

# RURAL PLANNING RURAL ORGANIZATION

## RPO Technical Coordinating Committee

May 11, 2017 – 10:00 A.M., Land of Sky Regional Council

### Minutes

#### **Attendance:**

Mark Burrows	Vicki Eastland	Zia Rifkin	Forest Gilliam
Sara Nichols	Daniel Sellers	Kris Boyd	Denise Braine
Daniel Cobb	Jay Swain	Brian Burch	Kristina Solberg
Karen Kiehna	Steve Williams	Joel Setzer	Erica Anderson
Jim Trogdon	Cole Hood	Rick Tipton	Steve Cannon
Terry Arellano	Kevin Teater	Lyuba Zuyeva	Jonathon Woodard
David Guchiano	Bucky Galloway	Justin Delancy	Tristan Winkler
Christy Stanat			

#### **WELCOME AND HOUSEKEEPING**

Chairman Burrows called the meeting to order at approximately 10:00am; he welcomed everyone in attendance and introductions followed. He recognized Transportation Secretary, Jim Trogdon, present at today's meeting to provide a presentation on NCDOT matters. He communicated that the Agenda needed approval with no modification requested.

***Kris Boyd moved to approve the Agenda as presented. Denise Braine seconded and the motion carried without further discussion.***

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No one made any public comments.

#### **A Presentation by Secretary of Transportation Jim Trogdon**

Jay Swain introduced Transportation Secretary Jim Trogdon, appointed by Governor Cooper in January 2017, and he provided background on Secretary Trogdon's accomplishments.

Secretary Trogdon shared that it is very important to him to see where communities are regarding transportation projects in their jurisdictions. Priorities identified by NCDOT include improving project delivery. Secretary Trogdon shared that his department is working to improve time for project development from the current 10 years to three years and the divisions will be more engaged in the project delivery process. Due to the challenge of slow delivery, NCDOT has been accumulating a cash balance since 2012 that is currently at \$3.3 billion. He communicated that projects in the deliverable part of the STIP will be accelerated, as possible, in order to get the cash balance down to \$1 billion by next summer. That is an important goal since when the General Assembly was considering the Connect NC (infrastructure) bonds, they did not approve transportation bonds in \$1.4 billion due to the cash balance that NCDOT was carrying. Secretary Trogdon shared that NCDOT does not want to create a peak and then another trough. With the state's tremendous growth, NCDOT will need to continue delivering at that

higher rate and in order to do that, the GA will be requested to revisit the bond proposal (range of \$2 to \$3 billion) in order to maintain that higher level of delivery through the next five years. Also during the next five years, NCDOT will work with the transportation regions and the GA to determine how to develop transportation in the state as technologies are changing and it is anticipated that revenues from fuel taxes will be declining. This will lead to a need to supplement and then replace the fuel consumption tax. Secretary Trogon shared that by 2025, fueled vehicles will be required to get 55 miles to the gallon, but most vehicles by that time will be electric. He communicated that NCDOT will be working with local government to find the funding for transportation projects. Another important project at NCDOT focuses on how to improve safety on the roads, as the state ranks fifth in the nation for motor vehicle fatalities. Most fatalities are due to driver behavior (distracted, etc.). He shared that NCDOT is looking for partners and plans to reach out to find partners for its programs. Secretary Trogon continued that right now, regarding STI- all divisions use the same criteria for Division Tier projects, which is illogical since all transportation regions are different. To compliment that, and by also combining some funds in the Highway Fund and adding some funds to it to merge economic development in order to provide a much faster turnaround on those smaller projects that are important to jurisdictions. He shared that the original intent of STI was not to have jurisdictions wait four or five years for an opportunity for transportation projects to be built. He also shared that he anticipates that the GA will easily pass the bill that will allow projects less than \$2 million in cost to advance through the process more quickly. Secretary Trogon shared that the third priority, beyond improving mobility, is to use emerging technologies- especially concerning freight, etc. to provide technological solutions including modeling capabilities for freight and freight movement through the state. Tremendous demand in the urban corridors and in the rural areas to move freight through. Then, NCDOT plans to consider the application of future technologies- the obvious one is un-manned aircraft (20,000 currently registered in the state). Un-manned aircraft have many uses including mapping; assessing traffic conditions, etc. and the technology can be expanded to other industries as well including law enforcement. Trained pilots are available, but not the ideas where this technology can be applied. In addition, the state is expecting tremendous growth for self-driving vehicles, which will change historically used transportation models. Self-driving vehicles could make transportation a lot cheaper for mobility of passengers and goods. NCDOT's goal is to position the state to take advantage of that and plan for the environment that will create. Secretary Trogon closed his remarks by reiterating the importance of feedback on how to increase transportation solutions in the regions.

Questions/Answers (on projects/timelines/etc.)

Chairman Burrows commented that NCDOT's process is extremely effective right now. He inquired about assistance for public transportation to move elderly folks about (to nutrition sites and other necessary destinations). Secretary Trogon shared the importance of access to para-transit services and how those have been under-utilized. While the president's proposed budget is not transportation friendly, the recently passed continuing resolution showed that congress does believe transportation projects are important. Right now, NCDOT is glad to collaborate and find solutions. He noted that currently there is an assessment being conducted by David Howard to determine solutions.

Forrest Gilliam thanked Secretary Trogon and shared that small rural counties have real transportation needs and the county is happy to see those needs being addressed.

Discussion occurred regarding the disadvantage that small counties face due to construction costs. Secretary Trogdon clarified that if the GA passes a bond initiative for transportation, the bonds would go to STI at the division and regional tiers. When the process was developed, the statewide tier was for those projects that were of importance to the state as a whole.

Discussion occurred regarding NCDOT establishing an integrated corridor-planning unit. Vicki Eastland shared that the objective was to do additional in-depth corridor studies. Secretary Trogdon commented that those could sometimes span more than one region's CTP.

Chairman Burrows thanked the Secretary for being at today's meeting.

**Informational only.**

### **ADOPTION OF THE PREVIOUS TCC MINUTES**

***Karen Kiehna moved to approve the February 9<sup>th</sup> TCC minutes as presented. Sara Nichols seconded and as all were in favor, the motion carried.***

### **RPO BUSINESS**

Approval of LOSRPO FY 2017 PWP Amendment: Vicki Eastland shared that the amendment is being requested as the CTP updates have been delayed necessitating moving funding to Prioritization (for SPOT planning). She noted that the TPB has approved the RPO moving forward with the amendment to the FY17 PWP.

Discussion occurred regarding the delay of the CTP and it was shared that the delay was due to restructuring at NCDOT and also the CTP process update is going on. Terry Arellano shared that the TPB is moving toward getting the CTP's going. Sometime around late summer or fall is the expected rollout of the new process. Vicki Eastland commented that some preliminary work will begin in FY17.

***Kris Boyd moved to recommend that the LOSRPO TAC approve the amendment to the FY2017 PWP as presented. Denise Braine seconded and the motion carried without further discussion.***

Prioritization Update: Vicki Eastland shared that as Secretary Trogdon mentioned- RPOs and division staff are being tasked with looking at how RPO projects are scored. Vicki Eastland shared that she will be reaching out to TCC members for direction on what to discuss and how the RPO can benefit from the proposed changes.

***No action required at this time.***

### **REGULAR UPDATES**

NCDOT Division 13 and Division 14 updates

Transportation Planning Branch Updates.

Legislative Updates

Staff Updates and Housekeeping

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Karen Kiehna moved to adjourn the meeting which was seconded and the meeting stood adjourned.