

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.

Rural Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) Meeting Minutes

November 20, 2023 • 9:00 AM

Cape Fear Council of Governments • Wilmington, NC

Voting Members Present

Frank Williams, Brunswick County
Mike Forte, Brunswick County
Dave DeLong, St. James
Glenn Marshall, Sandy Creek

Terry Mann, Whiteville
Fred McCoy, Pender County
Jerry Groves, Pender County
Vernon Harrell, Burgaw

Others Present

Mark Martin, Oak Island
Joseph Hatem, Southport
Rich Alt, Southport
Steve Smith, Topsail Beach
Gilbert Combs, Burgaw
Catherine Peele, Ferry Division
Brian Doliber, Ferry Division
Stephanie Ayers, NC Ports

Michelle Howes, NCDOT Div. 3
Caitlin Melvin, NCDOT Div. 3
Kirsten Spirakis, NCDOT Div. 3
Darius Sturdivant, NCDOT Div. 6
Bill Hammond, NCDOT Div. 6
Nazia Sarder, NCDOT TPD
Allen Serkin, Cape Fear COG
Sam Boswell, Cape Fear RPO

I. START-UP

- 1. Call to Order** – RTAC Chair, Mr. Frank Williams, called the meeting to order at 9:01 A.M.
- 2. Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance** – Mr. Fred McCoy led the group in an invocation and Mr. Mike Forte led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- 3. Roll Call** – RPO Staff took a roll call of all attendees.
- 4. Ethics Awareness & Conflict of Interest Statement** – Mr. Frank Williams read the ethics awareness statement.

5. **Additions or Corrections to the Agenda** – There were no changes to the agenda. *Mr. Mike Forte made a motion to adopt the agenda. Mr. Fred McCoy seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.*

*Frank Williams, Yes
Mike Forte, Yes
Dave DeLong, Yes
Glenn Marshall, Yes*

*Terry Mann, Yes
Fred McCoy, Yes
Jerry Groves, Yes
Vernon Harrell, Yes*

The motion passed unanimously.

6. **Approval of Minutes** – The September 15, 2023 meeting minutes were considered. *Mr. Terry Mann made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Mike Forte seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.*

*Frank Williams, Yes
Mike Forte, Yes
Dave DeLong, Yes
Glenn Marshall, Yes*

*Terry Mann, Yes
Fred McCoy, Yes
Jerry Groves, Yes
Don Helms, Yes*

The motion passed unanimously.

7. **Public Comment** – There were no comments from the public at this meeting.
8. **Vacancies and Appointments** – RPO Staff reviewed RTAC appointments and upcoming vacancies. Committee seats that require new appointments or reappointments will be addressed in the first meeting of 2024. *There was no action taken on this topic.*

II. PRESENTATIONS

9. **Ferry Division** – Catherine Peele with the NCDOT Ferry Division provided a presentation on the Ferry Division’s core functions, budget overview, role in the STI process (Prioritization), and discussed the Southport to Fort Fisher route, including a close look at ridership and the fund balance from collected tolls. The group then discussed the ability to use the Ferry Capital Fund Balance for the route as the local match for STI/Prioritization projects (only for replacement vessels, not expansion).
10. **The Importance of Long-Range Planning: Burgaw Bypass Case Study** – RPO Staff provided a presentation to the group using the Burgaw Bypass project as a case study to illustrate the importance of long-range planning. A project that was once thoroughly planned and studied, and was included in the STIP, the Burgaw Bypass is currently not in the STIP or in the Pender County CTP even though many problems still exist around

the corridor (heavy truck traffic through town, safety issues, congestion concerns, etc.). Opportunities for further discussion of this project will be available as the Pender County CTP Update kicks off in early 2024. RPO staff encouraged the group to remember the long-term perspective needed when planning and prioritizing transportation improvements throughout the region.

III. NEW BUSINESS

11. **2024 Cape Fear RPO Meeting Schedule** –RPO Staff presented the 2024 RPO meeting schedule and requested RTAC approval. *Mr. Fred McCoy made a motion to approve the schedule. Mr. Terry Mann seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.*

*Frank Williams, Yes
Mike Forte, Yes
Dave DeLong, Yes
Glenn Marshall, Yes*

*Terry Mann, Yes
Fred McCoy, Yes
Jerry Groves, Yes
Vernon Harrell, Yes*

The motion passed unanimously.

IV. REPORTS/UPDATES

12. Reports/Updates

- **Cape Fear RPO** – RPO Staff provided updates on the 2024-2033 STIP and P7.0.
- **NC Ports (Port of Wilmington)** – There was no update by the Port.
- **NCDOT Ferry Division** – There was no additional update by the Ferry Division.
- **NCDOT Integrated Mobility Division (IMD)** – There was no update by IMD.
- **NCDOT Division 3 (Brunswick & Pender)** – Michelle Howes gave an update Division 3 projects.
- **NCDOT Division 6 (Columbus)** – Darius Sturdivant gave an update on Division 6 projects.
- **NCDOT Transportation Planning Division (TPD)** – Nazia Sarder gave an update on the status of CTPs across the RPO area.
- **NC Board of Transportation** – There was no update by the Board member.

VI. OTHER

13. Open discussion – There was no additional discussion.

14. Adjourn – *The meeting was adjourned at 10:27 AM.*

Approved by the RTAC at a regular meeting on Friday, March 15, 2024.

Signed:


Frank Williams, RTAC Chair

Attest:


Sam Boswell, Secretary