



**Executive Committee**

**March 22, 2023**

**Hybrid Meeting In-Person at Land of Sky Regional Council office and Remotely via Zoom  
11:00 am**

**AGENDA**

**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. February 22, 2023 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
- B. Budget Amendment #5

**3. New Business**

- A. TDM Resolution
- B. Nominating Committee Report
- C. French Broad River Tour

**4. Other Items**

- A. Executive Director Report

**6. Adjournment**

**Land of Sky Regional Council  
Executive Committee  
Regular Meeting  
February 22, 2023**

**Minutes**

Land of Sky Regional Council's Executive Committee held a meeting at the Buncombe County Training Facility located on the campus of A-B Tech/Woodfin that included access through the Zoom platform on Wednesday, February 22, 2023. Executive Committee members participating in the meeting included Chair Patrick Fitzsimmons, Barbara Volk, Bob Tomasulo, Preston Blakely, Matt Wechtel, Maureen Copelof, and Sandra Kilgore, and Jason Chappell constituting a quorum.

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

Guests: Kathey Avery and Mike Hawkins

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

**Approval of Consent Agenda** – The consent agenda composed of item A. January 25, 2023 Executive Committee Minutes was presented for approval with no modification requested.

***Sandra Kilgore moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Matt Wechtel seconded, and the motion carried unanimously upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.***

**New Business**

**Safe Routes to School Resolution**

Tristan Winkler shared that NCDOT released a Non-Infrastructure Transportation Alternatives Program Call for Proposals in late December 2022 with applications due February 6, 2023. A resolution of support from the Land of Sky Regional Council is required as part of the application but is allowed to be provided following other materials that were sent in by the deadline. He noted that the grant application includes a Safe Routes to School Coordinator position for schools in the transportation region. Formerly, there were two staff in this position, but those positions expired in 2018 for Buncombe/Madison/Henderson and 2022 for Haywood/Transylvania. This is a non-infrastructure grant that is meant to support staff and some equipment and supplies to support marketing for the Safe Routes to School initiative including bicycle safety. In terms of this grant application, no local match is required currently, for applications requesting a lower level of funding. Three years of funding has been applied for, which is the maximum length of time the funding can support the Safe Routes to Schools program. Erica Anderson shared that the resolution includes data regarding 48 youth pedestrian and bicycle incidents, and the hope is to reduce the occurrence of these incidents through the operation of Safe Routes to School.

Discussion occurred regarding the Vision Zero initiative active in Transylvania County and the City of Brevard. Mayor Copelof suggested that the Safe Routes to School coordinator could support the Vision Zero initiative.

Commission Chair Wechtel requested clarification that the coordinator position was contingent on receiving the funding for the Safe Routes to School initiative, which was affirmed by Tristan Winkler. Nathan Ramsey noted that pending receipt of funding, the position would be filled as a Transportation Planner I.

***Barbara Volk moved to approve the Safe Routes to School Resolution as presented. Sandra Kilgore seconded, and the motion carried upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.***

**Board of Delegates Meeting Format**

Nathan Ramsey shared that board meeting format changes have been discussed by the leadership team as a way of making board meetings more relevant and convenient. Also, the possibility of a series of regional conversations about key topics has been discussed by leadership. He noted that throughout the pandemic, remote meetings became the norm and it continues to be a convenient way for delegates to attend meetings, is better for the environment, and saves time. However, it may be a good time to consider changes to the format of board meetings. He noted that the major strength of LOS and COGs is as the convener to solve

regional issues. Possibly, by readjusting the board of delegates meeting format time could be created to discuss a specific regional issue as part of each board meeting. He suggested that the format of meetings could change to begin with discussion of a regional topic before the regular start of the board meeting, then a business meeting of no more than an hour (including time for lunch). Nathan noted that some jurisdictions do not regularly attend meetings. He shared that the current format of board meetings could continue if the Executive Committee thought that was the best way to proceed.

Mayor Fitzsimmons shared that it could be a great value to have the LOS board discuss topics of importance to the region in-depth. Mayor Copelof agreed with Mayor Fitzsimmons, noting that issues-based dialogue is very valuable to her. She shared the importance of the remote option for meeting attendance. Bob Tomasulo concurred with the other members and suggested that three presentations at board meetings was too much.

Discussion occurred regarding the meeting time and consensus was reached that the current meeting time was adequate, and that issue-based dialogues (critical conversations) would be helpful along with a shortened meeting time for the board. Additionally, Mayor Fitzsimmons suggested that Executive Committee meet at 11am, the issues topic discussion would begin at noon, and the board of delegates would begin at 1pm and conclude around 1:45pm. Nathan Ramsey noted that delegates would have the option of participating in the issues dialogue. Vice Mayor Kilgore suggested holding the issues dialogue after the Board meeting so that if delegates did not want to participate they could drop off or leave the meeting and the business of the board would be completed for the month by 1pm. Mayor Fitzsimmons suggested having any presentations during the critical conversation portion of the meeting to make it more issue-focused while the board meeting would be business only. Commission Chair Wechtel expressed his opinion that the roundtable takes a lot of time during the meeting and he suggested a change in the way that is done. Nathan Ramsey shared that today's agenda specifies that comments during the roundtable be limited to no more than three minutes and it does have a monthly topic of focus now, which also makes comments from delegates more concise. Nathan Ramsey suggested following up with Mayor Fitzsimmons after additional conversation with LOS Leadership.

#### ***Information item.***

#### 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 that updated racial disparities data goes live today on the LOS website. He noted that the objective was not to editorialize, but to provide the data for decision makers.

Erica Anderson shared that a save the date for the regional housing forum would be available soon.

#### Adjournment

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

Respectfully submitted by Zia Rifkin

**BUDGET AMENDMENT RESOLUTION FIVE, March 22, 2023**

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 appropriation as follows:**

<b>AAA - Area Agency on Aging</b>	\$	30,736.00
<b>ECD - Economic and Community Development</b>	\$	35,695.00
<b>MAWD - Workforce Development</b>	\$	2,173,165.00
<b>MNG - General Operations</b>	\$	-
<b>WRP - Waste Reduction Partners</b>	\$	-
<b>TRAN - Transportation</b>	\$	400,000.00
		<hr/>
<b>Total Appropriations</b>	\$	2,639,596.00
		<hr/> <hr/>

**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.**

<b>Area Agency on Aging</b>	<b>Federal</b>	\$	30,736.00
	State	\$	-
	Local	\$	-
	Dues	\$	-
	Private	\$	-
	In Kind	\$	-
	Fees	\$	-
	Appropriated Fund Balance	\$	-
			<hr/>
<b>Total Area Agency on Aging</b>		\$	30,736.00
			<hr/> <hr/>

<b>Economic and Community Development</b>	<b>Federal</b>	\$	50,695.00
	State	\$	-
	Local	\$	(15,000.00)
	Dues	\$	-
	Private	\$	-
	In Kind	\$	-
	Fees	\$	-
	Appropriated Fund Balance	\$	-
			<hr/>
<b>Total Economic &amp; Community Development</b>		\$	35,695.00
			<hr/> <hr/>

**BUDGET AMENDMENT RESOLUTION FIVE, March 22, 2023**

<b>Workforce Development</b>	Federal	\$	2,173,165.00
	State	\$	-
	Local	\$	-
	Dues	\$	-
	Private	\$	-
	In Kind	\$	-
	Fees	\$	-
	Appropriated Fund Balance	\$	-
<b>Total Workforce Development</b>		\$	<u>2,173,165.00</u>
<b>General Operations</b>	Federal	\$	-
	State	\$	-
	Local	\$	-
	Dues	\$	-
	Private	\$	-
	In Kind	\$	-
	Fees	\$	-
	Appropriated Fund Balance	\$	-
<b>Total General Operations</b>		\$	<u>-</u>
<b>WRP - Waste Reduction Partners</b>	Federal	\$	-
	State	\$	-
	Local	\$	-
	Dues	\$	-
	Private	\$	-
	In Kind	\$	-
	Fees	\$	-
	Appropriated Fund Balance	\$	-
<b>Total Waste Reduction Partners</b>		\$	<u>-</u>

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**BUDGET AMENDMENT RESOLUTION FIVE, March 22, 2023**

<b>TRAN - Transportation</b>	Federal	\$	320,000.00
	State	\$	-
	Local	\$	-
	Dues	\$	-
	Private	\$	80,000.00
	In Kind	\$	-
	Fees	\$	-
	Appropriated Fund Balance	\$	-
<b>Total Transportation</b>		\$	<b>400,000.00</b>
<b>Total Estimated Revenues</b>		\$	<b><u>2,639,596.00</u></b>

**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 22th of March, 2023.

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Mayor Patrick Fitzsimmons, Chair

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Nathan Ramsey, Attest

Land of Sky Region Council  
Revenue and Expenditures



Fiscal Year → **FY23**  
Amendment → **Five**

Amendment Date → **3/22/23**

Revenue and Expenditures

Program Area	Proposed Budget as of Current Amendment -- 'Five'	Budget as of Previous Amendment -- 'Four'	Increase or (Decrease) between Current and Previous Amendment	Percent Change between Current and Previous Amendment	Percent Change between Current Amendment Proposed Budget and FY Begin
AAA - Area Agency on Aging	\$8,466,120	\$8,435,384	\$30,736	0.4%	0.6%
ECD - Economic and Community Development	\$5,828,833	\$5,793,138	\$35,695	0.6%	1.5%
MAWD - Workforce Development	\$7,572,186	\$5,399,021	\$2,173,165	40.3%	90.7%
MNG - General Operations	\$261,823	\$261,823	\$0	0.0%	0.0%
WRP - Waste Reduction Partners	\$330,877	\$330,877	\$0	0.0%	0.0%
TRAN - Transportation	\$1,816,387	\$1,416,387	\$400,000	28.2%	37.1%
<b>Land of Sky Regional Council</b>	<b>\$24,276,226</b>	<b>\$21,636,630</b>	<b>\$2,639,596</b>	<b>12.2%</b>	<b>22.9%</b>

Revenue by Source

Funding Source	Proposed Budget as of Current Amendment -- 'Five'	Budget as of Previous Amendment -- 'Four'	Increase or (Decrease) between Current and Previous Amendment	Percent Change between Current and Previous Amendment	Percent Change between Current Amendment Proposed Budget and FY Begin
Federal	\$16,558,346	\$13,983,750	\$2,574,596	18.4%	0.0%
State	\$2,482,766	\$2,482,766	\$0	0.0%	0.0%
Local	\$2,125,230	\$2,140,230	(\$15,000)	-0.7%	0.0%
Dues	\$519,349	\$519,349	\$0	0.0%	0.0%
Private	\$1,749,839	\$1,669,839	\$80,000	4.8%	0.0%
Other	\$131,838	\$131,838	\$0	0.0%	0.0%
In-Kind	\$325,226	\$325,226	\$0	0.0%	0.0%
Fees	\$215,642	\$215,642	\$0	0.0%	0.0%
Appropriated Fund Balance	\$167,990	\$167,990	\$0	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Land of Sky Regional Council</b>	<b>\$24,276,226</b>	<b>\$21,636,630</b>	<b>\$2,639,596</b>	<b>12.2%</b>	<b>22.9%</b>

**Land of Sky Region Council  
Revenue and Expenditures**



**FY23** Fiscal Year

**Five** Amendment Number  
**3/22/23** Amendment Date

FY23 Budget at Amendment Four; Total for AAA	Amendment Five; Total for AAA	FY23 Budget at Amendment Five; Total for AAA
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AAA Area Agency on Aging \$8,435,384      \$30,736      \$8,466,120

Unit	Grant Number	Grant Name	FY Start	FY23 Budget at Amendment Four	Amendment Five	FY23 Budget at Amendment Five
AAA	507	Medicare Improvement for Patients and Providers (MIPPA)	\$31,305	\$31,808	\$30,736	\$62,544



**Land of Sky Region Council**  
**Revenue and Expenditures**



**FY23** Fiscal Year

**Five** Amendment Number  
**3/22/23** Amendment Date

FY23 Budget at Amendment Four; Total for ECD	Amendment Five; Total for ECD	FY23 Budget at Amendment Five; Total for ECD
\$5,793,138	\$35,695	\$5,828,833

**ECD Economic and Community Development**

Unit	Grant Number	Grant Name	FY Start	FY23 Budget at Amendment Four	Amendment Five	FY23 Budget at Amendment Five
ECD	466	Weaverville Stormwater Inventory	\$0	\$0	\$50,695	\$50,695
ECD	42A	Southwestern Commission MOA -P&Z	\$0	\$0	(\$15,000)	(\$15,000)

Land of Sky Region Council  
Revenue and Expenditures



**FY23** Fiscal Year

**Five** Amendment Number  
**3/22/23** Amendment Date

FY23 Budget at Amendment Four; Total for MAWD	Amendment Five; Total for MAWD	FY23 Budget at Amendment Five; Total for MAWD
\$5,399,021	\$2,173,165	\$7,572,186

**MAWD Workforce Development**

Unit	Grant Number	Grant Name	FY Start	FY23 Budget at Amendment Four	Amendment Five	FY23 Budget at Amendment Five
MAWD	21B	P20 Council - DOL and Duke Energy	\$0	\$35,000	\$1,441,125	\$1,476,125
MAWD	630	DOL Growth Opportunities	\$0	\$0	\$80,000	\$80,000
MAWD	280	ARPA Work Based Learning	\$0	\$0	\$429,438	\$429,438
MAWD	281	ARPA Work Based Learning Admin	\$0	\$0	\$22,602	\$22,602
MAWD	282	ARPA Reentry	\$0	\$0	\$95,000	\$95,000
MAWD	283	ARPA Reentry Admin	\$0	\$0	\$5,000	\$5,000
MAWD	284	ARPA Substance Use	\$0	\$0	\$95,000	\$95,000
MAWD	285	ARPA Substance Use Admin	\$0	\$0	\$5,000	\$5,000

Land of Sky Region Council  
Revenue and Expenditures



**FY23** Fiscal Year

**Five** Amendment Number  
**3/22/23** Amendment Date

FY23 Budget at Amendment Four; Total for MNG	Amendment Five; Total for MNG	FY23 Budget at Amendment Five; Total for MNG
\$261,823	\$0	\$261,823

MNG                      General Operations

Unit	Grant Number	Grant Name	FY Start	FY23 Budget at Amendment Four	Amendment Five	FY23 Budget at Amendment Five

**Land of Sky Region Council**  
**Revenue and Expenditures**



**FY23** Fiscal Year

**Five** Amendment Number  
**3/22/23** Amendment Date

FY23 Budget at Amendment Four; Total for TRAN	Amendment Five; Total for TRAN	FY23 Budget at Amendment Five; Total for TRAN
\$1,416,387	\$400,000	\$1,816,387

**TRAN**                      **Transportation**

Unit	Grant Number	Grant Name	FY Start	FY23 Budget at Amendment Four	Amendment Five	FY23 Budget at Amendment Five
TRAN	955	Safe Streets for All	\$0	\$0	\$400,000	\$400,000

**Land of Sky Region Council  
Revenue and Expenditures**



**FY23** Fiscal Year

**Five** Amendment Number  
**3/22/23** Amendment Date

FY23 Budget at Amendment Four; Total for WRP	Amendment Five; Total for WRP	FY23 Budget at Amendment Five; Total for WRP
\$330,877	\$0	\$330,877

**WRP Waste Reduction Partners**

Unit	Grant Number	Grant Name	FY Start	FY23 Budget at Amendment Four	Amendment Five	FY23 Budget at Amendment Five



## AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

- Item:** 3A – Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Resolution
- Nature of Item:** Action
- Attachment(s):** TDM Resolution
- Background:** The Executive Committee is being requested to authorize LOSRC to submit and accept the annual TDM grant application to NCDOT for the FY2024 year.
- NCDOT has made \$57,547.50 available for State TDM funding for the FBRMPO region (Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Madison and Transylvania Counties). The local match will be provided with STBG-DA funding from the FBRMPO at an equal amount, not to exceed \$75,000
- Responsible Staff:** Hannah Bagli, Regional Transportation Planner, French Broad Metropolitan Planning Organization (FBRMPO)
- Suggested Motion:** Motion to approve the Transportation Demand Management (TDM) resolution, submit the grant application for state funding, provide the required local match, make the necessary assurances and certifications and be empowered to enter into an agreement with the NCDOT to provide TDM management services and activities.

# **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM RESOLUTION**

## **FY 2024 RESOLUTION**

**Section 5311 (including ADTAP), 5310, 5339, 5307 and applicable State funding, or combination thereof.**

Applicant seeking permission to apply for Public Transportation Program funding, enter into agreement with the North Carolina Department of Transportation, provide the necessary assurances and the required local match.

A motion was made by (*Board Member's Name*) \_\_\_\_\_ and seconded by (*Board Member's Name or N/A, if not required*) \_\_\_\_\_ for the adoption of the following resolution, and upon being put to a vote was duly adopted.

WHEREAS, Article 2B of Chapter 136 of the North Carolina General Statutes and the Governor of North Carolina have designated the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) as the agency responsible for administering federal and state public transportation funds; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Department of Transportation will apply for a grant from the US Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration and receives funds from the North Carolina General Assembly to provide assistance for rural public transportation projects; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of these transportation funds is to provide grant monies to local agencies for the provision of rural, small urban, and urban public transportation services consistent with the policy requirements of each funding source for planning, community and agency involvement, service design, service alternatives, training and conference participation, reporting and other requirements (drug and alcohol testing policy and program, disadvantaged business enterprise program, and fully allocated costs analysis); and

WHEREAS, the funds applied for may be Administrative, Operating, Planning, or Capital funds and will have different percentages of federal, state, and local funds.

WHEREAS, non-Community Transportation applicants may apply for funding for "purchase-of-service" projects under the Section 5310 program.

WHEREAS, Land of Sky Regional Council hereby assures and certifies that it will provide the required local matching funds; that its staff has the technical capacity to implement and manage the project(s), prepare required reports, obtain required training, attend meetings and conferences; and agrees to comply with the federal and state statutes, regulations, executive orders, Section 5333 (b) Warranty, and all administrative requirements related to the applications made to and grants received from the Federal Transit Administration, as well as the provisions of Section 1001 of Title 18, U. S. C.

WHEREAS, the applicant has or will provide all annual certifications and assurances to the State of North Carolina required for the project;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Executive Director of Land of Sky Regional Council is hereby authorized to submit grant application (s) for federal and state funding in response to NCDOT's calls for projects, make the necessary assurances and certifications and be empowered to enter into an agreement with the NCDOT to provide rural, small urban, and urban public transportation services.

I (Certifying Official's Name)\* \_\_\_\_\_ (Certifying Official's Title) \_\_\_\_\_ do hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of an excerpt from the minutes of a meeting of the (Name of Applicant's Governing Board) \_\_\_\_\_ duly held on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of Certifying Official*

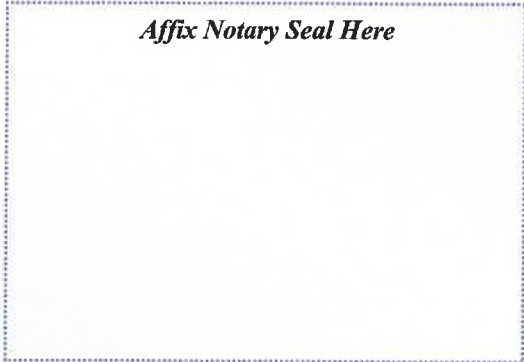
**\*Note that the authorized official, certifying official, and notary public should be three separate individuals.**

Seal Subscribed and sworn to me (date) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Notary Public \**

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Printed Name and Address*

My commission expires (date) \_\_\_\_\_







## BOARD OF DELEGATES AGENDA ITEM

<b>Item:</b>	3B - Nominating Committee Report
<b>Nature of Item:</b>	Information
<b>Attachment(s):</b>	LOSRC Nominating Committee Report
<b>Background:</b>	LOSRC Nominating Committee was appointed pursuant to the Bylaws & Charter at the February meeting. Nominating Committee members are Rebecca McCall, Commission Chairman, Henderson County, Terri Wells, Commissioner, Buncombe County and Elisabeth Ervin, Council Member, Town of Woodfin.
<b>Responsible Staff:</b> <b>Recommendation:</b>	Nathan Ramsey, Executive Director
<b>Suggested Motion(s):</b>	N/A.



**2023-24 Officers/Executive Committee  
(Terms Ending June 30, 2024)  
Nominating Committee Recommendation**

**Chair:** Patrick Fitzsimmons, Mayor, Town of Weaverville (Buncombe)  
**Vice-Chair:** Maureen Copelof, Mayor, Brevard (Transylvania)  
**Secretary:** Preston Blakely, Mayor, Fletcher (Henderson)  
**Treasurer:** Matthew Wechtel, Commission Chair, Madison County (Madison)  
**County Delegate:** Jason Chappell, Commission Chair, Transylvania County (Transylvania)  
**Municipal Delegate:** Sandra Kilgore, Vice Mayor, Asheville (Buncombe)  
**Past Chair Delegate:** Barbara Volk, Mayor, City of Hendersonville (Henderson)  
**Minority Representative Delegate:** Burton Hodges, Exec Director, Transylvania Alliance (Transylvania)  
**Aging Representative:** Bob Tomasulo, Chair, Aging Advisory Committee

Respectfully submitted by the Nominating Committee:  
Elisabeth Ervin, Council Member, Town of Woodfin  
Rebecca McCall, Chairwoman, Board of Commissioners, Henderson County  
Terri Wells, Commissioner, Buncombe County



**AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY**

- Item:** 3C – French Broad River Tour
- Nature of Item:** Information
- Attachment(s):** N/A
- Background:** We are planning a French Broad Tour which will take place in the summer or fall of this year. The French Broad River connects our region’s four counties and the river has many economic, cultural and environmental impacts. The tour will take place on Fridays over the course of several days and will span from Rosman to Hot Springs. There will be a rafting tour, most likely in Madison County. The tour will be paid for with private funds. The tour will be open to elected officials, government staff, economic development, business, agricultural and environmental leaders.
- Responsible Staff:** Nathan Ramsey, Executive Director
- Suggested Motion:** N/A

## 1. Finance

- Work is underway preparing for the FY23-24 budget

## 2. Economic & Community Development & Transportation Planning

### Kudos!

- Congratulations to the NC Apple Festival Board of Directors in Hendersonville for being recognized as a Main Street Champion by the NC Main Street Conference!

### Announcements

- The Racial Disparity Analysis has been updated with current data: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/34c9390316874caeab288d332dac3b12>
- We are assisting residents sign up for discounted internet service (ACP) in Buncombe County. Please contact [ian@landofsky.org](mailto:ian@landofsky.org) for more information.

### Events

- 3/1- Quarterly Managers Meeting @ LOSRC
- 3/1 - Regional Health Forum @ LOSRC
- 3/12-15 NADO & DDAA Washington Policy Conference in Arlington, VA
- 3/20-21 Rural Summit 2023 at the Raleigh Convention Center
- 4/26-28 NCAMPO Conference *Transforming Transportation* in Greenville, NC  
<https://www.ncampo.org/ncampo-state-conference/>
- 7/14 Housing Forum – Save the Date!

### Grants

#### **Rural Transformation Grant Fund Round 3**

The Rural Transformation Grant Fund provides local governments with grants and expert guidance to improve economic vitality and overcome the unique challenges many rural communities face. The fund is open to local governments in the state's Tier 1 and Tier 2 counties, as well as qualified census tracts in Tier 3 counties, you may review a map with eligible areas here. The fund will open for the third round of applications on Wednesday, **March 22, 2023**.

#### **2024 NC ARC Area Development Grant Pre-Application is Open Now**

The North Carolina ARC Program invites pre-applications from eligible applicants for the Area Development Grant Program. Applications must be **received by 5:00pm on April 17th, 2023**.

#### **EDA Publishes Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Notice of Funding Opportunity**

EDA has published a new Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance (PWEAA) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). The FY23 PWEAA NOFO outlines application submission requirements and review procedures for applications received under EDA's Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) programs.

#### **Infrastructure Funding Opportunities: NCDEQ CDBG-I**

The NC Department of Environmental Quality – Division of Water Infrastructure will be accepting applications for Community Development Block Grant-Infrastructure (CDBG-I) funding. In this spring funding round, there will be approximately \$19 million available for water and sewer infrastructure projects. CDBG-I funds are

designated to assist non-entitlement communities (municipalities under 50,000 and Counties under 200,000 in population) create a healthy living environment through financing public water and sewer infrastructure; and mitigate public and environmental health problems in areas where the percentage of low-and moderate-income persons are at least 51%. The maximum CDBG-I grant award per applicant is \$3 million every three years, with no minimum. There is no local match required. Project must complete the project within a 36-40 month period from the grant award. Applications are due to NC DEQ no later than **5:00pm on Monday, May 1, 2023**.

### **Funding Opportunity: Appalachia Digital Equity Accelerator Grants**

To accelerate broadband access across the region, Connect Humanity has partnered with the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) to work with 50 of Appalachia's least-connected communities, preparing them to build next-generation broadband networks. These communities will receive a Connect Humanity Digital Equity Planning Grant to create a holistic plan for achieving their digital equity goals. To learn more about who can apply and how the project works read the FAQs.

### **USDA Rural Development's Resource Guide for Rural Entrepreneurs**

USDA Rural Development has a new resource out for rural entrepreneurs that is full of insights, with excellent case studies and information for rural entrepreneurs on starting and growing their business. CLICK HERE to download the guide and share with your business community.

### **National Endowment for the Arts' Citizen's Institute on Rural Design Program**

Every two years, the National Endowment for the Arts seeks rural communities of 50,000 people or less to apply for the Citizens' Institute on Rural Design program (CIRD). With over 30 years of leadership in rural design, CIRD is perfect for creative, community-oriented rural leaders. The 2023 program application **deadline is April 21**. CLICK HERE to learn more.

**COGWorks:** Please visit <https://www.landofsky.org/cogworks.html> for more information and registration links. Courses are added as details become available.

- April - North Carolina's Transportation Prioritization Process
- May - Housing and Accessory Dwelling Units in North Carolina
- May - Transportation Grants
- June - TIPs and STIPs
- July - Green Growth Toolbox, Wildlife Crossings, and Related Planning Efforts
- August - Ethics Cases of the Year
- October - Rural Road Safety

### **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, MPO and ECD staff are assisting several communities write grants for transportation projects, including RAISE, FLAP, and the IJA Discretionary Funds.
4. MPO and RPO staff are serving on the state's Prioritization Workgroup with other representatives from MPOs, RPOs, and NCDOT.
5. The MPO is providing funding to several special studies in the region getting ready to begin in FY 2024: The Woodfin-Weaverville Trail Connection Study and the Fletcher Cane Creek Greenway Study.
6. Haywood County adopted their Greenway Master Plan at their February 6<sup>th</sup> meeting
7. The MPO is providing funding for on-going studies at the City of Asheville, including the purchase of bicycle and pedestrian counters, the Reed Creek Greenway Extension Study, and the Patton Avenue Corridor Study.

8. MPO & RPO staff are 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.
9. MPO & RPO staff continue to update local governments on NCDOT's financial situation and the Draft 2024-2033 STIP. A public survey is planned to be distributed by the MPO in November.
10. The MPO & RPO were awarded a Safe Streets for All Planning Grant from USDOT to cover Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania counties
11. The City of Hendersonville was awarded a feasibility study grant through the NCDOT Paved Trail Study program for the Above the Mud project.
12. The City of Brevard was awarded a feasibility study grant through NCDOT Paved Trail Study Program for the Old Hendersonville Hwy Shared Use Path.
13. The MPO was awarded a feasibility study grant through the NCDOT Paved Trail Study program for a small section of the Swannanoa Greenway near Meadow Road
14. MPO New Member Orientation is scheduled for Friday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>
15. RPO staff assisted local partners in applying for NCDOT's first rural Carbon Reduction program CRP, call for projects. The Carbon Reduction program is a new formula program in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law of 2021. RPO staff submitted three projects for local partners, totaling approximately \$1.2 million, with additional projects being developed for future calls.

### **Broadband**

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

### **Community Development/Water, Sewer, Stormwater Infrastructure**

1. Staff is continuing to support Fletcher, Laurel Park, Montreat, Weaverville and Woodfin with their MS4 (municipal separate storm sewer system) permit compliance. Updated stormwater management plans have been completed for Weaverville and Laurel Park in February and submitted to DEQ.
2. Weaverville's 205j-funded stormwater system inventory and green infrastructure planning kicked off in January, and field work is underway.
3. Brevard has requested assistance with a stormwater system inventory as well and work will begin in late Spring.
4. Final design has been completed for a 319-funded bioretention system at TOBM public works.
5. Staff is evaluating and synthesizing water and sewer system needs throughout the region, starting with Transylvania County.

## Housing

1. Staff submitted two pre-applications to Dogwood Health Trust for housing programs. One was invited for a full application, and one was deferred to the next round.
2. Staff has begun reaching out to Local Governments and Housing nonprofit providers to gather information and data for the Housing Asset Inventory and determine needs.
3. 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 15 counties. This project will be completed through a multi-COG effort.
4. 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.
5. Staff set a LOSRC Housing Forum date of July 14, 2023

## Economic Development/Workforce

1. Staff submitted the I26 Interchange/Access Road application to EDA to request \$2 million in funding on behalf of NCDOT. Staff assisted NCDOT receive \$2.5 million from ARC's Access Road fund.
2. The Creative Manufacturing Sector Development plan is final! Please contact us for a copy of the plan.
3. The reports for the Regional Economic Collaboration and Analysis led by the Region's Chambers of Commerce and business sector are complete:
  - a. Regional Resiliency and Strategic Plan Alignment Presentation
  - b. Regional Resiliency and Strategic Plan Alignment Report
  - c. Labor Shed and Target Industry Analysis
4. Staff and partners have completed the analysis and final products with Outdoor/Recreation Sector manufacturers to determine opportunities in supply chains, workforce and economic diversity in cooperation with High Country Council, Southwestern Commission and Riverbird Research.  
<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/291e98f0291643c49a6462395ec3e6e5>
5. We continue to partner with the Chambers of Commerce, Small Business Support Agencies, nonprofits, and economic developers to assist small businesses through COVID-19 impacts.
6. The TDM Coordinator is working with Workforce, Inspire, and employers to develop a vanpool for under-resourced individuals to access job sites.
7. LOSRC's Waste Reduction Partners program is providing free water-use management assessments for large customers of the City of Asheville's Water Resources Department. These on-site assessments help identify utility costs savings for the City.

## Resilience/Hazard Mitigation

1. LOSRC is supporting the development of the Domestic Preparedness Region 9 THIRA/SPR through the COG Disaster Recovery Grant and will start with Buncombe County to develop an information base and process that can be used across the 12 counties in DPR 9 (Regions A & B, as well as Polk County from Region C).
2. The LOS Regional Resilience Assessment Phase IV kicked off in January, also funded in part with through COG DRR, and includes new features and data in AccelAdapt to support resilience planning, and well as training and user group support.

## Clean Cities/Clean Vehicles

1. Clean Cities Program is assisting local governments prepare for VW Settlement projects. During the first round of settlement funding released in 2020, the Land of Sky Clean Vehicles Coalition helped the region bring in more than \$4.1 million in grant funding to support purchases of new clean vehicles and EV infrastructure. During the second round of funding, all of the applications that LOS

staff assisted with under the Level 2 Public Access Program were funded. Staff also assisted with applications for the DC Fast Chargers and Level 2 Multi-Unit Dwelling programs. Please contact Sara Nichols with questions on how to apply for more than \$68 million in state funding available for clean fleets: [sara@landofsky.org](mailto:sara@landofsky.org)

2. LOS received CMAQ funding to continue support of air quality outreach initiatives in WNC.
3. Staff supported applications for the EPA school bus rebate for Buncombe and Madison County Schools.
4. Cherokee Clean Vehicles participated in the first electric school bus in North Carolina ribbon cutting, including a visit from Governor Cooper and Administrator Reagan. Staff recently helped with a training for school leadership including a school bus drag race.
5. Staff are partnering with the Blue Ridge Electric Vehicle Club to host an electric vehicle car shows on April 22<sup>nd</sup> in Hendersonville, and April 30<sup>th</sup> in Asheville.
6. Staff are working on developing a EV planning map for the region.
7. Staff are working on their annual clean cities report for the region. This report quantifies the grant funding, public engagement, and greenhouse gas emission reductions in the region for 2022. Please contact Sara Nichols ([sara@landofsky.org](mailto:sara@landofsky.org)) and Ian Baillie ([ian@landofsky.org](mailto:ian@landofsky.org)) if your municipality or organization use an alternative fuel vehicle or equipment, replaced any diesel vehicle or equipment, implemented any idle reduction technology, and/or have a work from home policy.

### **Waste Reduction Partners**

1. WRP engineers helped Buncombe County Schools apply for a \$2.4 million grant through the US Department of Energy Renew Americal School program to upgrade HVAC systems at 4 elementary schools.
2. WRP staff helped Henderson County with the review of a \$4 million grant application to expand both recycling and composting capacity at the county's solid waste transfer station.
3. WRP engineers will be providing an energy assessment to Ridge Haven Camp in Brevard to identify practical energy and utility cost savings.
4. WRP staff assisted Blue Ridge Event Staffing in Asheville with a food waste reduction plan.
5. Staff assisted Reems Creek Nursery in Weaverville with recycling solutions for its agriculture plastics.

### **Planning Services**

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

### **Grants & Project Development**

1. Staff are working with several jurisdictions to support ARPA projects and administration. Please connect with Erica if you would like to learn more: [erica@landofsky.org](mailto:erica@landofsky.org) ARPA information can be found here: <https://www.nc.gov/agencies/pandemic-recovery-office/american-rescue-plan-act-information-and-resources>
2. Staff have been working with Sister Councils of Government on ARPA, Resilience and Multi-regional projects. Partnerships include sharing ARP policies, ordinances, and guidance; grant development; developing scopes of work and project delivery for ARPA State funds; budgeting and project development for housing, transportation and broadband tech assistance.
3. Staff continues working with several local governments and partners on applications for economic development, community development, transportation, and infrastructure implementation with BRIC/FEMA, EDA, and foundations. These projects will support transportation connections, resilience, job growth, industry expansion, and place-based development.
4. The NCGS 160D requires all Comprehensive Plans be updated to meet the new guidelines by July 1, 2022. (i.e. Municipalities and Counties must have a "reasonably-maintained" [updated



within last 5-10 years] Comprehensive Plan in effect in order to legally continue having local zoning/development regulations. At minimum, a reasonably updated Land Use Plan must be in place by July 1, 2022 as a rational nexus to zoning/development regulations. (see Town of Canton's phased-approach, Phase 1: Land Use Plan by July 1, 2022; Phase 2: Other Comprehensive Plan elements to be included after July 1, 2022)

Please contact [erica@landofsky.org](mailto:erica@landofsky.org) if you have questions or would like assistance updating your plans.

### **3. Aging**

#### **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)**

- With Kim Ward's move to the finance department, the Area Agency on Aging has decided that Chore Services would not be offered as a direct service. This leaves \$30,000 of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding that will be reallocated to another program. The ARPA team will be meeting to discuss how best to reallocate the funding.

#### **Family Caregiver Support Program**

- Staff and volunteers helped facilitate in-person caregiver and care receiver support groups in Hendersonville. There were 6 caregivers and 4 care receivers who participated in 2 meetings.
- Staff continues to offer \$500 Respite Vouchers to family caregivers in Transylvania County. So far, there are 11 caregivers who have received a total of \$8,500 in vouchers.
- Staff is working with AARP and MountainCare Adult Day on developing a presentation to give to employers on how they can assist their employees who are caregivers.
- Staff is co-sponsoring with AARP, "Powerful Tools for Caregivers" online. This is a 6-week training to assist caregivers. There are 13 caregivers registered.
- Staff gave a presentation on helping Kinship Caregivers with costs of summer camps for their grandchildren at Silvermont Mansion in Brevard. There were 9 participants in attendance.
- Staff represented Land of Sky Regional Council at a celebration in Brevard honoring WWII and Korean War Veteran, Joe Cooper.
- Staff attended CarePartners PACE (Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly) Ribbon Cutting celebrating the expansion of their facility in Asheville.

#### **Foster Grandparent Program**

Beginning in April, the Foster Grandparent Program volunteer stipend will be raised to \$4.00 an hour.

- Number of active volunteers: 32 volunteers are working one-on-one with children ages infant to 8 years old.
- Number of volunteers waiting on paperwork, placement, etc.: 1 new volunteer is doing her criminal history check prior to orientation and 4 volunteers are waiting for their school to reopen to volunteers so that they can return to service.
- Number of active stations (schools, day cares, etc.): 11
- Number of stations waiting to sign MOU, volunteer placement, etc.: 1 of childcare centers have not yet allowed volunteers to return to service.
- Recruitment efforts (press releases, presentations, etc.): Volunteer recruitment efforts are beginning now that the majority of Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) stations have reopened. Recruitment efforts include: 1) a recruitment bonus offered for FGP volunteers that refer someone and 2) staff plans to start running some articles and ads in local media.
- In-service/training update: On March 14, Foster Grandparent volunteers attended in-person in-service training at Land of Sky Regional Council. Volunteers participated in the Darkness to Light's Stewards

of Children training, a sexual abuse prevention training program that educates adults to prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to child sexual abuse. Upcoming in-services topics will be as follows:

- April 18 - WNC Fall Coalition will be presenting and doing fall screenings
- Beginning April 20 - ten Foster Grandparent volunteers will participate in the Circle of Security Parenting Training program, an 8 week training held for 1.5 hours each week for 8 weeks. This training program helps improve the developmental pathway of children through their parents and helps strengthen a caregivers' abilities to observe and improve their caregiving skills as well as discover new ways to help children connect, restore and grow.

#### Health Promotion and Disease Prevention

- Staff have seen an increase in volunteer interest in delivering community health programming in the region and have facilitated providing training for leaders across all programs offered by the Land of Sky Area Agency on Aging.
- Staff continues scheduling a variety of upcoming health and fall prevention programming workshops across the region to begin late March and early April, including: A Matter of Balance, Walk with Ease, Tai Chi for Arthritis and Falls, and Living Healthy, with many classes registered to capacity.
- Staff will present at the Age + Action Annual Conference held in Arlington, Virginia June 12-13. Topic for presentation is *Mission Matters: Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Evidence-Based Programs in North Carolina*
- Staff submitted HCCBG grant proposal to Buncombe County for the Asheville Terrace Community Health Worker Program.
- Mon Ami software testing for evidence-based programs has been completed and will be going live in upcoming programming. All leaders will be provided with training.
- Staff met with Jewish Family Services and community members to address recommendations and requests resulting from the Aging in Place Community Assessment Project.
- Senior Tar Heel Legislature will be presenting an educational program to senior centers to introduce themselves, explain what a Senior Tar Heel Legislator is, and discuss legislative priorities.
- Staff will be providing a Tai Chi for Arthritis and Falls Lunch and Learn in partnership with Blue Ridge Pride Generation Plus on March 23 at Land of Sky Regional Council.
- Staff and Asheville Terrace Community Health Workers continue to partner with MANNA, Trader Joes, and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) volunteers to bring nutrition to residents. In January, 117 bags of groceries were distributed to residents. Additionally, the Neighbor Knock program has seen an uptick in participants with 509 "Neighbor Knock" visits conducted in February.

#### Home and Community Care Block Grant: February 2023 Report of Services Provided

- Adult Day Care/Health Days = 1,896
- Meals – delivered/congregate = 132,927
- In-home Aide hours = 10,352
- Legal Services hours = 1,188
- Transportation trips = 31,787
- Home Improvement Projects = 40

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

- Staff completed in-person skilled nursing facilities providing training and materials as needed. Counties completed include: Burke, Caldwell, Haywood, and Jackson
- Staff provided training on program to 9 Skilled Nursing Social Workers
- Staff participated in the 2023 World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Walk planning meeting.
- Staff contacted all County Medicaid offices to offer training and support for Adult Medicaid and Community Alternatives Program staff.

- Staff hosts the monthly Professional Social Workers in Long-term Care organization (PSWLTC).

#### Money Follows the Person Transition Coordinator

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

- The western region has a caseload of nine.
- One person on the caseload has housing secured and will transition 4/1/2023.
- Eight people are waiting on housing, and some have been on the caseload for at least one year waiting on affordable, safe housing.

Central counties: Forsyth, Davidson, Surry, Davie, Stokes, Yadkin.

- The central region has a caseload of eleven.
- One person transitioned as of March 10; another is looking to transfer April 1, and two more will most likely transfer May 1.
- Five people are waiting on housing; one of whom has been waiting for over two years for appropriate housing.

#### Ombudsman Program

- Ombudsmen presented Aging Sensitivity Program to Area Agency on Aging staff.
- Ombudsmen are working with Community Advisory Committees to create a smooth transition to new training modules in the upcoming months.
- Ombudsman is working with North Carolina State Ombudsman Program in order for them to attend a future Henderson County Community Advisory Committee meeting.
- Ombudsmen have scheduled Kendra Dixon (from the North Carolina State Ombudsman Program) to attend the next Buncombe County Community Advisory Committee meeting.

#### Outreach and Assistance

- Staff completed Options Counseling certification.
- Staff continues to work on regular communication efforts through Facebook posts and WNC Aging Newsletter.
- Staff continues to help AAA programs with outreach efforts.
- Staff has been helping plan and prepare for health promotion and evidence-based programs throughout the region.
- Staff has assisted with phone calls and emails asking for help with things like food stamps, housing, Medicare extra help, and other aging resources.

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

- Since July 1 staff has distributed 99 percent of the State Project C.A.R.E. respite monies (\$42,854) to 54 caregivers in its 15-county region. Caregivers receive vouchers for respite care services in amounts ranging from \$500 to \$1500.
- More recently staff has distributed American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to caregivers to pay for respite care services also. 22 caregivers in Land of Sky's 4-county region have received vouchers valued at \$500 to \$1500.
- As an example of how the vouchers help caregivers, imagine a 78-year-old woman in Hendersonville caring for her 81-year-old husband who has dementia related to Parkinson's disease. She is on a walker and badly in need of a hip replacement. Her hip "hurts like a toothache." Her mobility is limited. She pays someone to help her husband with his shower. Finances are strained. The cost for him to go to a

facility to be cared for so that she can have hip replacement surgery is \$300/night. She will need to stay in the hospital for at least two nights and then go to a rehab center for two weeks. ARPA funds will cover five nights of his care. She will use money in their savings account to pay for the balance. This couple has two adult children, but one has been estranged for years and the other lives near but works in Greenville, SC and has a family experiencing significant health and financial challenges of its own.

Senior Companion Program: Beginning in April 2023, the Senior Companion Volunteer stipend will be raised to \$4.00 an hour. The AmeriCorps Seniors federal grant funding application has been completed and staff awaits award for fiscal years 2024-2026. Senior Companion stats for March 2023:

- Volunteers active: 53
- Volunteers new: 1
- Volunteers on hold: 3
- Volunteers in pre-service: 3
- Volunteers in recruitment: 2

#### **4. Administration**

- FY21-22 Annual Report has been posted on our website and we have printed copies to share with local governments and our partners
- Nathan attended the NADO Washington conference along with Erica, Mayor Patrick Fitzsimmons and Vice Mayor Kilgore. We visited with the offices of Congressman Chuck Edwards, Senator Ted Budd and Senator Thom Tillis
- Nathan attended NC Workforce Directors meeting in Kernersville at Piedmont Triad Regional Council
- Nathan and Erica hosted the quarterly local government managers meeting
- Several staff attended the Henderson County Chamber of Commerce Economic Outlook Breakfast
- Nathan met with the Town of Black Mountain regarding the town's funding priorities
- Nathan participated in multiple meetings regarding the closure of the Evergreen mill in Canton including a public forum hosted by Haywood Community College
- Nathan and Erica met with Transylvania Economic Alliance and NC Senator Kevin Corbin
- Nathan attended the Evergreen job fair at Pinnacle Church in Canton
- Nathan attended the NC Forestry Association meeting at Lake Logan
- Nathan is working with EQV Strategic to include funding for Foreign Trade Zone in the state budget along with funds to construct a facility at the Asheville Regional Airport for the port-of-entry to house US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) staff.
- We are in the process of discussing a potential environmental award named after George Masa in partnership with East Tennessee Development District
- We are working closely with Southwestern Commission to support 1,100 Evergreen workers, Town of Canton, Haywood County and our region in response to the notice of closure

#### **5. Workforce**

- Region's unemployment rate of 3.1% for January 2023 was released by NC Department of Commerce on Friday, March 17. Asheville metro continues to have the #1 lowest unemployment rate in NC, tied this month with the Raleigh metro. 2,834 more people are employed in our region compared to January 2022. All counties in our region have an unemployment rate lower than NC at 3.8%.
- Staff are responding to the notice of the closure of Evergreen Packaging in Haywood County. We are working closely in partnership with the Southwestern WDB and the NC Department of Commerce to support rapid response activities.

- WNC Career Expo in partnership with the Asheville Chamber of Commerce to be held March 23 at the WNC Ag Center in Fletcher. Prior to the job fair we will host high school students for career exploration with over 100 employers. The board has increased our funding support to expand outreach in light of the impending Evergreen closure.
- WNC Construction Career Day will be on March 28 and 29 in Haywood County at the Smoky Mountain Event Center. Over 20 school systems will be participating with 1,000+ students. Vannoy Construction is our presenting sponsor. We have raised about \$30,000 in private funding to support this event. The MAWDB meeting on March 28 will be held in Haywood County at Construction Career Day.
- Mountain Area WDB board member Steve Newman with ERC Broadband made a presentation at the Southeast Employment and Training Association (SETA) in Memphis TN to share our region's IT career pathways and our partnership with Guided Compass.
- Our region's IT career pathway will be endorsed by the NCWorks Commission at their May 10 meeting.
- We are working to implement grant awards for small business training, re-entry, and substance use recover.
- Dr. Wendy Frye, former Assistant Superintendent of Henderson County Schools has joined the MAWDB as a part-time staff.
- NC Department of Commerce recently notified MAWDB that our process for supporting on-the-job-training (OJT) contracts is not consistent with federal law and the board will be required to release a RFP to competitively procure an OJT provider.
- MAWDB is in the process of competitively procuring outreach services for the Construction/Skilled Trades and Tech/IT sectors. This outreach will promote career awareness of the career opportunities available in these sectors and this outreach will be integrated into Mountain Area Careers at [mountainareacareers.org](http://mountainareacareers.org).

## Strategic Initiatives

- **NEMT** - January 2023: Active Cases 1294, Clients Utilized Services 541, Total Number of Trips 8139, Currently billing for February 2023 so final numbers are not yet available.
- **Mountain Mobility** – Demand response throughout Buncombe County was up almost 200 trips from January while Trailblazer trips were down slightly. The most gains were with ADA paratransit trips through our contract with the City of Asheville.
- **Accelerate Buncombe** – We are highlighting two success stories in February. Stanley Eddings is the first participant to be enrolled in the Certified Productions Technician trainings offered thorough Accelerate Buncombe. He has had outstanding feedback from instructors all the way down to the training coordinator herself. Stanley has stated that he has plans to be tested and complete the course before the training deadline. Stanley has also been employed at Linamar since the 13th of February. Larry Bentley was released from prison in the early part of January and was eager to be involved with Accelerate Buncombe. He is also enrolled in the Certified Productions Technician training. Larry had anxiety about “going back to school” after 20 years, but he’s always modifying his study schedule to create the perfect routine that works best for him. He has scored a 92 on his first module and is almost ready to schedule his second in person test to be taken at AB-tech at the end of the March. Accelerate Buncombe Coordinator Halston Fisher is working with 13 other participants as well.
- **INSPIRE** – INSPIRE Recovery to Careers enrolled 26 participants in February and provided them with wraparound services as they continue on their recovery journey. Certified Peer Support Specialist Amanda Layton has done an amazing job at leveraging those relationships in the far western counties to further serve the people. Other INSPIRE statistics: 16 people were safely house ; INSPIRE paid a total of \$7,130.00 for housing assistance. 10 cell phones were provided. 0 people started working in the month of February.

- **Healthy Opportunities** – Land of Sky took 27 referrals in the month of February for Medicaid clients needing transportation. We have applied for \$17,000 from Impact Health for an outreach campaign to educate providers and potential participants about the program.
- **GO PLACES – (Growth Opportunities: Peer Leaders Activating Community Employment Success)** – GO PLACES is the newest program of the Department of Strategic Initiatives. Our focus is in serving 18-24 year olds who are justice-involved and live in high-crime and high-poverty areas of the City of Asheville. This \$4 million dollar grant is a two-state partnership with the East Tennessee Development District. We have moved Philip Cooper into the role of Project Director and hired Gene Ettison as the Project Coordinator. We welcome Gene to the Land of Sky team.