

Final Yearly Narrative

Mid-East RPO
Annual Performance Report
Fiscal Year 2013-2014

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, facilitated 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 the complex Prioritization 3.0 Process, including the development of a local methodology and the assignment of local input points to projects in the area.

Project Number **1213-000**: **MERPO General Activities**

- RPO staff attended county transportation committees and reported on local projects, comprehensive transportation plans, and regional and state transportation issues.
- A Mid-East RPO Facebook page was updated to post updates for RPO members and the public. RPO staff continued work on the Mid-East RPO website that is separate from the Lead Planning Agency's.
- 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.

Project Number **1213-002**: **SPOT 3.0**

- RPO Staff sought the input of TAC and TCC members for solicitation of projects that they felt would be regionally significant.
- RPO Staff reviewed recently adopted CTP's to see if any projects were not included in Prioritization 2.0 that should be evaluated in Prioritization 3.0
- RPO staff met with the Eastern North Carolina MPO/RPO Coalition to discuss regionally significant projects. Staff then began to analyze potential projects to identify which ones would have the most significant impact on the local area, as well as the region.
- RPO staff worked with SPOT Office, RPO Prioritization Sub-Committee, as well as TAC/TCC Members to develop a Local Methodology for evaluating projects; RPO staff advertised the proposed methodology for public comment prior to TAC/TCC adoption.

- RPO staff collected and analyzed data needed based on Local Methodology content to evaluate, score, and give initial project prioritization ranking recommendation.
- 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 prioritization local input point recommendation; RPO staff advertised the recommended local input points to public prior to final vote to endorse recommended points.

Project Number 1314-003: MERPO GIS Data

- RPO staff compiled updated traffic count information for member counties, as well as collected updated Crash Data from the TEAAS System each quarter.
- RPO staff used TEAAS and Traffic Count Data to begin analysis for the Pedestrian Safety at US 13/17 and Woodard Rd. project, as well as GIS Layers for proposed Bike/Ped Facilities in Windsor for Bike/Pedestrian Planning Grant Application.
- RPO staff compiled up to date GIS Layers and Shapefiles for member counties.

Project Number 1213-004: Martin County CTP

- RPO staff assisted NCDOT with the forming CTP steering committee for the Martin County Comprehensive Transportation Plan. RPO staff participated in CTP steering committee meetings, reviewed materials for TPB.
- RPO staff worked with communities in Martin County to begin a bike and pedestrian inventory for the Martin County CTP.

Project Number 1213_005: RPO-Transit Workshop

- RPO staff, following stakeholder meetings and data analysis, draft the Northeast Regional Locally Coordinated Public Transportation and Human Service Plan (LCP).
- RPO staff worked with NCDOT Public Transit Division staff on review and edits to the plan.
- RPO staff worked with Area Transit Providers to get the LCP Adopted.
- RPO staff attended regional Council of Government Meeting to speak on and receive an award for work on the project.
- RPO staff reviewed recommendations from plan to assist in prioritization of transit projects in the region for Prioritization 3.0.

Project Number 1213-007: Older Adult Transportation Service Delivery

- RPO staff organized two regional workshops with RPO Planners, Transit Providers, Health and Human Service Staff, and other local stakeholders to

discuss a regionalized approach for transit service in northeastern North Carolina. The meeting included collaboration with the Albemarle and Peanut Belt RPO's.

- RPO staff from the Mid-East worked along with staff from the Albemarle and Peanut Belt RPO's to host two stakeholder workshops in the development of the updated Locally Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan, with meetings held in Washington and Elizabeth City.
- RPO staff collected census data, produced GIS Maps, and analyzed routes and data to determine and prioritize transit needs in the region.

Project Number 1213-008: Pedestrian Safety

- RPO staff used TEAAS and Traffic Count Data to begin analysis for the Pedestrian Safety throughout our RPO region.
- RPO staff researched similar pedestrian safety reports to assist in development of recommended ideas for this report.

Project Number 1314-009: Truck Traffic at NC33/NC 306

- RPO staff used TEAAS and Traffic Count Data to begin analysis for the Truck Traffic Study at NC 33/NC 306.

Project Number 1314-010: Multi-Modal Transportation Development

- RPO staff used TEAAS and Traffic Count Data to begin analysis for Multi-Modal Transportation Development with neighboring RPO's.
- RPO staff held discussions with County Economic Development directors regarding transportation conditions surrounding our region.

Project Number 1314-011: Regional Highway System

- RPO staff used TEAAS and Traffic Count Data to begin analysis for a regional Traffic Study..

Project Number 1213-012: GIS Layers for Existing and Proposed Bike/Pedestrian Facilities.

- RPO staff conducted site visits and also met with Town Managers to discuss Bike and Pedestrian needs.
- RPO staff drafted Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans for the Towns of Farmville and Washington.

Project Number 1213-013: Bicycle and Pedestrian Inventory and Assessment

- RPO staff maintained GIS Layers for proposed Bike/Ped Facilities in MERPO Region.

Project Number **1213-014**: **Community Outreach**

- RPO staff reached out to member communities for input on local priority projects to be discussed with ENC Coalition.
- RPO staff provided project updates to member counties to share with various boards and county staff, including County Commissioners.
- RPO staff outreached to communities in Martin County to participate in Martin County CTP Steering Committee, as well as receive bicycle and pedestrian wants and needs.
- RPO staff made presentation to Mid-east Board members, and Beaufort County updating them on RPO and Prioritization 3.0.

Project Number **1213-015**: **Title VI**

- RPO staff stayed up to date on Title VI requirements.

Project Number **1314-016**: **Merger Process**

- RPO staff participated in Merger Meetings and signed off on concurrence points for projects in the region.

Project Number **1314-017**: **Complete Street Training**

- RPO staff successfully completed Complete Streets Training in Greenville

Project Number **1314-018**: **TEAAS Training**

- RPO staff successfully completed TEAAS Training in Garner

Challenges and Shortcomings

- **SEI Requirements and Ethics Commission Updates.** While my TAC Members have been cooperative through the ethics process, there have been numerous cases of information provided to the Ethics Commission having either not been logged into the system or ignored all together. I have received numerous e-mails from former members, who I have removed from the RPO Roster and submitted to the Ethics Commission, numerous times, who have still received notices saying they were subject to fines. I'm concerned that this type of treatment from the ethics commission may lead to future representatives being hesitant to serve based on the Ethics Requirements.
- **SPOT 3.0.** While the RPO's do appreciate DOT's recognition of the amount of work and responsibility on the RPO's with the increase in funding, it was

extremely challenging to meet all the Prioritization 3.0 requirements, while also maintaining other RPO projects and responsibilities. Additionally, it was difficult to get the correct information to our RPO Members when the information was constantly changing. While I know the process was ever evolving, it made it difficult to keep RPO members clear regarding how Prioritization 3.0 would work.

- **Transition of TPB Coordinator.** While we have worked through and resolved numerous issues with success, the transition from one TPB Coordinator to another has been difficult at times. Things that worked as far as invoice and deliverable submittals under one coordinator have not worked for another, leading to a good deal of time spent on reworking administrative items (invoice and deliverables) as opposed to planning.

Lessons Learned

- Continued regular communication with NCDOT Transportation Planning Branch staff has helped maintain a more productive and positive working relationship.
- Having a CTPs going on ensures that constant communication is upheld with NCDOT TPB staff on a regular basis. That additional communication has helped foster a positive working relationship between both parties.
- 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 perspective 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.
- Participation in the Eastern North Carolina MPO/RPO Coalition has garnered interest from RPO members and has been very beneficial in including the interest of the region with that of the remainder of eastern North Carolina.