

NORTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION OF RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS

April 30, 2004

BUSINESS MEETING Rocky Mount, NC

Attendees:

1. Ann Whitley, Upper Coastal Plain RPO
2. Billy Leggett, Albemarle RPO
3. Chris Rountree, Peanut Belt RPO
4. David Baird, High Country RPO
5. Don Eggert, Cape Fear RPO
6. Elizabeth Garnett, Piedmont Triad RPO
7. Gene Foxworth, Mid-East RPO
8. Greg Christo, Isothermal RPO
9. Jake Gilmer, Land-of-Sky RPO
10. Janet Robertson, Lumber River RPO
11. Jim Daughtry, Eastern Carolina RPO
12. John Beck, Land-of-Sky RPO
13. John Marshall, Unifour RPO
14. Matt Roark, Southwestern RPO
15. Pat Strong, Triangle RPO
16. Paul Black, Upper Coastal Plain RPO
17. Phil Trew, High Country RPO
18. Shelby Powell, Kerr-Tar RPO
19. Tammye Rey, Mid-Carolina RPO
20. Behshad Norowzi, NCDOT
21. Kurt Freitag, NCDOT
22. Travis Marshall, NCDOT

Meeting Minutes

1. **Start-up-** D. Eggert called meeting to order at 11:35.
2. **Consideration of Minutes of January 30, 2004 meeting** – *Motion made by B. Leggett to accept minutes as submitted; Second by J. Robertson. There being no further discussion, motion carried unanimously.*
3. **Mission Statement** -- P. Trew presented a revised version of the Mission Statement based on discussions at the January meeting. It states "The mission of the North Carolina Association of Rural Planning Organizations is to provide a forum for transportation planning officials to exchange information and form consensus on transportation issues of regional, statewide, or national significance." J. Gilmer stated that this is in line with what his committees were hoping to see from the Association. *Motion made by J. Daughtry to adopt the Mission Statement as presented; Second by S. Powell. Motion carried unanimously.*
4. **Partnering with National Association of MPOs** – D. Eggert stated that he was not sure if this was an appropriate partnership for us to formalize at this time. P. Trew agreed, stating that we partner with our MPOs formally through our RPO Liaison and their MPO Liaison, and we meet jointly with them at the annual conference. General consensus was heard from the group.
5. **Legislative Update** – J. Gilmer stated that he would be covering federal legislative issues and that Pat Strong would be covering state and local issues for this meeting. J. Gilmer stated that the TEA-21 reauthorization was still ongoing with the House wanting a \$275 billion bill and the Senate wanting a \$318 billion bill. Both these are over the White House maximum bill of \$256 billion. The significant issue for NC is the minimum guarantee going from 90.5% to 95%, as is proposed under the Senate bill. This issue is not covered in the House bill by a specific number, but the bill does acknowledge a disparity for donor states. The votes are likely there to override a presidential veto of the bill. DOT can not commit TE funds prior to reauthorization. This issue is likely to be resolved prior to the November

election. The extension of the bill was set to run out today. D. Eggert stated that the funds had been extended for two more months, and that the lateness of this year's draft TIP was likely a result of this delay. P. Strong reviewed major points of the Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee, including the provision of adding urban loops to the Intrastate System to make them eligible for Highway Trust Fund money, and the lack of adjustment to the Equity Formula. Other proposals included giving DOT authority to issue GARVEE bonds, which provide for early use of future projected federal funds, and gives DOT authorization to receive funding advances from local governments for TIP projects. The formation of a VA-NC Interstate High Speed Rail compact was also discussed. The new total mileage needed in the Intrastate System is 180.4 miles, with 830 miles being completely funded. The nine urban loops have 297.3 miles left, with 114 miles totally funded. The proposed I73/I74 corridors are being added to the Intrastate system in the northwest part of the state, and 321 will be designated Intrastate instead of 421 to mesh with TN state plans. P. Trew asked if the redesignations were meant to get projects done quicker? P. Strong stated that they will get done, then get put back on the list for 4-laning and will remain on the trust fund network. The Highway Trust Fund Study Committee met in April, and P. Strong provided a handout including summaries of testimonies at meetings. The Committee discussed getting attention for the General Assembly taking money from the Highway Trust Fund, and that DOT needs the minimum guarantee raised to increase funds. Raising the gas tax by \$0.03 would increase revenues by about \$110 million. P. Strong and J. Gilmer stated that they would keep abreast of these issues and give an updated report at the next Association meeting.

6. **NC Recreation Paddling Industry Initiative-** D. Eggert stated that Judy Hills of Eastern Carolina Council had given him some information on an initiative by recreational paddlers to change NCDOT bridge building practices to allow more access to waterways for paddlers. J. Daughtry stated that the recreational paddlers brought a large amount of tourist dollars to the eastern part of the state, and that new bridge practices to accommodate them would not be a bad idea, and that the paddlers want bridges built without the large rocks on the creekbed. B. Leggett stated that the rocks were there for the purpose of erosion control and pollution control, and that removing them would harm the water quality. D. Eggert stated that the item was informational only, and that no action would be taken on it.
7. **Membership Status Update-** J. Marshall stated that there were still two RPOs who had not provided a letter confirming their membership in the NC Association of RPOs.
8. **Other business** – P. Black gave a report on the GIS breakout session that was held the morning of Friday, April 30 prior to the business meeting. The availability of data from NCDOT was discussed, and NCDOT said they will produce a list of all datasets and whether they are available to RPOs. The GIS staff will identify what they want and give that to NCDOT. The RPOs will partner with CGIA to get local data sharing formalization by MOU or another such tool. Some other issues discussed were water and sewer infrastructure mapping, transit mapping, and general GIS uses. He stated that everyone had problems with NCDOT's internal bureaucracy problems when getting data. T. Rey asked how we would know what data was available. P. Black stated that he will post the list to the RPO listserv. P. Trew asked whether we should have a member dedicated to the GIS unit at NCDOT. D. Eggert stated that Paul Black would be a good choice for that if he was willing. P. Trew stated that the listserv could be used by that person to keep RPOs up to date on GIS issues. A. Whitley asked Paul if he felt he could do that in addition to all his other responsibilities. P. Black stated that he felt like he could. D. Eggert asked Paul to keep contact with the RPOs to let us know what is going on, and to keep contact with the RPO GIS staffers especially. K. Freitag stated that NCDOT staffers have the same bureaucratic problems when trying to get data. P. Black stated that DOT GIS is moving from the Transportation Planning Branch to the Information Technology Branch, so that should help them get a more data-driven focus. P. Trew stated that having a liaison would

serve the dual purposes of getting more accurate data to NCDOT as well as from NCDOT. P. Black said the long-term vision is to take local data into DOT coverages and layers, and that Federal agencies were making some efforts to get more accurate local data.

9. **Next Meeting Topics-** D. Eggert stated that the next meeting would be in Hickory on July 29-30. Some potential topics would be having Kent Taylor from NCDOT talk about traffic counters, having Miriam Perry give a public transportation overview, FHWA technical assistance, and the status of our TIP ranking processes. P. Trew stated that we should wait for the draft TIP to come out before we look at how well anyone's rankings worked. J. Daughtry stated that his TCC and TAC want to adjust the process sooner than that, and that it would be helpful for him to see others' progress prior to when the draft TIP comes out. J. Gilmer stated that he hoped Miriam Perry would focus on the regionalization of public transit, and asked if anyone had had any response to the Board of Transportation draft resolution requiring regionalization within five years. The Land-of-Sky RPO had written a formal response to the Board asking for more time to review the resolution. The Board of Transportation had tabled the resolution until NCDOT Public Transit Division and the NC Public Transit Association had adequate time to review it. J. Marshall stated that the intent of the regionalization resolution was to get regional ride-sharing, not necessarily all-new regional systems. J. Daughtry stated that NCDOT currently deals with 85 systems and wants to reduce that number. J. Gilmer stated that he would send the resolution out on the listserv along with the Land-of-Sky RPO comments. D. Eggert stated that anyone else with topic ideas should email or call him in the next few weeks so that he can begin setting up the agenda for the July meeting.
10. **Wrap-up** – D. Eggert thanked Ann and Paul for their work in setting up the Rocky Mount meeting and hotel accommodations, and thanked the speakers from the sessions. There being no further discussion, D. Eggert adjourned the meeting at 12:15 p.m.

Submitted by

Shelby Powell, Secretary
NC Association of RPO's