

Land of Sky Regional Council
March 22, 2023
Regular Meeting via Zoom



When joining the virtual meeting, Delegates are requested to mute themselves and to un-mute for discussion or moving on orders of business.

Delegates are requested to state their names when moving on orders of business. Thank you!

AGENDA

- I. **Call to Order (12:30pm)**
- II. **Invocation**
- III. **Pledge of Allegiance**
- IV. **Presentation by Drew Christy, Western Representative, NC Governor Roy Cooper**
- V. **Roll Call**
- VI. **Consent Agenda**
 - A. Modification/Approval of Agenda
 - B. Approval of the Previous Minutes (February 2023)
- VII. **Comments by the Chair and Delegates Roundtable**
- VIII. **Public Comment**
- IX. **Presentations**
 - A. Mayor Zeb Smathers, Town of Canton
 - B. NC Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Solutions, Assistant Secretary Chet Mottershead
 - C. Southwestern Workforce Development Board Director David Garrett
- X. **New Business**
 - A. Nominating Committee Report
 - B. Land of Sky Regional Council Legislative Priorities
- XI. **Executive Director's Report**
- XII. **Important Dates**
 - A. Next regularly scheduled Board meeting is planned for April 26, 2023 at Mountain Area Health Education Center (MAHEC), Mary Nesbitt Campus, 121 Hendersonville Road, Asheville, NC 28803.

XIII. **Adjournment**



BOARD OF DELEGATES AGENDA ITEM

- Subject:** Consent Agenda
- Item Number:** VI. Consent Agenda:
A. Modification/Approval of the Board's Agenda for March 22, 2023
B. Approval of Minutes from the February 22, 2023, Regular Meeting and Annual Awards Presentation.
- Responsible Party:** Zia Rifkin, Administrative Services
- Attachment(s):** Minutes from the February 2023 Regular Meeting
- Background:** Item B. February 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes Recap:
Quorum was present to conduct business at the February 2023 meeting and the minutes provide a recap of the Chair's comments and Delegates' updates focused on the topic of short-term rentals. The US Congressional and Senate contingent were recognized and their staff were introduced. Presentations included an orientation to LOSRC and Chris Wall provided a legislative update.
- Staff Recommendation:** Recommend approval of the Consent Agenda
- Suggested Motion(s):** Move to approve the Consent Agenda, as presented.

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

February 22, 2023

Minutes

- I. Call to Order – Chair Fitzsimmons called the meeting to order at approximately 12:30pm.
- II. Pledge of Allegiance – Chair Fitzsimmons led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- III. Roll Call – Nathan Ramsey called the roll. The following members were present: Jason Chappell, Larry Chapman, Sandra Kilgore, Jonathan Kanipe, Pam King, Archie Pertiller, Maureen Copelof, Preston Blakely, Barbara Volk, Jeff Young Daniel Cobb, Mason Blake, and Bob Tomasulo

Guests Present – Robin Ramsey, William Otter, T. Laughter, Tyler Teresa, Dorian Palmer, April Riddle, Aaron Baker

- IV. Consent Agenda – The consent agenda, consisting of the Board's February agenda, and the minutes of the January 25, 2023 meeting was presented for approval.

Sandra Kilgore moved to approve the consent agenda including the January 25, 2023 minutes and today's agenda as presented. Barbara Volk seconded, and the motion carried upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.

Quorum was established by the roll call for the vote.

- V. Chair's Comments and Delegates Roundtable -
Chair Fitzsimmons encouraged Delegates to share information of interest from their jurisdictions focused on the topic of short-term rentals. Chair Fitzsimmons shared that discussion occurred at the Executive Committee meeting regarding making the meetings more relevant to discussion of critical topics in the region.

Delegates Roundtable –

Assistant County Manager Amy Brantley – Shared that the Henderson Commission is addressing the short-term rental topic through the update to its comprehensive plan. The board is considering what the tax rate will look like and it will not stay the same in the new fiscal year.

Vice Mayor Sandra Kilgore – Shared that the City of Asheville is dealing with two hot topics- funding for McCormick Field and Council voted unanimously to look at zoning for short term rentals and for affordable housing.

Town Manager Jonathan Kanipe – Shared that the Town of Biltmore Forest amended its zoning ordinance to disallow short-term rentals in the Town in 2016 and have not had issues with the topic since.

Council Member Pam King – Shared that the Town of Black Mountain has not really addressed short term rentals in the past two years, but it may not be a big crisis in the Town since there are not a lot of hotels in the area but there are a lot of tourists. Also, the Town has hired a staffing consultant to undertake a pay and compensation study. The plan developed has been approved by the Town Council who wants the Town to be a great place to work.

Mayor Maureen Copelof – Shared that the City of Brevard Council developed a task force to look at short-term rentals and found that these types of rentals were impacting long-term rentals and the character of neighborhoods. A survey is going to be released regarding the topic. Additionally, investors from out of town are buying up housing units when those go on the market in order to turn those into short term rentals. She remarked that the City is a Blue Zone City and worked for three years to achieve the certification. Short term

planning session coming up to determine how to spend funding in the City's budget next year. Recognizing a 100-year-old veteran (Joe Cooper Day) at 10:30am on March 1 and everyone is invited to attend the event.
Town commissioner Barbara Jeter – Shared that the Village of Flat Rock is in a unique position since it is a very small community with limited short-term rentals.

Mayor Preston Blakely – Shared that the Town of Fletcher doesn't deal very much with short-term rental issues. Working through the budget proposal and working to see what the tax rate might look like. Finally, Tageos, a French company has announced that they are coming to Henderson County and creating 92 new jobs. Things are going well in Fletcher.

Mayor Barbara Volk – Shared that the City of Hendersonville has not noticed an issue with short term rentals at the moment. March 1 ribbon cutting for the new parking deck. Also parking on Main Street with incur a cost. Fire Station No. 1 is no more, and a new facility scheduled to be built on the site for the Fire Station. The new development will include a mix of new and old features and will be handicap accessible. The City distributed over a million dollars in funding to non-profits using ARPA funds. City council recaps are now available on the City's website.

Town Manager Daniel Cobb – Shared that the Town of Mills River is not experiencing an issue with short-term rentals. Much of the housing stock in the Town is owner occupied. Asheville Greenworks has planted poplar trees in the Town. Working on the budget and waiting on the reevaluations from the County to determine the tax rate.

Mason Blake – Shared that short term rentals are not an issue in the Town. The Comprehensive Plan is being updated and something regarding short term rentals may come out of that. Working on becoming a Bear-Wise community.

Mayor Patrick Fitzsimmons – Shared that the Town of Weaverville has a high degree of owner occupancy but there has been an explosion of short term rentals in the Town. More concerning is the level of these short-term rentals owned by non-residents. No enforcement related issues but it is affecting the quality of neighborhoods and there is no housing available for people who work in the Town. He shared good news that the Town is buying two new police cars that are EVs.

Town Commissioner Elisabeth Ervin – Shared that the Town of Woodfin is continuing to work on the Comprehensive Plan and working on outstanding zoning and development issues. Over 250 short term rentals have been identified and last November the Town Council approved an ordinance limiting one property per owner among other restrictions.

Bob Tomasulo – Shared that March 9 is the next Regional Aging Advisory Council meeting. Notice to be issued soon for the meeting.

VI. Public Comment -

Chair Fitzsimmons called for public comments. Dorian Palmer shared appreciation for the LOS sponsorship of the Bowl for Kids Sake.

VII. Recognition -

A. Western North Carolina Congressional Representatives: US Senators Ted Budd and Tom Tillis and NC-11 Congressman Chuck Edwards –

Nathan Ramsey shared that today, LOSRC is recognizing the WNC Congressional Representatives currently serving in the US Congress. He introduced Tyler Teresa representing Senator Ted Budd, Robin Ramsey representing Senator Tom Tillis, and T. Laughter representing Congressman Chuck Edwards.

Robin Ramsey shared that the senator's office can write a letter of support for any grant application that touches federal funding. Please reach out for more details or other needs.

Tyler Teresa shared that he is the western region staff for Senator Budd and the office is here to assist in any way possible when LOS is interfacing with the federal government.

T. Laughter shared that Congressman Edward's office is open and ready to listen to the community. Please reach out for any assistance when interfacing with the federal government. The Congressman wants to be first in constituency services.

VIII. Presentations –

A. Land of Sky Regional Council Board Orientation --

Nathan Ramsey shared information with the Board regarding the responsibilities and duties of members during an orientation session. He noted that this orientation should provide a good overview of what LOS does. He noted that LOS is in its 57th year and began in 1966. Currently, there are sixteen COGs in the State and the LOS region comprises Region B. He noted that all 16 of the local governments in the four-county region are members of LOS. LOS exists to provide services that are more regional in nature. The mission of LOS is to provide those regional solutions to relevant and emerging issues Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania counties while providing a standard of excellence in the delivery of federal, state, and regional services for our member government. He noted that members of the Executive Committee represent all of the local region's components (county, municipal, etc.). The Executive Committee oversees the day-to-day operational details of LOS. Nathan Ramsey reviewed the funding that comprises the LOS budget and includes federal funds, state funds, local government contracts, private grants, donations and in-kind support. Local government dues comprise 2% of the current budget. Over 80% of local dues are used as match funds for AAA and EDA funding. LOS employs a CPA auditing firm and has a clean unmodified opinion for its latest audit year. The organization is the Lead Development Organization for ARC and EDA and works to leverage funding for the benefit of the region. Programs at LOS include Area Agency on Aging, Mountain Area Workforce Development, Economic and Community Development, and the Transportation Resource Center. He noted that Waste Reduction Partners (WRP) serves all 100 counties in the state in partnership with NCDEQ. Currently, the budget is nearly \$30 million and includes over 100 separate grants and allocations.

LeeAnne Tucker shared about the work being done through the Area Agency on Aging (AAA), which was created through the Older Americans Act. The AAA offers a variety of programs in-house and in partnership with a variety of providers in the region. The budget is currently over \$8 million that are mostly pass-through dollars going directly to the communities. AAA funding matches include Home and CCBG funding, ARPA and Cares Act funding, and Nutrition Funding.

Erica Anderson shared about the work being done through Economic and Community Development including infrastructure, planning (housing, transportation, etc.), assisting local governments and leveraging funds. In FY22 just under \$5 million in funding was leveraged for the benefit of the region. Areas covered include stormwater, the Clean Vehicles Coalition, broadband development, etc. She shared about the MPO and RPO regions that include Haywood County in addition to the four counties in the LOS region. The Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) initiative is in its final stage of approval from the FTZ Commission and will cover all of Henderson County and portions of Buncombe, Madison, and Transylvania counties. The ECD team brought over \$80 million into the region over the past year. ECD brings in many additional resources to support jurisdictions and communities.

Nathan Ramsey shared about Mountain Area Workforce Development, which has the same footprint as LOS. Funding includes WIOA (allocations), ARC, and ARPA. Currently, the region has the lowest unemployment rate in the state and Buncombe County has the lowest unemployment rate of any county in the State. Most of the workforce board is comprised of private sector employers and the NCWorks career centers are the public facing sites that provide job seeker and training seeker services. The workforce board also operates youth programs in each county in the region.

Vicki Jennings shared about the Transportation Resource Center (NEMT and Mountain Mobility). ARC funding supports the INspire program that provides services in 11 western counties and provides recovery support for people coming out of treatment and others in recovery. The Healthy Opportunities Pilot provides transportation

assistance in 18 counties for Medicaid recipients as part of the Healthy Opportunities Pilot program. Additional work is planned around housing security for the Health Opportunities pilot. The project is slated to end in June 2024.

Nathan Ramsey shared about the P20 Council that is an initiative funded through John M. Belk Endowment (JMBE) and some other private and public sources. The P20 provides action teams that work to increase educational attainment in the western region.

B. Land of Sky Regional Strategic Plan –

Nathan Ramsey shared that over 150 responses have been received to the strategic planning survey. More information will be shared at a future meeting.

C. Land of Sky Legislative Priorities –

Nathan Ramsey shared that EQV Strategic has been engaged to provide advocacy for the COGs in the western-most region. He shared that a legislative priorities survey was released that received 31 responses from local jurisdictions. Affordable and workforce housing was noted as the number one challenge currently in the region. Water/sewer infrastructure and additional revenue options for local governments were also noted as top priorities. Nathan Ramsey reviewed the many regional needs cited by survey respondents. He noted that over 30 responses were received to the question regarding the one thing you would want the governor and state legislators to accomplish this year. Additionally, many responses were received to the question regarding what assistance from the state do local governments is most needed at this time. Many positive responses were received regarding how LOS more effectively support local jurisdictions. He noted that he would share the survey link again and he encouraged local jurisdictions to respond if they haven't already done so.

Chris Wall shared that things are moving quickly in the legislative session. He noted that the General Assembly (GA) is currently in its 2023 long session and is considering Medicaid Expansion, which has hit a snag, but it may pass the GA by the early fall. He shared that House and Senator committee chairs are working on the budget and he encouraged local jurisdictions seeking appropriations to reach out to their members of the House. A lot of bills are being filed and the Senate is moving a lot of bills that the Governor vetoed last year. Chris Wall noted that the State is potentially sitting on \$11 billion over what is required to fund the budget. However, many budget decisions have not been made yet.

Discussion occurred regarding the Senate bill that would repeal the current process for permitting a pistol. The bill proposes removing the County Sheriff from the process and would rely on the federal data base to determine who could purchase a gun.

Chris Wall added that the Governor plans to present his budget within the next two to three weeks.

IX. Executive Director's Report

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

Nathan Ramsey shared that the update to the Racial Disparity Study is posted on the LOS website.

X. Important Dates –

A. The next LOSRC Board of Delegates meeting is planned for March 22, 2023.

XI. Adjournment –

The meeting adjourned as there was no further business.

Respectfully submitted by Zia Rifkin



BOARD OF DELEGATES AGENDA ITEM

- Subject:** New Business - Nominating Committee Report
- Item Number:** X. Nominating Committee Report
- Responsible Party:** Nathan Ramsey, Executive Director
- Attachment(s):** LOSRC Nominating Committee Report
- Background:** 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.
- Staff Recommendation:** N/A
- Suggested Motion(s):** Move to appoint Land of Sky Regional Council Executive Committee members and Officers.



**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



BOARD OF DELEGATES AGENDA ITEM

Subject: Legislative Priorities

Item Number: X. LOSRC Legislative Priorities

Responsible Party: Land of Sky Regional Council Board of Delegates

Attachment(s): NCARCOG Legislative Priorities

Background: LOSRC Strategic Plan recommended the Council take a more active role in relationship building and advocacy efforts at the state and federal levels (Goal 2.3).

Draft LOSRC Legislative Priorities

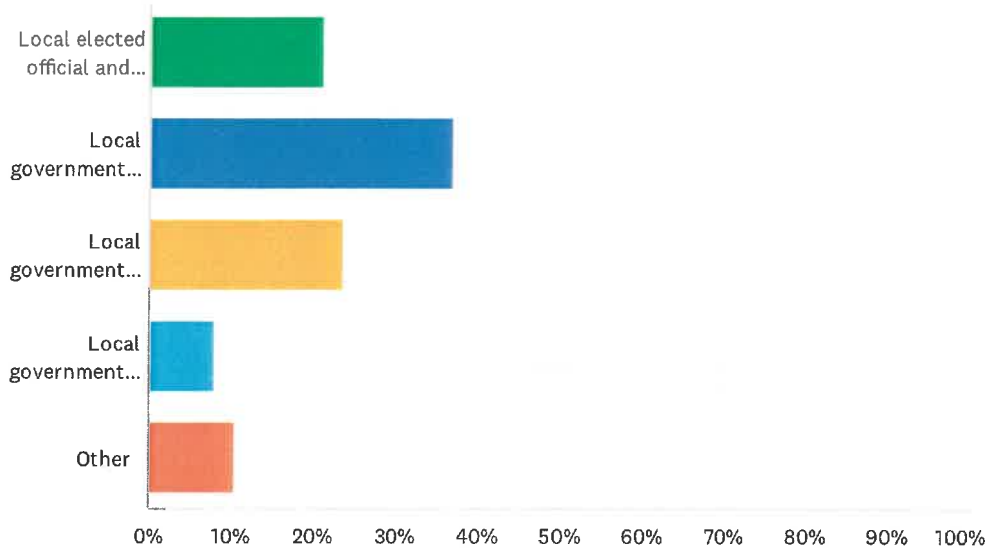
1. **Affordable and Workforce Housing:** The average price of a home in our region is approaching and in some cases has exceeded \$500,000. Rental vacancy rates are below 5% which is not considered a healthy rental market. Local employers have consistently cited housing as a top barrier in their efforts to recruit and retain employees. Local governments and other employers are dealing with historic workforce shortages and housing accessibility is one of the greatest barriers for their talent recruitment and retention efforts. The Council supports additional funding for affordable and workforce housing including expansion of tax credit projects and the NC Housing Trust Fund. The Council requests that local government authority be preserved to regulate short-term rentals which reduce the housing supply.
2. **Water/sewer and broadband infrastructure:** Water and sewer infrastructure is key to job creation and expanding the supply of affordable and workforce housing. The Council is grateful for the funding of broadband and water/sewer infrastructure during the previous legislative session, and we request ongoing support for these critical infrastructure needs.
3. **Additional Revenue Options for Local Governments:** Local Governments currently have limited revenue options beyond property taxes. The Council also requests that the existing sales tax authority be more flexible to meet the needs of local government but that the additional sales tax flexibility be subject to voter approval from voters within the respective local government jurisdiction. .

Staff Recommendation: Enact Regional Legislative Priorities pursuant to the LOSRC Strategic Plan.

Suggested Motion(s): Motion to approve the draft LOSRC Legislative Priorities.

Q1 What is your role at Land of Sky Regional Council?

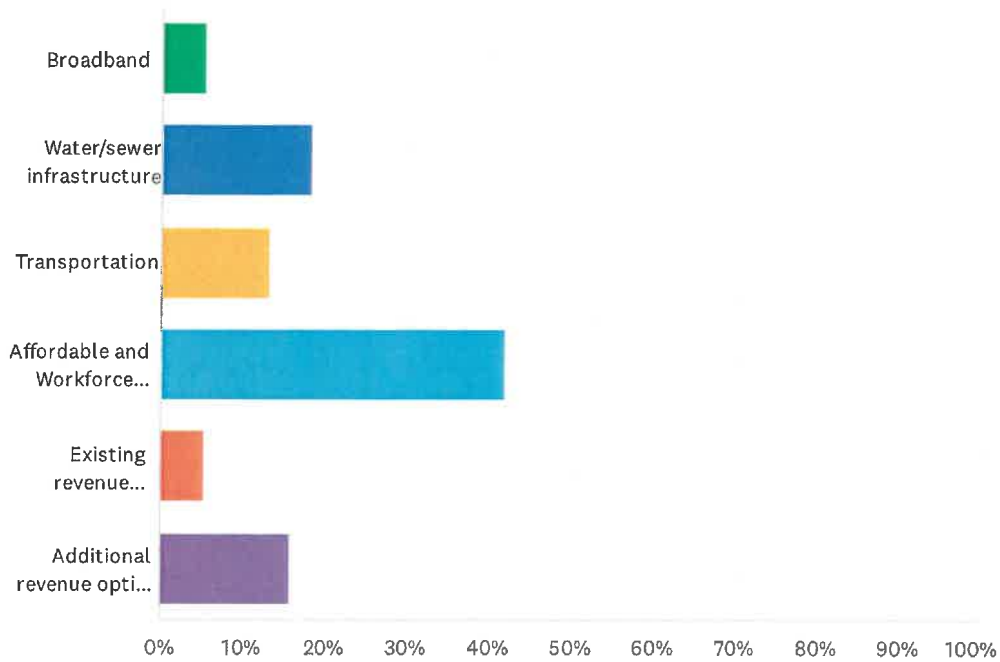
Answered: 38 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Local elected official and Land of Sky Regional Council board member	21.05%	8
Local government elected official	36.84%	14
Local government manager	23.68%	9
Local government staff beyond manager	7.89%	3
Other	10.53%	4
TOTAL		38

Q2 What should be the top legislative priority for Land of Sky Regional Council?

Answered: 38 Skipped: 0

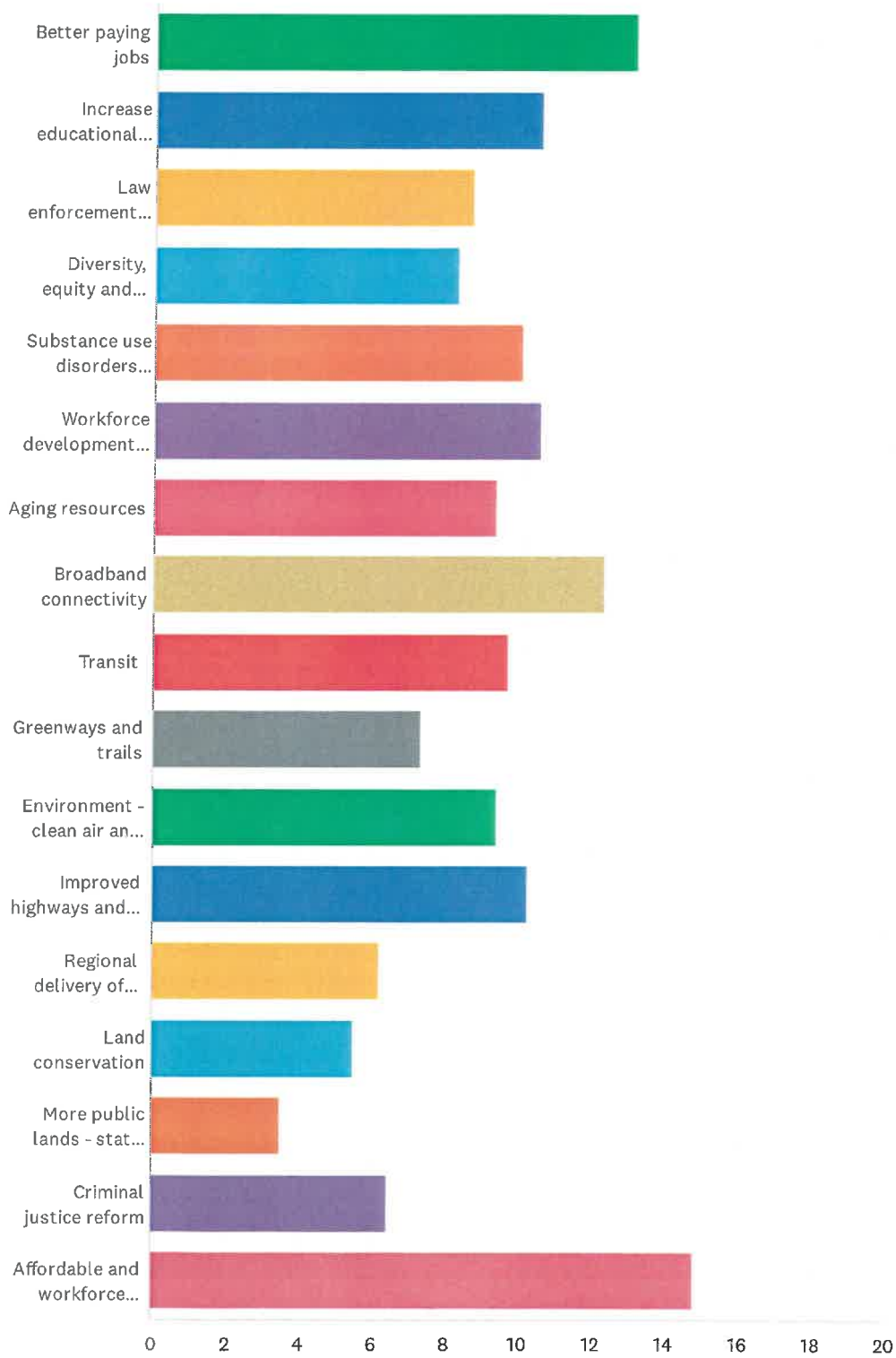


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Broadband	5.26%	2
Water/sewer infrastructure	18.42%	7
Transportation	13.16%	5
Affordable and Workforce Housing	42.11%	16
Existing revenue flexibility for local governments	5.26%	2
Additional revenue options for local governments	15.79%	6
TOTAL		38

Land of Sky Legislative Priorities

Q3 What is the top regional need for the Land of Sky region?

Answered: 38 Skipped: 0



Land of Sky Legislative Priorities

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Better paying jobs	25.71% 9	14.29% 5	11.43% 4	14.29% 5	2.86% 1	5.71% 2	5.71% 2	2.86% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	2.86% 1
Increase educational attainment	0.00% 0	9.38% 3	9.38% 3	3.13% 1	18.75% 6	12.50% 4	3.13% 1	9.38% 3	6.25% 2	3.13% 1	3.13% 1
Law enforcement resources	0.00% 0	3.03% 1	9.09% 3	9.09% 3	12.12% 4	9.09% 3	3.03% 1	6.06% 2	6.06% 2	6.06% 2	0.00% 0
Diversity, equity and inclusion	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	6.06% 2	6.06% 2	9.09% 3	12.12% 4	9.09% 3	3.03% 1	3.03% 1	15.15% 5	0.00% 0
Substance use disorders support	6.06% 2	3.03% 1	3.03% 1	6.06% 2	6.06% 2	6.06% 2	18.18% 6	15.15% 5	6.06% 2	6.06% 2	3.03% 1
Workforce development resources	0.00% 0	14.71% 5	5.88% 2	5.88% 2	8.82% 3	11.76% 4	8.82% 3	2.94% 1	5.88% 2	8.82% 3	8.82% 3
Aging resources	0.00% 0	6.06% 2	6.06% 2	9.09% 3	3.03% 1	6.06% 2	6.06% 2	15.15% 5	3.03% 1	9.09% 3	12.12% 4
Broadband connectivity	14.29% 5	14.29% 5	8.57% 3	11.43% 4	8.57% 3	2.86% 1	8.57% 3	5.71% 2	2.86% 1	2.86% 1	11.43% 4
Transit	0.00% 0	6.06% 2	0.00% 0	12.12% 4	15.15% 5	9.09% 3	6.06% 2	3.03% 1	21.21% 7	0.00% 0	3.03% 1
Greenways and trails	0.00% 0	3.13% 1	0.00% 0	9.38% 3	0.00% 0	3.13% 1	3.13% 1	3.13% 1	6.25% 2	21.88% 7	3.13% 1
Environment - clean air and clean water	3.13% 1	9.38% 3	3.13% 1	3.13% 1	3.13% 1	12.50% 4	6.25% 2	6.25% 2	6.25% 2	6.25% 2	9.38% 3
Improved highways and streets	5.71% 2	8.57% 3	14.29% 5	2.86% 1	11.43% 4	2.86% 1	8.57% 3	0.00% 0	2.86% 1	0.00% 0	17.14% 6
Regional delivery of services	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	9.09% 3	3.03% 1	0.00% 0	6.06% 2	3.03% 1	6.06% 2	3.03% 1	0.00% 0	6.06% 2
Land conservation	0.00% 0	3.13% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	3.13% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	3.13% 1	9.38% 3	6.25% 2	3.13% 1
More public lands - state and local parks	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	3.13% 1	3.13% 1	3.13% 1	6.25% 2
Criminal justice reform	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	3.13% 1	6.25% 2	3.13% 1	3.13% 1	0.00% 0	12.50% 4	9.38% 3	6.25% 2	6.25% 2
Affordable and workforce housing	52.78% 19	11.11% 4	13.89% 5	2.78% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	8.33% 3	0.00% 0	2.78% 1	2.78% 1	0.00% 0

Land of Sky Legislative Priorities

Q4 If our state legislators and Governor could accomplish one thing, what would you want that to be?

Answered: 33 Skipped: 5

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Supplemental pay for all State employees (i.e., teachers, bus drivers)	2/23/2023 12:24 PM
2	Broadband connectivity	2/22/2023 5:18 PM
3	Adequately fund our public education.	2/17/2023 7:50 PM
4	Less interference in local issues	2/16/2023 10:53 AM
5	Provide more tools and resources to support workforce housing.	2/15/2023 2:48 PM
6	create a fair, reasonable, non-partisan and just budget for coming two years.	2/15/2023 11:25 AM
7	Increase funding and revenue streams for local government.	2/15/2023 11:16 AM
8	Practice good government and stop the pointless wedge issues.	2/15/2023 9:31 AM
9	More equal resources and representation for those who live in the western part of the state.	2/14/2023 9:35 PM
10	Reinstate ETJ for the Town of Weaverville	2/14/2023 6:36 PM
11	Land conservation, water and air quality.	2/14/2023 5:17 PM
12	Make all the resources they've made available for economic development also available for housing	2/14/2023 4:43 PM
13	Better local control of our own destiny	2/14/2023 4:31 PM
14	Resources for small communities without restrictions	2/14/2023 3:47 PM
15	Better roads and transportation	2/14/2023 3:40 PM
16	To allow more local control of tourism spending vs infrastructure and educational spending.	2/14/2023 3:11 PM
17	Fix the tier criteria	2/14/2023 3:07 PM
18	Create more affordable housing, especially for essential workers and low-income families.	2/14/2023 3:07 PM
19	Abolish the State Board of Education	2/14/2023 3:06 PM
20	Provide mental health services for those with long term substance abuse. many of the mental health services have been defunded and the unaddressed need results in homelessness, crime, and other systemic problems.	2/14/2023 2:56 PM
21	help with funding from their surplus	2/14/2023 2:46 PM
22	Not to limit the local governments and region's ability to function as it deems appropriate and necessary.	2/12/2023 4:29 PM
23	Create a State electoral college.	2/8/2023 10:11 PM
24	Medicaid expansion	2/8/2023 9:10 PM
25	Expand Medicare	2/8/2023 2:54 PM
26	reduce government size and scope.	2/7/2023 8:23 PM
27	Affordable healthcare for entrepreneurs and small businesses.	2/7/2023 5:15 PM
28	Medicaid Expansion	2/7/2023 2:37 PM
29	Medicaid expansion.	2/7/2023 1:18 PM

Land of Sky Legislative Priorities

30	sustainable funding for all education	2/7/2023 12:50 PM
31	Pay to replace the hundreds of thousands of aging septic systems along the French Broad River	2/7/2023 12:14 PM
32	Create authorization for municipalities to support affordable and workforce housing projects with public funds.	2/7/2023 11:52 AM
33	Water sewer funding	2/7/2023 11:51 AM

Land of Sky Legislative Priorities

Q5 What assistance from the state do local governments most need at this time?

Answered: 32 Skipped: 6

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	More flexibility in obtaining and using revenues generated. Also, more flexibility in passing of ordinances.	2/26/2023 7:40 PM
2	funding for services	2/24/2023 10:44 AM
3	Supplemental pay for all State employees (i.e., teachers, bus drivers)	2/23/2023 12:24 PM
4	Capacity	2/22/2023 5:18 PM
5	Education funding.	2/17/2023 7:50 PM
6	Affordable housing funding assistance	2/16/2023 10:53 AM
7	Revenue flexibility.	2/15/2023 2:48 PM
8	STR clarity; housing options; fair redistricting; Medicaid expansion;	2/15/2023 11:25 AM
9	Increase funding and revenue streams for local government.	2/15/2023 11:16 AM
10	Funding for infrastructure and expedited regulatory approval process so those projects can move forward more quickly.	2/15/2023 9:31 AM
11	A western NC communications center so people from Western North Carolina can conduct and participate in North Carolina state business without having to take a 4 hour drive to Raleigh.	2/14/2023 9:35 PM
12	Infrastructure grants	2/14/2023 6:36 PM
13	Resources for affordable housing & home repair	2/14/2023 5:17 PM
14	infrastructure funding	2/14/2023 4:31 PM
15	Flexible monies	2/14/2023 3:47 PM
16	I don't know.	2/14/2023 3:40 PM
17	Mental health services	2/14/2023 3:11 PM
18	No unfunded mandates	2/14/2023 3:07 PM
19	Improve road conditions	2/14/2023 3:06 PM
20	storm water and other infrastructure funding source.	2/14/2023 2:56 PM
21	the ability to pay for much needed infrastructure improvements/extensions; school building rehabilitation; new courthouse	2/14/2023 2:46 PM
22	Broadband and infrastructure resources.	2/12/2023 4:29 PM
23	Ban unfunded mandates.	2/8/2023 10:11 PM
24	Revenue	2/8/2023 9:10 PM
25	More ARPA funds or support for aging infrastructure	2/8/2023 2:54 PM
26	Supportive and compassionate leadership with a public service attitude.	2/7/2023 5:15 PM
27	Funding for essential infrastructure	2/7/2023 2:37 PM
28	Additional money for water and sewer infrastructure improvements. More tools to address affordable and workforce housing. Less restrictions on municipalities and their ability to address new challenges - STRs, housing, etc.	2/7/2023 1:18 PM

Land of Sky Legislative Priorities

29	State taking on enviromental responsibilities to help develop property	2/7/2023 12:50 PM
30	Autonomy! Let's us run our towns for resident benefit, not state elected officials' future campaigns.	2/7/2023 12:14 PM
31	Support to maintain autonomy. There have been several bills introduced in recent sessions which would remove some local authority, for instance, land use controls. More authority for local control should be created, not less.	2/7/2023 11:52 AM
32	Increased Powell Bill funds	2/7/2023 11:51 AM

Land of Sky Legislative Priorities

Q6 How can Land of Sky Regional Council more effectively support your local government?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 11

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	doing a great job	2/24/2023 10:44 AM
2	Technical assistance and policy work	2/22/2023 5:18 PM
3	Secure funding for both grey and green infrastructure.	2/17/2023 7:50 PM
4	Keep local officials updated on issues affecting them	2/16/2023 10:53 AM
5	Continue to look for opportunities to provide regional support for locally required services, i.e. stormwater quality mandates (MS4 permit compliance).	2/15/2023 2:48 PM
6	You do a great job of this now. Continue doing what you're doing.	2/15/2023 11:16 AM
7	Direct assistance with obtaining funding and facilitating the regulatory approval process.	2/15/2023 9:31 AM
8	Continue to provide assistance to municipalities that don't have the resources or knowledge to deal with difficult issues which might be encountered.	2/14/2023 9:35 PM
9	Assist with Grant applications.	2/14/2023 6:36 PM
10	You guys are great!	2/14/2023 5:17 PM
11	Help develop regional strategy	2/14/2023 4:31 PM
12	Provide resources for small towns	2/14/2023 3:47 PM
13	Keep open channels of communications and collaboration among agencies and governments.	2/14/2023 3:40 PM
14	I don't know— I think you are very effective already.	2/14/2023 3:11 PM
15	Continue what you are doing	2/14/2023 3:06 PM
16	be a partner and lobbying organization for our area that seems to be forgotten by our Raleigh counterparts.	2/14/2023 2:46 PM
17	Continue operating as LOS Regional Council does now! Great work!	2/12/2023 4:29 PM
18	Identifying and promoting grant opportunities.	2/8/2023 10:11 PM
19	Regional cooperation	2/8/2023 9:10 PM
20	Continue to build cooperation and support for local & regional priorities	2/8/2023 2:54 PM
21	communication avenues with elected state officials and agencies.	2/7/2023 8:23 PM
22	Continue to assist with grant writing and administration.	2/7/2023 5:15 PM
23	Effective advocacy at state and federal levels	2/7/2023 2:37 PM
24	Advocate for revenue flexibility, and additional funding for infrastructure (broadband, sewer/wate)	2/7/2023 12:50 PM
25	Keep asking questions and speaking up!	2/7/2023 12:14 PM
26	LOSRC does a great job of supporting our local government.	2/7/2023 11:52 AM
27	Regionalization of services	2/7/2023 11:51 AM



BOARD OF DELEGATES AGENDA ITEM

- Subject:** Executive Director's Report
- Item Number:** XI. Executive Director's Report
- Responsible Party:** Nathan Ramsey, Executive Director
- Attachment(s):** Executive Director's Report for March 22, 2023
- Background:** The Executive Director's Report provides updates and relevant information regarding projects and initiatives for LOSRC Departments/Agencies.
- Staff Recommendation:** N/A.
- Suggested Motion(s):** N/A

1. Finance

- 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 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 6th 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 3rd
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

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 22nd in Hendersonville, and April 30th 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) and Ian Baillie (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 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)

- 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.

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.