

Northwest Piedmont Rural Planning Organization

# NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2016

NUMBER 3

## NORTHWEST PIEDMONT RPO

### QUARTERLY TRANSPORTATION PUBLICATION

This newsletter provides up-to-date information on projects in the RPO region and will help RPO communities become familiar with the products and services offered by the RPO. Each issue will include notices of upcoming events and meetings as well as transportation news from the region.

### CONTACT US

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**NORTHWEST  
PIEDMONT**  
RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION

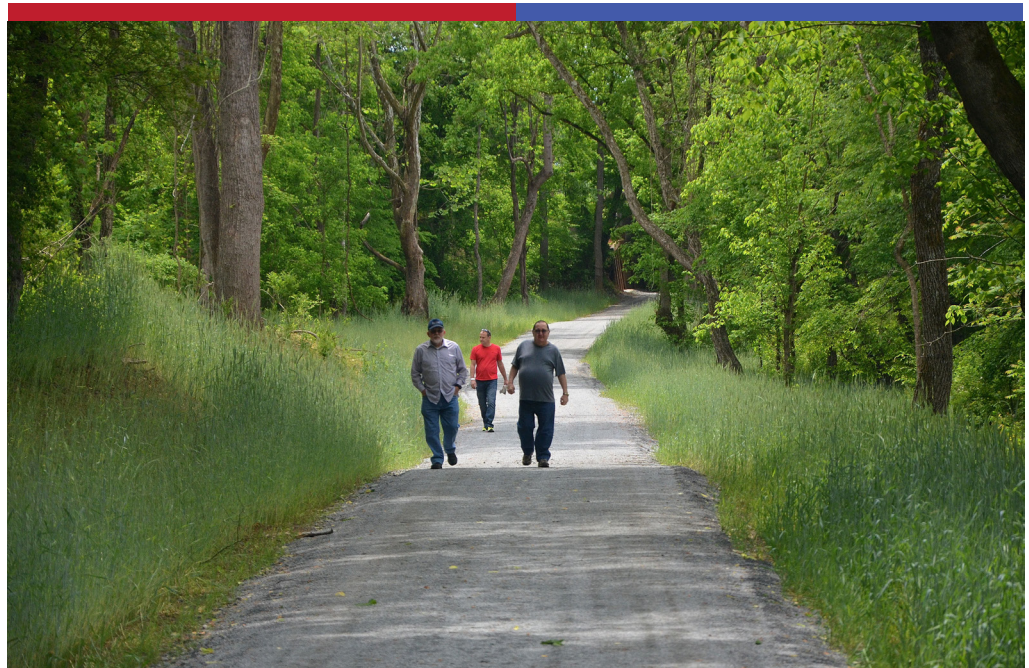


Photo: Joe Mickey

## Citizens Invited to Participate in Transportation Planning Process

Citizens in Northwest Piedmont Rural Planning Organization (NWRPO) area are encouraged to participate in implementing the Strategic Transportation Investments law. The STI law directs RPOs to assign points to local highway and non-highway mode projects considered important to their area. These points, when combined with a data-driven score, are used in determining the final score for each project on the Regional and Division levels. Projects on the Statewide level are scored using data only.

The NWRPO is asking citizens to offer feedback on two key areas:

- The method the NWRPO developed to determine how to assign these points; and
- The number of points the NWRPO plans to allot to different types of projects, including highway, aviation, bicycle and pedestrian, ferry, public transportation and rail.

Citizens can provide comments by contacting the NWRPO Coordinator. When the 30-day public comment period ends, NWRPO Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) members consisting of county and municipal staff and Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) members consisting of elected officials will carefully consider the input received and amend the methodology as necessary. Rational for including, or failure to include public comments in the final document will be published on the NWRPO website. The deadline for submitting feedback is March 22nd, 2016.

# FAST ACT FACTS

A NEW FORMULA PROGRAM FOR HIGHWAY FREIGHT PROJECTS

A NEW GRANT PROGRAM FOR LARGE-SCALE PROJECTS, THE NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT FREIGHT AND HIGHWAY PROJECTS (NSFHP) PROGRAM

MODIFICATION OF THE NATIONAL HIGHWAY FREIGHT NETWORK CREATED BY MAP-21 AND A REQUIREMENT THAT THE NETWORK BE RE-DESIGNATED EVERY 5 YEARS

EXPANDED FUNDING ELIGIBILITY FOR ON-SYSTEM BRIDGES LOCATED OFF THE NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM

AN INCREASE IN THE SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM (STP) SUBALLOCATION TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS FROM 50 TO 55 PERCENT

THE TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM (TAP) IS ROLLED INTO STP; 50 PERCENT OF CERTAIN TAP FUNDING SUBALLOCATED TO LOCAL AREAS CAN BE USED ON ANY STP-ELIGIBLE PROJECT

A COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM FOR BUS AND BUS FACILITIES FUNDS IS REINSTATED, INCLUDING A 10 PERCENT SET-ASIDE FOR RURAL AREAS

For more information, visit:  
[www.nado.org](http://www.nado.org)



Photo: Smart Growth America

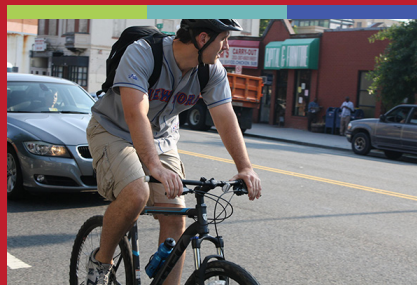
## FAST ACT

### FIXING AMERICA'S SURFACE TRANSPORTATION ACT

The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act is five-year legislation to improve the Nation's surface transportation infrastructure, including our roads, bridges, transit systems, and rail transportation network. The bill reforms and strengthens transportation programs, refocuses on national priorities, provides long-term certainty and more flexibility for states and local governments, streamlines

project approval processes, and maintains a strong commitment to safety.

The \$305 billion dollar highway and transit reauthorization bill is the result of negotiations between House and Senate conferees charged with resolving differences between the House and Senate surface transportation reauthorization bills. The FAST Act requires a transfer of \$70 billion in general fund revenue to the Highway Trust Fund from a variety of sources.



*The FAST Act requires that state DOTs and MPOs consider all users of the roadway when designing and building projects. This is the first time that complete streets elements have been included in a transportation bill*



*The FAST Act includes reforms and provisions to improve and consolidate public transportation programs, increase flexibility for states and local governments to meet their transit needs, and address transit safety.*

# Safe Routes to Parks

Children and adults are not getting enough physical activity and our health is suffering as a result. Many communities are working make it easier and safer to walk and bicycle to parks, an approach known as safe routes to parks.

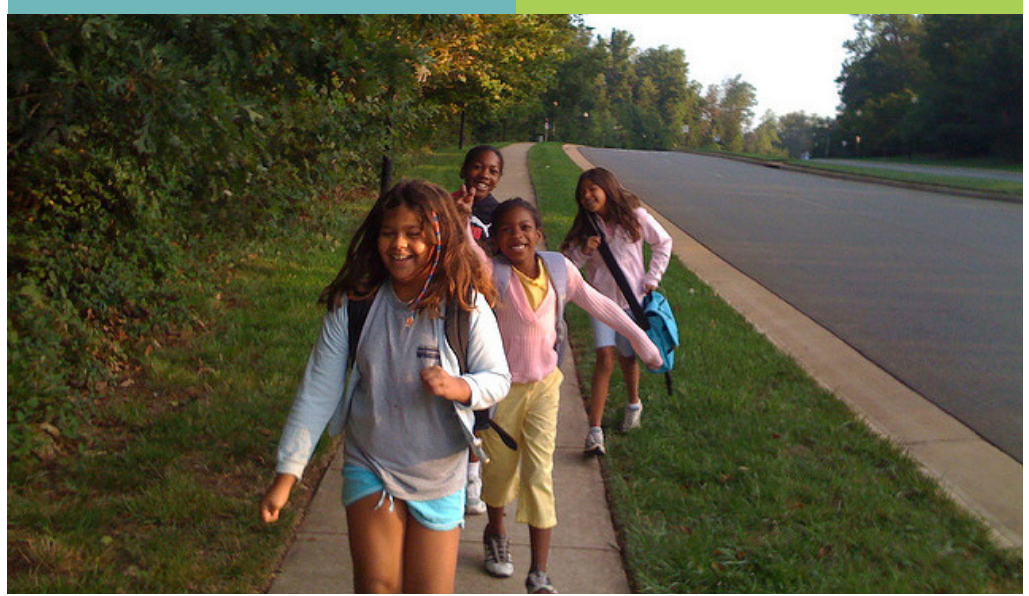
## WHY FOCUS ON SAFE ROUTES TO PARKS?

Everyone needs access to places for physical activity. While parks are ideal, getting there can be difficult when it comes to walking or biking, parks can be difficult to access. The absence of safe routes to parks may also decrease the overall amount of walking in a community, limiting physical activity as a component of their trip and generally walking less, especially if there is no attractive destination. When there are not safe routes to parks, people may walk regardless, but may deal with stress, injuries, or fatalities on the trip. This has a proportionate effect on low income communities and communities of color.

## HOW CAN SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PRACTITIONERS ADDRESS SAFE ROUTES TO PARKS?

Safe Routes to Schools practitioners influence programs, infrastructure, policies and investments in their communities with a focus on children's health, safety, and activity levels. Incorporating safe routes to parks into these activities can expand effectiveness and reach.

- In walkability assessments and walk audits, include parks as well as schools.



© Renegade Geek

- Encourage colocation of parks and schools when school or park siting is underway.
- Where parks and schools are co-located or adjacent, consider infrastructure improvements and encouragement activities that include the parks as well as the schools.
- Include Safe Routes to Parks on the agenda of existing Safe Routes to School coalitions.

## HOW CAN PLANNING PROFESSIONALS ADDRESS SAFE ROUTES TO PARKS IN THEIR WORK?

When working to address Safe Routes to School through city or county policies and practices, include safe routes to parks too. Comprehensive planning, bike/ped plans, zoning, city budget and infrastructure prioritization – all need to address both Safe Routes to School and

safe routes to parks. Safe Routes to Parks thrives on interagency collaboration.

Addressing park accessibility assists in increasing use of parks and plays a critical part in ensuring that communities have access to places to be physically active.

The Safe Routes to Parks concept provides advocates with the language to champion safe access during consideration of park siting, allocation of funds, planning, and implementation. Safe Routes to Parks increases opportunities for community members to be safe, be physically active, and experience the joy, social connectivity, and health benefits that parks bring. For more information on this and other initiatives, please visit <http://saferoutespartnership.org>.

*-Adapted from the Safe Routes Partnership*



# House Bill 232

On June 2, 2015, Governor McCrory signed House Bill 232 as passed by the North Carolina General Assembly requiring NCDOT to study bicycle safety laws. The legislation required NCDOT to establish a working group representing several industries and interests. The working group and NCDOT were tasked with evaluating existing traffic laws for potential revisions to improve motorist and cyclist safety on North Carolina Roadways. Legislators cited concern for bicyclists safety as well as consideration for motorist travel and access. HB 232 also required NCDOT to study issues related to passing a bicycle in a no passing zone, bicycling one or more abreast, and identification carry for bicyclists, and other issues including bicyclist visibility, informal group cycling practices, bicycle events requiring permits and vulnerable user protections. The final report can be downloaded at the link below.

[http://www.ncdot.gov/bikeped/download/Final\\_H232MemoandReport.pdf](http://www.ncdot.gov/bikeped/download/Final_H232MemoandReport.pdf)

# Grants

## USDOT REQUESTS APPLICATIONS FOR \$800 MILLION NEW FASTLANE GRANT PROGRAM

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) announced that it is now soliciting applications for the Fostering Advancements in Shipping and Transportation for the Long-term Achievement of National Efficiencies (FASTLANE) grant program. The FASTLANE program is a new program in the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act to fund critical freight and highway projects across the country. The FAST Act authorizes \$800 million in funding for the FASTLANE program for fiscal year 2016, with 25 percent reserved for rural projects, and 10 percent for smaller projects.

FASTLANE grants, authorized by the FAST Act's Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects (NSFHP) program, will fund small and large projects, based on project size, that meet statutory requirements. Large projects (equal to the lesser of \$100 million or a certain specified statutory percentage of the project state's FY 2015 apportionment) are eligible for a minimum award of \$25 million. Small projects, which consist of projects below the minimum large project size threshold, are eligible for a minimum award of \$5 million.

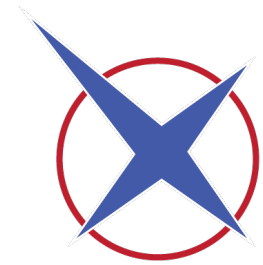
The NSFHP program is authorized at \$4.5 billion through 2020. Applications for FY 2016 are due on April 14, 2016. For more information, including a schedule of webinars on the program, please visit [www.transportation.gov/FASTLANEgrants](http://www.transportation.gov/FASTLANEgrants).

## TIGER DISCRETIONARY GRANTS

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) has awarded grants under seven programs for surface transportation projects that will have a significant impact on the Nation, a metropolitan area or a region. This program was first created in the 2009 Recovery Act, since which time USDOT has referred to these grants as Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery or "TIGER Discretionary Grants." Beginning with the Recovery Act and continuing through the Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 appropriations processes, Congress has provided DOT with eight rounds of competitive grants totaling nearly \$5.1 billion for capital investments in surface transportation infrastructure. Since 2009, the TIGER program has awarded 381 projects in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, including 134 projects to support rural and tribal communities.

The FY 2016 budget included \$500 million in TIGER Discretionary Grants pursuant to the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 (Pub. L. 114-113, December 18, 2015). As with previous rounds of TIGER, funds for the FY 2016 TIGER program will be awarded on a competitive basis for projects that will have a significant impact on the Nation, a metropolitan area or a region. Applications for the FY 2016 TIGER grants are due on April 29, 2016.

For more information on how to apply, please visit [www.transportation.gov/TIGER](http://www.transportation.gov/TIGER).



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## TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Commissioner Ernest Lankford, Chair  
*Stokes County*
- +
- Commissioner Kevin Austin, Vice-Chair  
*Yadkin County*
- +
- Commissioner Sharon Conaway  
*Town of Walnut Cove*
- +
- Commissioner Larry Phillips  
*Surry County*
- +
- Mayor Archie Hicks  
*Town of East Bend*
- +
- Commissioner Brent Ward  
*Town of Mocksville*
- +
- Commissioner Wayne Moore  
*Town of Jonesville*
- +
- Commissioner Terry Renegar  
*Davie County*
- +
- Commissioner Steve Yokeley  
*City of Mount Airy*
- +
- Mr. James Palermo  
*NCDOT Board of Transportation*

## 2016 TCC TAC MEETINGS:

### TCC SCHEDULE

- February 16th – Surry County
- April 19th – Stokes County
- June 14th – PTRC Kernersville
- August 16th – Yadkin County
- October 18th – Elkin
- December 20th – Davie County

**Time: 12:00 pm**

Note: All meetings fall the Tuesday before the TAC meeting dates.

### TAC SCHEDULE

- February 17th
- April 20th
- June 15th
- August 17th
- October 19th
- December 21th

**Time: 12:00 pm**

Note: All meetings correspond to Board of Delegates meeting dates.