



DURHAM OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS COMMISSION

AGENDA

September 20, 2023, 7:00 p.m.
IN PERSON AT 101 CITY HALL PLAZA
2ND FLOOR COMMITTEE ROOM

- I. **Call to Order**
- II. **Approval of Minutes**
 - a. **Approval of August Minutes**
- III. **Excused Absences**
- IV. **Adjustments to the Agenda**
- V. **Presentations**
- VI. **Old Business**
 - a. **DOST 2023 Election**
- VII. **New Business**
 - a. **DOST Letter for Durham to Roxboro Rail Trail Grant**
- VIII. **Updates**
 - a. **Updates from staff**
 - b. **Updates from liaisons**
 - c. **Updates from committees**
 - i. **Open Space**
 - ii. **Trails**
 - iii. **Equity**
 - iv. **Matching Grants**
 - d. **Announcements**

Adjournment

DOST Priorities

1. Advocate for increased funding to build out and maintain priority trails and open space
2. Support the implementation of the Durham Beltline Master Plan with a specific focus on equitable community engagement for the components of the plan that can still be addressed
3. Examine the Matching Grants process to encourage applications that reflect the racial and economic diversity of Durham
4. Support implementation of the Trails and Greenways Master Plan with a specific focus on equity.
5. Encourage implementation of the Urban Open Space Plan
6. Pursue ongoing professional development on trends in equitable development of trails and open spaces.
7. Proactively research and implement open space and trails acquisition best practices for ordinances and policy.

DOST Committees

Committee	Chair	Meeting Date/Location
Matching Grants		As needed
Open Space	Steve Cohn	First Wednesday at 6:30 pm
Trails	Dave Connelly	Second Wednesday at 6:30 pm
Equity	Shakira Campbell	First Thursday at 6:30 pm



D U R H A M

Open Space & Trails Commission

Durham City-County Planning Department ▪ 101 City Hall Plaza ▪ Durham, NC 27701

September 18, 2023

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg

Office of the Secretary

U.S. Department of Transportation

1200 New Jersey Ave, SE

Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

On behalf of the Durham Open Space and Trails Commission, I am pleased to submit this letter of support for Durham County's application to the U.S. DOT's FY24 Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) program to execute the Durham to Roxboro Rail Trail Planning Study.

The Durham Open Space and Trails Commission (DOST) advises the City Council and Board of County Commissioners on opportunities to preserve open spaces and trails by promoting their recreational and environment benefits while also considering the long-term well-being of the environment. DOST members include scientists, engineers, community activists, public health professionals, and other committed individuals who volunteer their time to expand Durham residents' access to valuable open spaces, trails, and other related recreational and transportation facilities.

Our Commission supports this application for several reasons. Primarily, this 18-mile trail would connect communities with varying incomes, racial and cultural histories, and educational backgrounds. It will provide safe walking and biking opportunities for residents who currently lack access to road shoulders, bike lanes, or sidewalks — both in urban areas where traffic is heavy and rural areas where speed limits are high. One such neighborhood is Bragtown, a prioritized community within the City's Equitable and Green Infrastructure program.

In addition to connecting urban and rural areas of Durham, this trail will connect to statewide and national trail networks, including the East Coast Greenway and the NC Mountains-to-Sea Trail, and provide access to protected areas like Penny's Bend Nature Preserve, Horton Grove Preserve, and Eno River State Park. Together with the planned Downtown Rail Trail, which is currently under development by the City of Durham, and the existing American Tobacco Trail, it will provide more than 40 miles of continuous access to parks and conservation areas in Durham, Person, Chatham and Wake Counties.

Finally, this trail corridor has been in the commuting and recreation long-range plan for many years. It was included in the DOST-led and adopted 2001 Trails and Greenway Plan for the City and County of Durham, and was reaffirmed through public engagement activities conducted in partnership with DOST during adoption of the more recent 2011 Trails and Greenways Plan for the City and County.

Should this grant be funded, DOST is committed to using the community engagement approach in the City's Blueprint for Equitable Community Engagement, which activates local partners and community networks for guidance on the project. The process for the trail planning study will also follow the Blueprint. Both the City and the County are committed to ensuring that those most affected by the trail have the opportunity to participate in its planning and design.

Our Commission strongly supports funding of the Durham to Roxboro Rail Trail Planning Study by RCN, and looks forward to participating in a successful engagement to advance this transformational project.

Sincerely,



David Connelly

Chair, Durham Open Space and Trails Commission