

William Taylor
TAC Chair

Beth Bucksot
TCC Chair



Brandi Robertson
TAC Vice-Chair

Chad Strawn
TCC Vice-Chair

DERPO TCC Regular Meeting, January 23rd, 2024; 10:00am

Attendance:

Don Baumgardner, Chair – Craven County
Sandi Watkins – Town of Morehead City
Jeff Wood – Craven County
Rohan Lahiji – NCDOT Division 2
Patrick Flanagan - CCATS
Len White – NCDOT Division 2
Janie Mason – Michael J. Smith Airport
Stephanie Ayers – N.C. State Ports Authority
Katrina Marshall – City of Havelock
Chad Strawn – Craven County
Kim Nguyen – NCDOT IMD

Becca Eversole – Eastern Carolina Council
Amanda Killian – NCDOT TPD
Janie Mason – Michael J. Smith Airport
Kevin Reed – Town of Pine Knoll Shores
Jack Veit – Craven County
Beth Bucksot – Vice-Chair, Pamlico County
David Rief – Town of Cedar Point
Deanna Trebil - NBAMPO
Kelly Walker - CARTS
Diane Miller – Town of Oriental
Lee Thompson – Eastern Carolina Council

Minutes for TCC

Call to Order – Don Baumgardner, *Chair TCC opened the meeting at 10:09am.*

1. Public Comment Period – no public comments.

2. ACTION: Approval of Agenda

The agenda for today’s meeting was presented for approval.

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Stephanie Ayers, seconded by Patrick Flanagan, and approved unanimously.

3. ACTION: Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the March 28, July 18, and September 21 TCC meetings were presented for approval.

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Beth Bucksot, seconded by Patrick Flanagan, and approved unanimously.

4. ACTION: Election of New Officers

As it was the first TCC meeting of 2024, elections for Chair and Vice Chair were held. Our current chair, Don Baumgartner, and Vice Chair, Beth Bucksot, had reached their term limits and were ineligible for reelection.

Beth Bucksot nominated Patrick Flanagan as TCC Chair, but he declined the nomination. Mr. Flanagan then nominated Ms. Bucksot, who accepted the nomination. A second was made by David Rief, and Ms. Bucksot was elected by a unanimous vote. DERPO Director Becca Eversole took the opportunity to thank outgoing Chair Don Baumgartner for his service to DERPO.

Mr. Baumgartner nominated Chad Strawn as TCC Vice Chair, and he accepted the nomination. A second was made by Jack Veit, and Mr. Strawn was elected by a unanimous vote.

5. DERPO Staff Report – Becca Eversole

a. *Carbon Reduction Program – Ms. Eversole reminded the committee that DERPO had received CRP grants for Pollocksville and Atlantic Beach sidewalk projects; these projects combine for \$1 million of new bike/ped projects (including local matches). The submittal and award guidelines have changed, and projects can now be submitted at any time, with awards occurring quarterly instead of yearly. She also reminded the committee that as this is a federal program, it requires a 20% local match and up-front funds, as it is a reimbursement program.*

b. *NCDOT Special Planning Grants – Ms. Eversole spoke about the SPR program, that allows for special studies for projects such as corridor studies. DERPO would serve as the project lead, so a financial agreement between the community and ECC would be required to fund up-front costs. There would also be a local match of 5%. The deadline for SPR applications is February 29.*

c. *ECC STIP/SPOT Training – Ms. Eversole, along with her colleague Mickey Anderson of the Eastern Carolina RPO, will be leading a half-day class on the STIP and the SPOT process for both staff and elected officials on February 13. Anyone new to the process or in need of a refresher is encouraged to attend. A registration link was provided last week.*

d. *Other DERPO Updates – Work on SPOT 7.0 continues, and the SPOT Office has decided to have data review throughout the evaluation process instead of near the end of the period. A draft methodology for local input points will be presented for approval at the March meetings, and quantitative scores should be released by the end of May. Ms. Eversole also stated that she would be attending upcoming meetings of the Hwy 17/64 Association, the Carteret County CTP Steering Committee, and the N.C. Association of RPO Directors.*

5. NCDOT/Transportation Agency Reports

a. *Division 2 – Len White of NCDOT Division 2 gave updates on current projects underway in the DERPO region. The Havelock Bypass is 75% complete with an anticipated completion date near the end of this year. There will be rerouting on US 70 in relation to the bypass project, and there will be an update to the project website. The James City upgrades to US 70/Future I-42 is 40% complete with an anticipated completion date near the end of 2025. The US 70 upgrade project to connect these two*

projects, R-5777C, is slated to begin construction in 2025 and take about 1.5 years to complete. Work continues with Duke Energy on the Newport River Bridge in Morehead City to reroute the power lines. Also in Morehead City, an alternative should be selected for the Bridges St. Extension project soon. Wetland delineation is underway, and a new project website should soon be up and running.

b. Transportation Planning Division – Amanda Killian of NCDOT TPD introduced her intern who was also on the call. NCDOT received \$1.1 billion from USDOT to purchase the “S Line,” which in coordination with Virginia’s DRPT will allow for quicker rail trips between Raleigh and Richmond. The next Carteret County CTP steering committee meeting will be on February 7.

c. Integrated Mobility Division – Kim Nguyen of NCDOT IMD spoke about the division’s Bike Helmet initiative; the application is open. Microtransit feasibility studies are currently on hold due to fiscal issues. She updated the committee on the upcoming Western Carteret Bike and Pedestrian Plan, and stated she was waiting for comments from the communities; David Rief responded that they had submitted their comments.

d. Public Transit/Aviation

i. CARTS (Craven, Jones, Pamlico) Update – Kelly Walker updated the committee on ridership, which continues to trend up. She mentioned the importance of substance treatment and detox ridership, and that employment ridership is strong. She will speak to officials in Jones and Pamlico Counties about unmet needs, and a new vehicle was expected in February.

ii. CCATS (Carteret) Update – Patrick Flanagan reported that ridership was up, but not to pre-COVID levels. He also spoke about drug rehab transport and the PORT program.

iii. Michael J. Smith Airport – Jamie Mason updated the committee on the rehab of runway 321. A meeting will be held on January 31, with construction expected to begin in April to widen the runway to 75 feet. Land acquisition is underway for the extension of runway 826. The 2024 World Skydiving Championship, which will bring together 250-300 skydivers, will take place at the airport in October after being relocated from Israel.

6. **ACTION: Recommend Draft FY 2025 Planning Work Program - Becca Eversole**
The Planning Work Program (PWP) is the annual budget for the Down East RPO and lays out DERPO’s priorities in the new fiscal year. Ms. Eversole presented a draft of the document and detailed changes from this fiscal year in priorities, including an increase in indirect costs. A motion to recommend the PWP to the TAC was made by Stephanie Ayers, seconded by Patrick Flanagan, and approved unanimously. After the TAC subsequently approved the PWP at their January 31 meeting, it was submitted to NCDOT for their approval and a final version will be presented at the March meetings for adoption.

- 8. ACTION: Recommend Resolution of Support for NC Ports Grant Application –**
Stephanie Ayers, NC Ports
The North Carolina State Ports Authority is preparing an application to USDOT for a grant to modernize and revitalize their barge berths at the Port of Morehead City. Nutrien, who maintains a mining facility and chemical plant in Aurora, ships their products from these berths at Morehead City worldwide, and this planned modernization will extend the life of the barge berths for another fifty years. Ms. Ayers went into detail on why the grant was needed and the proposed work. Sandi Watkins asked if there were any plans to expand the facility, and Ms. Ayers responded that it would remain in the current footprint. A motion to recommend a resolution of support for the grant application to the TAC was made by Beth Bucksot, seconded by Don Baumgartner, and approved unanimously.
- 9. Other Business/Discussion –**
Ms. Ayers also stated that mobilization for work on Radio Island that is being funded through a grant awarded in 2021 is underway, with completion of the project expected by summer 2024.
- 10. Adjournment –**
Ms. Eversole adjourned the meeting at 10:45am.