardship, and resilience. Talent attraction, business attraction, and economic development are all included in this program area. This is a regional community development initiative for the outdoor industry. Applications can be submitted by the counties in the 18-county region by Friday. The project team includes six COGs (Southwestern, LOS, Foothills, Western Piedmont, and High Country). The program ends in 2024 and during the assessment period, Appalachian State University (ASU) is going to be deploying an outdoor economic impact toolkit, providing a strategic recommendations and gap analysis, quarterly trainings/workshops to raise the bar and uplift the knowledge sharing component, among other facets of the initiative, which are explained throughout the application process. A matching grant program is available to communities that have their application selected. Three to eight working groups are envisioned who will receive one-on-one guidance on how to address their gaps. The Building Outdoor Communities Program launches September 9, 2022 in Boone, NC. The goal is to assist communities to move them to the place to advance their outdoor industry. The 7-month cohort work period includes a kick-off meeting the first month,

monthly meetings, mid-point meeting and wrap up meeting in the seventh month. Applications will serve as a baseline for grouping communities into cohorts.

Discussion occurred about the envisioned outcomes of the initiative for the benefit of the communities.

#### C. Legislative Update –

Chris Wall, Principal of EQV Strategic shared a legislative update with the Board. He noted that there's some insight into what the future holds for the General Assembly (GA) through December 2022. The budget was passed but funding was mostly kicked into next year. One thing not addressed was Medicaid Expansion, but it was passed earlier this year by the Senate, then stalled in the House without enough votes. It might be possible to come in after the elections to address some of the bigger ticket items and pass Medicaid Expansion. Maybe by early in December, the GA would come back in and address additional items including lottery gaming in establishments, medical marijuana, etc. Safe to say Republicans would maintain majorities in both the House and Senate, cannot say if a supermajority would be attained as a result of the elections. With the state being in such good fiscal health, it is hopeful that jurisdictions would be the beneficiaries of continued opportunities for additional funding.

Nathan Ramsey shared that LOS and Southwestern appreciates EQV's advocacy for the western region and he wondered if local jurisdictions were advocating for their local needs. Chris Wall noted that the short session had an over \$6 Billion surplus that could have been allocated but the mood was to adjourn for the summer. The new session should bring a renewed focus on supporting local jurisdictions. He shared that EQV is always happy to help local jurisdictions through the relationship with the western-most COGs. Now is the time for local jurisdictions to ask for what they need.

#### D. French Broad River Economic Impact –

John Hawthorne, Conservation Chair, Land O'Sky Chapter Trout Unlimited presented information regarding the French Broad River Partnership (FBRP). He shared the importance of healthy, sustainable, environmental and economic ecosystems. The FBRP works to maintain and improve stream health within the French Broad River watershed for environmental and economic benefits. The watershed is over 300 million years old, flows for 219 miles, and begins near Rosman. The watershed encompasses 8 counties, joins the Holston to create the Tennessee, Ohio, and Mississippi rivers. The watershed is comprised of three sub-watersheds including the Upper French Broad River, the Nolichucky river, and the Pigeon River Watershed. The river flows north/northwest based on the configuration of the mountains. The majority of the Pisgah National Forest, all of Dupont State Forest, 25% of the Great Smoky Mountain National Park and 75% of the land is forested. It's also an ecological resource including hellbenders, softshell turtles, pink beds, mountain valley bog, and rare fish and other species. Public understanding is the best reason to why to study the economic impact of the French Broad Watershed. It's like any other resource and without the proper care, it will degrade. As part of the study, data collection included identifying businesses by NAICS Codes in the eight-county region, a survey of visitors and residents was conducted. Study finding included that over 7 million people are influenced by the river to come to this region. Annual visitor spending exceeds \$2.7 billion, and the economic impact is \$3.8 billion. Another \$273 million in annual federal taxes is generated based on 38,554 jobs created or maintained annually. The overall environmental value is \$2.9 billion. Next steps include sharing findings with river-invested groups and individuals, expanding awareness among the public about the river's value, continuing research into other sectors (forestry, agriculture, etc.), and designing a multi-year action plan to address primary pollutants of concern.

#### X. 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 the organization is starting the strategic planning process and working to secure additional funding for the region.

#### XI. Important Dates –

A. The next Board of Delegates is September 28, 2022 in-person at the Land of Sky Offices and through Zoom.

XII. Adjournment –

Chair Fitzsimmons adjourned the meeting upon a motion and second of the Delegates as there was no further business.

Respectfully submitted by Zia Rifkin



## **BOARD OF DELEGATES AGENDA ITEM**

- Subject:** Executive Director's Report
- Item Number:** IX. Executive Director's Report
- Responsible Party:** Nathan Ramsey, Executive Director
- Attachment(s):** Executive Director's Report for September 28, 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

- Patricia Rosenberg, CPA and CIA (Certified Internal Auditor) has been named the Finance Director after an exhaustive search. Previously Patricia was Finance leader for a local law firm and Internal Auditor for the City of Asheville for seven years. Patricia is highly qualified and we are excited she has joined our team. Patricia was selected based on the unanimous decision of the leadership team and finance staff. We appreciate Charlotte Sullivan, former Finance Director at LOSRC for working to support us during this transition.
- LOSRC is adding more modules to our finance system to support payroll and encumbrances. Finance staff and all staff have participated in training.

## 2. Economic & Community Development & Transportation Planning

### Kudos!

- Congratulations to Mars Hill for their recent Rural Transformation Fund Grant – to acquire a vacant Main Street building.
- 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 being 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 with public meetings planned for June 6th-June 8th
9. The MPO has completed corridor studies on Hendersonville Road and Tunnel Road, in cooperation with the City of Asheville, Buncombe County, and NCDOT. The Studies can be found here: <http://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/local-plans/>
10. The MPO is providing funding for on-going studies at the City of Asheville, including the Close the GAP Plan, the purchase of bicycle and pedestrian counters, and the Biltmore/McDowell study.
11. 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.
12. The MPO is considering providing an additional \$23 million in funding for projects across the region, including:
  - Ecusta Trail (US 64 to the Transylvania County Line)
  - Woodfin Greenways
  - Swannanoa Greenway
  - Riceville Road Sidewalks
  - Texas Road Pedestrian Bridge

## 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 has begun in the first residential building.
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 is advertising to hire a Housing Planner. Information will be posted here: <http://www.landofsky.org/employment.html>
3. 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.
4. 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. Draft planning documents for the Creative Manufacturing Sector Development plan are currently being reviewed by the core steering committee. A presentation of findings will occur at the Creative Manufacturing Summit on September 26<sup>th</sup> in Waynesville.
2. 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.
3. 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>
4. 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.
5. The TDM Coordinator is working with Workforce, Inspire, and employers to develop a vanpool for under-resourced individuals to access job sites.
6. 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](mailto: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.

## **Waste Reduction Partners**

1. Staff is working 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. Working in special partnership with NC DEQ, Waste Reduction Partner's on-site technical assistance was featured in the Division of Environmental Assistance (DEACS) [2022 Biennial Report](#).
4. Staff will be assisting City of Hendersonville with energy assessments of City Hall and Operations Center to advance the City's strategic energy management plan.
5. WRP staff conducted 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](mailto: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](mailto: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 has have received Request for Funding applications from providers. Requests are being reviewed and our plan will be submitted to the Regional Aging Advisory Council for approval soon.

### COVID-19 Vaccine Outreach

- Staff is wrapping up work with Covid-19 Outreach, as the funding will end at the end of September.
- Staff has been working with the Fall Prevention Coalition of WNC to help provide informational placemats on both falls and Covid. These will reach over 1,500 individuals in all four counties along with providing Fall Prevention t-shirts for the group.
- Staff continues to work on radio and newspaper ads in the region reaching over 100,000 individuals with Covid ads.
- Land of Sky continues to be a location for people in the community to pick up free Covid-19 rapid at-home testing kits. Each week, 50-100 testing kits are distributed. This program has even benefited many staff members and their families.
- Staff continues to build up community partners and assist in community outreach. Over 125 thermometers were distributed for health and wellness events in Madison County that were put together by Kepro Community Health Workers. Staff is also working with Disability Partners to get the flu and covid vaccine clinic for October.
- Staff gave out just over 600 “swag bags” to homebound older adults in all four counties in partnership with Meals on Wheels in Henderson and Transylvania Counties as well as working with nutritional sites and meal deliveries in Transylvania, Madison, and Henderson Counties.
- Staff distributed over 1,000 custom-printed napkins with information to encourage older adults to stay healthy and safe. These napkins were given out to Buncombe County Meals on Wheels, MANNA boxes at Asheville Terrace, and other places with meals for seniors.

## Family Caregiver Support Program

- Staff participated in the Southeastern Association of Area Agencies on Aging Annual Conference in Amelia Island, Florida.
- Staff participated in Aging Projects, Inc. Eighth Annual “Aging in Place. It’s Your Future.” Conference that was held at Blue Ridge Community College.
- Staff worked with providers on Requests for Funding for Family Caregiver American Rescue Plan funds.
- Staff participated in the Friends of Transylvania County Adult Day Care meeting and discussed the programs Land of Sky Area Agency on Aging provides. Staff also discussed other programs currently being offered in Transylvania County that can benefit caregivers and care receivers such as the lunches offered at the Silvermont Mansion and the programs that are hosted there
- Staff helped facilitate in-person caregiver and care receiver support groups in Hendersonville. There were two caregivers and two care receivers who participated.

#### Foster Grandparent Program (FGP)

- Number of active volunteers: We have 22 volunteers are serving in-person with children ages infant to 13 years old.
- Number of volunteers waiting on paperwork, placement, etc.: 26 volunteers wait for their schools to reopen to volunteers so that they can return to service. Three potential volunteers are in the process of enrolling in the program.
- Number of active stations (schools, day cares, etc.): 9
- Number of stations waiting to sign MOU, volunteer placement, etc.: 8 of the schools, Head Start Centers, and childcare centers have not yet allowed volunteers to return to service, one of which we are working to renew the MOU with.
- 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 currently looking for new stations in Henderson County.
- In-service/training update: On September 13, Foster Grandparent volunteers attended in-person in-service training at Land of Sky Regional Council. The in-service served as a back-to-school recognition event as some volunteers return to in-person service. Volunteers received a vest with the new AmeriCorps Seniors logo as well as a FGP bag to carry to and from school. Included in the bags were hand sanitizer, COVID tests, and a FGP gripper. Volunteers learned more about Medicare Fraud and Scams through a presentation from Diane Trainer.

#### Health Promotion and Disease Prevention

- Staff will be promoting several Fall Prevention events beginning September 9 including:
  - Staff appeared with Billie Breeden of Age-Friendly Buncombe County on WRES Radio to promote the importance of fall prevention.
  - Represent AAA and WNC Fall Prevention Coalition at the Western North Carolina Falls Conference held at MAHEC on September 9<sup>th</sup>.
  - Outreach at Mission Hospital to promote evidence-based programs.
  - Educational Presentation at Hendersonville Library in partnership with Council on Aging Henderson County.
- Staff continues programming for several evidence-based programs beginning in September including
  - Living Healthy with Chronic Conditions (phone delivery)
  - Walk with Ease in Partnership with Western Carolina University Doctoral Program at Gerber Givens Park (in-person)
  - Continued monthly Tai Chi Education and refreshers at the Senior Opportunity Senior
- Staff has continued recruiting volunteers that recently completed or will be beginning training in Living Healthy with Chronic Conditions (2) and A Matter of Balance (2).
- Staff partnered with Blue Ridge Pride Generation Plus on several events for PRIDE month including:

- “Lunch and Learn” that focused on the Importance of Tai Chi to help strengthen the body and mind.
- Senior Prom: “The Love Boat” September 17
- PRIDE Festival: Staff will represent AAA, AARP, and Generation Plus on September 24.
- Staff partnering with AARP and Blue Ridge Pride Generation Plus for Rainbow Inspiration streaming event with Bob Tomasulo election “Special” Make Sure Your Vote Counts!” on October 3rd
- Staff is working with AARP to hold a “Meet the Author” event with Val Walker to discuss *Building Volunteer Capacity*. A watch party will be held at Land of Sky in April 2023.
- Staff and Asheville Terrace Community Health Workers continue to partner with MANNA, Trader Joe, and OLLI volunteers to bring nutrition to residents. In August, 58 bags of groceries were distributed to residents, and 382 “Neighbor Knock” visits were conducted.

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

- Adult Day Care/Health Days = 532
- Meals – delivered/congregate = 36,644
- In-home Aide hours = 2,177
- Legal Services hours = 318
- Transportation trips = 8414
- Home Improvement Projects = 6

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

- Completed in-person visits to 38 Skilled Nursing Facilities including: Cabarrus, Mecklenburg, Jackson (second visits) and Haywood (second visits).
- Assisted MFP Transition Coordinator with hands on activities for transitions.
- Presented MFP application review webinar for Skilled Nursing facilities for Western region.
- Completed education campaign to Skilled Nursing facilities regarding utilization of Local Contact Agency for MDS section Q referrals.
- Attended and provided outreach on programs at Aging Projects Annual Conference

#### Money Follows the Person Transition Coordinator:

Western counties: Buncombe, Henderson, Transylvania, Polk, Madison, McDowell, Rutherford, Mitchell, Madison.

- The current caseload for the Western counties is nine.
- All but one of the participants are currently waiting for housing before they can transition.
- One beneficiary transitioned in September.

#### Central counties being served: Forsyth, Davidson, Surry, Davie, Stokes, Yadkin

- The current caseload for the Central counties is six.
- Three clients are trying to locate housing before they can transition.
- Two clients are scheduled to transition October 1, 2022.

#### Ombudsman Program

- The Community Advisory Committees have re-entered facilities. Facility visits have been completed and visit reports have been provided to the Ombudsmen.
- Ombudsmen participated in the two-day Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST).
- Ombudsman assisted in planning and participated in the Generation Plus Lunch and Learn.
- The Ombudsman Program provided activity booklets to Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania County facility Activity Directors.
- There are four new Community Advisory Committee applicants in the region.

- Ombudsman participated in a two-day emergency preparedness webinar.
- Ombudsmen participated in two Resident Councils to provide information on Resident Rights.
- Ombudsmen participate in monthly North Carolina Ombudsman meeting to discuss case reviews and questions.
- Ombudsman assisted in planning and attending Generation Plus Prom.

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

- Since July 1, \$500 Respite care vouchers have been distributed to 36 dementia caregivers in the Western Project C.A.R.E. region which includes the Land of Sky region.
- 17 of the 36 caregivers are in the Land of Sky region.
- Most caregivers received one \$500 voucher, five received two vouchers, and one received three vouchers. In all, 44 vouchers were distributed.
- Most caregivers hired self-employed private caregivers to provide respite care in the home; a couple of the caregivers hired an in-home care agency to provide respite care; one took their care receiver to a nursing home for three nights of respite care.
- Staff provided information/referrals/assistance 146 times in the first two months of this fiscal year.
- All caregivers receiving financial assistance are also receiving care consultation services.
- 42 vouchers remain to be distributed.

### **The Senior Companion Program**

- Number of active volunteers: 57
- Number of volunteers waiting on paperwork, placement, etc.: 3
- Number of active stations (schools, day cares, etc.): 7
- Number of stations waiting to sign MOU, volunteer placement, etc.: 0
- Recruitment efforts (press releases, presentations, etc.): Monthly radio show with WKHB, Madison County. Visitation to eight Senior Active Living Centers in Madison County for October 2022 and reception in Henderson County for Senior Companion Volunteers with the Henderson County Council on Aging in late September 2022.
- In-service/training update:  
October: SHIIP program  
November: Senior Companion Handbook updates  
December: Luncheon and celebration.

The Senior Companion Program is gaining momentum as more of our volunteers are re-engaged in community. We have welcomed three new volunteers in the month of September and have three beginning the process. We have added CarePartners Rehabilitation as a new volunteer station. Two of our volunteers are providing art programs and activities for patients.

## **4. Administration**

- LOSRC received three NADO Impact Awards for
- Strategic planning process has begun with staff and external surveys. Hosted all-staff strategic plan meeting on September 23.
- Held interviews for the Finance Director position on September 20.
- Visited East Tennessee Development District to help support \$4 million USDOL grant with Tennessee and North Carolina to serve youth ages 18 – 24 years old.
- Nathan met with leadership of Pisgah Health Foundation in Brevard.
- Nathan attended the NC League of Municipalities ARP Tour meeting in Hickory.
- Nathan is participating in the NC Healthcare Broadband Task Force representing NC COGs.

- Nathan attended the Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development annual meeting at Rinehart Racing in Fletcher.
- Nathan attended the Lenoir Rhyne University 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration.
- We are increasing the general liability coverage for LOSRC from \$5 million to \$10 million.
- Hosted monthly LOSRC DEI and staff meetings.

## 5. Workforce

- Region's unemployment rate of 2.9% for July 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 9,683 more people working in the region compared to July 2021.
- Graham Fields with Advent Health Hendersonville is now Chair of the Mountain Area Workforce Development Board.
- We hosted NC Workforce Directors meeting in Asheville on September 12 – 13. Meetings were held at AB Tech and included a tour of New Belgium Brewing Company.
- Portfolio Workshop for Tech Careers with Guided Compass held on September 21 at Sierra Nevada Brewery in Mills River to share tech career opportunities in Western North Carolina.
- WNC Talent Survey covering 10-counties in Western North Carolina will be released at the Asheville Chamber's Economic Development Coalition of Asheville – Buncombe on August 26.
- We received \$1.44 million USDOL WORC grant as part of our P20 Council my Future NC effort. This grant will support training for high-demand careers at AB Tech and Blue Ridge Community College.
- We are working on submitting application for a \$4 million USDOL grant to serve youth in 11-counties in NC and 10-counties in TN.
- We submitted multiple grant applications to the NC Department of Commerce: \$200,000 for substance use disorders, \$200,000 for reentry, and \$904,080 for small business training support. The small business grant application was submitted in partnership with NC IDEA and NC Community College System.
- We will continue our partnership with the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce to host the WNC Career Expo in the fall of 2022 and spring of 2023. The fall 2022 WNC Career Expo will be October 11 at the WNC Agricultural Center in Fletcher.
- Board staff are working closely with county economic developers on several expansion or new business recruitment with the NC Job Ready grant.
- We are working on supporting rapid response activities at several local firms who will be laying off their employees, the largest of the closings will be Continental Automotive in Fletcher, there are still about 200 employees at Continental. Coats North America will be closing their facility in Laurel Park which will impact 51 employees.

## 5. Strategic Initiatives

- Mountain Mobility saw a 20% increase in trips from July to August. Total passenger trips in August topped 9,880, with Trailblazer services also seeing gains across the three routes. We served 15% more passengers on our Black Mountain, Enka-Candler, and North Buncombe routes in August than the previous month.
- Healthy Opportunities Pilot Program – our partnership with Impact Health/Dogwood Health Trust that provides non-medical transportation services to qualifying Medicaid recipients (different from those served by NEMT) – has served 10 members in August throughout our region. Additionally, we are processing mileage reimbursements for 12 others. We are hopeful this program continues to grow as the program is more widely publicized.
- *INspire: Recovery to Careers* serves the needs of individuals who are recovering from Substance Use Disorder and are ready for career/life skills. We enrolled 34 new participants in August 2022: seventeen

of those are actively working and others are in housing programs and are starting education and training programs.

- Continuing to work on \$4 million USDOL GROW application to serve opportunity youth ages 18 – 24 in partnership with East Tennessee Development District. Submitted \$200,000 reentry grant and \$200,000 substance use disorder grant to the NC Department of Commerce to support the INspire program.
- We would like to welcome Amanda Layton as our newest Certified Peer Support Specialist (CPSS) who started with us in August. Amanda has lived experience and has already built a solid client base, and LOS is excited to have her on the team. We also want to welcome Felix Soto and Angela Frady as interns. Felix and Angela are former *INspire* participants that have chosen the Peer Support/Direct Care as a career path, and we are now providing internships for them to get hands-on learning experience. Also, Anton Sluder, a former *INspire* participant, recently achieved his CPSS and is now working as a CPSS with RHA, thanks to connections made by the *INspire* team.
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) - Land of Sky is planning a series of Lunch 'N Learns to introduce community programs and services to LOS staff. Our first event is planned for Wednesday, October 5th, with a presentation by Inclusive Hiring Partners, a program sponsored by the Asheville Chamber of Commerce seeking to close the opportunity gap between employers and job seekers with barriers.