

# NORTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION OF RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS

July 30, 2004

## BUSINESS MEETING Hickory, NC

### Attendees:

1. Ann Whitley, Upper Coastal Plain RPO
2. Billy Leggett, Albermarle RPO
3. Brandon Shoaf, Albemarle RPO
4. Christ Rountree, Peanut Belt RPO
5. Dan Thomas, NCDOT
6. David Baird, High Country RPO
7. Dawn Qiu, Lake Norman/Rocky River RPO
8. Don Eggert, Cape Fear RPO
9. Elizabeth Garnett, Piedmont Triad RPO
10. Gene Foxworth, Mid-East RPO
11. Geraldine Dumas, Kerr-Tar RPO
12. Greg Christo, Isothermal RPO
13. Jaime L. Adrignola, NCDOT
14. Jake Gilmer, Land-of-Sky RPO
15. Janet Robertson, Lumber River RPO
16. Jim Daughtry, Eastern Carolina RPO
17. John Marshall, Unifour RPO
18. John Tippet, Unifour MPO/RPO
19. Judy Hills, Down East RPO
20. Kerry Vallant, NCDOT
21. Lisa Craven, Mid-Carolina RPO
22. Marc Allred, Northwest Piedmont RPO
23. Matt Roark, Southwestern RPO
24. Nikki Hay, Northwest Piedmont RPO
25. Pat Strong, Triangle J RPO
26. Shelby Powell, Kerr-Tar RPO
27. Tammye Rey, Mid-Carolina RPO
28. Travis Marshall, NCDOT

### Meeting Minutes

1. **Start-up-** D. Eggert called meeting to order at 9:10 a.m.
2. **Consideration of Minutes of April 30, 2004 meeting** – *Motion made by J. Daughtry to accept minutes as submitted; Second by J. Gilmer. There being no further discussion, motion carried unanimously.*
3. **Legislative Update** – J. Gilmer stated that on the federal level, TEA-21 reauthorization seemed to be at a standstill. A conference committee has been appointed, but not much progress is being made. A TEA-21 extension was passed to cover the period up to September 30, 2004. Existing funding will continue at the current level with that extension. AMPO lobbyists feel that no new bill will appear prior to the election, but there will likely be a one year extension passed. He spoke with Denese Lavender at NCDOT, and she stated the Enhancement Unit will move forward and issue TE awards based on old levels of funding. D. Eggert stated that no RPO's were represented on the Enhancement committee. J. Robertson stated that her COG Planning Director was on the committee on behalf of COG's. D. Baird stated that Phil Trew would be interested in serving on that committee if we needed someone to represent us. J. Gilmer stated that the donor state issue may be more easily settled after the November election. ● P. Strong passed out information about the NC budget that deals with transportation. The total highway revenue projected for 2004-2005 is \$1.3 Billion. P. Strong stated that we may want to have NCDOT come to a future meeting and explain to us the different construction/maintenance funding line items. The Highway Trust Fund is having \$242 Million transferred from it to the General Fund in 2004-2005. Since TEA-21 lapsed, the federal government has been running on the continuation legislation; no funding table was drawn up this year by USDOT and FHWA. Last year's FY04 funding table is being followed again this year, so \$740 Million will go to NC. Senate Bill 1089 was signed in mid-July, stating the advancement of TIP projects, mainly those in years 04-07, can happen if the municipality will put up the money up front and agree to be reimbursed by NCDOT. The Governor has not signed this bill yet. This will likely affect only larger municipalities who have the funding available to cover this work. It is doubtful this will be beneficial to small urban areas. J. Hills asked if this bill would

result in the delay of other TIP projects. P. Strong stated that the first three years of the TIP are locked in, but this is for 04-07 projects. B. Leggett stated that funding could only be obligated once, and if an area has a large project from the bottom of the priority list, then that would affect money to obligate to smaller projects further down the list. The money would be obligated for seven years to pay back the municipality. P. Strong stated that the NCAPA has been actively opposing the billboard legislation that passed in the Senate and House by large margins this session. The Governor vetoed the bill, and it went back to committee. The bill kept a 5 year amortization; if a billboard comes down, the advertiser has five years to recover revenue; arbitration panel will likely be set up. This issue seems to be favoring business rather than local issues. On major roads and interstates, we will continue to see billboards go up. This bill only affects state routes.

4. **Nomination Committee-** D. Eggert stated that a nominating committee would be comprised of himself, Ann Whitley, and Greg Christo. The committee will bring forth a slate of nominations for elections in October, and other nominations will be accepted from the floor.
5. **MPO Update-** J. Tippett stated that NCAMPO meets quarterly and will be holding a meeting next week. Tyler Meyer is now President of NCAMPO. MPO's have been around since the 1970's, but the Association is only five years old. RPO's have come a long way quickly in that respect. NCAMPO adopted a Vision and Mission Statement and is now working on a strategic plan. They are hiring a consultant to lead them through the planning process. They will want Hanna Cockburn or another RPO representative to participate, as they would like to move in the same direction as NCDOT and the RPO's. They are looking at ways to get input on the Strategic Plan at the Wilmington annual conference. October 20-22 will be the Annual MPO Conference. There will be a good balance of sessions, and Mark Tinkler and Don Eggert have been working to make that a great conference. J. Marshall stated that Paul Black and some NCDOT staff would be doing a GIS session and would likely update us on the information he presented at our Rocky Mount quarterly RPO meeting. D. Eggert stated that Paul Black is doing a great job as our GIS liaison. J. Tippett stated that brochures for the conference will go out in the next few weeks. It will be at the Wilmington Hilton with receptions being held on the Henrietta II riverboat and at the Fort Fisher Aquarium. D. Eggert stated that we will have transit available from the hotel to the aquarium. J. Tippett stated that he is on a committee working on another conference, the 2005 Transportation Forum, that will be held March 23-24 in Charlotte. Ann Whitley has been the RPO representative on that committee. Senator Dole is signed up as keynote speaker if the Senate is not in session that day. There will be a large plenary session after that. Thursday will be the big agenda day with four tracks and four sessions under each track. He hopes that RPO's will have session topic ideas to him by the Wilmington conference. The 2005 Transportation Forum will be held at the Charlotte downtown Hilton. Registration information will go out in September 2004.
6. **Membership Status Update-** J. Marshall stated that we have on file letters from all twenty RPO's committing to membership of the NC Association of RPO's.
7. **Logo Selection Committee-** D. Eggert stated that the Association needs a logo, and all persons creatively inclined should submit logo ideas to him as soon as possible.
8. **Other business** – There will be a business meeting of this Association on Wednesday, October 20, 2004 at 12:00 noon, prior to the start of the MPO Conference. We will elect officers at that meeting. D. Eggert is arranging a dinner function for RPO's prior to the conference, probably Tuesday evening, October 19 at the same restaurant where we ate during our last Wilmington function. The winter quarterly RPO Association meeting will be held in Raleigh at the Triangle J COG offices on January 27-28, 2005.
9. **Open Discussion-** D. Baird asked Jake Gilmer and other Early Action Compact participants if they could explain the process with the RPO's. J. Gilmer stated that Asheville entered the EAC, then EPA used last summer's data and Asheville complied so they were not designated as non-attainment. Boone may not need an EAC. D. Eggert stated that it was not necessary to get into EAC's if you don't have to. J. Marshall stated that the Unifour area had compiled a toolbox that could be used for some air quality planning and implementation. J. Tippett stated that the deadline for EAC's was December 31, 2003 and

they still were not sure if EAC's would stand up in court. The Unifour area is working with environmental groups in hopes of them not filing a lawsuit questioning the legitimacy of the EAC. Ginger Booker at the Piedmont Triad COG is the contact for EAC issues, and has lists of action items and implementation measures. D. Baird said that Region D doesn't have the equipment used to measure air quality. D. Eggert stated that EPA would put out the monitoring equipment if the potential for problems was there. J. Tippet stated that air quality compliance is a tremendous amount of work if you get designated. P. Strong stated that the EPA website is very informative, and it shows that NC has 10 counties with PM designations. J. Tippet stated that there are 30 monitors in the state, and 10 of those are non-compliant. M. Allred stated that the locations of monitors can affect their readings. J. Tippet stated that cleaner air is on the way, but it will take 2 to 3 years for the implementation to take affect. The Clean Smokestack Act will help some. P. Strong stated that the entire southeastern US is experiencing similar problems. ● J. Gilmer asked if the RPO/MPO/NCDOT listserv was still active. J. Marshall stated that he was signed up for the listserv but did not receive any messages on it. Other members stated that they had seen one or two messages on it, but they mainly use the RPO listserv. ● D. Eggert stated that you should try to keep your neighboring RPO's in mind when sending out agendas and materials so we can keep connectivity across the state. ● A. Whitley stated that she has purchased traffic counters and was looking for policy statements used by other COGs or RPOs when using the counters. She received a document from Phil Trew and is looking for other examples. She has experience problems with getting requests from private citizens and businesses, and wondered if there is a hierarchy for addressing requests. J. Marshall stated that they would charge private developers a large amount of money to do a count for them. They mostly do counts for NCDOT. D. Eggert stated that local governments are our customers and should receive priority when they request counts. J. Marshall stated that they don't let people borrow their equipment at all, except for a few local governments who have expertise. M. Roark stated that we should not do private counts because it could cause problems if there is a dispute with NCDOT on data. J. Gilmer stated that you could charge for counts the way the GIS departments charge for work or maps. J. Marshall stated that their GIS department sells maps, but they still wouldn't do a private traffic count because it could be used against NCDOT. M. Allred suggested that Ann check with her TAC and TCC since they authorized the purchase of the counters. J. Marshall stated that NCDOT does a good enough job on major roads for developers to use, the only complaints local governments have is that some data is old. A. Whitley asked if a policy statement should be approved by the TAC. T. Marshall stated that he would highly recommend that since the TAC is the governing body of the organization.

10. **Wrap-up** – D. Eggert thanked John Tippet and John Marshall for their work in setting up the Hickory meeting and hotel accommodations, and thanked the speakers from the sessions. There being no further discussion, D. Eggert adjourned the meeting at 10:05 a.m.

Submitted by

Shelby Powell, Secretary  
NC Association of RPO's