

NORTH CAROLINA RURAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS

**John Marshall, RPO Coordinator
Unifour Rural Planning Organization
Hickory, North Carolina**



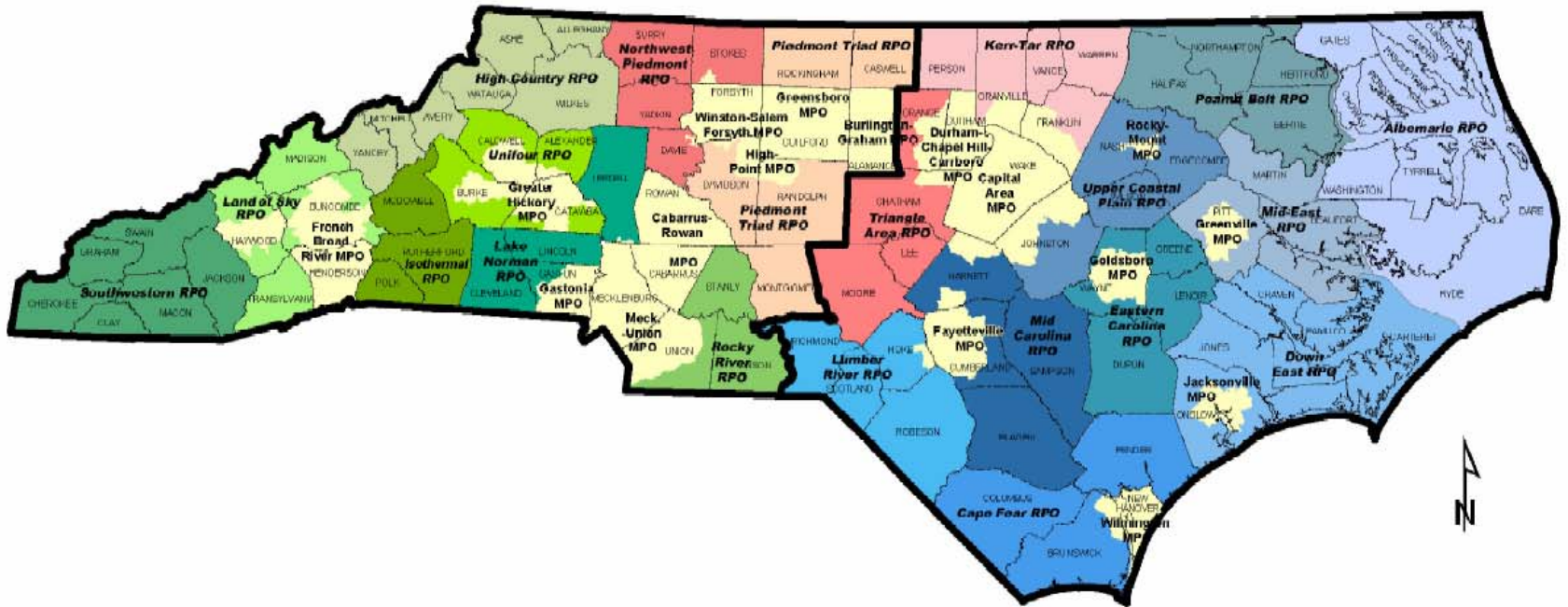
Areas Represented

- ▶ Contiguous Areas of three to fifteen Counties
 - Must have at least 50,000 population according to Office of State Planning
 - Not all Municipalities in a proposed RPO must join the organization but the County must be a member in the RPO

NC Transportation Planning

- ▶ Twenty RPOs
- ▶ Seventeen MPOs
- ▶ First RPO Chartered in August 2001
- ▶ Last RPO Chartered in January 2003

North Carolina Rural Planning Organizations and Metropolitan Planning Organizations



Legend

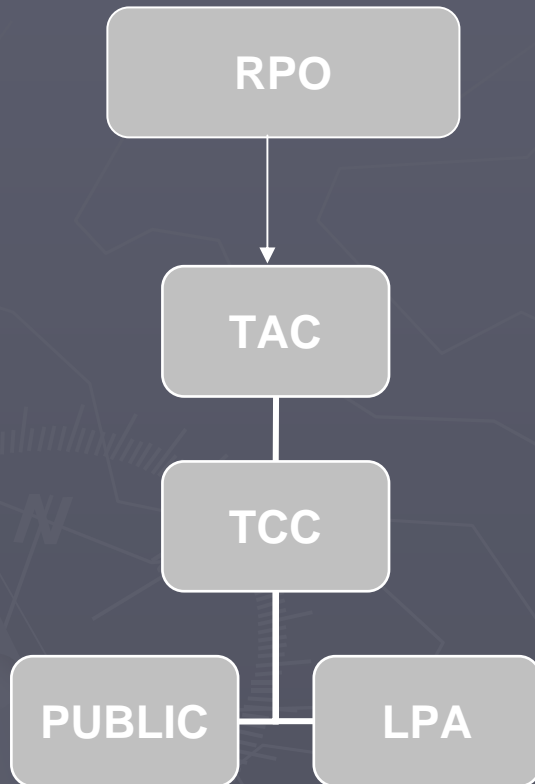
Yellow square icon: MPO_Boundaries



Map Created by
North Carolina
Department of Transportation
Transportation Planning Branch
December 13, 2005



NC RPO STRUCTURE



RTAC – Transportation Advisory Committee -- Local Elected Officials, DOT Board of Transportation Members; **MAKES POLICY AFFECTING RPO PLANNING REGION**

RTCC – Transportation Coordinating Committee -- Local Planners, County Managers, Town Managers, Transit Providers, Local Transportation Committee Representatives, NCDOT Engineers, Economic Development Officials; **MAKES TECHNICAL RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE TAC**

LPA – Lead Planning Agency -- **ACTS AS STAFF TO THE RPO**

NC RPO STRUCTURE

- ▶ Funded through NC Highway Trust Fund
Administrative Budget
- ▶ State funding only
- ▶ 80% State funds matched by 20% Local
funds
- ▶ \$80,000 - \$110,000 in planning funds per
RPO provided by NC DOT each year

Benefits of a Rural Planning Organization

- ▶ Serves as a link to an ongoing relationship with NCDOT
- ▶ Will allow for consistent Public involvement
- ▶ Allows the Rural community to advise the Department in projects added to the STIP
- ▶ Serves as a valuable resource of information regarding transportation issues
- ▶ Provides a unified voice for the region

Rural Planning Organization Four Core Duties

- ▶ Developing long range local and regional transportation plans
- ▶ Providing a forum for public participation in the transportation planning process
- ▶ Developing and prioritizing projects the organization believes should be included in the TIP
- ▶ Providing transportation related information to local governments

These are the core duties that must be provided but the organization is not limited to only these and can provide other duties

Obstacles

- ▶ Legislation Created Four Core Duties – Details to accomplish these duties are sometimes vague
- ▶ When RPOs were created there was a certain level of skepticism that they might just be another level of bureaucracy in getting transportation projects approved
- ▶ Many of the RPOs work elements were modeled after the MPOs but some were not applicable due to the MPOs urban nature
- ▶ Future funding source

Positives

- ▶ Some transportation duties decentralized from DOT.
 - CMAQ Applications
 - Transportation Enhancement Applications
- ▶ RPO's higher levels of responsibility and offer increased assistance to DOT in day-to-day planning tasks
- ▶ GIS improved for all RPOs
- ▶ Support from MPOs vital to the success of the RPOs

NC RPO Work Programs

- ▶ Modeled after the MPO Structure
 - Annual Planning Work Program adopted by RTAC
 - Five-Year Planning Calendar adopted annually by RTAC
 - Prospectus and Planning Work Program adapted from MPOs

NC RPO WORK PROGRAMS

► Deliverables Are Required

- Maps
- Traffic counts
- Public outreach materials
- TIP project priority list
- Transportation Plan priority list
- Meeting agendas/minutes
- Planning documents

NC RPO PARTNERSHIPS

- ▶ Partners with NCDOT
 - RPO Coordinators
 - Statewide RPO Coordinator
 - NC Board of Transportation Members
 - Division/District Offices

NC RPO PARTNERSHIPS

- ▶ Metropolitan Planning Organizations
 - 20 MPOs in North Carolina
 - Statewide MPO Conference
- ▶ Rural Planning Organizations
 - 17 RPO's in North Carolina
 - All 100 Counties covered by a transportation planning organization

NC RPO Association

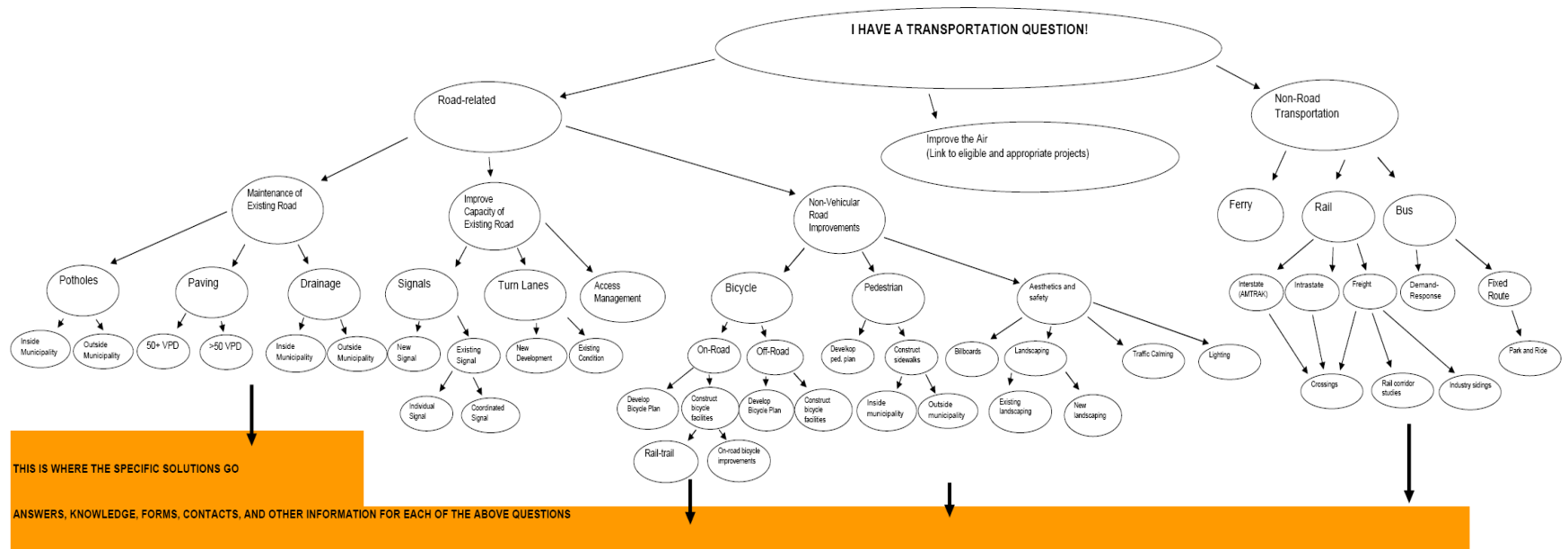
- ▶ NC Association of RPOs
 - Formalized in 2003 with officers and bylaws
 - Membership from all 20 RPOs RTCCs
 - Quarterly Meetings
 - Statewide projects

NC RPO Association

▶ NCARPO: Subcommittees

- Executive Committee
- GIS Subcommittee
- Legislative Subcommittee
- Transportation Finance Subcommittee

NC RPO Website



► NCARPO: Transportation Finance Project

- Decision Tree
- Website



Collaboration

▶ Collaboration Project

- NCDOT

- RPOs

- MPOs

NC RPOs: What's Next?

- ▶ Improved PWP process
- ▶ Institutionalized in NC Processes
- ▶ State or Self Certification
- ▶ Additional Funding
- ▶ Individual TIP meetings with Board of Transportation Members