



**North Carolina Association of RPOs  
July 26, 2007 Quarterly Meeting  
Historic Courthouse  
Fayetteville, NC**

Adrian Cox, Albemarle RPO  
Ann Whitley, Peanut Belt RPO  
Craig Hughes, High Country RPO  
Don Eggert, Cape Fear RPO  
Faye Lewis, Mid-Carolina RPO  
Greg Christo, Isothermal RPO  
Hanna Cockburn, Piedmont Triad RPO  
Janet Robertson, Lumber River RPO  
Joel Strickland, Mid-Carolina RPO  
John Marshall, Unifour RPO  
Jon Beck, Land of Sky Regional Council  
Shelby Powell, Kerr-Tar RPO  
Pat Strong, Triangle J RPO  
Paul Black, Triangle J RPO  
Daniel Van Liere, Down East RPO  
Dana Stoogenke, Rocky River RPO

Cliff Kendall, Mid-East RPO  
Marc Allred, Northwest Piedmont RPO  
Geraldine Dumas, Kerr-Tar RPO

Ed Johnson, Capital Area MPO  
Joshua Mello, Wilmington MPO

Elina Zlotchenko, NCDOT TPB  
Philip Pollard, NCDOT GIS Unit  
Chris Tilley, NCDOT GIS Unit

Guests

Dr. Scott Bradshaw, ESSU  
Sharon Campbell, ESSU  
Jim Caldwell, Region M

Minutes

**Welcome**

S. Powell called the meeting to order at 3:35 pm.

**Minutes**

S. Powell noted that the minutes had been distributed by e-mail, and called for a motion to accept the minutes of the NCARPO April 2007 meeting as presented. **A motion was made by D. Stoogenke to adopt the minutes as presented; Second by D. Van Liere.** Discussion: none. With no further discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

**Transportation Planning Branch Update**

E. Zlotchenko provided attendees with updates on several items. E. Zlotchenko notified attendees that she would be serving TPB in another capacity for the coming year to eighteen months, but would be available to respond to questions or concerns. RPOs were reminded to provide copies of deliverables to their coordinators, if requested. E. Zlotchenko also reminded attendees of the impending invoice due date, indicating that there were continuing concerns about financial reporting and invoicing, and that if an invoice was going to be late, to let the RPO coordinator, herself and T. Marshall know. E. Zlotchenko indicated that 2006 was the final year for tier grants, and invoices should be attached to the fourth quarter report.

Moving on the Planning Work Programs (PWP), E. Zlotchenko indicated the final day to revise a PWP was April 1<sup>st</sup>, and that a database of PWP funding allocations would be distributed. P. Strong noted that streamlining the PWP would be a great outcome of the RPO study, and that if we could get by with fewer line items, we should.

**Legislative Update**

H. Cockburn introduced a current piece of legislation, Senate Bill 151 (SB 151), which included language to do away with RPOs in state law. Jim Caldwell, Executive Director of the Region M Council of Governments shared that the bill had been a 'blank bill' and was populated later with a number of transportation items. J. Caldwell indicated he had spoken to Bill McNeil, staff to the North Carolina Association of Regional Councils and David Huskins, the association's lobbyist, who were both working on the issue. J. Caldwell went on to explain he had called Senator Rand (Bladen/Cumberland

County), who indicated the bill was in conflict with the budget bill, and the legislature was scheduled to adjourn on August 3<sup>rd</sup>. Senator Rand also indicated that while this was a senate bill, there would be a push for it in the house, and it might come down to a called vote on the floor.

E. Zlotchenko shared that she had spoken to Susan Coward, the NCDOT legislative liaison, who indicated that SB 151 would likely be revised to include a study of the RPOs, rather than repeal the statute. P. Strong shared that at the joint legislative committee meetings he had attended, that negative comments had been made regarding NCDOT, particularly in regards to funding and TIP management. P. Strong continued by indicating that the Representative Nelson Cole (Rockingham) and Senator Clark Jenkins (Edgecombe/Martin/Pitt) chaired the committee, and further shared a list of current committee members. P. Strong advised that efforts to reach legislators should focus on these committee members.

D. Eggert shared that those involved in the merger process seemed to welcome the participation of RPOs, and that this was a good opportunity to communicate needs and concerns. S. Powell wrapped up the discussion by stating that the association would follow a strategy of providing updates to everyone as additional information came available, and to keep an eye on bill and the legislative website.

### **MPO Update**

Ed Johnson, MPO Liaison, provided an update on several MPO items. He informed attendees that the annual conference would be held in Greensboro, October 24th-26<sup>th</sup>. E. Johnson continued, said that the “Gap” funding was a top priority for CAMPO. He explained that “Gap” funding is that amount of money needed to make up the difference between what tolls would collect vs. the actual cost of a highway. He also said that there were some good points and some bad point to SB 151. Finally, he reported that the recently released study by PBS & J on NCDOT project delivery recommended a more transparent TIP process than what’s in place now. He went on to say that it was difficult to follow the progression of some projects through the process, i.e. how some got on the TIP and other didn’t make the TIP. D. Eggert commented on the gap funding issue regarding toll facilities, and how it related to rising project costs for the Skyway project in the Cape Fear region and was fueling support for the turnpike authority. He further posed the question, what’s in it for the rest of the state? M. Allred commented on the transparency of the TIP process, suggesting that unfunded projects don’t need to be added to the TIP, and that a new philosophy was needed to reform the TIP process. D. Eggert added that as long as power in the process was unequal, it would continue. P. Strong drew attention to SB 1201, an omnibus capital bill that would increase the Highway Use Tax, but did not know the current status of the bill. He further commented that changes may occur incrementally. P. Strong detailed the allocations of the Highway Trust Fund transfers: \$206 million for the Highway Patrol; \$36 million for Drivers Education and a hold-harmless amount of \$177 million.

### **Committee Reports**

**Officers Report** –H. Cockburn updated the group on the status of the state-wide association of TAC chairs. Attendees indicated the response to the proposal had received generally positive responses. H. Cockburn indicated a resolution of support would be drafted, and the MPO association would again be approached for their reaction. S. Powell distributed a copy of the potential training schedule that would occur over three days in January, most likely in Greensboro. She asked for feedback to be given quickly, so a finalized schedule of speakers could be arranged. **A motion to approve the training topics, location and timing was made by J. Marshall, and further to cancel the January quarterly meeting in lieu of the training, with a second by C. Hughes.** The motion carried without further discussion.

S. Powell suggested a tabling of the goals and objectives discussion until the October meeting, without dissent.

S. Powell informed attendees of two upcoming conferences: the NCAMPO Conference (October 24-26) to be held in Greensboro and the RPO America Peer Learning Conference (September 26-28) to be held in Chattanooga. She informed attendees that the Association had submitted the Transportation Answers website for an RPO award.

S. Powell then updated attendees on the status of the Transportation Enhancements program. She indicated that the advisory committee had met once, and due to administrative changes, no workshops had been scheduled, and it was unlikely that a call for projects would be made in 2008. S. Powell suggested that projects continue to be developed, in case a short call is made.

**GIS** – G. Christo provided an update on TAZs, on behalf of Paul Black. The issue remains that federal census staff want larger geographies, and local governments want smaller. The timeline for developing TAZ for the next census will be October 2008-February 2009.

**Legislative** – C. Kendall shared information on the legislative reaction to the TIP project prioritization process, indicating that county priorities trump RPO priorities with the BOT, according to the secretary of transportation. P. Strong suggested sending agendas and minutes of meetings to legislators.

**Manual** – S. Powell indicated that the manual committee had met prior to the meeting, and updated committee assignments, and that results should be available for review by October.

**Best Practices** – D. Van Liere indicated that the committee had not made much progress, and they were looking for examples of project types and special studies.

**Nominating Committee.** A call was made for members of the nominating committee, headed by J. Marshall. J. Robertson and G. Christo were recruited.

**Assessment Committee.** A call was made for members to serve on the assessment committee. S. Powell, D. Eggert, C. Kendall, A. Whitley, D. Stoogenke and C. Hughes were recruited. Contact information for each member would be forwarded to Dr. Bradshaw.

**Future Topics and Future Meeting Locations.** S. Powell stated that the October meeting would precede the MPO Conference in Greensboro. She further indicated a final schedule for the January training would be reviewed at the meeting.

**Adjournment.** With no other business to consider, S. Powell adjourned the meeting at 5:14 p.m.