

**ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT
FOR EXPENDITURE OF STATEWIDE RPO PLANNING FUNDS
MID-EAST RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION
JULY 1, 2009 – JUNE 30, 2010**

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT NARRATIVE

The Counties of the Mid-East Rural Planning Organization, Beaufort, Martin and Pitt and the 22 municipalities therein continue to collaborate on transportation issues throughout the region.

Several important transportation work elements were undertaken by the MERPO in the past year and are identified below:

II-A-1 Traffic Volume Counts

The MERPO facilitated the collection of updated traffic count maps. We supplied organizations, developers and citizens with updated traffic count maps. Also, MERPO collected traffic count data for research for prioritizing projects for the 2011-2017 TIP. The expenditure for this line item reached one hundred percent (100%) of the \$2000 budgeted.

II-A-2 Status of Transportation Plans

The MERPO maintains an inventory of current Comprehensive Transportation Plans (CTP) for the area. We began the initial prioritization of CTP for our member communities. We are in the process of revising our CTP priority list since the Town of Williamston has recently expressed an interest in having a CTP for their jurisdiction and Beaufort County has completed their Land Use Plan update, for certification by the Coastal Area Management Agency (CAMA). Also, MERPO assisted communities with inclusion of transportation element and guidance in Land Use Planning process. The expenditure for this line item reached one hundred (100%) percent and totaled \$2,500.

II-A-3 Street System Inventory

The MERPO assisted NCDOT with revisions to several roads/highways in the region to reflect their true functional classification. This involved communication with NCDOT personnel and inclusion of these items for the TCC and TAC to consider. Assisted communities with street database updates. The expenditure for this line item reached one hundred percent (100%) and totaled \$750.

II-A-4 Traffic Accidents

The MERPO analyzed accidents, as part the process for Beaufort County's Transportation element in their CAMA Land Use Plan. The MERPO also catalogued and provided updated crash data as it was made available by NCDOT. Reviewed intersections as requested by TCC/TAC for evaluation and prioritization. The expenditure for this line item reached one hundred percent (100%) and totaled \$2,000.

II-A-5 Transit System Data

The MERPO realizes the importance of efficient transit throughout and beyond the region and researched, attended meetings related to transit. The MERPO staff planned, directed and conducted transit summit. Disseminated summit data for completion of draft Coordinated Public Transportation Plan for Martin and Beaufort Counties. The expenditure for this line item reached one hundred percent (100%) and totaled \$3,000.

II-A-6 Dwelling Unit, Population, and Employment Changes

The MERPO identified and evaluated changes in population and development for the entire region. We also serve as the lead regional agency for the State Data Center. Researched census data for assisting communities with grant application pedestrian/bike planning grant. The expenditure for this line item reached one hundred percent (100%) and totaled \$1,500.

II-A-9. Mapping/Data Inventory

The MERPO analyzed and created numerous transportation maps for several functions and stakeholders in the region. Examples of maps include crash maps, county road maps and maps of ongoing projects, maps for bike routes, abandoned rail beds, existing and potential trails and maps for recreational purposes. Reviewed NC 11 conceptual corridor maps to facilitate with educating NC 11 corridor committee on potential interchanges etc. revised maps accordingly. Provided Martin County with revised map following merger team meeting for 125 bypass of Williamston. The expenditure for this line item reached one hundred percent (100%) and totaled \$10,000.

II-A-11 Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Inventory

Continued working with the City of Washington and Coastal Carolina Rail/Trail for the Washington/Greenville Greenway. Continued recommendations and assistance to the Town of Bath in planning and development of "Lawson's Walk", a historic interpretative trail in the Town. Assisted City of Washington, and Town of Farmville and Williamston with effort to obtain bike/ped funding. Submitted Grant application for the Town of Farmville The expenditure for this line item reached approximately one hundred percent (100%) and totaled \$3,000.

II-B-1 Collection of Data

The MERPO maintains a collection of the following variables for existing conditions: (1) population; (2) housing units; and (3) employment. The MERPO also collects data as requested by the TCC/TAC and member communities and stakeholders. Collected data relative to equity formula, merger team data/information, and data relative to functional classification changes in member communities. Used data to guide and assist with municipal and other transportation related planning. The expenditure for this line item reached one hundred percent (100%) and totaled \$10,000.

II-B-5 Community Goals and Objectives

Presented Martin County Board of Commissioners with related transportation information/updates. Assisted Member communities with identification of goals, objectives, expectations, and desires for transportation improvement in their communities. MERPO Staff

discussed Bike/Ped and Safe Routes to School programs with several communities. The expenditure for this line item was one hundred percent (100%) and totaled \$1,000.

II-B-7 Capacity Deficiency Analysis

MERPO staff worked with towns to identify and discuss potential strategies related to capacity issues at various area/intersections. Monitored progress of new US 17 Bypass in Beaufort County regarding traffic impacts at various locations/intersections, and interchanges. The expenditure for this line item was one hundred percent (100%) and totaled \$1500.

II-B-8 Highway Element of the LRTP

The MERPO updated TCC/TAC and other stakeholders on the new spot prioritization and the impacts relative to their role. Participated and directed regional workgroup for the NC 11 corridor in Pitt and Lenoir Counties. Monitored through merger team participation, and updated Martin County regarding the NC 125 bypass. Researched and crafted resolution for adoption regarding proposed equity formula for TAC. The expenditure for this line item was one hundred percent (100%) of the \$4000 budgeted.

II-B-9 Transit Element of the LRTP

The MERPO provided continual updates to transit providers on the new spot prioritization and the impacts relative to their role. Continued efforts to conduct meeting of Coordinated Transit Plan per NCDOT Transit Division. Conducted successful transit summit for coordinated transit planning efforts. The MERPO has identified and realizes the importance transit service and unmet needs, and the importance of transit systems. The MERPO concentrated on immediate transit issues as indicated above. The expenditure for this line item was one hundred percent (100%) of the \$2,500 budgeted.

II-B-10 Bicycle and Pedestrian Element of LRTP

The MERPO realizes the role the bicycle and pedestrian element plays in the overall transportation system and concentrated on future needs for this issue, by attending Coastal Carolina Trail, and other related meetings. Completion of bike/ped planning grant activities for City of Washington and completed grant application research and submittal for the Town of Farmville. Also, MERPO assisted the Town of Historic Bath on Bike/Ped planning. The expenditure for this line item reached one hundred percent (100%) of the \$2,500 budgeted.

II-B-13 Rail, or Other Mode of the LRTP

Researched element for potential inclusion into prioritization process for 2011-2017 TIP. The MERPO continued efforts in consulting with local economic developers on potential of rail service to assist in Economic Development. The expenditure for this line item was one hundred percent (100%) of the \$1,000 budgeted.

II-B-14 Freight Movement/Mobility Planning

Researched element for potential inclusion into prioritization process for 2011-2017 TIP. The MERPO also researched various routes and scenarios for facilitation of freight movement in the region. The MERPO worked with the Town of Farmville regarding US 258 reclassification, and provided TAC/TCC opportunity for review and comment. As part of NC 11 study, reviewed

potential freight mobility issues and role of planning and corridor protection effort. The expenditure for this line item was one hundred percent (100%) of the \$2,500 budgeted.

II-B-16 Congestion Management Strategies

Attendance at NCARPO Quarterly meeting and received education on transit as possible solution to congestion management. Researched related potential projects for inclusion into prioritization process 2011-2017 TIP. The MERPO continued working with the City of Washington by offering insight and advice for ordinance amendments to address the concern of the US Hwy 17 bypass project in Beaufort County. The expenditure for this line item reached one hundred percent (100%) of \$1,500 budgeted.

III A Planning Work Program

The MERPO in cooperation with other participating agencies and under the guidance of the Rural Technical Coordinating Committee and approval of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) created an annual Planning Work Program. The expenditure for this line item reached one hundred percent (100%) and totaled \$4,000.

III B Transportation Improvement Program

The MERPO worked with the Greenville Urban Area MPO (GUAMPO) in the development of the 2011-2017 TIP. The transportation projects for all three counties are represented in the Adopted TIP. The expenditure for this line item reached a hundred percent (100%) and totaled \$7,000.

III-C-1 Title VI

MERPO staff, along with TCC/TAC spent time addressing and reviewing the importance, legal issues and mandatory requirements, and continually recognizes and includes this item in our PWP. The expenditure for this line item reached a hundred percent (100%) and totaled \$750.00.

III-C-2 Title Environmental Justice

MERPO staff, along with TCC/TAC spent time addressing and reviewing the importance, legal issues and mandatory requirements, and continually recognizes and includes this item in our PWP. The expenditure for this line item reached a hundred percent (100%) and totaled \$750.00.

III-C-4 Minority Business Enterprise Planning

The MERPO continued working with representatives of community organizations to investigate resources and potential grants, loans, etc. for the promotion of minority owned and operated businesses. The expenditure for this line item one hundred percent (100%) of the \$750.00 budgeted.

III-C-5 Planning for the Elderly and Disabled

The MERPO continues outreach and coordination with communities in the region, Beaufort County, Belhaven, Chocowinity, Grimesland, in discussion of the rising aging population and potential issues that may result. The expenditure for this line item was one hundred percent (100%) of the \$750.00 budgeted.

III-C-7 Public Involvement

The MERPO continued to follow the public involvement process to provide for an open exchange of information and ideas between the public and transportation decision-makers in all of our meetings as well all of our transportation plans. The expenditure for this line item reached one hundred percent (100%) of the \$4,000 budgeted.

III-D-1 Transportation Enhancement Planning

The MERPO continued working with the town of Historic Bath on potential Enhancement projects. MERPO staff updated and informed member communities on the changes and requirements of the Enhancement process. There is a high demand for Enhancement projects in the MERPO, staff continues to monitor potentially fundable projects that meet the requirements. The expenditure for this line item was one-hundred percent (100%) of the \$2,500 budgeted.

III-D-2. Environmental Analysis and Pre-TIP Planning

MERPO assisted Beaufort County with guidance regarding the transportation element within the CAMA Land Use Plan update. Assisted Beaufort County with importance of transportation element in regards to Hazard Mitigation Planning process. Also, environmental issues and their effects, regarding transportation projects, were discussed with TCC and TAC members. The expenditure for this line item reached one hundred percent (100%) of the \$1,500 budgeted.

III-D-3 Special Studies

Researched and communicated with local officials the new SPOT process. Researched and fielded inquiries regarding signage on the new US Hwy 17 bypass in Beaufort County. Related tasks regarding the coordination of the transit summit. Several special studies were done as requested by our communities. Included, was continued effort and guidance to the City of Washington on a rails-to-trails project. The expenditure for this line item reached ninety-three percent (100%) of the \$3,950 budgeted.

III-D-4 Regional or Statewide Planning

The MERPO coordinated with state and federal agencies involved in transportation planning activities on the regional, state, and national levels. MERPO staff is the legislative liaison for the NCARPO and prepared Legislative Updates keeping the Association up to date on issues regarding transportation at the State and Federal levels. The MERPO is represented as a voting member of GUAMPO and attends/provides input at scheduled meeting. MERPO provides guidance and updates to the Southern Albemarle Transportation Association. The expenditure for this line item reached one hundred percent (100%) of the \$7,000 budgeted.

III-E Administration and Services

The continuing transportation planning process required considerable administrative time for attending quarterly committee meetings, preparing agendas and minutes to these meetings,

training, preparing quarterly progress reports, documenting expenditures for the various planning work items, and filing for reimbursement of expenditures. The expenditure for this line item reached one hundred percent (100%) of the \$20,925 budgeted.