



**KERR-TAR RPO RTAC MEETING MINUTES**

**May 12, 2008**

**11:30 A.M.**

**Western Sizzlin Restaurant**

**Henderson, NC**

<b>ATTENDEES</b>
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**RTAC Members**

**Alston, Clinton – Warren County**

**Averette, Pete – Granville County**

**\*Brown, Thomas – City of Roxboro**

**Day, Jack – Town of Stem**

**Dunston, Sydney – Franklin County**

**Gardner, Walter – Town of Warrenton**

**O’Geary, Pete – City of Henderson**

**Pernell, Karl – Town of Louisburg**

**\*Spaulding, Ken – NCDOT Board of  
Transportation**

**Wright, Danny – Vance County**

**\*Yarborough, Larry – Person County**

*\*Denotes voting members who were absent*

**Others Present**

David Foster, NCDOT Rail Division

Ellen Wilkins, Town of Stem

Geraldine Dumas, Kerr-Tar RPO

Julie Bollinger, NCDOT Transportation Planning Branch

Shelby Powell, Kerr-Tar RPO

Wally Bowman, NCDOT Division 5 Office

## MINUTES

**Welcome and Introductions** – Chairman Walter Gardner called the meeting to order at 12:10 p.m. He welcomed members to the meeting, and thanked the two speakers on the agenda for coming.

**RTAC Action: Minutes from March 17, 2008 meeting – Motion made by J. Day, Second by C. Alston, to accept the minutes as presented in the mailed agenda packets.** There being no further discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

**Southeast High Speed Rail Update** – David Foster, NCDOT Rail Division, provided an update on the Southeast High Speed Rail project, which will traverse three RPO counties: Warren, Vance and Franklin. The following points were made during the presentation:

- Work on the environmental documentation has been underway since 1999
- After the environmental documents are complete, construction money can be applied for
- From 1999 to 2002, work was done on the Tier I Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) from Washington, DC, to Charlotte, NC; this work analyzed nine alternatives
- A preferred alternative going through Henderson to Raleigh was chosen for in-depth environmental work
- The Federal Rail Administration asked that the project scope be extended to Richmond, VA, from Petersburg, making the project length 168 miles long
- There are 100 new bridges planned between Raleigh and Petersburg
- The rail will hold freight and passenger trains, and there will be five-mile passing areas every 10 miles along the project
- NCDOT Rail Division has worked directly with towns and counties to minimize impacts with road and bridge designs
- The Draft EIS is expected in early 2010; after public comment is received from the Draft, the Final EIS will be completed
- Maps and documents can be found on the website [www.sehsr.org](http://www.sehsr.org)
- The total project cost is between \$3 and \$4 Billion; this includes all bridge and road work associated with the project
- Local concerns about road closings or crossings will be addressed by staff working directly with town and county staff, as well as through the public hearing process
- Youngsville will have a grade separation at NC 96; staff has to be careful to avoid impacting historic structures due to 4f requirements in the law
- No right-of-way has been purchased; once the EIS is complete, purchase of right-of-way with federal money can begin
- Eminent domain may be used to obtain some land, but all other avenues would first be exhausted
- Environmental documentation for a greenway trail in right-of-way adjacent to the rail corridor right-of-way will be completed as part of the project; this will allow towns and counties to build greenway system miles without having to pay for environmental work to be done
- Ultimately there will be greenway corridor from the Neuse River in Raleigh to Petersburg, VA
- The line between Norlina and Gaston was studied as part of the project, and the state is purchasing the right-of-way; although no justification exists for using that line for passenger rail, there is opportunity to expand freight rail use there

Chairman Gardner thanked D. Foster for his presentation; RTAC members were encouraged to contact Mr. Foster if other questions arise.

**Air Quality Conformity Report** – John Hodges-Copple, Triangle J COG, discussed current air quality status, stating that each time a new Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is adopted by an MPO in

the region, or each time a new State Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is adopted by NCDOT, the region must show that those plans are conforming with air quality standards. The MPO's in the region are starting to update their LRTP's now, so this process will likely occur at this time next year as well. The Draft Air Quality Conformity Report under consideration now is dealing with the new 2009-2015 TIP. On June 9, the LRTP process will kick off, and all interagency air quality partners including the RPO, will attend a meeting at the Division of Air Quality to discuss the conformity schedule. The Triangle Non-Attainment area was recently redesignated as Maintenance since the region showed conformity with the standards. However, EPA changed the standard in March 2008, so the region will likely go back to non-attainment status. Three years of data showing that air quality standards are being met is required for a region to move to maintenance designation. D. Wright asked who our Resolution is sent to. J. Hodges-Copple reported that the NCDOT receives our support resolution and uses it to justify and enhance their air quality conformity determination for the rural areas. There is a very collaborative process between the MPO's, RPO's and NCDOT for doing the air quality conformity determinations. S. Powell reported that the RTCC had reviewed this information at their meeting the previous week, and had forwarded a recommendation that the RTAC adopt the resolution presented. **Motion made by D. Wright, Second by P. Averette, to adopt the resolution entitled "RESOLUTION REGARDING THE KERR-TAR RPO ENDORSEMENT OF THE FINDINGS RELATED TO THE 2009 AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY ANALYSIS AND DETERMINATION REPORT FOR THE GREATER RESEARCH TRIANGLE REGION."** There being no further discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

**RTAC Officer Election for FY 2008-2009** – Chairman Gardner opened the floor for nominations for Chair of the RPO RTAC to serve for the upcoming fiscal year. **Motion made by K. Pernell, Second by P. Averette, to nominate Walter Gardner to serve a second term as Chair.** There being no further discussions or nominations, the motion carried unanimously. **Motion made by S. Dunston, Second by D. Wright, to nominate Jack Day to serve a second term as Vice Chair.** There being no further discussions or nominations, the motion carried unanimously. Mayors Gardner and Day thanked the RTAC for their continued faith in their Chair and Vice Chair.

**NCDOT Division 5 Report** – Wally Bowman, NCDOT Division 5 Engineer, reported that the turn lanes on NC 96 in Youngsville would be complete in October 2008. The four-mile interstate rehabilitation project was slightly behind schedule, but is 7% complete and due to be finished in October 2010. The pavement preservation project on I-85 up to the Virginia line is ahead of schedule; it is 23% complete and due to be finished in October 2008. This is an \$8 million project, and should extend the life of the interstate pavement for at least five to seven years. W. Bowman further reported the NCDOT Board Member Ken Spaulding had made a commitment to continue maintenance of the system's main lines before making expansion of the network a priority, and should be commended for this commitment.

**NCDOT Transportation Planning Branch Report** – Julie Bollinger, NCDOT Transportation Planning Branch, reported that the Franklin County CTP committee is finalizing traffic projections and will begin work on the capacity deficiencies and bicycle element of the plan. The Warren County CTP and Granville County CTP are both scheduled to go to the Board of Transportation for adoption in June.

**Planners Report** – S. Powell updated the group on the following items:

- a. **MOU Update Status Report** – A list of local governments who had approved the RPO's amended Memorandum of Understanding was included in the agenda packet. Those local governments who have not adopted the MOU were asked to follow up as soon as possible so the MOU could go to NCDOT for final approval.
- b. **Upcoming Transportation Conferences/Meetings** – The following transportation-related meetings were announced:
  - i. **NADO Southeastern Transportation Forum – Raleigh, May 22-23**

- ii. **NCAMPO Conference – New Bern, Nov 11-14**
  - iii. **21<sup>st</sup> Century Commission will meet Tues 5/13 at 9:00 a.m. in Leg Bldg –**  
This group is expected expected to announce recommendation for a transportation bond and for phasing out the highway fund transfer to the general fund. The meeting is open to public.
- c. **Report from NCARPO Quarterly Meeting --** The Kerr-Tar RPO had endorsed the idea of a statewide RTAC group; this idea is still under exploration by the NC Association of RPO's. It is thought to be important due to pending federal transportation reauthorization and the importance of transportation as a state issue in upcoming gubernatorial elections. The group may convene during the NCAMPO conference in November to discuss the idea and decide whether or not a statewide RTAC would be beneficial to local governments.
- d. **NC DOT Rail Plan for the State –** S. Powell made available a list of interview questions being used by NCDOT's Rail Division to get input on a new statewide rail plan. She had also emailed the questions to RTAC members. She has provided input on behalf of the RPO to the Rail Division; if any members have input to give, they should provide that to her as soon as possible.

**Other Business –** No other business was identified.

**Adjournment –** There being no further items of discussion, Chairman Gardner adjourned the meeting at 12:55 p.m.