

**ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT  
FOR EXPENDITURE OF STATEWIDE RPO PLANNING FUNDS  
MID-EAST RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
JULY 1, 2010 – JUNE 30, 2011**

**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, and for recommendation to DOT on modernization and safety related issues throughout our planning jurisdiction. 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 Beaufort County has recently expressed an interest in having a CTP for their jurisdiction and have met the DOT criteria by recently completing, and adopting an updated Land Use Plan. The Town of Williamston/Martin County has expressed interest as well and are currently on the CTP priority list. 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 \$1,000.

**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, one example being Highway 17 business. This classification change was due to the construction and opening of the new highway 17 bypass. Mid-East RPO staff also 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 upcoming CTP process. 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 \$1,000.

### **II-A-5 Transit System Data**

The MERPO realizes the importance of efficient transit throughout and beyond the region. Mid-East RPO staff did preliminary research on most efficient routes, and coordinated with regional transportation providers for input on a regionalized transportation network. RPO staff attended transit provider meetings and provided input on regionalization. The MERPO staff disseminated transportation data for inclusion in upcoming Beaufort County CTP, and other transportation planning documents. 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 for the Town of Farmville, and the City of Washington. The expenditure for this line item reached one hundred percent (100%) and totaled \$3,000.

### **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 and, local elected officials on potential interchanges etc. revised maps accordingly. Provided TAC/TCC, and elected officials updated data/mapping of revised roadways. The expenditure for this line item reached one hundred percent (100%) and totaled \$3,000.

### **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 throughout Town. Assisted with grant submittal for trail facility. Assisted City of Washington, and the Town of Farmville with effort to obtain bike/ped funding. Submitted Grant application for the Town of Farmville. Created maps showing options for interconnectivity throughout the City of Washington and Beaufort County. Map potential improvement/sidewalk area for the Town of Farmville. The expenditure for this line item reached approximately one hundred percent (100%) and totaled \$8,500.

### **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 \$7,000.

#### **II-B-5 Community Goals and Objectives**

Presented Mid-East Commission Board, (made up of representative from a five county region) with related transportation information/updates, new legislation, funding changes, and other transportation related updates. Assisted Member communities with identification of goals, objectives, expectations, and desires for transportation improvement in their communities. MERPO Staff discussed Bike/Ped programs with several communities and collected feedback to match funding potential with needed improvements. The expenditure for this line item was one hundred percent (100%) and totaled \$3,500.

#### **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. Studied NC 11 corridor in conjunction with East Carolina RPO, from the City of Greenville to Kinston for possible solutions to capacity deficiency through this corridor. Recommended alternatives and created mapping to show possible interchanges and presented to local elected officials. 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 \$2,500.

#### **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. 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 \$1,500 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. Collection of transit data 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 \$1,500 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 \$1,500 budgeted.

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

Researched element for potential inclusion into prioritization process. Monitored proposed ferry tolling, and collected data on potential impact on local employees, and economic development for our area. 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 \$1,500 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 other workshops/training for education on transit and other strategies as possible solution in minimizing the impacts of congestion through effective management practices. Researched related potential projects for inclusion into prioritization. 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. Staff also worked with the TCC/TAC members in identification of congested candidate transportation routes. The expenditure for this line item reached one hundred percent (100%) of \$2,500 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 \$10,000.

## **III B Transportation Improvement Program**

The MERPO worked with the TCC/TAC members in conjunction with the Greenville Urban Area MPO (GUAMPO) in developing an un-prioritized list of potential projects to be ranked in the near future. The transportation projects for all three counties are represented in this un-prioritized list. The expenditure for this line item reached a hundred percent (100%) and totaled \$3,500.

## **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 member jurisdictions on the identification of potentially fundable enhancement projects. RPO Staff continued assisting 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 \$4,000 budgeted.

### **III-D-3 Special Studies**

MERPO assisted Beaufort County with monitoring and guidance regarding the transportation elements within the newly adopted CAMA Land Use Plan update and provided technical assistance and data relative to the newly adopted Hazard Mitigation Plan. Both elements will be incorporated in the upcoming Beaufort County CTP process. Also, environmental issues and their effects, regarding transportation projects, were discussed with TCC and TAC members. Researched and communicated with local officials the new SPOT process. Researched and fielded inquiries regarding the effects and transportation patterns due to the new US Hwy 17 bypass in Beaufort County. Several special studies were done as requested by our communities.

Included, was continued effort and guidance to the City of Washington and Town of Chocowinity on a rails-to-trails project, and how to effectively incorporate Greenville Greenway into the route. Mid-East RPO staff created maps showing proposed interconnectivity between Town of Bath Lawson Walk Trail and the Town visitor center and waterfront locations. The expenditure for this line item reached one hundred percent (100%) of the \$3,450 budgeted.

#### **III-D-4 Regional or Statewide Planning**

The MERPO staff presented to the North Carolina Board of Transportation local transportation priorities and issues of concern throughout our rural jurisdiction, and stressed the need for more projects in our area to enhance economic development and tourism throughout our member Counties/Communities. The MERPO coordinated with state and federal agencies involved in transportation planning activities on the regional, state, and national levels. MERPO staff tracked Legislative Updates keeping the TAC/TCC 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 \$12,000 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.