



**Executive Committee
September 28, 2022
Hybrid Meeting In-Person at LOSRC office and Remotely via Zoom**

AGENDA

1. Call to Order (11:00am)

2. Consent Agenda

Consent Agenda items are considered routine and noncontroversial in nature, and are considered and approved by a single motion and vote. If any member of the Executive Committee requests an item be removed from the Consent Agenda for separate consideration and action that item will be placed under the Business, Updates and Discussion section of the agenda.

- A. August 24, 2022 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
- B. Budget Amendment #2
- C. Record Retention Policy

3. New Business

- A. AAA Staff Bonus
- B. Legislative Agenda – Council Priorities
- C. Strategic Plan Update
- D. Affordable and Workforce Housing
- E. NC11 Congressional Candidates - October 26 Board of Delegates meeting

4. Other Items

- A. Executive Director Report

6. Adjournment

**Land of Sky Regional Council
Executive Committee
Regular Meeting
August 24, 2022**

Minutes

Land of Sky Regional Council's Executive Committee held a meeting at the offices of Council that included access through the Zoom platform on Wednesday, August 24, 2022. Executive Committee members participating in the meeting included Chair Patrick Fitzsimmons, Maureen Copelof, Barbara Volk, Jason Chappell, Bob Tomasulo, Sandra Kilgore, Matt Wechtel, and Preston Blakely, constituting a quorum.

Land of Sky staff participating in the meeting included Nathan Ramsey, Patricia Rosenberg, Charlotte Sullivan, Christina Giles (Zoom Host), Vicki Jennings, LeeAnne Tucker, and Erica Anderson, Tristan Winkler, and Zia Rifkin (Minutes). Land of Sky's Legal Counsel, Susan Russo-Klein was present, too.

Call to Order –Chair Fitzsimmons called the meeting to order at approximately 11:00 am.

Approval of Consent Agenda – The consent agenda composed of items A. June 2022, Executive Committee Minutes; B. Budget Amendment #1, and C. Eligible Use Policy was presented for approval with no modification requested.

Matt Wechtel moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion received a second, and carried unanimously upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.

New Business

Finance Staff Position and Pay Changes

Nathan Ramsey shared that the following proposed changes would reclassify the Payroll and Accounting Specialist position to Payroll and Finance Coordinator at Grade 26 with a \$5,000 salary increase for the current salary of Sherry Christenson. The purpose for this change is to recognize Ms. Christenson leading the Finance Department's digital transition which adds modules to the current financial software. Wanda Clark is the longest serving employee of the Council with 43 years of service. She is currently a part-time employee in the role of an Accounting Manager earning \$34.00 per hour. Administrative staff propose increasing her pay to \$36.28 per hour to respond to market conditions. Part-time employees did not receive a cost-of-living adjustment.

Preston Blakely moved to reclassify the Payroll and Accounting Specialist position to Payroll and Finance Coordinator at Grade 26 with a salary of \$70,965.39 and increase the pay of the part-time Accounting Manager to \$36.28 per hour effective for the pay period beginning August 27, 2022. Bob Tomasulo seconded, and the motion carried upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.

Land of Sky Regional Council Strategic Plan

Nathan Ramsey shared that Land of Sky Regional Council adopted its Strategic Plan 2019-2021 in 2019. Preparations are being made to update the Strategic Plan. LOSRC staff plan to hold an all-staff strategic planning session on September 23, 2022. An anonymous survey will be sent to LOSRC staff, the Board of Delegates, local government managers, elected officials, board members of other boards at LOSRC, along with other stakeholders. The purpose of this update is to request direction from the Executive Committee for this Strategic Planning process.

Nathan Ramsey noted that the purpose of the survey is to gather information regarding what the organization is doing well, what work needs to be done, and the current focus and future direction for LOSRC. He shared that Dogwood Health Trust (DHT) focus areas are Health/Wellness (including social determinants of health), Housing, Employment, and Education. From a staff standpoint, a more focused strategic plan may be beneficial to the programs. It's important to glean the priorities of the region and the strategic planning process could define how those priorities are pursued by Council.

Discussion occurred regarding the inclusion of transportation in the strategic focus since that is part of all other focus areas. It was noted that the identification of a small number of priorities may help to define a focus for gaining additional funding to serve the region and lead to healthier and more vibrant communities. Nathan Ramsey noted that DHT includes those four strategic priorities as part of their grant applications, asking applicants how their proposals align with DHT goals. While the strategic plan developed

through this current process may not align with all DHT's strategic priorities, the goal is to address growing pains within the organization and throughout the region, in general. A lot of transformational changes have occurred over the past few years, and the survey instrument is structured to capture thoughts and ideas about the best path forward for the organization. The Executive Committee would have an opportunity to review the survey before it is released publicly.

Discussion occurred regarding using the strategic planning process to look at other potential funding sources and developing a strategic plan that allows for a multi-purposed approach to the most important priorities for the region.

Information item. No action requested at this time.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Update

Land of Sky Regional Council is required to adopt a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) as part of the funding the organization receives from the US Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA). Council is in the process of updating the CEDS. For this update Ernst & Young (EY) has been retained and are working with the Chambers of Commerce in Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania Counties. Dogwood Health Trust provided part of the funding required to retain EY. The preliminary top priorities of the CEDS are the following: Housing Expansion & Diversification, Transportation & Infrastructure Improvement, and Workforce Development.

Erica Anderson shared that the CEDS is a Chamber-led effort and Ernst & Young are leading a robust process based on the input from businesses referred by the chambers for this process. She noted that reports would be generated through this employer-engaged process and those would be distributed to the Executive Committee when available. Building additional career pathways may be an opportunity realized from this part of the CEDS update process. She encouraged Executive Committee members to reach out to ECD staff with any questions or comments when those reports are available.

Information only. No action requested this time.

Affordable and Workforce Housing

Nathan Ramsey shared that he was part of a forum held recently in the City of Brevard. Afterwards, Brevard's Mayor and Executive Committee member Maureen Copelof requested that Land of Sky Regional Council serve as a regional convener to address the affordable and workforce housing needs in the region. The CEDS update identifies housing as the top priority for the region. LOSRC currently supports housing in many ways from providing writing and technical support for the Regional Housing Consortium, supporting non-profit housing agencies including the WNC Housing Partnership and helping to address the infrastructure needs required to support affordable housing. A regional forum would likely include Dogwood Health Trust, NC Housing Finance Agency, WNC Housing Partnership and many others. Nathan Ramsey noted that one of the recommendations coming from the Richmond Fed at the recent WNC Rebounding Stronger Summit, was the development of regional housing trust funds. Erica Anderson shared that DHT has been engaged in the discussion of holding a regional housing forum. The goal is to look at what can be done and implemented at the realistic level. A housing inventory is kicking off in the entire DHT region including an examination of available tax credits. Erica Anderson requested that the Executive Committee reach out with ideas around this topic.

Discussion occurred regarding a company that uses HUD funding to build entirely workforce housing units that are deeply affordable. Their model has proven effectiveness and may be able to be replicated. It was noted that there has been a lot of regional forums and groups convened around affordable housing and the hope is to centralize the conversation for the region. These conversations could be part of LOSRC's priorities. The goal is to try to pull this effort together in a central manner to get things changed at the State level. It was noted that there is intense pressure on available housing as those are bought by investors and turned into short-term rentals.

Nathan Ramsey shared that there have been many conversations regarding what local jurisdictions can do with regards to regulating short-term rentals and this ties into to developing legislative goals for LOSRC based on what local jurisdictions could agree on as goals for the next legislative session. It was shared that it is important to educate the public on the need for multi-family housing that is affordable at many levels. Currently, it seems that this type of housing development is stigmatized. Nathan Ramsey noted that the average annual wage in the region is \$45 Thousand, and the average housing price is over \$300 Thousand. Even with building more housing units, without addressing the affordability aspect of such developments, the issue cannot be solved. Staff noted that population growth is projected to increase consistently and an examination of where growth is likely to happen was reviewed. Many people are concerned about traffic impacts when additional development is proposed in their areas. It was noted that building alone is not going to address this multi-faceted issue. There is an imperative need to address the property tax rate and how that is structured. Nathan Ramsey noted that legislative action would be required to address that issue. Susan Russo-Klein

noted that there have been a lot of different means of addressing the property tax rate structure by local jurisdictions and more information could be shared after additional research on the subject. It was noted that action needs to follow the ideas that are identified. Perhaps the goal should be to form a group that would act on ideas developed through a convening of stakeholders on the affordable housing issue. Nathan Ramsey noted that one creative way to get around the issue is how Buncombe County is addressing the issue by providing a rebate to low-income homeowners.

Executive Committee members encouraged staff to develop a centralized hub to share information on available initiatives and to provide education on the subject to the public. It was suggested that meetings could include a monthly topic that would allow for member governments to learn what other jurisdictions are doing to address issues around affordable housing. Nathan Ramsey shared that ECD may need to identify a staff member that could be devoted to the affordable housing issue, but that is difficult to do without dedicated funding for that work. Erica Anderson noted that creating more capacity is an ongoing discussion in ECD around those topics that are not part of a dedicated funding stream and she suggested that it may be possible to address these topics for the benefit of the region and that this should come out in the strategic planning process.

Executive Committee members shared that a limited tax base is an issue in the smaller counties in the LOSRC region, and it would be important to address how tax breaks could affect potential increases in the cost of providing services. The need to look at the benefits versus the cost is imperative.

Nathan Ramsey confirmed that challenges within the LOSRC staffing structure would be examined and the goal is to report back with possible solutions soon. It was shared that MPO funding may be put towards affordable housing objectives based on updated guidance.

Information only. No action requested.

NC 11 Congressional Candidates

At the request of Chairman Fitzsimmons, the three NC-11 Congressional candidates (Jasmine Beach-Ferrara, Chuck Edwards, and David Coatney) have been invited to speak for 10 minutes to the LOSRC Board of Delegates. This will not be a debate. Attorney Susan Russo-Klein has indicated that we can host a nonpartisan forum and not jeopardize our funding sources or federal and state assurances. The three candidates plan to speak at the October 26 Board of Delegates meeting.

Information item. No action requested.

Other Items

Executive Director Report

Nathan Ramsey shared that his current report is included in the agenda packet, and he encouraged Executive Committee members to reach out with any questions or comments regarding the report.

Nathan Ramsey shared about the process to appoint the permanent Finance Director, noting that Patricia Rosenberg has been doing exemplary work during her interim engagement to date. He confirmed that she made a major commitment when agreeing to the interim slot. Normally, the Board has been involved at some level in the search process for LOS Administrative staff, including the Finance Director position, as that position is critical to the operations of the organization. He encouraged the Executive Committee to reach out with suggestions for engagement in the process or to participate.

Nathan Ramsey shared that his wife has asked him to travel to Washington DC with her for an event with her employer, Senator Burr, who is retiring. He informed the Executive Committee that he plans to attend September's Board meetings remotely.

Nathan Ramsey encouraged the Executive Committee to consider individuals who might be appointed to the vacant slots for At-Large/Minority representatives for Buncombe and Transylvania. He also encouraged them to consider how Economic Development representatives are appointed to the Board. He followed that request with the information that George Morosani, the long-serving Economic Development representative for Buncombe County, has announced his intention to retire from the Regional Board.

Adjournment

Chair Fitzsimmons adjourned the meeting upon unanimous consent, as there was no further business.

Respectfully submitted by Zia Rifkin

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BUDGET AMENDMENT RESOLUTION #2

BE IT ORDAINED by the governing board of the Land of Sky Regional Council that the following amendment be made to the annual budget ordinance for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023.

SECTION I. To amend the appropriations as follows:

Area Agency on Aging	\$	-
Workforce Development		1,904,965.00
Waste Reduction Partners		28,764.36
Economic & Community Development		94,896.91
General Operations		-
Total Appropriations	\$	<u>2,028,626.27</u>

SECTION II. It is estimated that the following revenues will be available for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2022 and ending June 30, 2023.

Area Agency on Aging -Federal	\$	-
Area Agency on Aging- State		-
Area Agency on Aging – Local		-
Area Agency on Aging – Local Dues		-
Area Agency on Aging – Private		-
Area Agency on Aging – In Kind		-
Area Agency On Aging – Fees		-
Appropriated Fund Balance		-
Total Area Agency on Aging	\$	<u>-</u>

Workforce Development - Federal	\$ 1,886,965.00
Workforce Development - State	-
Workforce Development - Local	-
Workforce Development - Local Dues	-
Workforce Development - Private	18,000.00
Workforce Development - In Kind	
Workforce Development - Fees	
<i>Total Workforce Development</i>	<u><u>\$ 1,904,965.00</u></u>
Waste Reduction Partners - Federal	\$ 11,950.00
Waste Reduction Partners - State	(5,197.83)
Waste Reduction Partners - Local	4,322.00
Waste Reduction Partners - Local Dues	-
Waste Reduction Partners - Private	17,408.38
Waste Reduction Partners - In Kind	-
Waste Reduction Partners - Fees	281.81
Appropriated Fund Balance	-
<i>Total Economic & Community Development</i>	<u><u>\$ 28,764.36</u></u>
Economic & Community Development - Federal	\$ (237,584.81)
Economic & Community Development - State	(11,975.52)
Economic & Community Development - Local	245,873.07
Economic & Community Development - Local Dues	30,346.00
Economic & Community Development - Private	68,238.17
Economic & Community Development - In Kind	-
Economic & Community Development - Fees	-
Appropriated Fund Balance	
<i>Total Economic & Community Development</i>	<u><u>\$ 94,896.91</u></u>
General Operations -Local Dues	
General Operations - Appropriated Fund Balance	-
General Operations - Fees	
General Operations - Other	
Total General Operations	
<i>Total General Operations</i>	<u><u>-</u></u>
Total Estimated Revenues	<u><u>\$ 2,028,626.27</u></u>

SECTION III. The finance officer is authorized to allocate the amounts of projects, programs and functions to appropriate objects of expenditures in accordance with the requirements of the contract concerning each project, program or function. The Finance Officer is authorized to reallocate departmental appropriations among various line item objects of expenditures and revenues as necessary during the budget year. However, any changes to salary or compensation of any employee for any reason shall be approved by the Executive Director and the Executive Committee before such changes takes effect.

SECTION IV. The Chairman and/or appropriate officers are authorized to execute all contracts or grants necessary to implement this budget, including federal and state grants, contracts for assistance to local governments and agencies, and subcontracts to local entities necessary to implement Council programs and activities.

SECTION V. Copies of this resolution shall be furnished to the finance/budget officer as directions in carrying out her official duties.

Adopted this 28th day of September, 2022.

Mayor Patrick Fitzsimmons, Chair

Nathan Ramsey, Attest

Land of Sky Regional Council Record Retention Policy: Documents Created or Maintained Pursuant to the ARP/CSLFRF Award

Retention of Records: The Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (“CSLFRF”) [Award Terms and Conditions](#) and the [Compliance and Reporting Guidance](#) set forth the U.S. Department of Treasury’s (“Treasury”) record retention requirements for the ARP/CSLFRF award.

It is the policy of Land of Sky Regional Council to follow Treasury’s record retention requirements as it expends CSLFRF pursuant to the APR/CSLFRF award. Accordingly, the Land of Sky Regional Council agrees to the following:

- Retain all financial and programmatic records related to the use and expenditure of CSLFRF pursuant to the ARP/CSLFRF award for a period of five (5) years after all CLFRF funds have been expended or returned to Treasury, whichever is later.
- Retain records for real property and equipment acquired with CSLFRF for five years after final disposition.
- Ensure that the financial and programmatic records retained sufficiently evidence compliance with section 603(c) of the Social Security Act “ARPA,” Treasury’s regulations implementing that section, and guidance issued by Treasury regarding the foregoing.
- Allow the Treasury Office of Inspector General and the Government Accountability Office, or their authorized representatives, the right of timely and unrestricted access to any records for the purpose of audits or other investigations.
- If any litigation, claim, or audit is started before the expiration of the 5-year period, the records will be retained until all litigation, claims, or audit findings involving the records have been resolved.

Covered Records: For purposes of this policy, records are information, regardless of physical form or characteristics, that are created, received, or retained that evidence Land of Sky Regional Council’s expenditure of CSLFRF funds on eligible projects, programs, or activities pursuant to the ARP/CSLFRF award.

Records that shall be retained pursuant to this policy include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Financial statements and accounting records evidencing expenditures of CSLFRF for eligible projects, programs, or activities.

- Documentation of rationale to support a particular expenditure of CSLFRF (e.g., expenditure constitutes a general government service);
- Documentation of administrative costs charged to the ARP/CSLFRF award;
- Procurement documents evidencing the significant history of a procurement, including, at a minimum, the rationale for the method of procurement, selection of contract type, contractor selection or rejection, and the basis for contract cost or price;
- Subaward agreements and documentation of subrecipient monitoring;
- Documentation evidencing compliance with the Uniform Guidance property management standards set forth in 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.310-316 and 200.329;
- Personnel and payroll records for full-time and part-time employees compensated with CSLFRF, including time and effort reports; and
- Indirect cost rate proposals

Storage: Land of Sky Regional Council's records must be stored in a safe, secure, and accessible manner. Wherever practicable, such records should be collected, transmitted, and stored in open and machine-readable formats.

Departmental Responsibilities: Any department or unit of Land of Sky Regional Council, and its employees, who are responsible for creating or maintaining the covered documents in this policy shall comply with the terms of this policy. Failure to do so may subject Land of Sky Regional Council to civil and/or criminal liability. Any employee who fails to comply with the record retention requirements set forth herein may be subject to disciplinary sanctions, including suspension or termination.

The Finance Director is responsible for identifying the documents that Land of Sky Regional Council must or should retain and arrange for the proper storage and retrieval of records. The Finance Director shall also ensure that all personnel subject to the terms of this policy are aware of the record retention requirements set forth herein.

Reporting Policy Violations: Land of Sky Regional Council is committed to enforcing this policy as it applies to all forms of records. Any employee that suspects the terms of this policy have been violated shall report the incident immediately to that employee's supervisor. If an employee is not comfortable bringing the matter up with the supervisor, the employee may bring the matter to the attention of the Finance Director. Land of Sky Regional Council prohibits, any form of discipline, reprisal, intimidation, or retaliation for reporting incidents of inappropriate conduct of any kind, pursuing any record destruction claim, or cooperating in related investigations.

Questions About the Policy: Any questions about this policy should be referred to Patricia Rosenberg, Finance Director, Land of Sky Regional Council, Phone 828-251-6622 ext. 1158 Email: Patricia@landosky.org who is in charge of administering, enforcing, and updating this policy.



AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

Item: 3A – Area Agency on Aging (AAA) Staff Bonus

Nature of Item: Action Requested

Background: In 2021, Land of Sky Regional Council hired new employee Jenna Sharrits to perform the work under the grant entitled, *COVID-19 Vaccine Outreach and Education for Older Adults and Caregivers*. Her work was directly supervised by Aging Program Specialist Brea Kuykendall. Brea provided excellent oversight and guidance to Jenna in this challenging position by taking on many new responsibilities with this grant including orientation, mentoring, staff supervision, oversight of state reporting and regional outreach activities, and budget management. Brea has taken on this responsibility in addition to her normal job duties. As a result, we are proposing the payment of a one-time bonus of \$2500.

Responsible Staff: Nathan Ramsey, Executive Director, and LeeAnne Tucker, Area Agency on Aging Director

Suggested Motion: Motion to approve the one-time bonus of \$2500 for Brea Kuykendall.



AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

Items: 3B – Land of Sky Regional Council Legislative Priorities

Nature of Items: No Action

Attachment(s): Land of Sky Regional Council Legislative Priorities

Background: NG General Assembly convenes the 2023 long-session in January 2023. Land of Sky Regional Council has retained EQV Strategic in the past, in partnership with Southwestern Commission, to represent the region. The Council adopted a 2021-2022 Legislative Agenda with three priorities: Transportation Funding, Broadband Access/Funding and Local Government Revenue Flexibility. In the past volunteers from the Board of Delegates crafted a draft legislative agenda that was approved by the Board of Delegates. The proposed timeline would be for Board of Delegates to consider the legislative priorities at their January 25, 2023 meeting.

Responsible Staff: Nathan Ramsey, Executive Director

Suggested Motion: N/A.



AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

- Items:** 3C – Land of Sky Regional Council Strategic Plan
- Nature of Items:** No Action
- Attachment(s):** External and Internal Surveys
- Background:** Land of Sky Regional Council adopted a Strategic Plan 2019-2021 in 2019. The preparations are being made to update the Strategic Plan. LOSRC staff held an all-staff strategic planning meeting on September 23, 2022. An anonymous survey has been sent to LOSRC staff, LOSRC Board of Delegates members, local government managers, elected officials, board members of other boards at LOSRC along with other stakeholders. The purpose of this update is to request direction from the Executive Committee for this Strategic Planning process.
- Responsible Staff:** Nathan Ramsey, Executive Director
- Suggested Motion:** N/A.



AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

Items: 3D – Affordable and Workforce Housing

Nature of Items: No Action

Attachment(s): N/A

Background: Land of Sky Regional Council is working to increase the Council's capacity to support our local government needs for affordable and workforce housing technical assistance. We are in discussions with Southwestern Commission to share a full-time position focused on affordable and workforce housing. .

Responsible Staff: Nathan Ramsey, Executive Director

Suggested Motion: N/A.



AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

- Items:** 3E – 11th District Congressional Candidates at October board meeting
- Nature of Items:** No Action
- Attachment(s):** N/A
- Background:** Land of Sky Regional Council, a local government under NC law, has invited the three candidates for Congress in the 11th Congressional District to attend the October 26, 2022 Board of Delegates meeting. Each candidate will have 10 minutes for their presentation on their priorities in Congress, if elected, while serving Western North Carolina. Susan Russo Klein, Attorney, Roberts & Stevens has advised us that it is acceptable for this forum to occur at our board meeting pursuant to federal and state law. The Executive Committee should determine whether any questions are allowed of the candidates..All three candidates have indicated they will attend the board meeting.
- Responsible Staff:** Nathan Ramsey, Executive Director
- Suggested Motion:** 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 26th 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
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 ARPA information can be found here: <https://www.nc.gov/agencies/pandemic-recovery-office/american-rescue-plan-act-information-and-resources>
2. Staff have been working with Sister Councils of Government on ARPA, Resilience and Multi-regional projects. Partnerships include sharing ARP policies, ordinances, and guidance; grant development; developing scopes of work and project delivery for ARPA State funds; budgeting and project development for housing, transportation and broadband tech assistance.
3. Staff continues working with several local governments and partners on applications for economic development, community development, transportation, and infrastructure implementation with BRIC/FEMA, EDA, and foundations. These projects will support transportation connections, resilience, job growth, industry expansion, and place-based development.
4. The NCGS 160D requires all Comprehensive Plans be updated to meet the new guidelines by July 1, 2022. (i.e. Municipalities and Counties must have a “reasonably-maintained” [updated within last 5-10 years] Comprehensive Plan in effect in order to legally continue having local zoning/development regulations. At minimum, a reasonably updated Land Use Plan must be in place by July 1, 2022 as a rational nexus to zoning/development regulations. (see Town of Canton’s phased-approach, Phase 1: Land Use Plan by July 1, 2022; Phase 2: Other Comprehensive Plan elements to be included after July 1, 2022)
Please contact erica@landofsky.org if you have questions or would like assistance updating your plans.

3. Aging

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) - The Area Agency on Aging 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 9th.
 - 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 10th 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.