

Final Yearly Narrative

Mid-East RPO
Annual Performance Report
Fiscal Year 2017-2018

Overview

The Lead Planning Agency, the Mid-East Commission, has utilized its staff, technology and resources to participate in a wide variety of planning efforts, facilitate local participation in the transportation decision-making process and support local officials with information, mapping and transportation expertise. We guided local professionals and elected officials through identifying new projects for submission in the Prioritization 5.0 Process. Staff also guided Martin County in the development of their Comprehensive Transportation Plan, as well as the initiation of the early planning stages of the upcoming Pitt County CTP.

Project Number **1718-000**: **MERPO General Activities**

- RPO staff attended county transportation committees and reported on local projects, comprehensive transportation plans, and regional and state transportation issues.
- RPO staff attended meetings of regional organizations such as the Highway 17/64 Association and the Southern Albemarle Association and reported updates to the TAC/TCC.
- RPO staff responded to member requests for details on specific projects.
- RPO staff updated the Mid-East RPO website as needed.
- RPO staff participated in statewide RPO coordinators quarterly meetings.
- RPO staff hosted regular meetings of the TCC and TAC and prepared the necessary documents and arrangements for each meeting.
- RPO staff prepared all required documentation for quarterly reports and financial reimbursement.
- RPO staff participated in RPO evaluation process and RPO Coordinator evaluations.
- RPO Staff served on NCARPO Bike and Pedestrian Committee.
- RPO Staff served on CTP 2.0 Committee.
- New RPO staff studied MERPO projects and RPO 101 manual and had training sessions with former RPO staff.

Project Number **1718-002**: **PROJECT PRIORTIZATION**

- RPO Staff input new projects for P5.0.
- RPO Staff worked with Division Engineers, Division Planners, and surrounding RPO's to analyze project prioritization based on data, local methodology criteria, regional significance, and budget consideration.

- RPO staff held meeting with TAC/TCC to discuss Local Input Points for the Regional Category; RPO staff advertised the recommended Regional Category Local Input Points to public prior to final vote to endorse recommended points.
- RPO staff analyzed projects to assign local input points using local methodology for P5.0.
- RPO staff meet with TAC/TCC for final adoption of Regional Category input points for P5.0.
- RPO staff input approved Regional Category Local Input Points into SPOT Online for P5.0.

Project Number 1718-003: MERPO GIS Data

- RPO Staff evaluated traffic counts and crash data for evaluation as requested by TCC member.
- RPO staff downloaded updated GIS layers and maps.
- RPO staff downloaded updated parcel and centerline GIS layers for Pitt and Martin Counties.

Project Number 1718-004: Develop CTP Vision

- RPO staff organized the Pitt County CTP steering committee.

Project Number 1516-005: Analyze Alternatives and Develop Final Plan

- RPO staff assisted NCDOT with the development of the Martin County Comprehensive Transportation Plan. RPO staff participated in CTP steering committee meetings, reviewed materials for TPB, collected survey responses, and made regular update reports to the Mid-East RPO TCC and TAC.
- RPO staff reviewed draft CTP maps, draft CTP problem statements, draft presentations to local officials, and steering committee comments.
- RPO staff coordinated with County Manager, Division Planning Engineer, and Transportation Planning Branch on project description for US 64 Business, US 17 Business and the Airport Road connector project.

Project Number 1718-006: RPO-Transit Workshop

- RPO staff attended Beaufort Area Transit System quarterly board meetings.
- RPO staff communicated with Division 2 DPE and Beaufort Area Transit System on eligibility of projects in P5.0.

Project Number 1718-008: Assist NCDOT with data Collection and Assessment for US 11/13 Study

- No activity

Project Number 1718-009: Assist NCDOT with data Collection and Assessment for

US 64/I-44 Study

- No activity

Project Number **1718-010**: GIS Layers for proposed Bike and Pedestrian Facilities

- RPO staff completed a sidewalk inventory for the Pitt CTP and assisted NCDOT TPB staff with pedestrian and bicycle recommendations.
- RPO staff assessed and recorded recent sidewalk projects in the Mid-East RPO region in GIS for satisfy FHWA request for data.

Project Number **1718-012**: Community Outreach

- RPO staff worked with Division 2 office on 15th Street project in Washington and met with Washington Council Member and Planning Director on project alternatives.
- RPO staff assisted on crafting resolution, presentations and public notice about the Martin County CTP and its adoption.

Project Number **1718-013**: Title VI

- RPO staff reviewed the Title VI Assurances and briefed our TAC members which approved the signing of the document.

Project Number **1516-014**: Merger Process

- RPO staff attended R-2513 (US 17 widening from NC 43 in Ernul to SR1127 Possum Track Rd.). Responded to future development questions by email to assist with traffic forecast. Contacted Beaufort County and Chocowinity to find out about permits issued.

Project Number **1718-015**: GIS Training

- No activity

Project Number **1718-004**: Develop CTP Vision

Challenges and Shortcomings

- **Public Participation.** More time needs to be dedicated to public outreach, but time required for prioritization and other tasks makes this difficult to achieve. Ideas include evening meetings for public input, a Facebook page for MERPO, and a monthly or quarterly newsletter.

- **Learning Curve.** As a new RPO Planner, questions sometimes come up that I don't know the answer to and I have to do research and get back to people. Knowing where to look for information and who to ask about each subject is key. There is no one database you can go to for all answers.
- **Martin County CTP underdeveloped.** The CTP draft document needed lots of improvements. An extensive amount of time was dedicated to make sure the plan represented by the local vision correctly. Another challenge was the town boards and community misconceptions about the plan and its repercussions.
- **Project Development local pushback.** Spent time meeting with local officials and DOT Division staff and made presentations related to controversial projects, particularly the 15th Street project in Washington and the I-87 Feasibility Study in the Martin County Portion.

Lessons Learned

- Continued regular communication with NCDOT Transportation Planning Branch staff has helped maintain a more productive and positive working relationship.
- The success of the RPO is part staff commitment, part cooperation with NCDOT TPB, and part active/engaged TCC and TAC members. Having local government officials who are energetic and passionate about transportation and getting them appointed by their respective Counties to serve on the RPO has made for a better experience and product for everyone involved.
- Continued promotion and education of RPO activities and member benefits to local governments is critical to the success of the RPO.
- Ask about workshops and meeting attendance being an allowable expense before registering or attending, unless they have been preapproved in the PWP.