

**FIRST TENNESSEE RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ZOOM MEETING  
June 2, 2020  
MINUTES**

The First Tennessee Rural Planning Organization Technical Committee & Executive Board met jointly via the virtual Zoom platform on 10:00 a.m as hosted by the FTRPO Coordinator.

**Call to Order - Welcome**

Vice Chairman Brad Peters, FTRPO Coordinator Chase Milner, and Troy Ebbert, TDOT Office of Community Transportation welcomed the Technical Committee, calling the meeting to order at 10:05 AM ET. Mr. Ebbert called the roll and a quorum (10) representing 1/3 of the Technical Committee was obtained per the by-laws. 42 participants in total attended the virtual joint (w/Executive Board) meeting.

**Voting Members**

- |                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1. Brad Peters        | Vice-Chair   |
| 2. Logan Engle        | Greene County Joint Economic Development Board Representative    |
| 3. Ambre Torbett      | Sullivan County Joint Economic Development Board Rep.            |
| 4. Hattie Skeans      | Carter County Municipalities Representative (Chris Craig, Proxy) |
| 5. Calvin Clifton     | Hawkins County Municipalities Representative                     |
| 6. Travis Bishop      | Unicoi County Municipalities Representative                      |
| 7. Candace Gump       | Rural Public Transit Representative                              |
| 8. Chris Craig        | First Tennessee Development District Representative              |
| 9. Michelle Christian | TDOT Long Range Planning Representative                          |
| 10. Chase Milner      | FTRPO Coordinator  |

**First Tennessee RPO stakeholders also in attendance included:**

**Non-Voting Members/Interested Parties**

- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Tim Bailey           | Unicoi County Public Works Director                  |
| Rebecca Baker        | Hawkins County Joint Economic Development Board Rep. |
| David Metzger        | Bristol MPO Representative                           |
| Mary Butler          | Johnson City MPO Representative                      |
| Bill Albright        | Kingsport MPO Representative                         |
| Rich DesGroseilliers | Lakeway MPO Representative                           |
| Don Brown            | East TN North & South RPOs Representative            |
| Troy Ebbert          | TDOT Office of Community Transportation              |
| Randy Busler         | TDOT Johnson City Field Office, District 17          |
| Jason Farmer         | TDOT Johnson City Field Office, District 17          |
| Ronda Sawyer         | TDOT Office of Community Transportation              |
| Stacy Morrison       | TDOT Long Range Planning Representative              |
| Ian Preston          | TDOT Office of Community Transportation (Region 3)   |
| Erica Malpass        | First Tennessee Development District                 |
| Randy Dodson         | Mattern & Craig                                      |

Jason Carder	Mattern & Craig
Nick VanEss	Mattern & Craig
Richard C. Davenport	<i>Unknown</i>
Alaina Wood	Environmental Planner, First Tennessee Development District
Pingpen Chen, PhD.	Professor, Tennessee Tech
Ashley Shelton	Town of Unicoi
Tim Hendrick	<i>Unknown</i>
Andrea Noel	TDOT
Mike Woody	Old Dominion Freight Line Trucking Representative
Mark Stevans	Special Projects Director, First TN Development District
Ashley Davies	TN Dept. of Health

**Approval of the November 21, 2019 Meeting Minutes**

Candace Gump made a motion to accept the November 21, 2019 Minutes as written. Calvin Clifton seconded the motion. Troy took a roll call vote. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

**FTRPO Coordinator Update**

**Chase Milner, FTRPO Coordinator**

Mr. Milner reported that he has been scheduling one on one meetings with all mayors, highway superintendents, and public works directors throughout the region. He expressed interest meeting with all these said parties this month if they have not already met this spring. Virtual/phone meetings will suffice, or in person meetings OK, practicing safe social distancing.

*FTRPO 3Q highlights included:*

- FTRPO partners were awarded \$38,300 through the 2019-2020 Traffic Signal Modernization Program (TSMP) (Carter County & Town of Erwin)
- Community Transportation Planning Request reports for the following: Greene County/Greeneville SR-70 from Idletime Drive to Meyers Street, Greene County/Baileyton Van Hill Road, Johnson County Intersection of SR-67 and SR-167, and Mountain City crosswalk at intersection of Murphy Street and Main Street
- Facilitated outreach with Greene County/Baileyton/Private businesses regarding trucking travel center development plans along the I-81 corridor in the Greene County vicinity
- Recruited 1 Rail (Retired CSX employee) and 1 Freight (Old Dominion Freight Line) contacts to join the FTRPO Technical Committee
- Worked with Jonathan Overlay, Executive Director of East TN Clean Fuels Coalition + Tennessee Clean Fuels to prepare a memo that TDOT used for an Alternative Fuel "signage-pending" application submitted to FHWA for I-81 & I-26 on February 26th
- Prepared and submitted the newly awarded Community Transportation Planning Grant (CTPG) application on behalf of the City of Tusculum and Tusculum University for the Tusculum Mobility Plan on January 24th, 2020

## **I-26 & I-81 Corridor Study Update**

## **OCT Region I, Troy Ebbert TDOT**

Troy provided a presentation on both the I-26 & I-81 Corridor Studies. I-26 study is in the Task 4 phase. Mr. Ebbert identified I-26 deficiencies and issues, including congestion near I-81 interchange, as well as potential solutions. Bill Albright, MPO mentioned the desperate need for variable ITS message boards and also stated that he has been working with the FTRPO on park & ride surveying. Chris Craig inquired about North Carolina's I-26 status near Asheville (Patton Ave. bottleneck). Troy said he will follow up on the NC update for Mr. Craig.

*More info:* <https://www.tn.gov/tdot/government/g/planning-studies/i-55-75-26-multimodal-corridor-study.html>

Mr. Ebbert then provided an overview on the I-81 study, a 20-year, phased set of recommended transportation improvements for the I-40 and I-81 corridors. Purposes for the study include: guidance for decision makers, short and long term objectives identification, and stakeholder corridor promotion. 455 miles of I-40, and 76 miles of I-81 are being studied. Currently, the public comments survey collection period is still going on until mid-June to assess existing & future conditions on traffic flow, safety, alternative fuels infrastructure for freight/transit (and/or lack thereof), and operations & management.

*I-81 Survey Link:* <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/F62R7DY>

*Link to I-81 study information:* <https://www.tn.gov/tdot/government/g/planning-studies/i-40-81-multimodal-corridor-study.html>

## **Multimodal Access/Community Trans. Planning Grant Awards - TDOT & RPO Coordinator**

Matthew Cushing, TDOT provided an overview of TDOT's Multimodal Access grant, the goal of which is to help fill in the transportation infrastructure gaps in the State Route network. Multimodal grant requires only a 5% match, which can include your engineering expenses \$950K Max request.

1. Notice of intent to apply end of July NOI deadline (1-1.5 months period).
2. Next round of multimodal applications due likely in late August-September.

Mr. Cushing will be sending out follow-up information in the coming weeks.

*Link to TDOT Multimodal Grant Information:*

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

For questions about the Multimodal Access Grant: [Matthew.Cushing@tn.gov](mailto:Matthew.Cushing@tn.gov) , 615-741-2586

## **CTPG**

Chase Milner congratulated the City of Tusculum for the newly awarded Tusculum Mobility Plan, which will help to identify the existing multi-modal, and the future transportation systems as planned by the University 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.

## **Rural Planning Initiative (RuPI) Grant**

## **OCT Staff, FTRPO Coordinator**

The Rural Planning Initiative or RuPI Grant program is intended to help rural communities identify needs and promote solutions that lead to an interconnected community with efficient modes of transportation. This initial year 2020 will be a pilot grant to determine if this program will benefit rural communities and to further develop the process.

Eligible communities must lie within the Distressed or At-Risk counties, and be located outside an MPO planning boundary. There is zero local match required.

RPO coordinator outlined the new RuPI grant, applications which will be due back to the RPO Coordinators ([cmilner@ftdd.org](mailto:cmilner@ftdd.org)) by June 10, 2020. Announcements will happen within 10 days of Review Committee decision; July 29, 2020.

*Link to RuPI info:*

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

## **Questions / Discussion**

## **Executive Board & Technical Committees**

Troy reminded the participants about the RPO's Community Transportation Planning Request (CTPR) format, which allows for RPO stakeholders to initiate a "Needs Assessment" for a "New Start" project.

The CTPR form can be accessed via:

[http://www.ftdd.org/files/8415/4747/8627/CTPR\\_Official\\_Request\\_Form.pdf](http://www.ftdd.org/files/8415/4747/8627/CTPR_Official_Request_Form.pdf)

## **Other Business**

Michelle Christian provided a TDOT presentation entitled, "Resurfacing Coordination". The presentation included new TDOT processes for publishing the current and proposed lists on their website the summer prior to the projects. TDOT will communicate with each jurisdiction on the resurfacing list. TDOT will consider changes to be included in the project.

Randy Busler, TDOT's Paving Coordinator provided further input about the 3 year paving list, completed in 2019. He has just submitted the actual FY2021-2023 3 year paving list has just been just submitted to Nashville. Mr. Busler expects new paving list evaluations on projects will be publicly available possibly by late June. Projects will then be in the project design process July/August. Mr. Busler recommended Oct. 1<sup>st</sup> deadline is a great time to get local information in regarding paving project incorporated requests. He discussed their annual review, prioritization of projects, railroad coordination process, and provided his contact info 423-854-5022  
[Randy.Busler@tn.gov](mailto:Randy.Busler@tn.gov)

*More paving info available via:*

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

## **Boones Creek I-26 Interchange project**

An inquiry was made by Randy Dodson in Zoom chat as to the Boones Creek I-26 Interchange project update. Jason Farmer, TDOT Johnson City Field Office, District 17 provided an update on the project status, the new website, and stated that September delays might push letting to the end of year. Lake Park Drive to Christian Church Road 90% done. More info, as well as an overview video of the project can be accessed via:

<https://www.tn.gov/tdot/projects/projects-region-1/i-26-boones-creek-road-interchange.html>

## **Public Comments**

There were no public comments made nor requested during the virtual public meeting.

## **Adjourn**

There being no further business, a motion was made by Kevin Morrison to adjourn the joint FTRPO meeting. Seconded by Michelle Christian. Meeting was adjourned at 11:34 AM.

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