
The Cape Fear Rural Transportation Planning Organization serves as the intergovernmental organization for local elected officials, the North Carolina Department of Transportation, and residents of Brunswick, Columbus, and Pender Counties to work cooperatively to address transportation issues.

Cape Fear RPO Community Liaison Description

Approved by the RTAC on April 10, 2026

Situation: In recent years, the Cape Fear Rural Planning Organization (RPO) has held local input workshops in each of the counties represented by the RPO. Those meetings have typically included representatives from county government as well as the municipalities in the RPO area. However, there are several large, unincorporated communities in the RPO area that do not have the same mechanism to provide input. Examples include Winnabow/Town Creek in Brunswick County, Delco in Columbus County, and Maple Hill in Pender County.

Additionally, the voting structure of the RPO's Rural Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC), the RPO's governing body, is such that each RPO municipality does not occupy a voting or alternate seat. Not having a designated RPO representative can leave a community at greater risk of being unaware of RPO planning efforts.

Strategy: Designate a representative from key unincorporated areas as well as municipalities without RTAC members to serve as an RPO Community Liaison (RPO Liaison) for their area and provide insight into transportation needs and projects in their communities.

Structure and Description

- RTAC Voting Members and Alternates will count as the RPO Liaison for their communities.
- RPO Liaisons from municipalities without an RTAC Voting Member or Alternate will be elected officials appointed by the council on which they serve. The default RPO Liaison from each non-voting municipality will be the mayor until the municipality tells the RPO otherwise.
- RPO Liaisons from unincorporated areas will be recommended by one or both County Commissioners from their county and must be approved by a vote of the RTAC.
- RPO Liaisons may attend RTAC meetings and county local input workshops and may be called on to speak or answer questions pertinent to their community but will not be voting members of the RTAC.
- RPO Liaisons are expected to provide thoughtful input on the needs of their communities.
- RPO Community Liaisons are expected to invest the time required to develop a basic understanding of North Carolina's Strategic Transportation Investments (STI) law and the Prioritization process, the development of Comprehensive Transportation Plans (CTPs), and the RTAC's role throughout these efforts. The RPO staff will provide RPO Liaisons with information, materials, and a brief orientation on these issues.