

final thoughts...

Your input is important to the RPO. If you have ideas for tasks and projects the RPO should undertake please do not hesitate to pass that information on to us. We are here to serve your community and we strive to do the best possible job. Our job becomes easier with the assistance of the public, community staff and elected officials.

Carolina Thread Trail Awards Funds to Area Communities

The Carolina Thread Trail recently awarded grants for four projects in Iredell County that will help implement the Thread Trail. Iredell County and its communities adopted the plan earlier in 2011, and the Catawba Lands Conservancy, who administers the Thread Trail initiative, regularly awards design, right-of-way, and construction grants to communities to help implement the network.

Mooreville: \$20,000 to complete corridor design of 6.3 miles along the Rocky River and Dye Creek along the Rocky River riparian corridor.

Statesville: \$75,000 to complete construction drawings for a connection under US 21 to connect over four miles of existing trail.

Troutman: \$63,600 for design and construction to extend the northern end of the existing Richardson Greenway approximately 0.85 miles.

Iredell County: \$20,000 to complete design for 5.8 miles from downtown Statesville north to Fort Dobbs.

Contact us at **704-688-6501**

www.lakenormanrpo.org

Upcoming Meetings>>>

TCC

Wednesday, January 11
Wednesday, February 8

TAC

Tuesday, February 28

Meetings held at 2:00 pm
James W. Warren Citizens Center
–Third Floor
115 W. Main St., Lincolnton, NC

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Area Transportation Plans Updates

RPO Endorses Project Priorities

Population and Employment

Projections to be Updated to 2040

Communities Receive Carolina

Thread Trail Grants

Issue
2011.3

A quarterly newsletter offering insight into the Lake Norman RPO



LNRPPO Leadership >>>

Transportation Advisory Committee

Chair

Mayor Bob Austell
City of Cherryville

Vice-Chair

Commissioner George Arena
Lincoln County

Technical Coordinating Committee

Chair

Neil Burke
Town of Mooreville

Vice-Chair

Elinor Hiltz
Iredell County

RPO to Update Area Demographic Projections to Year 2040

The Charlotte region has collectively maintained a computerized travel-demand model for the past decade, called the Metrolina Model. This model is a computerized depiction of the current and future transportation network, as well as land use patterns, for the region. This model is used to predict congestion, transportation-impact on air quality levels, and transit ridership for proposed transit rail lines. The Lake Norman RPO participates in this process by providing “baseline” totals, as well as projections into the future, typically 25-30 years. This model includes all of the RPO except for portions of Iredell County north of Mooreville and portions of Cleveland County north and west of Shelby.

The RPO staff has already begun the projection process, and is coordinating with area transportation planning agencies on methodology and regional totals. This is necessary to ensure that the same population, employment, and school enrollment methodologies are used throughout the eleven counties in

North and South Carolina included in the projection process.

What types of demographic information does the RPO have to project for 2040?

The Metrolina Model uses the number of people, households, jobs, and students as inputs to calculate where trips will be generated, and where they end. Accurately projecting the number and locations of future residents helps to identify where trips originate, and accurately projecting the number and locations of future jobs and students helps to identify where these trips terminate.

The RPO last updated its projections in 2007, when it projected population, jobs, and students to 2035. The 2035 projections anticipated approximately 400,000 people, 174,000 jobs, and 68,000 students.

Would you like to participate in the update process? Contact your local planning department staff or RPO staff at 704-688-6501.



525 N. Tryon St.
12th Floor
Charlotte, NC 28202

Lake Norman RPO Approves its Top 25 Highway Project List

The Lake Norman RPO is required to update its project priorities every two years. These priorities are inputted into an NCDOT database, which is then combined with NCDOT Division 12 and Board of Transportation input, along with objective maintenance, congestion, and safety data to collectively rank the transportation needs of the RPO area. This information is then considered by the NCDOT when developing the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), which allocates funds across the state. Any project selected for inclusion in the STIP would be included in the 2018-2022 period, as the first five years (2012-2017) already have projects identified for funding. The projects in 2018-2022 are considered “next in line” and are studied in further detail for environmental, design, and cost considerations.

The RPO’s Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), comprised of area elected officials and representatives of the NCDOT Board of Transportation, met on November 15 in Lincolnton to review a list of candidate projects for submission to the NCDOT. The RPO, along with the NCDOT Division 12 office, each identify their top 25 projects. The Division, located in Shelby, is responsible for executing projects in Alexander, Catawba, Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell and Lincoln counties, meaning that their top 25 will include projects from outside the RPO. The NCDOT also includes objective data on road maintenance conditions, traffic, and safety as a part of the overall score for a project.

The Lake Norman RPO’s TAC utilized its adopted project ranking process to identify a prioritized list of 25 projects, and then reranked them based on whether they were “subregional”, “regional”, or “statewide” in impact. The RPO’s influence on the overall prioritization process considers the “tier” of the project; i.e., the RPO’s ranking is worth more for a project like Williamson Road in Mooresville than for improving I-40, with the assumption being that the local communities have a greater understanding of the importance of those projects. The TAC ultimately approved a project list that maximized the impact of the RPO’s scores, yet still reflected the holistic ranking of all 50+ candidate projects in the RPO. This was accomplished by ranking all “subregional” projects from the top 25 projects first, and then “regional” projects, and then “statewide” projects.

Next Steps: All NCDOT Divisions, Rural Planning Organizations, and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are required to submit their projects to the centralized project ranking office by mid-December. The NCDOT will then develop a project list for inclusion in the draft STIP by mid-June, when it will be presented to the RPO and other similar organizations for comments. The STIP will then be adopted in late 2012.

Sub-Regional Projects

1. Williamson Road from I-77 to NC 150
2. Cornelius Road extension to Mazeppa Road
3. Brawley School Road widening from I-77 to US 21
4. I-77 interchange at Cornelius Road
5. Mooresville East-West Connector
6. Alcove/ Fairview Road overpass and connection to Williamson Road

Regional Projects

1. NC 115 from Timber Road to Mecklenburg County
2. US 21/NC 115 widening from Cedar Lane to Barium Springs
3. NC 279 from Sunbeam Farm to Lakeside Street
4. NC 150 diverging diamond interchange at I-77
5. US 21 widening from NC 150 to Troutman

Statewide Projects

1. I-40/ I-77 Interchange Improvements– Phase 2
2. I-77 widening from West Catawba to US 21
3. I-77 widening from NC 115/ US 21 to I-40
4. I-77 widening from US 21 to NC 115/US 21
5. I-40 widening from Catawba County to Statesville
6. US 74 Bypass from Long Branch Road to west of Stoney Point Road
7. US 74 Bypass from west of NC 150 to Long Branch Road

Statewide Projects– continued

8. NC 150 from Harvel Road to I-77
9. Existing US 74 Bypass– widening to six lanes
10. NC 150 from Harvel Road to New NC 16
11. US 74 Mooresboro Interchange
12. NC 73 widening from Airport Road to W. Catawba Ave.
13. NC 150 widening from Indian Creek to Business US 321
14. NC 150 from NC 27 to New NC 16

NCDOT Continues Updates for Area Comprehensive Transportation Plans

The NCDOT’s Transportation Planning Branch is currently updating the plans for northwest Gaston County, Lincolnton, and Statesville.

Each municipality or county, not located within a metropolitan planning organization (MPO) and each MPO, with the cooperation of the Department of Transportation, shall develop a comprehensive transportation plan (CTP) that will serve present and anticipated travel demand in and around the community. The NCDOT is required to complete these plans per General Statute 136-66.2 (Development of a coordinated transportation system and provisions for streets and highways in and around municipalities). These plans identify the transportation needs of the areas for the next 30 years, which is 2040 for purposes of these plans. The plans each include a report, as well as maps depicting highway, pedestrian, bicycle, and public transportation needs for the area. The maps are endorsed by the Lake Norman RPO and adopted by the local communities before being submitted to the NCDOT Board of Transportation for its approval.

Below are status updates for the three Comprehensive Transportation Plans.

Northwest Gaston County: The Northwest Gaston County CTP includes all portions of the county not included in the Gaston Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (GUAMPO). The City of Cherryville’s plan was last updated in 2002, and that plan’s study area covered the majority of the current “combined” study area of unincorporated county land, as well as land within Cherryville’s municipal limits. The existing plan noted Cherryville’s concern for multi-lane highway access to the City. This need has been consistently advocated by the City in the bi-annual NCDOT STIP updates. The public will be invited to comment on the plan in the summer of 2012. The plan will then be submitted to the City of Cherryville and Gaston County for adoption, which is scheduled to occur in the fall of 2012. **For more information, please contact Shannon Ransom, with the NCDOT Transportation Planning Branch, at 919-707-0974 or sransom@ncdot.gov.**

Lincolnton: The Lincolnton CTP is currently updating the existing plan, which was last updated in 1996. At that time US 321 was under construction, and has subsequently improved access to I-85 and I-40. The 1996 plan recommended a loop around Lincolnton connecting NC 150, NC 73, and NC 27. The segments of this loop in the southeastern portion of the area have been consistently ranked in the top 25 for the RPO’s project priorities. The public will be invited to comment on the plan in the summer of 2012. The plan will then be submitted to the City of Lincolnton and Lincoln County for adoption, which is scheduled to occur in the fall of 2012. **For more information, please contact Linda Dosse, with the NCDOT Transportation Planning Branch, at 919-707-0973 or ldosse@ncdot.gov.**

Statesville: The Statesville CTP has been underway since late 2009, which will update the current 1995 plan. RPO staff developed socio-economic projections as an initial part of the study process. The 2040 population projections are for 100,000 persons, a roughly 50 percent increase from the 2009 totals of approximately 65,000 persons. The current 1997 Statesville plan recommended a series of improvements to radial and north-south and east-west routes around the City, such as Buffalo Shoals and NC 115. The plan noted the strategic importance of any recommended improvements to the road network in the Statesville area by virtue of the intersection of I-40 and I-77. The plan update will further refine these recommendations, and reflect new technologies and emphasis on freight movement. NCDOT and RPO staff presented an update to the Statesville City Council at their November 7 meeting. The public will be able to comment on the plan in the spring of 2012. The plan will then be submitted to the City of Statesville and Iredell County for adoption, which is scheduled to occur in the summer of 2012. **For more information, please contact David Keilson, with the NCDOT Transportation Planning Branch, at 919-707-0972 or dpkeilson@ncdot.gov.**