

Meeting Agenda

RPO Technical Advisory Committee

May 27th, 2015 –2:30 Medium Conference Room Land of Sky Regional Council

1. WELCOME AND HOUSEKEEPING

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| A. Welcome and Introductions | Brownie Newman |
| B. Ethics Statement & Agenda Approval/Modifications | Brownie Newman |
| C. Agenda Approval/Modifications | Brownie Newman |

2. CONSENT AGENDA

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| A. Minutes from the RPO TAC March 18 th , 2015 Meeting | Brownie Newman |
|---|----------------|

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

4. BUSINESS

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| A. Approve amendments to PIP | Vicki Eastland |
| B. Approve Prioritization work group members | Vicki Eastland |
| C. Review SPOT4 updates and schedule | Vicki Eastland |
| D. Adopt Timeline/Meeting Schedule | Vicki Eastland |

5. REGULAR UPDATES

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| A. NCDOT Division 13 and 14 updates | Jay Swain/Ed Green/Designee |
| B. Transportation Planning Branch Updates | Brendan Merithew |
| C. Legislative Updates | Vicki Eastland |
| D. Staff Updates and Housekeeping | Vicki Eastland |
| E. Adjourn LOSRPO Meeting | Brownie Newman |

Next Meeting: August 26th, 2:30 PM

Upcoming Meetings

6. ADJOURNMENT

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Item 1b: Ethics Statement

ETHICS AWARENESS & CONFLICT OF INTEREST REMINDER

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

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

Item 2A: Consent Agenda: Minutes from March. 18, 2015 Meeting

Land of Sky RPO TAC Meeting Minutes from March 18, 2015

Attendees:

David Brown
Jason Chappell (ph)
Vicki Eastland
Ed Green

Charles Landreth (ph)
Brendan Merithew
Brownie Newman
Lawrence Ponder

Kristina Solberg
Michael Sorrells
Tristan Winkler

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Brownie Newman called the meeting to order and welcomed attendees. He read the Ethics Statement, asked if there were any conflicts, and members responded that there were none. He then reviewed the Agenda and no modifications were proposed.

CONSENT AGENDA

Lawrence Ponder motioned to approve the minutes from February 5th, Michael Sorrells seconded, and as all were in favor, the minutes were then approved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The public comment period was opened, and as there were none at this time, nor through Facebook or email, the public comment period was closed.

BUSINESS

RPO Draft 2015-2016 PWP: Vicki Eastland highlighted the RPO Draft 2015-2016 PWP and added that DOT has approved this, and at the TCC meeting it was approved pending TAC approval. Brownie Newman asked if there were any questions and none were brought forth.

Michael Sorrells motioned to approve the RPO Draft 2015-2016 PWP, Lawrence Ponder seconded, and as all were in favor, the motion carried.

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Five-Year Planning Calendar: Vicki Eastland pointed out the various columns from the Calendar and asked if any questions and none were presented.

Jason Chappell motioned to approve the Five-Year Planning Calendar, Michael Sorrells seconded, and as all were in favor, the motioned carried.

LOSRPO Bike/Ped Project Submission Form: Vicki Eastland reviewed the form and that the TCC had suggested adding a contact section which was subsequently included.

Town of Marshall Pop Up Bike Corral Presentation: Vicki Eastland reviewed the survey process and the results which are available from the website. Results included heavy 251 use to Marshall and also indicated a need for additional, visible bike racks and that there should be other locations to hold a similar Pop Up Corral. David Brown asked about funding and Vicki Eastland responded that there is \$1,000 grant from the BR Bike Club to purchase a new rack that the town will be applying for, relocate the old ones, and an encroachment agreement with NCDOT will be needed.

REGULAR UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Kristina Solberg provided Division 13 updates and Ed Green provided Division 14 updates.
- Brendan Merithew presented TPB updates regarding the CTP timeline.
- Legislative updates included gas tax options not yet passed, and potential TAP funding set aside.
- CPTHSTP is updated every five years, this time in combination with MPO because both the MPO and RPO serve the same counties. This is the opportunity for counties to identify their transit projects in an attempt to obtain funding.

With no further discussion, the meeting adjourned.



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LOSRPO Business:

Item 4a: Adopt Amendments to Land of Sky RPO PIP

Attached at end of Agenda

Staff recommended action:
Review and adopt

Item 4b: Land of Sky RPO Prioritization Work Group

Members include: Scott Collier, Mark Burrows, Josh Freeman, Kris Boyd and Forrest Gilliam

Staff recommended action:
Review and discuss list and adopt

Item 4c: Review SPOT4 updates and schedule

We have reached consensus on how to score projects. Please note that some of these still could change based on feedback from either the legislature or the Board of Transportation, so this is still essentially draft. Here is a summary of the scoring criteria:

Highway Project Default Weights:

| | Statewide | Regional | Division |
|-----------------------------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Benefit-Cost | 25% | 20% | 15% |
| Congestion | 30% | 20% | 15% |
| Economic Competitiveness | 10% | -- | -- |
| Accessibility/ Connectivity | -- | 10% | 5% |
| Safety | 15% | 10% | 10% |
| Freight | 15% | 10% | 5% |
| Multimodal | 5% | -- | -- |
| Lane Width | -- | -- | -- |
| Shoulder Width | -- | -- | -- |
| Pavement Condition | -- | -- | -- |

- Benefit-Cost = [(Total Benefits over 10 years/Cost to NCDOT) + (“Other Funds”/Total Project Cost) x 100]] (note: total benefits includes travel time benefits and safety benefits; “other” is non-DOT controlled funding sources (local, private, tolling, etc.))
- Congestion (Statewide) = [((Peak ADT/Capacity) x 60%) + ((Peak ADT) x 40%)]
- Congestion (Regional) = [((Peak ADT/Capacity) x 80%) + ((Peak ADT) x 20%)]
- Congestion (Division) = Peak ADT/Capacity
- Economic Competitiveness = Long Term Jobs Created (50%) + Value added in \$ based on % change in county economy (50%) (note: using TREDIS model)



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- Accessibility/Connectivity = 50% county rankings used in "tier" designations (economic distress indicator) + 50% whether the project upgrades the function of the roadway (yes/no – if yes, then score based on per-user travel time benefits)
- Safety (segments) = (crash density x 33%) + (crash severity x 33%) + (critical crash rate x 33%)
- Safety (intersections) = (crash frequency x 50%) + (severity index x 50%)
- Freight = (truck volume on the route x 50%) + (Peak ADT/Capacity only if the route is non-Interstate STRAHNET route or Future Interstate corridor x 30%) + (proximity to gate of freight terminal, max 20 miles x 20%)
- Multimodal = (Peak ADT/Capacity only if the project is within 5 miles of a multimodal terminal x 40%) + (proximity to gate of multimodal terminal, max 5 miles x 60%)
- Lane Width = Existing lane width - DOT design standard lane width
- Shoulder Width = Existing shoulder width - DOT design standard shoulder width
- Pavement Condition = 100 - pavement condition rating

Bike/Ped Project Default Weights:

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| | Division (not eligible for Statewide/Region) |
| Safety | 15% |
| Access | 10% |
| Demand-Density | 10% |
| Connectivity | 10% |
| Cost Effectiveness | 5% |

- Safety = 40% bike/ped crash history + 40% posted speed limit + 20% safety benefits
- Access = 50% number of destinations (different weights for primary and secondary) + 50% proximity to destinations (1 mile max for ped, 3 miles max for bike) (*note: similar to P3.0, but some changes to what count as destinations*)
- Demand-Density = number of households and employees per square mile within 1.5 miles for bike or within 0.5 miles for ped (also incorporate second homes & group quarters into the household calculation)
- Connectivity = measure of whether the facility connects with other facilities at its endpoints and the quality/consistency of those connections
- Cost Effectiveness = ((Safety + Access + Demand-Density + Connectivity) / Cost to NCDOT)

Aviation Project Default Weights:

| | Statewide | Regional | Division |
|------------------------------|-----------|----------|----------|
| NCDOA Capital Project Rating | 40% | 30% | 25% |
| FAA ACIP Rating | 10% | 5% | 10% |
| Non-state Contribution Index | 30% | 20% | 5% |
| Benefit-Cost | 20% | 15% | 10% |

- NCDOA Capital Project Rating = state-developed rating based on priority of that project type



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- FAA ACIP Rating = federally-developed rating based on priority of that project type
- Non-state Contribution Index = based on how much of the cost (%) is covered by non-state sources
- Benefit-Cost = $\frac{((\text{Total } \$ \text{ Economic Contribution of that Tier} / \text{Number of IFR Operations in that Tier}) \times \text{NCDOA Capital Project Rating})}{\text{Project Cost}}$

Public Transportation Project Default Weights:

TRANSIT – EXPANSION VEHICLES

| | Regional | Division |
|--------------------|----------|----------|
| Access | 10% | 5% |
| System Safety | 10% | 10% |
| Impact | 20% | 15% |
| Cost Effectiveness | 20% | 15% |
| Market Share | 10% | 5% |

- Access = annual OpStats reported hours / vehicles in fleet
- System safety = OpStats reported miles / 3 year average of incidents
- Impact = $(\text{unlinked annual passenger trips} + \text{projected new unlinked annual passenger trips}) / \text{unlinked annual passenger trips}$
- Cost Effectiveness = $\text{projected new unlinked passenger trips for the life of the vehicle} / \text{cost to the state}$
- Market share = $(\text{unlinked passenger trips} + \text{projected new unlinked annual passenger trips}) / \text{service area population}$

TRANSIT – FACILITIES

| | Regional | Division |
|---------------------------|----------|----------|
| Impact or Age of Facility | 20% | 15% |
| Cost Effectiveness | 20% | 15% |
| Market Share | 15% | 10% |
| Ridership Growth | 15% | 10% |

- Impact = $(\text{Additional capacity} + \text{existing capacity}) / \text{Existing capacity}$
- Age = age / 45 years
- Cost effectiveness = $\text{estimated trips for the life of the facility} / \text{cost to the state}$
- Market Share = $(\text{unlinked passenger trips} + \text{projected new unlinked annual passenger trips}) / \text{service area population}$
- Ridership growth = ridership growth trend for the previous 5 years

Rail Project Default Weights:

| | Statewide | Regional | Division |
|----------------------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Cost Effectiveness | 35% | 25% | 20% |
| System Health | 35% | 20% | 10% |
| Safety & Suitability | 20% | 15% | 10% |
| Project Support | 10% | 10% | 10% |

- Cost Effectiveness = $((\text{Monetized Benefits} / \text{Cost to NCDOT}) \times 75\%) + ((\text{Long-term Jobs Created in Year 20} \times \text{Weighted County Unemployment Rate}) \times 25\%)$

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- System Health (Passenger Station) = ((Volume / Capacity) x 75%) + ((Points of Interest within 10 miles of this station / Average Points of Interest within 10 miles of existing stations in state) x 25%)
- System Health (Rail Improvements) = ((Volume / Capacity) x 75%) + ((Percentage of project that improves the NCTN statewide rail system) x 25%)
- System Health (Grade Crossings) = ((Volume / Capacity) x 75%) + ((Employment density by grade crossings) x 25%)
- Safety & Suitability = SARA Investigative Index x Mitigation Factor (1.0 for grade separations, 0.5 for at-grade improvements)
- Project Support = Outside (non-state) Contributions / Cost to NCDOT

OTHER IMPORTANT UPDATES:

- **Timeline for submitting projects:** To allow more time for NCDOT's IT vendor to get the SPOTOnline website up and running, the window for submitting projects has been pushed back one month to **October 2015**. Nothing else on the schedule is expected to change – “regional” local points will still be assigned in April/May 2016 and “division” local points will still be assigned in Aug/Sept 2016.
- **Scaling of Scores:** In an effort to improve the distribution of project scores, the raw scores developed for each criterion will be scaled based on the results of scoring all the other projects (e.g. Project “Z” has a raw congestion score of 27.2, but that’s actually the highest congestion score of any project, so it would be rescaled from 27.2 to 100. The same project has a raw benefit-cost score of 87.4, but that is actually the median Benefit-Cost score of any project, so it would be rescaled from 87.4 to 50.) We think this should do a lot to address issues we saw in P3.0 where certain criteria were carried much greater/lesser weight than they were intended to have due to poor distribution of scores.
- **Alternate Criteria:** As in P3.0, there will again be an opportunity for Divisions & Regions to diverge from the default weighting percentages.. Please note that the alternate criteria from Divisions 1-4 last time will not automatically carry forward, so if those areas (or any areas) wish to have alternative criteria this time, they will need to go through the process again. Any changes require unanimous agreement from all MPOs, RPOs, and Division Engineers within the affected area. The deadline for developing/approving these alternate criteria and submitting them to NCDOT will be **October 1, 2015**.
- **Normalization:** The Work Group has recommended handling normalization the same way it was handled in P3.0, as shown below:
 - No normalization in the statewide category – project selections are based on the scores
 - In the Region & Division categories:
 - Step 1: program 4% minimum for non-highways (this is done as a “statewide” competition)
 - Step 2: program 90% minimum for highways (this is done at the region/division level)
 - Step 3: program the remaining 6% that is flexible (highway or non-highway)(this is done at the region/division level with whatever money is left in that region/division)

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- **Local Point Methodologies:** Once again, each MPO and RPO will have to submit its local point assignment methodology to NCDOT for approval (similar to P3.0). If there are no changes to your methodology, you will only need to send the SPOT office notification that there are no changes, but if you make any changes then it will need to be approved again. The deadline for getting those in is when the window opens for local input point assignment (currently scheduled for April 2016).
- **SPOTOnline web tool:** NCDOT is working to make improvements to the SPOTOnline tool to incorporate changes for P4.0. As you may remember, in P3.0 you were able to see a draft score for many types of projects when they were submitted through SPOTOnline. In P4.0, it will not be possible to see a draft total score at the time you enter a project, because the scores will not be scaled until after all projects have been entered (see above for scaling explanation).. However, you should still be able to see raw (unscaled) scores for some of the components of the total score (as of now, we expect you should be able to see raw score components for congestion, freight, multimodal, pavement condition, lane width, shoulder width, and safety on the highway criteria). Please take these limitations into account as you think about your process for submitting projects.

BIG UNRESOLVED ISSUES:

- **Cleaning Up the Existing Database, the Number of New Submittals Allowed, and the Number of Local Input Points:** these are all related issues, and we have not yet been able to reach consensus. In general, there is recognition that it would be helpful to clean some of the poor-performing projects out of the existing project database, but there is not agreement yet on how to proceed. There are a few concepts being floated:
 - Clean out everything except projects that are in second 5 years of STIP (non-committed STIP projects), sibling projects of projects that are in the STIP, and projects with completed NEPA documents (these would automatically be carried forward for consideration in P4.0). Everything else would be removed from automatic carry-over and instead placed in a “holding tank” where they could be resubmitted by MPOs/RPOs/Divisions without having to re-enter the projects from scratch. Under this scenario, we would probably want a relatively higher number of new submittals/resubmittals to be allowed.
 - Clean out some percentage of bottom-scoring projects based on P3.0 scores. There are many ways this could be done (bottom 1/3, bottom 1/2, is % based on pulling out the automatic carry-forward projects or not, etc.). The number of new projects necessary varies based on how much stuff is being removed.
 - Keep everything, but only allow new submittals if old projects are removed (“one in-one out”)
 - **We realize that it is getting very late in the process, and that this could have a very big impact on the processes each RPO will need to go through this summer as far as identifying projects to submit for P4.0. For this reason, we are working very hard to have a decision about this at our**

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next meeting on May 18th so that we all know what the rules will be and can move forward with our respective processes as RPOs. Keep this in mind as you begin to prepare – depending on what decision gets made, you may have more work than you originally anticipated in terms of identifying projects to submit!

- **Local Input Point Split between MPOs/RPOs and Division Engineers:** the Work Group has not yet come to consensus on the amount of weight that should be given to local input points from MPOs and RPOs versus those from Division Engineers. There are currently two options we are looking at:
 - Maintain even split (25/25 in Division and 15/15 in Region)
 - Give more weight to MPOs/RPOs (30/20 in Division and 20/10 in Region)
 - There does not appear to be support within the Work Group for removing Division Engineer points entirely
- **Use of the Statewide Travel Demand Model (NCSTM):** Parsons Brinckerhoff (who are developing the model) are still testing things within the model to make sure it works the way we expect. At this point, we are only proposing to potentially use the model for calculating direct travel time savings (for example, as used in the benefit-cost criterion). Also, the model can only be used for statewide and regional-level projects (not division) because most division-level roads do not show up in the model. We will need to make a decision at the next meeting on whether to use the model for this, or whether to revert to the way travel time savings were calculated in P3.0.
- **Legislative Changes?** As always, there could be changes that come out of the General Assembly that require us to reconsider things.. We are keeping an eye on HB 672, which includes some language about the criteria for safety, multimodal, and freight.

As always, please let us know if you have questions or comments. As of today, we only have one more Work Group meeting scheduled (on May 18th), and hopefully we will be able to wrap everything up at that time.

Matt Day, Patrick Flanagan, Karyl Fuller, Dana Stoogenke, and Jesse Day
RPO Representatives to Prioritization 4.0 Work Group

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Staff recommended action:

FYI only, Review and discuss

Item 4d: Adopt Timeline/Meeting Schedule

Timeline attached at end of Agenda

5. REGULAR UPDATES

- A. NCDOT Division 13 and 14 updates
- B. Transportation Planning Branch Updates
- C. Subcommittee/Workgroup Reports,
Staff Updates and Housekeeping
- D. Legislative Updates (attached to Agenda)

NCDOT Staff
Brendan Merithew
Vicki Eastland
Staff
Vicki Eastland

Announcements, News, Special Updates

Construction reports available from the LOS RPO Website:

http://www.landofskyrpo.org/resources_and_links

[Division 13 updates](#)

[Division 14 updates](#)

LAND OF SKY



Land-of-Sky Rural
Transportation
Planning
Organization

(LOS RPO)

Public Involvement Policy (PIP)

Adopted by the Land-of-Sky RPO
Rural Transportation Advisory Committee
January 29, 2015

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Land of Sky RPO

1. Overview

The establishment of Rural Transportation Planning Organizations (RPOs) is similar in concept to the urban Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organizations (MPOs). The RPOs provide rural areas the opportunity to work in partnership with the North Carolina Department of Transportation toward development of sound, short-range and long-range transportation planning for rural areas.

In 1998 Congress recognized the transportation needs of the rural areas and presented similar opportunities afforded the urban areas as part of the statewide planning provisions of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). TEA-21 calls for enhanced consultation with rural local officials and encourages states to use existing regional development organizations to facilitate the participation of elected officials.

Locally based rural transportation planning gives communities the opportunity to make transportation investment decisions that enhance economic and community development goals. Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) have the federal authority to implement their plans, but the Rural Planning Organizations (RPOs) are voluntary in North Carolina and have been given authority by the state.

It is governed by a Transportation Advisory Committee that is advised by a Technical Coordinating Committee. Each committee consists of elected and appointed officials representing Buncombe County, Haywood, Madison and Transylvania Counties; and the municipalities of Brevard, Hot Springs, Marshall, and Rosman.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the Land-of-Sky Rural Transportation Planning Organization (RPO) Public Involvement Policy (PIP) is to provide guidance and policy in engaging the public in the transportation planning process. This plan seeks to accomplish the following:

- Create a well-informed public that effectively contributes to transportation decision making.
- Engage the public early and continuously in the transportation planning process.
- Develop a public education program on Land-of-Sky RPO activities.
- Assist the Land-of-Sky RPO in developing specific transportation projects that reflect the interest and needs of the community.
- Gain the support and trust of the public.
- Satisfy the requirements of N.C.G.S. § 136-212 regarding duties of a RPO and federal transportation legislation.

Deleted:

The Policy is not intended to preempt any public involvement activities conducted by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) or any local governments within the Land-of-Sky RPO region.

3. Goals and Objectives

- Bring a broad cross-section of the public into the public policy and transportation planning decision-making process.
- Maintain public involvement from the early stages of the planning process through detailed project development.
- Use different combinations of public involvement techniques to meet the diverse needs of the general public.
- Determine the public's knowledge of the rural transportation system and the public's values and attitudes concerning transportation.
- Educate citizens and elected officials in order to increase general understanding of transportation issues.
- Make technical and other information available to the public.
- Establish a channel for an effective feedback process.

4. State Requirements

The Public Involvement Policy has the following objectives as provided in N.C.G.S. § 136-212:

- Develop, in coordination with NCDOT, transportation plans.
- Provide a forum for public participation in the transportation planning process.
- Develop and prioritize suggestions for projects that the organization believes should be included in the State's Transportation Improvement Program.
- Provide transportation-related information to local governments and other interested organizations and persons.

5. Policy Elements

The LOSRPO's Public Involvement Policy is comprised of a number of sub-policies. All planning programs and activities are required to go through the Transportation Advisory Committee's public process, with the exception of minor formatting or technical corrections to the policy content pages. In addition, the RPO will initiate public involvement programs for the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP), The Prioritization List, (Formally the Priority Needs List (PNL)), the Air Quality Conformity Determination (if needed), the Congestion Management Plan, the Planning Work Program (PWP) and the RPO's provisions for American with Disabilities Act (ADA). The final component of the Public Involvement Policy is the policy review element designed to ensure that the programs are meeting their goals.

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II. REGULAR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

A. TAC Meetings

The TAC holds advertised meetings on a regular schedule. These meetings are open to members of the public and, upon request, anyone can be placed on the TAC mailing list. At the beginning of each regular meeting, the TAC provides time to receive public comments as a set part of its agenda. The public and concerned parties are welcome

to provide public comment through telephone, email and in writing to RPO staff at anytime.

B. Public Comment

The TAC typically acknowledges public comments in one of the following two ways. The TAC may incorporate a summary of public comments and the RPO's response, as an appendix, into the specific planning document. Depending on the number of comments, the TAC may instruct RPO staff to respond directly by letter. Acknowledging public comments is a way to let the public know that its comments are being addressed and is part of the public involvement feedback process.

III. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TOOLS

Public Outreach is the process of informing the public about the transportation planning process, specific transportation projects, and activities of the Land-of-Sky RPO. Typical public outreach strategies include, but will not be limited to, the following:

A. Identify and Build Relationships with Stakeholders

In order to create and implement transportation plans with long lasting benefits, appropriate stakeholders must be identified. RPO staff will seek to identify stakeholders that are critical to the success of a specific transportation plan or policy. A stakeholder is defined as any person or group that is affected by a transportation plan, program, or project, including those who may not be aware they are affected.

Stakeholders may include:

- The general public
- Business/industry organizations
- Environmental organizations
- Neighborhood organizations
- Public agencies
- Civic organizations
- Transit providers
- Motor freight carriers
- Taxicab companies

Stakeholder groups will be identified and may be included on a mailing list for notices of public hearings, workshops, etc.

B. Publicize LOSRPO Activities

Activities of the LOSRPO will be advertised by utilizing various media and social outlets. These activities may include distributing press releases to the media, inviting the media to regular TAC and TCC meetings, conducting radio interviews, posting public involvement activities on the RPO website, and presenting drafts of plans at social events. RPO staff will develop publicity strategies appropriate to the scope and timeframe of the specific project or plan.

Specifically, articles, news releases and or media alerts will be disseminated to announce public review and comment periods for the LOSRPO's Comprehensive Transportation Plan, the Comprehensive Transportation Plan amendments, Transportation Involvement Program, Unified Planning Work Program, Public Involvement Plans and other major activities. All Press Releases shall be approved by either the Chair or Vice-Chair of the LOSRPO TAC prior to publication.

A current list of media outlets such as mainstream, local and ethnic radio stations, newspapers and small community based publications, will be established and maintained. Our current list is available in Appendix A.

C. Partner with Outreach Professionals

In an effort to maximize public involvement, RPO staff will collaborate with outreach professionals. Such professionals have long-standing relationships with the public and are aware of the various concerns expressed by the citizens they represent. Utilizing their resources to publicize RPO events and programs will promote increased levels of public participation.

Presentations will be made to interested civic organizations on Land-of-Sky RPO activities, the transportation planning process in general, or specific transportation projects. Presentations will be made by Land-of-Sky RPO staff and/or NCDOT staff.

D. Develop and Implement a Plan to Reach Non-Participating Minority, Low-Income, Limited English-Proficiency and Low-Literacy Populations

RPO staff will make concerted efforts to engage communities that have traditionally not been participants in the transportation process. Traditional non-participants are persons who are low-income, minority, elderly and disabled, have no vehicles, are low literate or have limited English proficiency. RPO staff will identify opportunities and strategies that will provide these communities greater access to the transportation planning process. These opportunities will allow RPO staff to build relationships with key leaders and organizations within the communities.

Public Outreach activities will include efforts to involve traditionally underserved groups (i.e., minorities, elderly, low-income persons) in the transportation planning process. These efforts may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Identifying areas in the Land-of-Sky RPO region with concentrations of minority, elderly, and low-income populations
- Including organizations that deal directly with minority groups on the Stakeholder list
- Posting notification of meetings, public hearings, and open houses in County Health Departments and Senior Centers
- Publishing notification of meetings, public hearings, and open houses in Spanish

E. Develop an Outreach and Education Program

Public involvement is at its best when the general public is thoroughly informed of the complex issues surrounding a project. Such outreach will also include informing the public and other agencies about the roles and responsibilities of the RPO. When necessary, the RPO will develop outreach and educational programs to inform various parties of the public involvement process for a particular project or to provide technical framework. English and Spanish materials will be a part of this program. Adequate outreach also includes taking different meeting times and locations into consideration in an effort to reach a diverse cross section of the affected population.

F. Establish a Speaker's Bureau

The Speaker's Bureau will respond to requests from civic groups, professional organizations, neighborhood associations, and other groups for presentations about the regional transportation planning process and transportation plans. The Bureau will consist of RPO staff, TCC members, Land of Sky Staff and designated volunteers. The RPO will market the availability of the Bureau to local groups and organizations.

G. Maintain Website

The LOSRPO website is a tool that provides timely information to the public. Various Transportation plans are accessible through our website in conjunction with additional resources. Interested parties also have the ability to access updates on the status of specific plans and projects, along with the time remaining within public comment periods. A calendar is used to provide dates of upcoming meetings and public involvement opportunities.

H. Produce and Distribute Newsletters

The LOSRPO maintains and updates newsletter items to keep the general public and local agencies informed of RPO activities. The newsletter material is distributed through Facebook, Twitter, and e-mail. Archives may be accessed through the RPO website. Citizens and agencies have the opportunity to remain engaged in the public involvement process through updates provided in our newsletter.

I. Create and Maintain New Forms of Technology and Media

RPO staff seeks to utilize all available forms of media in an effort to increase public involvement. Government agencies continue to take advantage of progressive and interactive media formats to communicate with citizens. Strategies to encourage public input may include social marketing mediums such as Facebook, Twitter and blogs. Such mediums are not a required aspect of each transportation Public Involvement Policy, but efforts to include them will be made when deemed appropriate or beneficial.

J. Produce and Distribute Brochure

A brochure will be established and created to provide interested parties with information about the LOSRPO and the planning process. Copies of the brochure will be made available to identified stakeholders and online. Spanish translations will be maintained. RPO staff may find it appropriate to develop a brochure specific to a project, RPO policy or plan.

K. Hold Open Houses and Information Workshops

RPO staff may decide to hold open houses to provide the public with information in regards to the transportation planning process, or to provide further information about a plan prior to a public hearing. These open houses are informal and allow the public to engage with the material in a relaxed format. The format may include but is not limited to maps of projects, PowerPoint presentations, and surveys. RPO staff will be available to facilitate questions from the public or organization representative. Open houses also provide an opportunity to expand the RPO mailing list. Information workshops are topic specific and conducted on an as-needed basis. These workshops are informal and allow RPO staff to gain immediate feedback that may be incorporated in a transportation plan.

L. Provide for Public Input at LOSRPO meetings

Formal RPO business is conducted during TAC and TCC meetings. RPO TAC and TCC meetings agendas provide time for public comment. These public comments are documented and become a part of the meeting minutes. In the event that an individual seeks to address a specific agenda item, they must sign up prior to the meeting to comment on that specific agenda item. The individual may also contact the secretary prior to the meeting to sign up for the public comment list. At the conclusion of a public comment period, a public hearing will be held in which public comments received in writing will be read by RPO staff. Members of the public may comment on specific agenda items, prior to their discussion by the TAC as an agenda item. The chair has the discretion to address anyone wishing to speak at the meeting whose name is not on the list previously mentioned. The maximum time allotted to a public comment is 15 minutes on each item. In the event that the public is unable to make comments during a meeting time, comments may be submitted in written, verbal or electronic form.

M. Conduct Surveys

Surveys and focus groups allow RPO staff to directly collect feedback from the general public. Strategies for disseminating surveys will consider differences in language and technology access among affected citizens. Some methods may include inserting surveys in water or power bills, and providing links to surveys on government websites. RPO staff may also gather small groups of citizens to create focus groups that will provide feedback in regards to a specific topic or transportation plan. The composition of a focus group may include residents of an affected neighborhood.

IV. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT STRUCTURE

A. Open Meetings

All RPO meetings will be open to the public and subject to the North Carolina Open Meetings Law. All materials presented during RPO committee meetings will be public record and made available for review at the Land of Sky Office. Copies of archived records can be distributed upon request.

B. Access by Persons with Disabilities

All RPO meetings will be held in facilities that are accessible to people with disabilities. The LOSRPO website will be in compliance with the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 (Section 508). Where permitted, clear directional signs will be posted at outdoor entrances to buildings.

C. Adequate Notice

The LOSRPO will provide adequate notice of meetings subject to the North Carolina Open Meetings Law. Meeting notices will be posted on the LOSRPO's website and publicized during LOSRPO events.

D. Public Comments

Public Comments may be obtained in a number of ways. The LOSRPO will accept comments in writing, through email, by fax, with TTY (teletypewriter) or TDD (telecommunications device for the deaf), verbally at a public meeting or during a RPO public outreach opportunity. Public involvement may be documented in a variety of ways.

Any comments received during a meeting of the Land-of-Sky RPO's TCC or TAC will be included in the meeting minutes. Also, any comments received during a public hearing held by the Land-of-Sky RPO's TAC will be included in the meeting minutes. Comments received during workshops, open houses, or presentations to civic organizations will be summarized, presented to the TCC and TAC, and kept on file. Results of surveys will be compiled, summarized, presented to the TCC and TAC, and kept on file.

Public comments may be included as appendices in formal documents or plans for which they were made. The RTCC or RTAC may direct Land-of-Sky RPO staff to respond directly to public comments via letter. All correspondence should be directed to: 339 New Leicester Hwy | Suite 140 | Asheville, NC 28806 and faxed to: (828) 251-6353.

E. Time Period for Public Comments

Public comments will be taken no later than close of the business day specified in requests for public comment; unless otherwise specified.

F. Format of Public Meetings

Public meetings allow RPO staff the opportunity to interact with citizens that may be directly affected by specific transportation plans. LOSRPO staff seeks to conduct meetings in a format conducive to generating public feedback. The general format of public meetings will include; a presentation by LOSRPO staff; a question and answer period and a summary of materials covered. Meetings may also include using maps to identify where citizens are located, and an interactive activity.

V. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Public involvement strategies will vary depending on the particular issue or project for which public comment is desired. Typical actions for specific activities of the Land-of-Sky RPO may include, but are not limited to:

Minimum Transportation Plan Public Involvement Procedure

The Land of Sky Rural Planning Organization will provide opportunity for meaningful public involvement in the development and update of the Comprehensive Transportation Plan. The public comment period will be for a minimum 28-day period, effective from the date of the public notice publication. Written comments will be received during the comment period and will be directed to the LOSRPO. The LOSRPO will assemble all comments and forward them to the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC). The TAC shall hold at least one public hearing for the Comprehensive Transportation Plan. The availability of the Plan will be publicized using our media resources provided in the Appendix.

Purpose of Public Involvement Process

The purpose of the public involvement policy is to develop and implement strategies to inform and involve citizens in the development and update of the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP). Public ownership of the Transportation Plan is critical to its success; the goal of the program is to ensure that policy decisions will reflect the values, needs, and priorities of those affected by the decisions (i.e. the public).

The public review and participation process is designed to provide adequate opportunities for citizens and public officials to be involved in the LOSRPO, CTP development. The public participation is designed to provide gradual progression from the general information (such as vision setting and / or formulation of goals, objectives and policies) pertaining to the plan to specific information regarding alternatives and plan selections. Each public forum or input technique will use information collected at previous "forums" in order to build progression concluding with the adoption of the Transportation Plan.

Objectives

1. Encourage citizens to take a proactive role in the development of Transportation Plans.
2. Bring a broad cross-section of members of the public into the public policy and transportation planning decision-making process.
3. Educate the public and elected officials in order to increase public understanding of both the options and constraints of transportation alternatives.

4. Determine public concerns and/or perceived impacts of Transportation Plan elements.
5. Determine which elements of the Comprehensive Transportation Plan would support or diminish the citizens' desired lifestyle.
6. Establish a channel for an effective feedback process.

VI. OPTIONAL PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TECHNIQUES (COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN)

As a method for increasing public involvement and participation in the process, the public involvement for the CTP may also include any or all of the following techniques:

1. Information dissemination, notification of meetings and publication of proposed plans will be integral elements of the public involvement process.
2. Proactive participation techniques may be employed to involve citizens and provide fuller access to information and technical data on the Transportation Plan. These techniques may include, but not be limited to, public meetings/hearings, surveys, focus groups, newsletters, public service announcements, charrettes, transportation advisory group, mass media, etc.
3. Public meetings may be held to formulate a vision for the Transportation Plan Development, provide the public background information on the metropolitan transportation system and other issues as well as the proposed framework of the Transportation Plan update process, and to receive citizen input.
5. Public meetings (forums) designed to solicit public comment may be held at various locations around the RPO area to encourage the greatest public participation. Public meetings should be held at a location which is accessible to persons with disabilities and preferably located on a transit route.
6. Copies of the draft Transportation Plan will be distributed to the member jurisdictions, citizen groups and agencies, and will be placed in the local libraries. Notification of the draft Transportation Plan may be provided through various media outlets. The notification will inform the public of the availability of the draft Comprehensive Transportation Plan for review and comment where to send written comments, and addresses and phone numbers of contact persons. The notices also will include an announcement that states that persons with disabilities will be accommodated. Special provisions will be made if notified 48 hours in advance (i.e. having available large print documents, audio material, someone proficient in sign language, a translator, or other provisions as requested). Additionally, the notice will inform the public that copies of the draft Transportation Plan are on file for public review at the Land-of-Sky Regional Council Office, The member government's municipal offices,

available in a PDF format for downloading from the LOSRPO homepage and at branch libraries throughout the area.

7. The public comment period will be for a minimum 28-day period, effective from the date of the public notice publication. Written comments will be received during the comment period and will be directed to the LOSRPO. The RPO's contact person, phone number and e-mail address will be included in the public notice.
8. Any significant revisions to the Comprehensive Transportation Plan will also be subject to a public comment process as described in this policy.
9. Involvement of the public in key decision points may be desirable. Decision points are those stages where the TAC may consider endorsement of the work in progress or take action on particular work elements. These may include some of the following:
 - Formulation of vision, goals and objectives
 - Review of multi-modal goals and elements
 - Review and approval of socio-economic and demographic projections
 - Review and determination of transportation deficiencies
 - Evaluation of alternatives and selection of preferred option

VII. PRIORITIZATION LIST AND LOCAL PRIORITIZATION METHODOLOGY PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

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The Prioritization List serves as the bridge between the long term plans (such as, CTP, and locally-adopted transit, bicycle and pedestrian and other transportation plans) and the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP). The LOSRPO TCC will develop a draft Prioritization List from the local project priorities of the RPO jurisdictions as reflected in the CTP and in the locally-adopted plans. Each RPO municipality and county should provide to the RPO their priorities for consideration, and an indication of the plan where those projects are reflected (CTP or locally-adopted plan). First priority will be given to the projects in the CTP prioritized list of projects. Other modes of projects that may not be listed in the CTP specifically may be selected (i.e. transit, bicycle, pedestrian, enhancement projects included in locally-adopted plans). These may be developed as each governing agency sees fit (for example, they may come from staff, the elected boards, or the elected boards with public involvement). The Local Prioritization Methodology, developed within NCDOT guidelines, will be used for ranking and applying points to projects making up the Prioritization List. Public Involvement Process for the Prioritization List and Prioritization Methodology will include the following steps:

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- After consideration and preliminary adoption by the TAC, the draft Prioritization List will be published for a minimum two-week (14-day) public comment period and the notice will be advertised using our media resources provided in Appendix B.

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- A Committee of TCC members was created to develop a local point methodology. After consideration and preliminary adoption by the TAC, the draft Prioritization Methodology will be published for a minimum four-week (28-day) public comment period and the notice will be advertised using our media resources provided in Appendix A
- The notices for the public comment period and the public hearing will include an announcement stating that persons with disabilities will be accommodated. Special provisions will be made if notified 48 hours in advance (i.e. having available large print documents, audio material, someone proficient in sign language, a translator or other provisions as requested). The Prioritization List and Prioritization Methodology will be on file for review at the Land-of-Sky Regional Council Office, and available in a PDF format for downloading from the LOSRPO homepage. Written comments will be received during the comment period and will be directed to the LOSRPO. The LOSRPO's contact person, phone number and e-mail address will be included in the public notice. The LOSRPO will assemble all comments and forward comments to the TAC.
- The RPOTAC will hold a public hearing on the draft Prioritization List and the Prioritization Methodology. The public hearing will be held at a location which is accessible to persons with disabilities. The RPOTAC will approve a final Prioritization List and Prioritization Methodology after considering the public comments received. The public review periods for the Prioritization List and the Prioritization Methodology will sometimes be concurrent and sometimes will run separately, depending upon which schedule is more practical. The Prioritization List shall be submitted to the NCDOT at or before the NCDOT public hearings for input into the STIP. The RPOTAC may elect to open a dialogue with the State on specific project priorities.

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VIII. PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (PWP)

Introduction

The PWP must identify the RPO planning tasks to be undertaken with the use of federal transportation funds, including highway and transit.

Purpose

The purpose of public involvement in the PWP process is to keep the public apprised of and to receive input on the planning activities to be undertaken by the Rural Planning Organization.

Public Involvement Process

- The TAC meetings are open to the public and comments on the Distribution Formula may be received at this time.
- The local jurisdictions will prepare a list of tasks and funding for the federal fiscal year according to the approved Distribution Formula. These lists are submitted to the LOSRPO for compilation into a draft Planning Work Program
- The draft Planning Work Program is reviewed by the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC). The TCC meetings are open to the public. The TCC then endorses a draft PWP and forwards the document to the TAC.

- The draft PWP is then reviewed by the TAC. Public comments may be provided at this time. The draft is sent to the Public Transportation Division for comments.
- The final PWP comes back again to the TAC for approval. Upon TAC approval, the PWP is then forwarded on to the State.

IX. AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) PROVISIONS

All notices for planning activities of the Land-of-Sky Rural Planning Organization will include an announcement that states that persons with disabilities will be accommodated. Special provisions will be made if notified 48 hours in advance (i.e. having available large print documents, audio material, someone proficient in sign language, a translator or other provisions requested). Notices for the public comment period and the public hearing will be advertised using the media list provided in Appendix B. Public meetings will be held in locations accessible to persons with disabilities and will be located near or on a transit route if possible.

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