

**SOUTHEAST TN RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION (RPO)**

**EXECUTIVE BOARD & TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES**

**Wednesday, June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

**11:00 a.m. Eastern Time**

**TDOT Region 2 Auditorium, 7500 Volkswagen Drive, Chattanooga, TN 37416**

**In Attendance**

**EB:** Keith Cartwright; D. Gary Davis; John Gentry; Robby Hatcher; Clint Huth; David Jackson; Bill James; Bo Perkinson; Lois Preece; Gregg Ridley; Jim Vincent

**TCC:** John Bamber; Jake Battles; Ben Burchfield; Shannon Burke; Byron Clinton; Mary Cookston; Dan Evans; Wanda Fulmer; Linda Hixon; Linda Hooper; David Jackson; Beth Jones; Winston Pickett; Karen Rennich; Greg Thomas; Roy Thomason; Tom Trotter

**Guests:** Chuck Hammonds; Anya Shalun; Ashley Gates; Garrett Haynes; Kelly Ware; Garris Bugg; Rachel Burgmann; Jonathan Rush

- 1) Welcome & Introduction.....Chad Reese, SETD Planning Director**  
Chad Reese introduced new SETD staff: Marc Holcomb, Jonathan Rush, Katie Kortekaas. Marc Holcomb has been designated as the new RPO Coordinator.
- 2) Executive Board / Call to Order / Roll Call.....Bill James, EB Chairman**  
Sign in sheets indicated sufficient attendance for quorum for EB.
- 3) Technical Committee / Call to Order / Roll Call.....Dan Evans, TCC Chairman**  
Sign in sheets indicated sufficient attendance for quorum for TCC.
- 4) Approval of Previous Minutes EB Meeting.....Bill James, EB Chairman**  
Motion to approve made by Keith Cartwright, seconded by Lois Preece. Motion carried.
- 5) Approval of Previous Minutes TCC Meeting.....Dan Evans, TCC Chairman**  
Motion to approve made by Ben Burchfield, seconded by Roy Thomason. Motion carried.
- 6) Southeast RPO Updates....Chad Reese, SETD Planning Director and Marc Holcomb, RPO Coordinator**  
Chad Reese noted that a new manual is being developed for the RPO coordinators in the region. A new contract has been submitted to TDOT for the RPO workplan for the next two years. Local road safety initiative projects took place in Bledsoe and Polk Counties. \$250,000 available for road safety improvements in each of our counties, based on crash data. Road safety audit program is also available. RPO webpage has launched at [sedev.org/rpo](http://sedev.org/rpo). Pilot program in Grundy County to identify local roads in need of repair. TDOT helping with pilot via e-Trims data. Continue to work on ADA transition plans.  
Marc Holcomb discussed federal and state grants available. DOT RAISE Grant, Multimodal Projects Discretionary Grant, Safe Streets/Roads for All Grant, Multimodal Access Grant.  
Rhea County and Dunlap applied for RAISE Grants.  
SS4A Grant applications due by September 15  
MMAG active grants: Decatur (2018), Jasper (2018), Monteagle (2019), Calhoun (2020), Dayton (2021)  
MMAG 2022 applicants: Monteagle, Graysville, Spring City

Community Transportation Planning Grants awarded to Athens (Bike/Ped) and Dayton (Community Mobility)

Signal Modernization Program Grant awarded to Dayton

TAP application not open yet but typically due in October. 80/20 match. Construction only. Does not cover engineering costs.

Multimodal is a 95/5 match and covers engineering costs.

**7) Bylaws Update..... Marc Holcomb, RPO Coordinator**

Two proposed changes:

Elections for officers would take place during even years (updating sections 5 and 11 of bylaws).

Allow for the ability to meet virtually with adequate notice to members and ability for public viewing (updating sections 6 and 12 of bylaws).

Chad Reese noted the Environmental Representative should be added back to TCC bylaws.

Motion for EB to approve made by Keith Cartwright, seconded by Lois Preece. No additional discussion. Motion carried.

**8) TDOT Announcement of New Commissioner..... Andrea Noel, Planning Supervisor - TDOT Region 2**

Andrea Noel announced that Butch Eley is the new TDOT Commissioner, effective June 15<sup>th</sup>.

**9) Governor's Highway Plan.....Rachael Bergmann, Senior Transportation Planner - TDOT Region 2**

Rachael announced she will be transitioning from TDOT to a new position with TDEC.

Three-year plan projects are important for maximizing safety/security, the economy, active populations, managing existing transportation system, creating livable communities, and promoting stewardship of the environment. Plan released each spring ranked on technical score. TDOT prefers to distribute funding evenly. Plan available on TDOT's website. Two SETN RPO projects funded for 2025: Rhea SR 30 ROW and Bledsoe SR 28 ROW.

**10) Resurfacing Project Updates..... Rachael Bergmann, Senior Transportation Planner - TDOT Region 2**

Finalized list of paving projects for 2023 was released at the beginning of the week of the meeting. The list will be made public June 30<sup>th</sup> and will be available on the Paving Projects page of the TDOT website. Once a project is on the paving list, it remains on the paving list. A project might be bumped to the next year but will not be removed from the list. TDOT sends detailed letters to each jurisdiction with a paving project. Curb to curb project replacing what's already there, but there are sometimes opportunities to add bike lanes, crosswalk enhancements, rumble strips, etc. Try to coordinate with any utility work happening in the area. Notify TDOT if your community has any other projects or events that needs to be considered when scheduling the repaving project.

**11) Rural Regional Transportation Plan.....Andrea Noel, Planning Supervisor - TDOT Region 2**

RRPT discussion began in 2019 with county-by-county conversations and data collection. Process delayed by pandemic. Mareike Ortmann has been working on the plan. The goal is to deliver the RRTP during the Fall 2022 meeting.

RRTP goals based on feedback: improving safety, increased multimodal access, promote efficient freight movement while preserving road safety, support State's efforts in better supporting rural Tennessee.

Would like to have 10 strategies per goal.

Safety: Coordinate with roadway supers, ID potential issues

Multimodal Access: Improved ADA access, sidewalks, gap analysis. Local grants will be available.

Freight: Decrease freight on local roads. State routes are often not adequate for the level of freight traffic they carry. ID ways to get roads up to par for their use.

Support Rural Tennessee: RUPI grants were a way to help.

Participant feedback during meeting: Rather than decreasing trucks, better accommodate them with improvements to turn lanes, shoulders, etc. Ask for Google's help in removing challenging rural routes from navigation options. Remove safety deficiencies on local routes bearing freight traffic. Look at congestion due to road closures, accidents, etc. on major routes with traffic being diverted to local roads. Truck drivers don't seem to read signs put out by TDOT.

**12) Walkability Audits..... Kelly Ware, TN Dept. of Health, Healthy Development Coordinator**

Many communities lack safe places to walk. Sidewalks encourages physical activity and wellbeing by improving walkability. Walk audits allow participants of different ages and abilities to travel a route together, photo documenting and writing down assets and any areas for improvement. This data can be used in bike/ped plans, and to track improvement before and after infrastructure improvements. Audits can focus on smaller or larger areas. Include participants of difference ages and abilities. Any communities interested in walkability audits are welcome to reach out to their respective planners. CTPGs through TDOT offer something similar as well.

**13) Other Properly Presented New Business.....Bill James, EB Chairman**

None.

**14) Executive Board Adjournment.....Bill James, EB Chairman**

Motion made by Keith Cartwright, seconded by Lois Preece. EB adjourned.

**15) Technical Committee Adjournment.....Dan Evans, TCC Chairman**

Motion made by Ben Burchfield, seconded by Roy Thomason. TCC adjourned.

**16) Projects Q&A..... TDOT Staff**

SR 307 kickoff? TBD

2023 paving list should go out by end of month.

Ribbon cutting for new bridge on Hwy 64? TBD

Hwy 39 Athens to Englewood: Community concerned about traffic control during bridge construction. Typically do construction alongside existing structure or signalize one lane traffic while replacing bridge. Traffic control is part of the conversation.

Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill for local roads? Have inventory list ready to capitalize on funding.

Issue with a delay in guidance. Notice of Funding comes out well before instructions, and timelines are tight.

Criteria have changed for bridge safety and inspection which has put communities behind.

Concern over safety at intersection near new bridge on Hwy 64 at Cookson Creek Rd.