

Eastern NC MPO/RPO Coalition

Meeting – January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015

11:00am

Attendees:

Angela Walsh, Albemarle RPO  
Allen Serkin, Cape Fear RPO  
Lauren Tuttle, Down East RPO  
Patrick Flanagan, Down East RPO  
Rob Will, Eastern Carolina RPO  
Jennifer Collins, Goldsboro MPO  
Daryl Vreeland, Greenville MPO  
Peggy Holland, Jacksonville MPO  
Janet Robertson, Lumber River RPO  
Joel Strickland, Mid-Carolina RPO  
Bryant Buck, Mid-East RPO  
Maurizia Chapman – Kim Maxey, New Bern Area MPO  
Bob League, Rocky Mount Urban Area MPO  
Adrienne Harrington, Wilmington MPO  
James Salmons, Upper Coastal Plain RPO  
Jeff Cabaniss, NCDOT Division Two

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**1. Approval of the Agenda**

Motion was made and seconded to approve the agenda as presented.

**2. Summary of January 21<sup>st</sup> Goldsboro Meeting**

Mr. Justin Oakes relayed that this meeting was a chance to review issues and reconsider the direction the coalition should take. Discussions pertained to the Highway 70 & 17 Commissions, and the upcoming meeting with Secretary Tata on February 13, 2015. This meeting is scheduled to be held in New Bern. Members wanted to ensure representatives will attend to discuss issues with him.

Mr. Patrick Flanagan provided additional updates:

The Highway 70 members and coalition staff wanted to meet regarding STI and the future of the coalition. This meeting was prompted in part by the upcoming visit by Secretary Tata.

Members discussed how staff in areas did with STI, covering both the positives and negatives, and getting back toward the vision that brought the coalition together initially; making connections in NC. Discussion revolved around agriculture, military, tourism, ports and how the STI doesn't effectively capture needs in these areas. This will hopefully be the main message conveyed to Secretary Tata. Representatives will also let Secretary Tata know what the STI did accomplish and what it didn't accomplish, from the formula standpoint as well as legislatively.

Pertaining to accessibility and connectivity; conveying that the criteria didn't help local areas as intended. The concern is Legislature perception is connecting rural areas to jobs in urban areas, but this didn't measure nor accomplish the goal. Multi-modal criteria didn't really help those areas.

Projects had to touch the property line of one of those assets to take advantage of the criteria.

**3. Discussion of topics for meeting with Secretary Tata**

The intent of this meeting is to create a bullet list of major topics to be presented to Secretary Tata for discussion and consideration.

Ms. Maurizia Chapman questioned what the format of the meeting with Secretary Tata will be; who will speak, who should we provide the information to. Mr. Flanagan advised he didn't have full details at this time. It was his understanding that as the meeting was set up through the Highway 70 & Highway 17 associations that a member representing these groups should receive the topics for discussion. Items need to be to the designated point person by the second Monday in February. This allows time for the individuals to familiarize themselves with requested topics and allow time for follow up if necessary prior to the meeting. All were in agreement that the meeting won't be successful if too many voices are trying to speak. Ms. Chapman has concerns that politicians may speak without knowing what's going on. This concern was reiterated by others as well.

Ms. Walsh noted that others in her group had the same concerns. As some legislatures may not understand the STI nor the scoring. Mr. Flanagan noted he understood and thus the reason for this meeting to try and get some points together for specified representatives.

Mr. Flanagan will ensure that documents are presented and points are forwarded to legislatures.

One topic of concern was that the STP-DA funds need to be pulled out of the division funds. The intent will be to stress this concern to Secretary Tata.

Ms. Walsh requested that Ferry systems be added to the list of discussion points. Mr. Flanagan agreed that these should be considered for regional funds and will add to the list of topic discussions.

Mr. Serkin requested a consensus on the topic of accessibility and connectivity. As this wasn't a success, should this be a topic discussed?

Mr. Flanagan relayed this is a topic the P 4.0 work group is currently discussing, including how it was previously laid out in SPOT, connection to jobs, as well as how to ensure proper networks to employment. As was discussed in a previous meeting regarding the statewide model, it isn't just jobs, but accessibility and connectivity to health care and hospitals, education accessibility, recreation for residents and tourists. Mr. Flanagan noted there isn't great data in identifying major tourist points being noted. Accessibility needs to be considered beyond jobs. Many of these will be drawing points on a map and members will be advocating for consideration.

Mr. Flanagan continued, noting the statewide model incorporating measuring projects is being discussed. Recently he saw a document including a network, interstate, US routes & NC routes. In the east, there are only a handful of SR routes in statewide model. Initially it was thought this would be a great tool for connectivity. The data to be forwarded for connectors may look better, but at first glance, if using the model, Mr. Flanagan recommends advocating to devoting more resources to develop the model further. He wasn't impressed with the model he was shown previously. He continued that connectors in rural areas are not impressive. SR routes carry many to food, shopping and jobs. He would like to tie this in with connectivity.

Ms. Walsh questioned if it is just NC or are they considering border states as well? Mr. Flanagan advised he didn't ask that question but it was previously explained they were taking this into account. Ms. Holland advised it wasn't discussed at the last meeting, rather major connections were discussed. Mr. Flanagan noted he will add as a discussion topic.

Mr. Serkin brought up the topic of multi-modal, questioning if this topic needs to be exempt, and was it captured by work group? Mr. Flanagan feels this is something we should definitely touch on. In list of 9 criteria, freight is one, and no formula was previously created, just thrown into multi-modal. There are things to add to the list. Only the large assets were considered viable. Now in 4.0 workgroup, general aviation airports have been added to the list. He's concerned we are trying to measure two different things; moving people and moving freight. He feels these shouldn't be included in one criteria, but should be separated. When discussing ports and military operations, these are different than moving people. It would be well served to use the model as a freight tool to show connection to ports and large facilities. The way the model has been described, we'll see the difference one project would make in freight across the state. These are within the networks of the model. The model will show how it will affect the freight movement state-wide.

Mr. Serkin agreed that the people moving criteria and freight criteria should be separate, and to use the model to calculate. Mr. Serkin voiced concern in how to incorporate freight rail into this. Mr. Flanagan noted there is a separate tool which will be used on freight to determine how much on trucks and how much the project will change that. He noted the Port of Morehead City is mostly truck traffic. With the Goldsboro bypass, which is 100 miles from port, they should be able to estimate how much more would be on trucks, how much would move to rail, and then incorporate that data into the score.

Mr. Serkin questioned how the military will be considered in the criteria? Mr. Flanagan has tried to determine this, but there have been few who have addressed it. He noted job measures will be incorporated with military bases. There is not a lot of freight in and out of military bases, therefore Mr. Flanagan questions if they need to be included in freight criteria or remain in multi-modal criteria? They may end up being in the people moving criteria.

Ms. Holland relayed that she feels the military should fall into both side, noting that even though we may not see a large freight base into individual bases, they have a large truck traffic count. With so many individuals moving in and out of the bases with moving trucks, this would equate to freight. The freight and warehousing are concerns in all military areas as well. There is freight, perhaps not what is normally is considered, but there is high freight volume from the soldier turnover. Mr. Flanagan agreed, and will request additional information on this. He would like to advocate for this as well, noting that troop convoys also need to be considered and would like to know if they are already being included in freight numbers. He will add this as another bullet point for the discussion with Secretary Tata as a consideration, but not a discussion point that may be necessary to hash out at the upcoming meeting. Ms. Chapman feels this would better be discussed in a work-group format rather than the meeting with Secretary Tata. She noted some of the military bases are larger than the NBAMPO, therefore the freight definitely needs to be taken into consideration, as well as truck routes that go directly to the bases.

Mr. Serkin noted something else to consider is the STRAHNET and how it overlaps with the statewide model. He wondered if we could give an extra boost to the military freight and military people. Mr. Flanagan relayed this is part of multi-modal right now, but could be divided out. It wouldn't affect the people-moving but would the freight criteria.

Mr. Serkin questioned how detailed the questions for Secretary Tata should be; vague or specific, noting this topic is up for discussion. He would like discussion on how to better the accessibility connectivity. Secretary Tata may suggest data to include in considerations. Mr. Serkin noted these topics are not going to be solved on a speaker phone conference call, and suggested it be agreed on broad strokes: accessibility connectivity, multi-modal, STP-DA needs to come out before division tier, ferry is regional, consistency on passenger movement locations....

Mr. Daryl Vreeland noted these are detailed bullet points, and wondered if Secretary Tata is aware of these details? Mr. Flanagan advised he is 100% aware of the details.

Ms. Walsh questioned who will present the information? Mr. Flanagan advised he will get the information to the representatives on Monday prior to the meeting. This will ensure the representatives have time to review and follow up if necessary. They will organize among themselves, discuss the items we present and ensure understanding of all before the meeting. Ms. Walsh had concerns that the meeting be steered from a regional approach rather than from an individual group approach, as if the latter, discussion may end up revolving around a specific area's project, with questions about why something didn't score better. It was agreed that type of dialogue would be counter-productive for this meeting.

Mr. Serkin noted that Mr. Flanagan mentioned agriculture, and wondered if that was captured, or if we need to capture. Mr. Flanagan advised it isn't currently captured, other than basic traffic counts. They looked at it for local methodology, looking at larger farms and assessed through their annual income. But is not sure how much freight they generate. Mr. Flanagan noted the information is captured through the TREDIS economic model. Beyond that, he isn't sure how they would capture or how to advocate for agriculture.

Mr. Rob Will noted he has been considering agriculture as well and questioned how it may fit into freight counts. Is hauling agricultural goods considered freight? Mr. Flanagan noted it is considered freight. If considering freight movement on statewide model not STRAHNET movement, there is no way to re-capture this data. The TREDIS model goes into this in more detail. If they were just to do a freight category that is based on moving only agriculture the farms would show up. Mr. Will advised he could do more detailed work on this but recommends a future type of measurement for this area, that would capture agriculture movements and where they need to be included, or if they should be considered separately. Mr. Will relayed that his area is predominately agricultural and feels this data hasn't been picked up appropriately. Including a bullet point separating this out would help capture this data which is a backbone of the NC economy.

Ms. Walsh questioned working on the evacuation route part. Her RPO feels this is a main issue especially during seasonal congestion. She noted it is hard to score but would like to include in presentation that this is a major concern for specific areas. Mr. Flanagan relayed that hurricane evacuation routes were not considered in Spot 3. Through research, he found a study done in 2005, measuring the time it would take during various tourist occupancies. This document noted that hurricane evacuations should happen in 18 or less hours, but no direction was provided to ensure who is responsible to make this time frame possible and happen. Mr. Flanagan has noted to bring this up for discussion in his next meeting, and include which criteria should this be included under? What

measure will it be? He noted the Secretary did mention hurricane evacuation routes at his first meeting, so he is aware of the concern, but may be worth mentioning again. It is not something legislature is interested in. They specifically told NCDOT they don't want to see hurricane evacuation in the SPOT process. Ms. Walsh noted this should be addressed at least through the coalition. There will be many deaths in the future if it isn't addressed and planned for. Mr. Flanagan agreed, and will have this at a high level heading in the next coalition meeting.

Mr. Serkin confirmed that hurricane evacuation should be included in the criteria for comment. No opposition.

Mr. Vreeland noted the hurricane evacuation topic brings the conversation back to major roads. Mr. Flanagan agreed, noting they are concerned with making the larger connections, as this will tie back to everything we do helps in multiple areas. Mr. Vreeland relayed that every group has their specific needs unique to their area and wishes the DOT would adjust their scoring by division to accommodate these needs. Mr. Flanagan advised we took advantage of the option given to us and we get to pick what to consider and how the criteria is measured for each area. We may get there eventually, but part of the advantage of adding criteria such as freight, is heavily factored in different areas. Mr. Serkin noted if we get criteria tweaks that will highlight our own areas, we expect will benefit us more than the statewide formula. Mr. Flanagan agreed this is correct.

Mr. Vreeland feels this brings us back to the same thing we had; even regional is such a large area there are many differences in needs. Mr. Flanagan agreed, noting at least this time we have some data we can run to figure out what will be best for us. Last time we were unable to do this. Through the work group, if we can get individual criteria to do what we hope, it's up to us to come together and determine which criteria we all want to support heavily. It is a large area, we have to balance RPOs and MPOs and projects in the same area, but need to continue to take advantage of our abilities to score.

Ms. Chapman noted this is a conversation we will have later as well, and doesn't have anything to do with preparing for the meeting with Secretary Tata. Mr. Flanagan confirmed but noted we may want to specify we want that ability to continue doing this, without details to the Secretary. Mr. Serkin noted to add to bullet list for discussion, the opportunity to continue our own weight-measurement criteria.

#### **Points:**

- Accessibility Connectivity: Would like to convey that this was not successfully addressed, as well as expanding focus to health care, education and recreation. The work group has discussed using the new statewide model to calculate this, however the statewide model includes very few SR routes and this model would not serve division projects until SR routes are included in the model. Model needs to be vastly expanded before we are comfortable using it.
- Multi-modal/Division of people moving/fright movement/military freight: Discerning what should be included in this formula. Would like to see current multi-modal criteria split into two areas; one for people moving (rail and transit depots, multi-modal centers) and one for freight movement (agriculture, ports). Additionally would like to see military facilities considered in multi-modal and freight criteria.
- Hurricane evacuation route: This is not included in the SPOT process but is a major concern in our areas. Need direction on which criteria this falls under and requires additional planning.
- Scoring Own criteria at Statewide level: Continue to have opportunity to come up with own regional and division weights by criteria laid out by SPOT process. Utilized this during SPOT 3 and would like to continue
- STP-DA: Would like to see funds taken off the top of all STI funding before it is distributed in the Statewide, Regional and Division 40/30/30 split.
- Ferry Systems: Would like to see all ferry projects eligible at the regional impact level as well as the division needs level.

Mr. Flanagan advised since NBAMPO is taking minutes, they can provide the list of discussion topics to those requesting the information.

Any additional thoughts please send to Mr. Oakes.

#### **4: Next meeting date**

Mr. Flanagan noted they would like to look at the SPOT schedule. He recommended everything be presented to BOT again and suggested meeting prior to the BOT being presented with the information.

The SPOT schedule will be reviewed to determine exact dates, but he expects it will not be prior to March. Follow up with this will take place in late February.

**5. Adjournment – 12:00pm**