

**Prospectus
for
Continuing Transportation Planning
for the
Upper Coastal Plain Rural Planning Organization**

Prepared by:

Statewide Planning Branch
North Carolina Department of Transportation

In cooperation with the:

County of Edgecombe	Town of Momeyer
County of Johnston	Town of Pine Level
County of Nash	Town of Pinetops
County of Wilson	Town of Princeton
Town of Bailey	Town of Princeville
Town of Benson	Town of Red Oak
Town of Black Creek	Town of Saratoga
Town of Castalia	Town of Selma
Town of Clayton	Town of Sharpsburg
Town of Conetoe	Town of Sims
Town of Dortches	Town of Smithfield
Town of Elm City	Town of Speed
Town of Four Oaks	Town of Spring Hope
Town of Kenly	Town of Stantonsburg
Town of Leggett	Town of Tarboro
Town of Lucama	Town of Whitakers
Town of Macclesfield	City of Wilson
Town of Micro	Town of Wilson's Mills
Town of Middlesex	Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments

Approved by Upper Coastal Plain RPO

_____, 2003

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Counties of Upper Coastal Plain Rural Planning Organization (UCPRPO), Edgecombe, Johnston, Nash, and Wilson, and the North Carolina Department of Transportation participate in a continuing transportation planning process in the UCPRPO as allowed under G.S. 136-210. A Memorandum of Understanding approved by the counties and the North Carolina Department of Transportation establishes the general operating procedures and responsibilities by which transportation plans are developed and continuously evaluated.

The Prospectus contained herein is primarily a reference document for the transportation planning staff. Its purpose is to provide sufficiently detailed descriptions of work tasks so that staff and agencies responsible for doing the work understand what needs to be done, how it is to be done, and who does it.

A secondary purpose of the Prospectus is to provide sufficient documentation of planning work tasks and the planning organization and procedures so that documentation is minimized in a required annual Planning Work Program (PWP). The PWP identifies the planning work tasks that are to be accomplished in the upcoming fiscal year and serves as a funding document for the North Carolina Department of Transportation.

The Rural Planning Organization (RPO) is responsible for carrying out the transportation planning process in the Upper Coastal Plain RPO. The RPO is an organization consisting of the representatives of general purpose county government; local government; the North Carolina Department of Transportation; a Rural Transportation Advisory Committee; a Rural Technical Coordinating Committee; and the various agencies and units of county, local, and State government participating in transportation planning for the area.

The respective governing boards (the municipal governing boards or County Boards of Commissioners) make policy decisions for local agencies of government. The Board of Transportation makes policy decisions for the North Carolina Department of Transportation. The county governing board, the municipal governing board and the N.C. Department of Transportation have implementation authority for construction, improvement, and maintenance of streets and highways.

The Memorandum of Understanding established a Rural Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) composed of representatives from the policy boards to provide policy direction for the planning process, and to improve communications and coordination between the several Policy Boards. The RTAC is responsible for (1) review and approval of the PWP; (2) review and approval of the area's Rural Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) which ensures coordination between local and State programs; (3) review of the National Highway System, review of the Functional Classification Designation (as it pertains to the Surface Transportation Program) and review and approval of the Rural Planning Boundary; (4) endorsement, review, and approval of the Prospectus; (5) guidance on transportation goals and objectives; and (6) review and approval of changes to the adopted RPO's Long-Range

Transportation Plan. As required by North Carolina General Statutes 136-66.2, revisions to the Transportation Plan must be jointly approved by the local governing boards and the North Carolina Department of Transportation.

A Technical Coordinating Committee (RTCC), also established by the Memorandum of Understanding, is responsible for supervision, guidance, and coordination of the continuing planning process, and for making recommendations to the county, local, and State governmental agencies and the Rural Transportation Advisory Committee regarding any necessary action. The RTCC is also responsible for review of the National Highway System and for development, review, and recommendation for approval of the Prospectus, PWP, TIP, Designation (as it pertains to the Surface Transportation Program), Rural Planning Organization revisions, and technical reports of the transportation study. The membership of the RTCC consists of, but is not limited to, key staff from the North Carolina Department of Transportation, the regional Council of Governments, Federal Highway Administration, the counties, transit operators, and the municipalities.

The Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments is designated as the Lead Planning Agency (LPA) and is primarily responsible for annual preparation of the Planning Work Program and Rural Transportation Improvement Program. The Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments is the primary local recipient of planning funds received from NCDOT for the Upper Coastal Plain Rural Planning Organization (RPO).

Transportation planning work is divided into two elements in the Prospectus according to type of activity:

Continuing Transportation Planning, Chapter II
Administration, Chapter III

Citizen participation is an important element of the transportation planning process and is achieved by making study documents and information available to the public and by actively seeking citizen participation during the planning process. Involvement is sought through such techniques as goals and objective surveys, neighborhood forums, drop-in centers, workshops, seminars, and public hearings. Elected or appointed county and town representatives and municipal and county planning boards should serve as primary sources in gaining public understanding and support for the transportation planning activity.

The history and status of transportation planning is given in Appendix A. The following are contact agencies for information concerning the transportation planning process in the Upper Coastal Plain RPO.

Contacts:

Ann S. Whitley
Transportation Planner
Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments
P. O. Drawer 2748
Rocky Mount, NC, North Carolina 27802
Telephone: 252-446-0411
Fax: 252-446-5651
Email: awhitley@ucpcog.org

Earlene Thomas
Transportation Engineer, Upper Coastal Plain RPO Coordinator
Statewide Planning Branch
N. C. Department of Transportation
1554 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1554
Telephone: 919-733-4705
Fax: 919-733-2417

Jim Trogdon, PE, Division Engineer
P. O. Box 3165
Wilson, North Carolina
Telephone: 252-237-6164 ext.2100
Fax: 252-234-6174

II. CONTINUING TRANSPORTATION PLANNING WORK PROGRAM METHODOLOGY, RESPONSIBILITIES AND SCHEDULES

The continuing transportation planning work tasks are described here and in Chapter III. Appendix A details the history of transportation planning in the area

A. Surveillance of Inventory Data

A number of conditions generally need to be continuously surveyed and compiled annually to determine whether previous projections are still valid or whether plan assumptions need to be changed. Surveillance tasks are described in the following sections and agency responsibilities are listed in Table 1.

1. Traffic Volume Counts

The Statewide Planning Branch is responsible for obtaining counts at specified locations on other segments of the major street system, for updating the count location map biannually to reflect any changes made in the major street system, for preparing the Annual Average Daily Traffic Volume Map, and for sending this information to the Lead Planning Agency. The RPO may review the count maps and suggest any changes. The RPO may also perform special counts, either in house or under contract, to support transportation planning activities.

2. Status of Transportation Plans

The RPO should maintain an inventory of current transportation plans for the area.

3. Street System Inventory

Records on improvements to the state highway system, whether planned, underway, or completed, are maintained by the Division Engineer of the NCDOT. Each area should maintain inventory of the existing major street system for the

planning area. Periodically or as changes or additions to the major street system occur, the inventory may be updated.

4. Traffic Accidents

North Carolina law requires that any traffic accident involving personal injury and/or property damage in excess of \$1000.00 be reported in detail to the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) of the NCDOT. The DMV also receives a detailed report on any accident investigated by a law officer. Copies of all these reports are forwarded to the Traffic Engineering Branch of the Division of Highways, where the information is summarized and stored. Annual analyses will compare each year's high accident locations to previous years' high accident locations.

The Traffic Engineering Branch will provide the Annual Highway Safety Program Listing Report on request.

5. Transit System Data

Items to be considered are transit patronage, route changes, service miles, load factor, route ridership changes, boarding and alighting counts, headways, frequency, and service hours.

6. Dwelling Unit, Population, and Employment Changes

Changes in population and development across the area will be identified and evaluated to determine necessary restructuring of transportation services to meet current and forecasted demand. Census data, local parcel, zoning, and tax data records; Employment Security Commission; and private vendors are acceptable sources of information for this purpose. This item may include the development and maintenance of a GIS database.

7. Air Travel

Data may be collected and analyzed to determine influence of local air travel on the area's transportation system and identify needs for additional services. Airport entrance traffic counts would help relate air travel to ground travel in future updates. A ground transportation survey is a good example of this.

8. Vehicle Occupancy Rates (Counts)

Vehicle occupancy counts are collected across the service area to measure effectiveness of transit projects. Information will also be used to comply with the Clean Air Act and is useful in the trip generating process of modeling traffic during the travel modeling phase, as well as other parts of the Long-Range Transportation Plan.

9. Mapping/Data inventory

The creation and maintenance of base maps, zone maps, land use, transportation plans etc. for the area. The RPO may also serve as a data warehouse for the various sources of planning data available.

10. Central Area Parking Inventory

Inventories of both on- and off-street parking supply in the cities and towns within Upper Coastal Plain RPO may be maintained by the Lead Planning Agency. Periodic updates and inventories of other parking facilities in other areas will be performed as determined by the RPO through the development of the Planning Work Program. Data collected should include parking policies, ownership, and rates.

11. Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Inventory

An inventory of significant municipal, state, and federal bicycle and pedestrian transportation facilities shall be maintained. These systems shall be incorporated in the Long-Range Transportation Plan update and analyzed in conjunction with other transportation elements.

TABLE 1

Back of Table 1

B. Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

Federal Law (as updated by TEA-21) requires participation of local officials and the public in the transportation planning process. NCDOT's Rural Planning Regulations require RPOs to develop long-range local and regional multi-modal transportation plans in cooperation with the area MPO and the North Carolina Department of Transportation. Long-Range Transportation Plan is: local and regional, multi-modal, a minimum 20 year horizon, adhere to the RPO's adopted public involvement policy, have growth forecasts consistent with latest local land use plan. The physical product of this LRTP will be in one or more assembled documents containing all plan elements and will be the responsibility of the RPO.

Evaluation of the overall Long-Range Transportation Plan should be undertaken at such time that the surveillance items indicate that travel or land development trends have begun to deviate significantly from forecasts or at such time that new data are required for facility design.

TEA-21 stresses "seven planning factors" that should be considered by the RPOs to guide the development of the LRTP. They are:

- Support the economic vitality of the community, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity and efficiency;
- Increase the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- Increase the accessibility and mobility options available to people and freight;
- Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve quality of life;
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight;
- Promote efficient system management and operations; and
- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

The RTCC prepares recommendations for work required for plan reappraisal for review and approval by the RTAC. Agency responsibilities for various work tasks in the Long-Range Transportation Plan evaluation elements are given in Table 2. The following work elements may be required depending upon the depth of the studies needed.

1. Collection of Data

Collection of the following variables for existing conditions is required: (1) population; (2) housing units; and (3) employment. It is expected that re-projection of travel patterns, including transit, would require a re-tabulation of these factors used in developing the travel plans. A GIS database may be used to maintain housing and land use information. The RPO will normally be responsible for providing socioeconomic data in spreadsheet form to SWP.

2. Collection of Network Data

Collection of the following variables describing the existing street system is necessary to build a base network for the travel model: 1) posted speed limit; 2) width/lanes; 3) segment length; 4) traffic signal locations. These items are generally the standard parameters required, but others may be needed as models become more sophisticated. The network development process is included in this task item.

3. Travel Surveys

These surveys may be implemented to attain such items as origins and destinations, travel behavior, transit ridership, commercial vehicle usage, workplace commuting, freight movement, etc. Therefore, these surveys may be home interviews, cordon O/Ds, and on-board transit to name a few.

New surveys will be conducted at such time as is necessary for the reevaluation of travel plans. Because these surveys are very cost prohibitive, the survey responsibility and funding sources will be determined at the onset of the study.

4. Forecast of Data to Future Year

In general, the procedure will be to project population and socio-economic factors on an areawide basis, to cross check these projections and convert them to land use quantities if required, and to distribute the projected planning data to areas on the basis of land capabilities, accessibility, and community goals as implemented through land use controls. The RPO will provide the approved socioeconomic forecasts.

5. Community Goals and Objectives

In the evaluation of community goals and objectives, the RPO will formulate policies ensuring local goals and objectives are discerned and addressed during the development and implementation of the Long-Range Transportation Plan.

6. Forecasts of Future Travel Patterns

The forecast of future travel patterns will result from using the forecasted planning data as input to the travel forecast. The forecast of travel patterns will include a review and comparison to community goals and objectives.

7. Capacity Deficiency Analysis

A system planning level capacity deficiency analysis will be made to determine existing and projected street deficiencies.

Link capacities will be calculated in accordance with procedures based on the latest edition of the HIGHWAY CAPACITY MANUAL, Special Report 209, Highway Research Board, National Academy of Sciences, National Research Board.

8. Highway Element of the LRTP

The Highway element of the LRTP will be evaluated in terms of projected travel, capacity deficiencies, travel safety, physical conditions, costs, design, travel time, and possible disruption of people, businesses, neighborhoods, community facilities, and the environment. The evaluation will include an analysis of the Long-Range Transportation Plan and the interrelationship between alternative travel modes. Recommendations should include adequate right-of-way for improvements consistent with the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan, Transit Plan and other intermodal connection facilities along logical corridors. If major deficiencies are found with the existing plan, alternative plans will be evaluated. Alternatives that may be considered include (1) a Do-Nothing Alternative, (2) Alternative Modes, (3) Travel Demand Management, and (4) Alternative Design: Types and Standards.

9. Transit Element of the LRTP

Transit planning incorporates all vehicular modes other than trucks and the single occupant automobile, including (but not limited to) fixed-route bus service, ridesharing, fixed-guideway transit, and demand responsive transit. The transit plan describes existing transit service and unmet needs, and identifies any additional potential markets. New types, and areas of service may be recommended, supported by ridership forecasts and other analyses. Assumptions and implications related to land use, travel behavior, parking policies and other variables are clearly defined. Establishing objective measures of effectiveness is critical for evaluating transit alternatives. Measures of transit effectiveness include both the reduction of auto use and congestion, and the broadening of mobility options.

10. Bicycle and Pedestrian Element of LRTP

A bikeway and pedestrian plan is an essential part of the multi-modal LRTP for the area. The report entitled, Incorporating Bicycle and Pedestrian Elements into Transportation Plans, produced by the Statewide Planning Branch, describes the essentials of this task. At a minimum, an update to the inventory of existing and proposed bicycle and pedestrian elements should be included in the LRTP.

11. Airport/Air Travel Element of LRTP

The Airport Master Plan may be coordinated with the RPO (where applicable), and be an element of the LRTP.

12. Collector Street Element of LRTP

Collector street planning will be conducted as required to develop standards and preliminary locations for collector streets in advance of development. The objective of this planning activity is to ensure optimum traffic operations for the developing street system and transit accessibility to developing areas.

13. Rail, Waterway, or Other Mode of the LRTP

Some RPOs may have additional transportation elements that link to the multi-modal LRTP. The RPO should provide documentation to be included in the LRTP.

14. Freight Movement/Mobility Planning

As one of the TEA-21's seven planning factors, emphasis is placed on increasing accessibility and mobility options available to people and freight. Tasks included in this Category may be a survey of freight carriers, recommendations for improving truck mobility or train/truck intermodal movements, and identifying acceptable truck routes.

15. Financial Planning

The Thoroughfare Plan and the State's Thoroughfare Plan should be financially responsive for the area. The RPO should develop a financial plan for the implementation of their LRTP. This item also covers identifying new and alternative funding sources, including new taxing strategies, impact fees, and public-private partnerships.

16. Congestion Management Strategies

TEA-21, stresses efficient system management and operations. Planning for congestion management strategies such as these below are included in this item.

- a. Transportation Demand Management (TDM)
- b. Intelligent Transportation System (ITS)
- c. High Occupancy Vehicle lanes or priorities (HOV)
- d. Access Control and Management
- e. Traffic Operations Improvements, Incident Management
- f. Growth Management

This item covers the costs associated with planning for these items, coordination with public and private stakeholders, and marketing or public education.

17. Air Quality Planning/Conformity Analysis

The transportation sector is a key participant in the development and application of the State Implementation Plan (SIP) for air quality. RPOs have the responsibility to make a determination as to whether or not transportation plans, programs, and projects conform to the intent of the SIP. Tasks involved in this pursuit include, but are not limited to:

- a. Participation in interagency consultation process as part of SIP development and conformity determination development
- b. Providing assistance to NCDENR in developing and maintaining mobile source emission inventories,

- c. Participating in development of TCMs for the SIP
- d. Implementation of TCMs as appropriate
- e. Performing analysis and approving conformity determination* as required; Actual responsibility for performing the analysis will be determined through interagency consultation.

*RTAC must approve conformity determination

III. ADMINISTRATION

The administration of the planning process is organized into five areas. The Planning Work Program is prepared each year and details what work will be completed for the next fiscal year. The State Transportation Improvement Program is prepared on a biennial cycle, and details a seven-year program of transportation improvements that are jointly funded and implemented with the NCDOT. The remaining sections are Civil Rights and Regulatory Compliance, Incidental Planning and Project Development, and Management and Operations. Agency responsibilities for administrative work tasks are given in Table 3.

A. Planning Work Program

A Planning Work Program (PWP) will be prepared annually by the Lead Planning Agency in cooperation with other participating agencies and under the guidance of the Rural Technical Coordinating Committee. The PWP will present the proposed planning work program for the next year and review the recent accomplishments of the planning process. The PWP will be cross-referenced to the Prospectus to minimize repetitive documentation. The PWP will be reviewed and approved by the Rural Transportation Advisory Committee, by the State and Regional intergovernmental review process, and the North Carolina Department of Transportation, which provides planning funds for continuing transportation planning. These State planning funds are provided by NCDOT.

B. Transportation Improvement Program

NCDOT's Rural Planning Regulations require RPOs to develop and prioritize suggestions for transportation projects, which the Rural Transportation Planning Organization believes should be included in the State Transportation Improvement Program.

Prepared every two years, the State TIP is a seven-year multi-modal program which identifies transportation improvements recommended for advancement during the program period, identifies priorities, groups improvements into staging periods, includes estimated costs and revenues, and is fiscally constrained.

The RPO Priority Needs List is developed biennially to communicate the RPO's priorities (both regional and local) regarding the funding schedule on already programmed projects, the acceleration of long term projects into the program, and the addition of new projects to the STIP. The List may include cost estimates, purpose and need statements, and other supporting materials. The Priority Needs List is a key step in cooperative TIP development between the RPO, the transit operator, and NCDOT.

C. Civil Rights Compliance (Title VI) and Other Regulatory Requirements

1. Title VI

Provide update of Civil Rights statistics report for submittal to FTA to determine RPO compliance to civil rights provisions. Title VI states: The RPO shall comply with all the requirements imposed by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (78 Stat. 252), 49 U.S.C. 2000D TO 2000-D-4; the Regulations of DOT issued thereafter in the Code of Federal Regulations (commonly and herein referred to as CFR) Title 49, Subtitle A, Part 21), and the assurance by the RPO pursuant thereto.

2. Environmental Justice

Executive Order (E. O.) 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations, requires all Federal agencies to identify and address Title VI and Environmental Justice requirements. Recipients of federal funds, including NCDOT and the RPOs, must assure compliance with these requirements. As mandated by the FHWA, planning activities should focus on complying with E. O. 12898 and the three basic principles of Environmental Justice as follows:

- a. ensure public involvement of low-income and minority groups in decision making;
- b. prevent disproportionately high and adverse impacts to low-income and minority groups resulting from decisions made; and
- c. assure low-income and minority groups receive a proportionate share of benefits resulting from decisions made.

3. Indirect and Cumulative Impact Analysis

Provide data as necessary to support NCDOT's analysis of Indirect and Cumulative Impacts. Impacts may be defined as present and future actions that are reasonably foreseeable that are as a result of transportation projects.

4. Minority Business Enterprise Planning (MBE)

There is a continuing need to address the Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) as a part of the planning and programming phases of project development. Areas are encouraged to give full consideration to the potential services that could be provided by MBEs in the development of transit plans and programs, and the provision of transit service. Transit properties with established MBE programs are encouraged to work with

RPOs, utilizing transportation planning funds to update existing MBE programs as necessary.

5. Planning for the Elderly and Disabled

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) ensures that persons with disabilities enjoy access to the mainstream of American life. The ADA expands on the Section 504 program to comprehensively address mobility needs of persons with disabilities.

Joint FHWA and FTA regulations require that the urban transportation planning process include activities specifically emphasizing the planning, development, evaluation and reevaluation of transportation facilities and services for the elderly and disabled, consistent with ADA. This process should include an analysis of inventories of disabled persons, their locations, and special transportation services needed. These regulations emphasize estimation of travel needs through statistical analysis and a self-identification process.

Both thoroughfare and transit planning activities should focus on complying with the key provisions of the ADA, and include special efforts to plan transportation facilities and services that can be effectively utilized by persons with limited mobility, such as:

- a. Public transit authorities providing fixed route transit service must provide comparable level paratransit service to disabled individuals who cannot otherwise use the fixed route service;
- b. Transit authorities providing elderly and disabled oriented demand responsive service must also buy or lease accessible vehicles unless it can be demonstrated that the system provides a level of service to the disabled equivalent to that provided to the general public; and
- c. New facilities built must be accessible and existing facilities with major alterations must be made accessible to the maximum extent feasible.
- d. Planning for better mobility through such items as wheelchair curb cuts, longer pedestrian crosswalk times at certain intersections, and special parking spaces and rates for cars with one or more transportation disadvantaged occupant(s).

6. Safety/Drug Control Planning

RPOs may pass planning funds through to transit operators for use in performing safety audits and in the resultant development of safety/ security improvement and in alcohol/drug control planning, programming, and implementation. Attention should be

given to the development of policies and planning for the proper safety related maintenance of transit vehicles, fire safety, substance abuse where it affects employee performance in critical safety related jobs, emergency preparedness to improve the capability to respond to transit accidents/incidents, security to reduce theft and vandalism of transit property and to counter potential politically motivated terrorism directed against transit users, facilities, and equipment.

7. Public Involvement

An effective public involvement process provides for an open exchange of information and ideas between the public and transportation decision-makers. The overall objective of an area's public involvement process is that it be proactive, provide complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and opportunities for early and continuing involvement (23CFR450.212(a) and 450.316(b)(1)). It also provides mechanisms for the agency or agencies to solicit public comments and ideas, identify circumstances and impacts which may not have been known or anticipated by public agencies, and, by doing so, to build support among the public who are stakeholders in transportation investments which impact their communities. The RPO should have a formalized, written and adopted public involvement process.

8. Private Sector Participation

Federal regulations require that private operators be afforded the "maximum feasible opportunity" to participate in the planning and provision of local transportation services. The purpose of the private sector participation requirement is to give private operators the opportunity to initiate involvement. In an effort to more effectively address this requirement, the evaluation of private sector service alternatives has been incorporated into the transportation planning process.

The general criteria for making public/private service decisions may include but is not limited to:

- a. comparative cost of private versus public services in similar situations;
- b. perceived quality and reliability of service;
- c. local control of services;
- d. responsiveness and flexibility of operators; and
- e. private operator financial stability.

D. Incidental Planning and Project Development

1. Transportation Enhancement Planning

This category of federal funding began with ISTEA and was carried through in TEA-21 legislation. RPO assistance to applicants, review of applications, and preparing endorsements is included under this item. The RPO may review and comment on all proposed enhancement projects for inclusion in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) prior to being forwarded to NCDOT for consideration of inclusion in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Sponsoring agencies must submit completed application packages to the NCDOT for consideration by the Transportation Enhancement Committee.

2. Environmental Analysis and Pre-TIP Planning

It is anticipated that the evaluation will be evaluated in the following areas: efficiency in serving travel demands; energy conservation; cost; and impact on the physical, social, and economic environment. The physical environmental evaluation will include air quality, water quality, soils and geology, wildlife and vegetation. The social environmental considerations will include housing and community cohesion, low-income and minority populations, noise, churches and educational facilities, parks and recreational facilities, historic sites, public health and safety, national defense, and aesthetics. Effects on business, employment and income, land development patterns, and public utilities will be studied as part of the economic environmental evaluation.

The RTCC, LPA, Statewide Planning Branch and Resource Agencies will jointly recommend projects for Pre-TIP Planning. The RTAC will be kept informed concerning the results of these studies. Public review will be incorporated as part of the alternatives analysis.

3. Special Studies

During annual reevaluation of the Long-Range Transportation Plan, there occasionally is a need to make a specific study of a transportation corridor to determine the best solution to a problem. While this may include development of a simple functional design for corridor protection, more detailed studies may include evaluations of alternative modes or alignments for cost, feasibility, environmental impact, and design.

In a similar manner, special problems may arise in relation to major land use changes when large-scale traffic generators (hospitals, regional malls, etc.) will either be developed or closed. These land use changes could significantly affect the regional

distribution and/or amount of traffic, which could require changes to the Long-Range Transportation Plan to accommodate the newly forecasted growth.

The extent, responsibility, and cost for a corridor or sub-area study, which should be conducted within the work plan of the RTCC, would be determined prior to its initiation.

4. Regional or Statewide Planning

Coordinate with state and federal agencies involved in transportation planning activities on the regional, state, and national levels. Examples of such activities include: Functional Reclassification of roads, designation of Urban Area Boundaries, National Highway System coordination, Highway Performance Monitoring System activities, and regional transit coordination.

Involvement could include, but is not limited to: collection and compilation of data; participation in related workshops, conferences, and meetings; and review and administrative approval or endorsement of documentation.

E. Administration and Services

The continuing transportation planning process requires 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.

It is also necessary to periodically, review and update the Prospectus, Memorandum of Understanding, and other administrative agreements and procedures.

The daily operations require dissemination of planning information to the public or other organizations and coordination with NCDOT and other agencies.

APPENDIX A

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING HISTORY AND STATUS

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), enacted June 9, 1998 by the Federal Government encourages participation of local official and the public in the transportation planning process. Therefore, the 1997-98 Session of the North Carolina General Assembly ratified the Board of Transportation Reform Bill (House Bill 1304) mandating the Board, with the assistance of the Secretary and the NCDOT, develop a plan to establish RPOs as a counterpart to the existing MPOs, which are mandated by federal regulations as a condition of receiving federal financial assistance for transportation planning.

In July of 2000, the North Carolina General Assembly amended General Statute 136-18 by ratifying Senate Bill 1195, which authorized the development of Rural Transportation Planning Organizations (RPOs) to establish a continuing, comprehensive, cooperative transportation planning process. The RPOs were charged with four core duties: 1) to develop long-range local and regional multi-modal transportation plans in cooperation with the area MPO and the North Carolina Department of Transportation, 2) to provide a forum for public participation in the rural transportation planning process, 3) to develop and prioritize suggestions for transportation projects, which the Rural Transportation Planning Organization believes should be included in the State Transportation Improvement Program, 4) to provide transportation-related information to local governments and other interested organizations and persons.

LOCAL AREA TRANSPORTATION PLANNING HISTORY

During the years 2001 and 2002, the Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments, in cooperation with the North Carolina Department of Transportation, worked with area county governments to form a transportation planning organization for the rural areas of the region. Late in the summer of 2002, the counties of Edgecombe, Johnston, Nash, and Wilson entered into an agreement with NC-DOT to establish the Upper Coastal Plain Rural Planning Organization. The four counties signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), by and between the participating governments and NC-DOT, that set up the purpose and structure of the organization. On September 25, 2003, the Upper Coastal Plain Rural Planning Organization (UCPRPO) was chartered in a ceremony held in Rocky Mount, North Carolina.

The Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments staff met with the governing boards of the thirty three municipalities within the four counties during the fall of 2002, for the purpose of presenting to them information about the UCPRPO and giving the municipalities an opportunity to join the organization. Each of the municipal governments approved and signed the MOU, thus becoming members of the RPO. The Upper Coastal Plain RPO held its initial meeting on February 13, 2003.