

Rural Planning Work Program
FY 2009-2010
Pee Dee Region

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GENERAL

The importance of transportation in the Pee Dee cannot be over-emphasized. The inter-dependent economies of the various communities in the Pee Dee depend on an efficient, capable transportation system to ensure the proper flow of goods, provide worker access, and ensure social needs of the population are met. To do so requires a multi-modal approach to movement of people and goods and public involvement, which are the focus of this work program.

BACKGROUND ON THE PEE DEE REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

The Council of Governments is a multi-county planning and development organization organized by and serving six counties in northeastern South Carolina Governments (Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Marion and Marlboro Counties). The COG provides direct and indirect assistance primarily to the counties and municipalities in the Region, but also serves public agencies and organizations and citizens through the following broad areas of service. A diverse staff of planners, public administrators, workforce developers, project managers, engineers, graphic technicians and others assist with the following work program:

1. Workforce Development – Coordinating workforce training/enhancement programs
2. Economic Development – Assistance in economic planning and infrastructure development
3. Community Development – Housing and infrastructure for low-to-moderate income persons
4. Local Government Planning – Assistance with comprehensive planning and zoning
5. Transportation Planning – Coordinated multi-modal transportation planning for the Region
6. Public Administration – Roving town administrator services
7. Engineering – Civil engineering design/inspection of roads, drainage, other infrastructure
8. Other Technical and Grant Services – Grantsmanship and other technical assistance
9. Building/Facility Schematic Design – Building layout of town halls and other public facilities
10. Computer Mapping/GIS – Technical mapping support for other programs
11. Satellite Training – Municipal training via satellite
12. S.C. Project Notification and Review System – Assistance in local review of projects
13. Revolving Loan Fund – Operates public-sector loan pool for small businesses

The COG also operates a Pee Dee Regional Development Corporation which has facilitated several economic development projects.

Transportation planning activities fit well within the varied involvements of the COG staff, lending an interdisciplinary team approach to regional planning.

COVERAGE AREA

The geographic area covered by this work program includes the service area of the Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments (Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Marion and Marlboro Counties) less the service area of the Florence Area Transportation Study (FLATS), the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Florence urban area.

WORK PROGRAM

The work program will include, but will not necessarily be limited to the following tasks:

1. Long-range transportation planning
 - a. The COG staff will maintain socio-economic data in support of planning efforts in the Region and State.
 - b. The COG staff will participate with SCDOT planners in the preparation of environmental scans and early agency review in corridor and facility planning, thereby considering environmental issues in transportation planning.
 - c. The COG staff will assist SCDOT engineering and planning staff in the updating of transportation demand models, if necessary and appropriate, to test alternative highway improvements (with special emphasis on traffic impacts of I-73).
 - d. The COG staff will develop an inventory of existing bicycle facilities in the region (outside of the FLATS area), including roadway facilities with a 4' or wider paved shoulder as well as multi-use trails such as rail trails.
 - e. In all transportation planning tasks, the COG staff will incorporate safety and security considerations.
 - f. The COG staff will maintain and update as appropriate the long-term list of highway needs in the region, identifying those highway projects not currently being addressed by the regional TIP.
 - g. The COG will maintain a regional transportation technical and policy committee to guide its long-range planning.
 - h. The above tasks will be input to the development of a long-range plan (see #3).
 - i. In concert with (b) above, the COG staff will review and recommend changes, then formally approve, APPRs prepared for roadways in the region.
2. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
 - a. With the assistance of SCDOT planners and a review of other planning processes in the State, the COG staff will develop a process for ranking STIP projects and long-range plan projects when funding requires/permits such rating and ranking.
 - b. The COG staff, with assistance of SCDOT, will develop revisions to the regional TIP, including priorities, costs and funding mechanisms.
 - c. The COG staff will monitor the status of committed projects in the Region through site visits, meetings with SCDOT staff and appropriate reports to the COG Board and transportation committee.
3. As a result of the activities described in # 1 and #2 above, the COG will maintain a project-specific, financially feasible list of long-range transportation improvements in a format agreeable to SCDOT. This long-range transportation plan will be updated on a five-year schedule with public input and will be adopted by the COG Board.
4. Transportation Enhancement Program projects
 - a. The COG staff will promote Enhancement Program activities at the local level through contacts with interested communities.
 - b. The COG engineering and planning staff will assist communities in identifying and developing specific enhancement projects and establishing local priorities, to include field assistance with project needs and eligibility, project design assistance, engineering advice, cost estimating, etc.
 - c. The COG staff will assist communities on an on-call basis regarding implementation of projects previously funded, providing technical advice.
5. Consultation with and involvement of the public and local elected officials in the above transportation planning and coordination

- a. With the assistance of SCDOT planners and after review of other public participation processes in the State, the COG staff will develop public involvement objectives and design a process that will provide meaningful and balanced input to the transportation planning process by stakeholders and the general public.
 - b. The COG will revise its website so as to include documents and/or website linkages that provide relevant and timely information to the public and decision-makers regarding transportation issues and projects, including:
 - i. This Rural Work Program
 - ii. The most recent Long-Range Plan (LRP) for the Pee Dee
 - iii. The most recent Transit Coordination Plan for the Pee Dee
 - iv. The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the region
 - v. The transportation planning efforts undertaken by Florence County for the FLATS urban area
 - vi. A listing of scheduled public hearings or meetings to be held by the COG and/or SCDOT
 - vii. Ways the public can contact the COG transportation staff
 - viii. Other relevant information or links
 - c. include The COG staff will maintain a public information file on the Statewide and Regional STIP elements, ensuring their availability to the public and public understanding of the plan and process. This will include assisting with any required public meetings, distribution of copies of the STIP, fielding public inquiries, etc.
 - d. The COG staff will ensure public officials and policy-makers are knowledgeable as to the status of planned and committed transportation improvements by providing regular reports to the COG Board and reports to County Councils and others as requested.
 - e. The COG will ensure public input regarding transportation needs and priorities by utilizing the COG Board of Directors, its regional transportation committee and public meetings.
 - f. The COG staff will coordinate with the FLATS MPO on transportation issues, including sharing of socio-economic data, attending study or policy committee meetings, informing FLATS of regional meetings, and identifying opportunities to work together on projects. As requested, the COG staff will provide updates of regional LRP issues and the status of construction projects to the FLATS Study and Policy bodies.
 - g. The COG will meet with and update local transportation planning bodies regarding transportation needs and issues, priorities, and the status of committed and planned projects. Primary groups to be contacted on a regular basis would be county transportation committees, coordinating councils and other advisory/interest groups.
 - h. The COG will attend and participate in local and regional public meetings on transportation issues and/or specific roadway or other transportation projects.
6. Capacity-building at the local and regional level, enhancing the ability of COG staff and local officials to improve long-range planning processes
- a. Participate in FHWA and SCDOT training opportunities, including freight planning.

To adequately address these areas of work, the COG will utilize Rural Planning Funds. These funds will be used to conduct needed studies, develop necessary data and provide necessary coordination at a regional and local scale. It is anticipated that the work program will be performed with current staff without use of outside consultants unless a specific need arises.

The rural transportation planning process in the Pee Dee Region is guided by the Board of Directors of the COG, supplemented by an ad hoc transportation committee when the need arises. The conduct of the work program will be guided by a similar process.

STAFF RESOURCES

As noted above, the diversified staff of the COG makes an inter-disciplinary team of professionals available to accomplish the work program. Primary staff for the work program (and their general duties/qualifications) will include:

1. **Project Director:** 36+ years planning experience, including comprehensive planning, transportation planning, environmental assessments, public participation. Role: overall work program direction, assisted by staff.
2. **Senior Planner:** 30+ years planning experience in comprehensive planning. Role: socio-economic data and general planning support.
3. **Civil Engineer:** 20+ years experience, with emphasis on roadway design and interaction with local transportation committees. Role: Coordination with transportation Committees.
4. **GIS Operator:** 15 years CAD/GIS experience. Role: GIS mapping support.

Financial management of program funds will be by the COG finance officer (a CPA) and assisted by the project director. The Executive Director of the COG and the Board of Directors provide financial oversight to this and other work programs.

The regional transportation committee and transportation staff [provide programmatic guidance to the program.

BUDGET AND TASKS

Line Item Budget Proposal:

LINE ITEM	ANTICIPATED BUDGET	PERCENT OF TOTAL
Chargeable Salaries	\$ 36,500	38.9
Fringe Benefits	19,820	21.1
Indirect Costs (Incl. tel. & most suppl.)	32,778	35.0
Travel, mtgs., auto exp.	3,852	4.1
Advertising	500	0.5
Direct Supplies	200	0.2
Misc. (Shipping, FedEx, etc.)	100	0.1
	\$ 93,750	100

Budget By Tasks:

TASK	Percent of Effort	Approximate
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			Budget
1	Long-Range Planning	45	\$ 42,187
2	Regional TIP	20	18,750
3	Long-Range Transportation Plan	10	9,375
4	Enhancement Project TA	10	9,375
5	Public Involvement	10	9,375
6	Capacity-Building	5	4,688
		100	\$93,750