

Results of MPO and RPO Survey

**Presented by Amna Cameron
Fiscal Research Division**

**Transportation Oversight Committee
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Survey Details

- To prepare for this survey, I attended the RPO and MPO Association meetings in January
- Survey sent to all MPOs and RPOs on February 3rd. Responses due March 2nd
- GREAT RESPONSE RATE!
 - 100% response rate among RPOs
 - 14/17 of MPOs responded

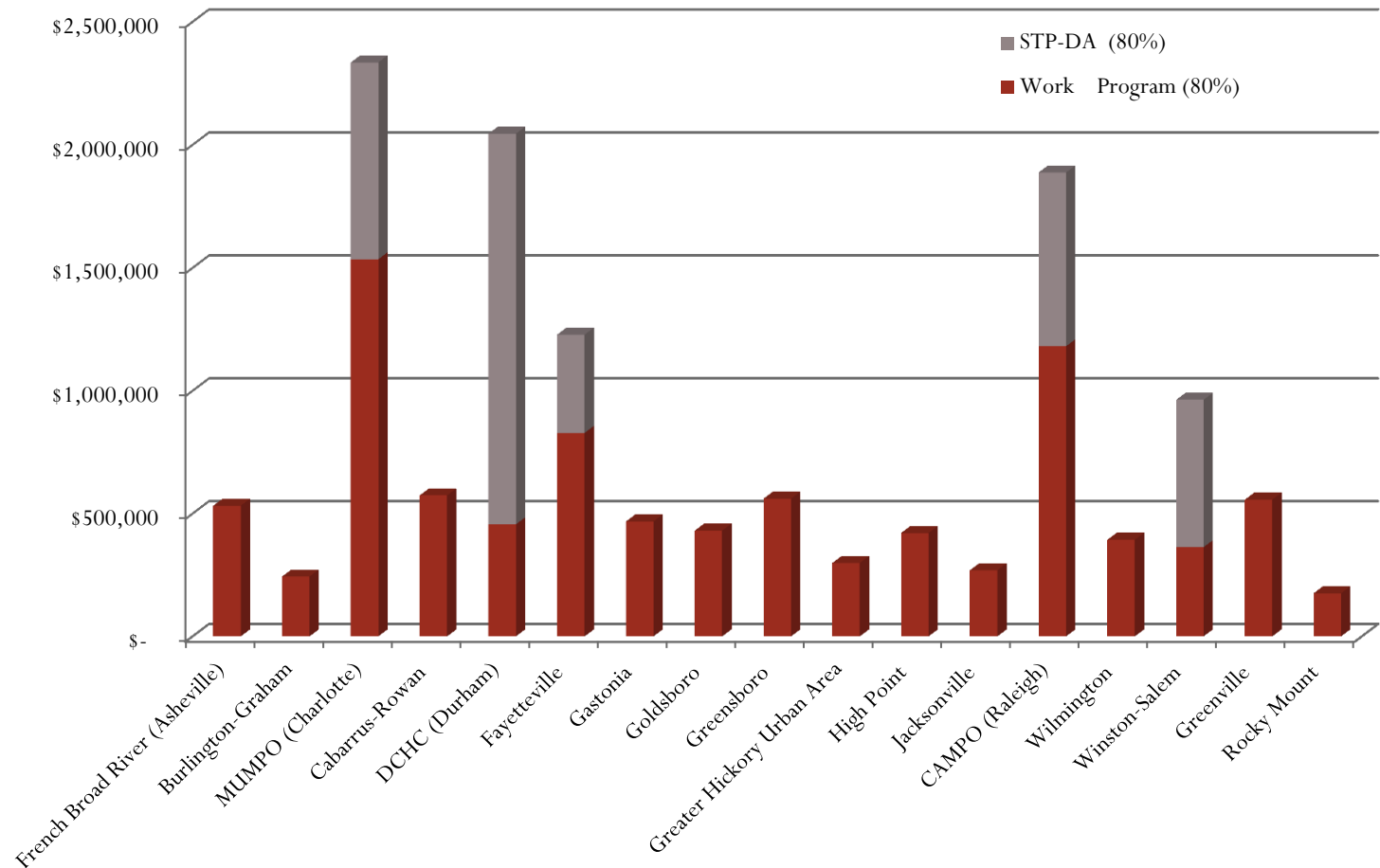
MPO and RPO Components

Lead Planning Agency (LPA)

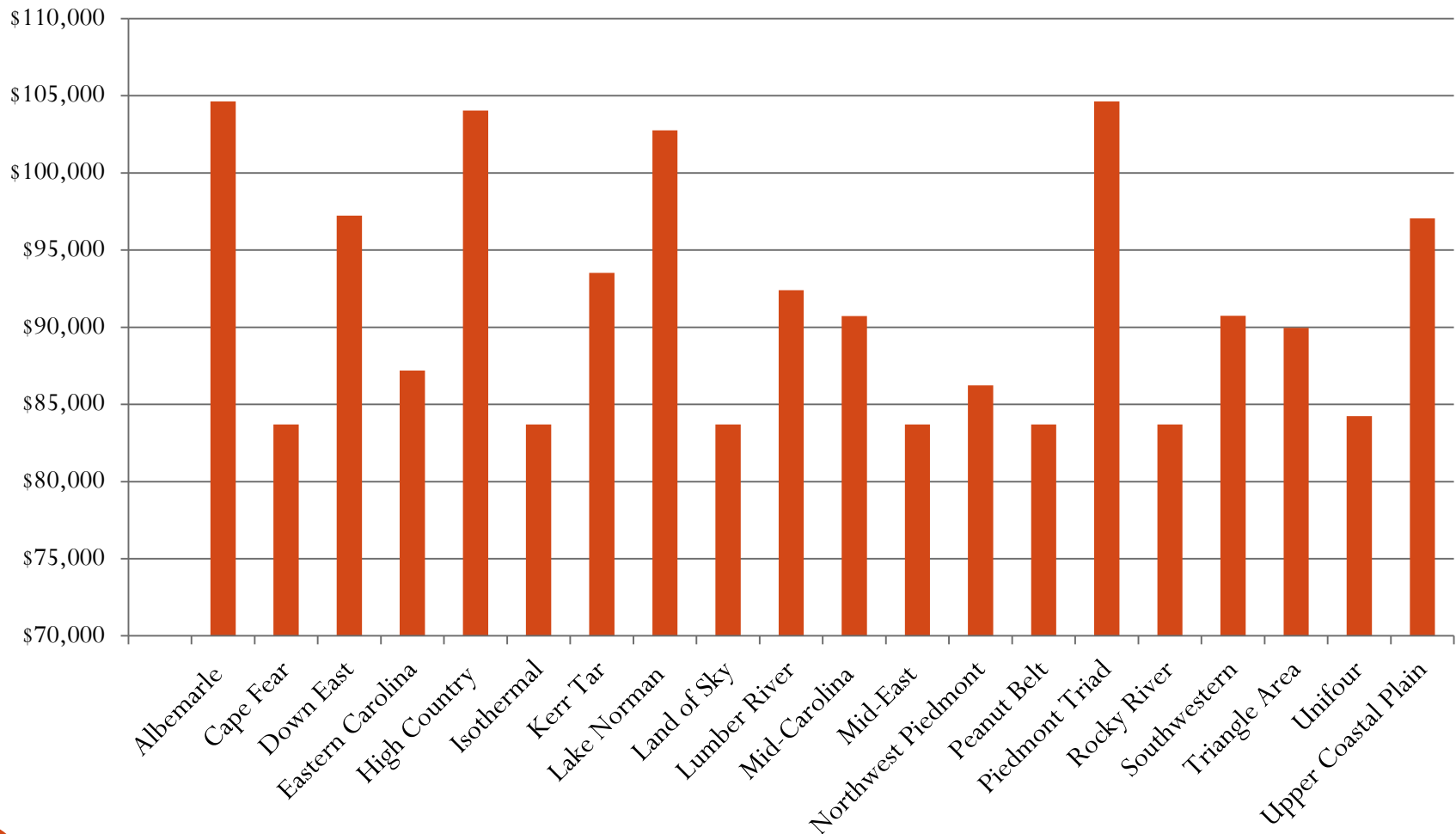
Technical Coordination
Committee

Transportation Advisory
Committee

FY 2012 Federal Funding to MPOs



FY2012 State Planning & Research Funds to RPOs (Federal Funds)



Staffing

- Average RPO FTE staff: 1-2 persons
- MPO FTE staffs range from 2- 11
- Local government employees perform significant duties for their MPOs and RPOs
- Consultants perform private engineering, planning, corridor studies
- Many MPOs and RPOs hire part-time workers

Forming Transportation Plans

- DOT's SPOT process has increased the use of a defined methodology to rank and prioritize projects.
- Up to individual Organization to select methodology.
- MPOs have more defined methodologies than RPOs.

Meetings

- Most Organizations meet at least quarterly, but a few had only 1 or 2 meetings annually
- Organizations have defined meeting schedules published annually, with a minimum one week notice for date changes
- Noticing varies greatly
 - Venue
 - Time limit for noticing

Public Comment

- Federal standards for public comment period prior to adoption of transportation plans
- All allow public comment at meetings but in varying degrees
 - Dedicated public comment period typically at beginning of meeting, but some also allow comment on individual agenda items, or at conclusion of meeting

Conflicts of Interest

- While bylaws may include conflict of interest statements, most organizations consider elected officials covered through their elected office.
- FHWA/DOT require ethics policy
- TCC members may have no coverage
- Most reported no incidents of conflicts of interest, recusal if identified and a shift to TCC for decision making.

Input for Changes

- Three questions:
 - How can the prioritization process be improved?
 - Is there duplication, too much red tape, or any other hindrances that you believe can be solved that will improve transportation planning at the State, division, or local level?
 - Recommendations for statutory, budgetary and administrative changes?

Prioritization Process

- “Great job”, “positive step forward”, “great improvement”, “very positive”...
- Issues:
 - Some rural communities do not have Comprehensive Transportation Plans in place.
 - Not connected to funding availability
 - Request to reduce the number of decision criteria to most important items

Themes

- Need for additional transportation funding
- Urban vs. Rural: “A greater population does not always mean a greater need”
- Equity formula
- Change DOT division boundaries
- Complexity of CMAQ
- Local vs. State prioritizations
- Additional State operating funds to RPOs

Suggestions to Improve DOT

- Transportation Planning Branch (TPB)
 - Decentralize; Move from Raleigh to Divisions
 - Efforts duplicative with MPO/RPO and within DOT
 - Small staff, high turnover adds delays
 - Consolidate Bike/Ped into TPB
- “Disconnect” between Public Transportation grant cycles and STIP cycle
- Place Public Transportation grant administrators in more field offices
- Greater link: land use and transportation planning

Requests for Statutory Changes

- Equity formula – Reduce “Intrastate” share, Give financial preference to regions with a greater number of high-priority projects
- Better fund the State Infrastructure Bank
- Grant local governments more ability to raise funds for projects while holding harmless State funding
- G.S. 136-211 RPO requirement: 3 counties and 50,000 in population. Request to change from AND to OR.
- Allow traffic fines to be used for red-light cameras

Action Items

- Take MPO/RPO suggestions under advisement
- Consider further strengthening the public connection to transportation planning at both DOT and MPOs/RPOs
- Consider standardizing or granting DOT approval of local methodology used in MPO/RPO prioritization
- Consider standardizing public input at TAC or TCC meetings

Final Comments

- Respondents greatly encourage Legislators to become involved in RPO and MPO transportation planning processes
- Encourages more interaction between State Legislators and the Congressional delegation on federal transportation matters that affect localities