

**FIRST TENNESSEE RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION
TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING
December 10, 2020
MINUTES**

Pursuant to Gov. Bill Lee's Executive Order No. 65, the First Tennessee Rural Planning Organization Technical Committee & Executive Board met jointly via the virtual Zoom platform on 10:00 a.m. on December 10, 2020.

Call to Order - Welcome

Chase Milner, RPO Coordinator welcomed those in attendance to the First Tennessee Rural Planning Organization (RPO) Technical Committee meeting and called the meeting to order at 10:01am. Troy Ebbert, Office of Community Transportation Staff (TDOT), assisted in the roll and a quorum was present for both the Technical Committee and Executive Board.

Roll Call – Technical Committee Attendees (11 Voting Members)

Johnny Deakins	Washington County Highway Superintendent (Chair)
Brad Peters	Greeneville Public Works Director (Vice Chair)
Ambre Torbett	Sullivan County Joint Economic Development Board Representative
Kevin Swatsell	Greene County Highway Superintendent
Calvin Clifton	Hawkins County Municipalities Representative
Travis Bishop	Town of Erwin Municipalities Representative
Candace Long	Director of Transportation, First TN Human Resource Agency
Chip Kessler	Carter County Representative (Town of Watauga)
Chris Craig	First Tennessee Development District Representative
Bill Forrester	First Tennessee Development District Representative
Michelle Christian	TDOT Long Range Planning Representative (OCT)
Chase Milner	RPO Coordinator

Other Attendees (not including Executive Board)

Kwabena Aboagye, Bill Albright, Kayla Baxter, Bryan Bartnik, Don Brown, Steve Borden, Randy Busler, Mary Butler, Jason Carder, Michael Dick, Randy Dodson, Troy Ebbert, Jason Farmer, Brian Hurst, Dexter Justis, Jon McCurry, Eric Wilson, Randy Busler, David Metzger, Ashley Owens, Scott Pouder, Lesley Phillips, Ronda Sawyer, and Sean Santalla.

Approval of the June 2nd, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Calvin Clifton made a motion to accept the June 2nd, 2020 Minutes. Johnny Deakins seconded the motion.

Approval of the June 2nd, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Roll call Vote:

Kevin Swatsell	Abstain (Absent 6/2/2020)
Johnny Deakins	Yes (second)
Brad Peters	late attending mtg.
Ambre Torbett	Yes
Calvin Clifton	Motion
Travis Bishop	Yes
Candace Long	Yes
Chris Craig	Yes
Michelle Christian	Yes
Chase Milner	Yes
Chip Kessler	Yes

Motion passed.

Discussion of the Project Ranking Process and Project Ranking Sheet

Link: <https://rpo-project-rankings-dv-prjrankings.hub.arcgis.com/pages/first-tennessee-rpo>

As part of Tennessee's State budget, the Department of Transportation provides a three-year Comprehensive Multimodal Program. TDOT and every RPO evaluates projects on an annual basis to determine funding priority for the next 3 fiscal years. For this cycle, we are planning for FY22-24, reflecting TDOT's commitment to deliver needed transportation projects while maximizing funds available to Tennessee.

The individual highway projects as shown via the link provided to RPO meeting attendees identify active projects that are located in the First TN Rural Planning Organizations (RPO) boundaries and are in various stages of project development, (e.g., location study, preliminary engineering, right-of-way, paving, and construction). RPO members were asked this morning to provide additional feedback either verbally, or through the earlier provided survey monkey link, to rank projects that affect their local jurisdiction. Criteria to consider should include elements of Regional Connectivity, Accessibility, Economic Development, and Safety.

TDOT's Eric Wilson introduced the new "Story Maps" home base to the RPO meeting attendees. RPO staff presented the proposed project prioritization rankings to mirror 2019 rankings, which this First TN RPO last approved November, 2019.

The formal action being asked during today's meeting is for the Technical Committee & Executive Board to both consider endorsing the rankings as recommended by RPO staff. The floor was made open should the Technical Committee wish to re-rank projects differently than what has been presented.

TDOT Presentation of the List of Projects to be Ranked

First Tennessee RPO Project Ranking List December 10, 2020									
County	PIN	Route	Description	Length	Phase	2019 Rank	2020 Rank	2020 Comments	* Recommended 2020 Ranking Considering Project Ready to Advance
Greene	100228	SR-35 US-321	(Newport Hwy.) From North of Cocke County Line to North of Nolichucky River (Bright Hope Road) (***) (IA)	3.2	Construction	1		Good candidate to move forward to 3 year plan	1
Greene	100229.00	SR-35 US-321	(Newport Hwy.) From North of Nolichucky River (Bright Hope Road) to South of SR-349 (Warrensburg Rd.) near Pates Lane (***) (Re-Budgeted-ROW) (IA)	6.1	ROW	2		Good candidate to move forward to 3 year plan	2
Hawkins	107579.00	SR-66	From SR-34 in Bulls Gap to South of Speedwell Road./Old Highway 66 (IA)	5.3	ROW	3		Good candidate to move forward to 3 year plan	3
Greene	100230.00	SR-35 US-321	(Newport Hwy.) From South of SR-349 (Warrensburg Rd.) near Pates Lane to Near SR-34 (US-11E) (***) (Re-Budgeted-ROW) (IA)	4.7	ROW	4			4
Hawkins	101394.00	SR-31	(Flat Gap Rd.) From Mooresburg to Adams Lane (***) (Re-budgeted-ROW) (IA)	4.3	Construction	5		Current progress is not far enough along for a high ranking	5
Greene	107461.00	SR-34 US-11E	(Greenville Bypass) From US-11E, West of Greenville to US-11E, East of Greenville (***) (IA)	11.0	PE	2 (PE)			2 (PE)
Greene	124345.00	I-81	Greene County Rest Area Renovation (IA)	0.5	PE	3 (PE)			3 (PE)
Johnson	124433.00	SR-91	From Near Cold Springs Road to the Virginia State Line (IA)	6.8	PE	4 (PE)			4 (PE)
Hamblen, Hawkins, Greene	124360.00	SR-34 US-11E	(Andrew Johnson Hwy.) From Steadman Rd. to I-81 (IA)	5.1	PE	1 (PE)			1 (PE)

Ranking Discussion

Vice Chair Brad Peters inquires if there might be any further advice that TDOT can offer to him and his state representatives who have inquired to him if the Greene County projects will actually be built. Steve Borden responded that it is truly the intent of the Dept. of Transportation that these projects are each and indeed moving forward. Dexter Justis and Eric Wilson both provided additional input as to each project status updates as Chase Milner displayed the Story Maps webpage onto screen share for each attendee to observe during today's discussion.

Other comments were collected from Technical Committee members by RPO staff via survey monkey sent out 12/9, to keep "project rankings ranked [same] as last year".

Technical Committee Vote on Project Ranking

Brad Peters made a motion to support the 2020 project ranking order as presented. Johnny Deakins seconded the motion to accept the ranking order as presented during today's meeting.

Roll call Vote:

Kevin Swatsell	Yes
Johnny Deakins	Yes (second)
Brad Peters	Motion

Ambre Torbett	Yes
Calvin Clifton	Yes
Travis Bishop	Yes
Candace Long	Yes
Chris Craig	Yes
Michelle Christian	Yes
Chase Milner	Yes
Chip Kessler	Yes

Motion passed.

RPO Coordinator's Report - Chase Milner

FTRPO 1-2nd Quarter highlights

- **CTPG Grant Awarded – Tusculum Mobility Plan:** In November, the City of Tusculum, TDOT/RPO staff, and the hired consultant HNTB met virtually to initiate the newly awarded Community Transportation Planning Grant (CTPG) for the Tusculum Mobility Plan as awarded on January 24th, 2020. The City is currently reviewing the Scope of Work as prepared & finalized by HNTB earlier this month.

The Tusculum Mobility Plan is an exciting project that will help to identify the existing multi-modal, and future transportation systems as outlined in Tusculum University's Master Plan, including roadways, public transportation, rail, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities that are needed to safely serve the current and anticipated travel demand in the growing population and student body.

The Community Mobility Plan process will help to strengthen the connection and community vision between the City's transportation planning and the University's Campus Master Plan, which was last updated May 2002.

For those interested in applying for next year's Community Transportation Planning Grant (CTPG), please note that the next application round is slated to open next month (January, 2021), and the FTRPO staff would be happy to assist you with more info.

- **RuPI Projects Awarded for Hawkins County & Town of Erwin:** Throughout 1st and 2nd Quarter, FTRPO staff has been working with 2 "At Risk" counties within the RPO, through the Rural Planning Initiative (RuPI), a new RPO pilot program. Since our last RPO meeting, through a competitive selection committee process, the First TN RPO awarded two projects – 1. Hawkins County Transportation Facility Inventory, and a 2. Town of Erwin Bicycle/Pedestrian (Sidewalk Inventory) Plan. Both project Request for Proposals (RFP) were sent out to approximately 50 consultants on 8/10. Through a RFP and competitive bidding process, Mattern & Craig was competitively selected in October to undertake both RuPI awarded pilot projects. To date, both RuPI Steering Committee initial scoping meetings have commenced this and last month, and additional kickoff meetings are being planned by the consultant right now with each communities to get moving forward next month.

- **EV Fleet Case Study:** The FTRPO also began collaboration with regional partners to develop the state's first ever Electric Vehicle (EV) Fleet Case Study (w/partners at CARTA, and Washington County Schools). ETSU MBA students were chosen in September for working on the project and presented their initial findings to the RPO in November. The First TN RPO will continue to participate in this partnership into 2021 (ETSU Students and DET/Task Force team/Philip Pugliese and Jarrod Adams).
- In September, FTRPO staff joined TDOT Statewide Active Transportation Plan SATP - Region 1 Focus Group
- **Multimodal Access Grants Updates:** During the 1st and 2nd Quarters, FTRPO staff has continued direct assistance with our Sneedville multimodal project partners. Sneedville is currently in the process also hiring its consultant Mattern & Craig, and is proceeding with necessary Environmental reviews, with FTDD Environmental Planning staff acting as sub-consultants to the project.
- The Town of Erwin has also submitted a multimodal application this November, 2020, in an effort to build upon the Erwin-Unicoi Master Plan, specifically focusing on sidewalk improvements along North Main Street in Erwin (2nd Street to Griffith Ave.)
- The FTRPO website has been continuously updated and maintained with current and accurate posting of RPO materials, including agendas, grants, minutes, public notices, and technical information, for more information please visit:
<http://www.ftdd.org/programs/rural-planning-organization/>
- In 2021, following COVID pandemic protocol, Chase will continue to be scheduling 1on1 meetings with all Mayors, Highway Superintendents, and Public Works Directors both virtually via Zoom and over the phone. As always, I wish to be meeting with every Mayor, Public Works Directors, and Highway Superintendents by mid-2021. Please do reach out to Chase at any time should FTRPO members wish to set up a time & date to virtually meet.

Other Business

Jason Carder of Mattern & Craig presented on the Local Roads Safety Initiative, the presentation was provided virtually during the meeting, and via email to attendees as an appendices to these minutes.

Michelle Christian (TDOT Region I Staff) also provided additional comments on how she and the Office of Community Transportation continues to work with RPO staff to further FTRPO's work plan with each municipality.

Sean Santalla, FHWA coordinator also spoke to advise the Technical Committee and Executive Board about the FHWA's *Everyday Counts* initiative/rollout.

More info can be found here: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/innovation/everydaycounts/edc_6/

Public Comment

The floor was made open for public comments. No public comments were received in advance of the meeting, nor did any public attendees make any additional comments during today's meeting.

Adjourn

Candace Long made a motion for the Technical Committee to adjourn today's FTRPO meeting. Johnny Deakins seconded the motion. No Roll Call Taken. Motion passed.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:19 AM.

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Additional Reference Links:

Story Maps: <https://rpo-project-rankings-dv-prjrankings.hub.arcgis.com/pages/first-tennessee-rpo>

I-40/I-81 Study: <https://www.tn.gov/tdot/government/g/planning-studies/i-40-81-multimodal-corridor-study/public-meetings.html>

FHWA Everybody Counts Initiative https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/innovation/everydaycounts/edc_6/

TDOT Multimodal Access Grant:
<https://www.tn.gov/tdot/multimodal-transportation-resources/multimodal-access-grant.html>

TDOT Resurfacing lists: <https://www.tn.gov/tdot/maintenance/pavement-office/future-paving-projects.html>

FTRPO Homepage: <http://www.ftdd.org/programs/rural-planning-organization/rural-planning-initiative/>