Beyond the RPO:

RPO Planners and their role outside the DOT World

Communities Transforming
For a healthier North Carolina

EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA MPO/RPO COALITION

17 Highway 17 Association

VIDANT HEALTH™

Safe Kids USA

KATE B. REYNOLDS CHARITABLE TRUST
Investing in Impact

N.C. DIVISION OF COASTAL MANAGEMENT

North Carolina Parks & Recreation Trust Fund

Thursday January 30, 2014

RPO 101

Raleigh, N.C.

The other side of RPO Planners

- While being the liaison between the NCDOT and the local governments the RPO serves is the primary task RPO Planners face each day, Planners can also serve as a useful resource for their communities through working with groups other than the DOT.

- As RPO's already work from a regional perspective, their insights and knowledge are often useful and make their participation on regional stakeholder workgroups a win/win for both the RPO and the workgroup.

Participation with Regional Partners

- While serving as an RPO Planner, regional partnerships have been developed with the following organizations:
  - Area Transit Boards
  - Economic Development Boards (CEDS Report)
  - NC Community Transformation Grant – Active Living Action Group
  - KB Reynolds Charitable Trust
  - Transportation Advocacy Groups
    - Southern Albemarle Association
    - Highway 17 Association
    - Eastern NC MPO/RPO Coalition
  - Local Health Departments and Hospitals (Safe Kids USA)

Area Transit Boards

- While being in tune with your area transit providers is absolutely essential during times of update to Transit Planning documents, it is valuable to be involved year-round if possible.

- Attending your providers Board Meetings is one of the best ways to stay informed of the services being provided as well as hear the issues in which each provider faces.

- Maintaining open communication lines with transit providers can benefit both the RPO and Transit Provider (ex: grants)

Economic Development

- Staying in tune with your area Economic Developers is a beneficial and important task in which each RPO Planner should do.
- Transportation and Industry can have direct impacts on one another, therefore, coordination is essential when looking at project needs in a region.

Examples:

- ❖ New Industry is recruited to county within RPO; improvements are needed to roadway at new facility; RPO endorses improvements to roadway as it industry positively impacts economy in the RPO Region

- ❖ RPO's can assist in the preparation of regional Economic Development Reports (Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy)

NC Community Transformation Grant- Active Living Group and **KB Reynolds Charitable Trust**

- Throughout North Carolina, the Community Transformation Grant initiative is underway, pulling together local and regional governmental staff in regions throughout the state to work toward building healthier communities.
- One of the three subgroups in each region is the Active Living Team, which typically consist of Planners and Recreation Staff, along with area health department staff.
- While perhaps not initially obvious, this group and this grant initiative can be very beneficial to transportation.
- KB Reynolds Charitable Trust (available in a few counties, but with plans to expand) offer funding for many of the same things.

Examples

- Funding for Local and Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans
- Funding to assist Counties/Communities in completing Land Use Plans
  - Martin County needed LUP to become eligible for Comprehensive Transportation Plan

Transportation Advocacy Groups

- Throughout North Carolina, there are numerous groups, both at the municipal and regional level, that meet to advocate for transportation needs for their area.

  Examples
  - Highway Associations (Highway 17, Highway 70, ect.)
  - Coalitions (Eastern North Carolina MPO/RPO)
    - Instrumental in establishment of alternative Regional and Division Scoring Criteria in Prioritization 3.0
  - Regional Associations (Southern Albemarle)
    - Group of interested citizens in the northeast region of the state; advocate for the transportation needs in their communities and region as a whole

- Participation in these groups meetings can enlighten RPO Planners as to the needs of the area, and bring to their attention issues they did not know existed.

Local Health Departments and Hospitals

- Mentioned briefly earlier, coordination between local Health officials and Planners is on the rise through the Community Transformation Grant as more and more communities seek to integrate health considerations into plans.

- Through coordination with Health Department staff, health considerations are now being included in not only Land Use Plans, but other plans including Bicycle and Pedestrian and Parks & Recreation.

- As many of these plan promote active living and alternatives to vehicular transportation, especially among youths, local hospital injury prevention staff is now becoming involved, especially in Pedestrian Planning. Coordination between these groups and RPO Planners can benefit local communities.

Example:

- Town of Farmville received funding for a Pedestrian Plan, which is being prepared by the RPO; through this process, the RPO become familiar with the Injury Prevention group at the area hospital and their work to improve pedestrian safety around local schools through a Safe Kids USA Grant they received. Planners were then able to work with Injury Prevention staff to build off of their work.

Grant Writing

- Through involvement with regional partners, RPO Planners can more easily find out about grant opportunities they may not now of otherwise. Examples of grants in which we have assisted include:

    - NCDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant
    - North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund
    - NC Coastal Management Program Public Access Grant
    - NC Community Transformation Grant
    - KB Reynolds Charitable Trust

Questions?