

Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS)
Policy Committee Meeting
Friday, October 2nd, 2020 at 10:00 am
Zoom Conference Link: <https://us.web.zoom.us/j/4830277728>
Meeting ID: 483-027-7728 Passcode: 8431969
Phone: (877)853-5273
Facebook Live
MINUTES

Policy Committee Members Present:

Chairwoman – Mayor Lisa Sulka, Town of Bluffton
Mayor Joe DeVito, Town of Port Royal
Susan Zellman, LRTA
Mike McFee, City of Beaufort
Mayor Harry Williams, City of Hardeeville
Barbara Clark, Jasper County
Glenn Stanford, Town of Hilton Head
Paul Sommerville, Beaufort County Council

Technical Committee Members Present:

Kraig Gordon, Chairman Beaufort CTC
Mary Lou Franzoni, LRTA
Katie Woodruff, City of Hardeeville
Anne Cyran, Town of Hilton Head
Kevin Icard, Town of Bluffton
Lisa Wagner, Jasper County
Rob Merchant, Beaufort County

LCOG Staff Present:

Sabrena Graham, Executive Director
Stephanie Rossi, Planning Director
Christian Dammal, Planner I
Kira Fuller, Executive Assistant

Others Present:

Mark Wilkes, CORE MPO
John Fleming, SCA
Mark Pleasant, FHWA
Barbara Childs, LRTA
Allen Cephart
Stan Frazier
Joe Croley

Policy Committee Members Absent:

Robby Robbins, SCDOT Commission Chairman
Sen. Tom Davis, JC Leg. Delegation Chairman

Technical Committee Members Absent:

Linda Bridges, Town of Port Royal
David Pritchard, City of Beaufort

SCDOT Staff Present:

Megan Groves
Craig Winn
LaToya Grate
Josh Johnson
David Gray
Betsey McCall
Diane Lackey

1. Call to Order: Chairwoman Lisa Sulka called the meeting to order at 10:00 am
 - a. Invocation – led by Mike McFee
 - b. Pledge of Allegiance
 - c. Introduction of Members, Guests and Staff
 - d. Designees – Barbara Childs of LRTA
 - e. Action on August 7, 2020 Meeting Minutes
 - i. Mike McFee made the motion to accept the minutes with changes. Glenn Stanford seconded. **Motion carried unanimously.**
2. Old Business:
 - a. Update on the LATS Long Range Plan Update and Extension – Stephanie Rossi
 - i. We received an extension on both the rural (LCOG) and urban (LATS) LRTPs from the State (SCDOT) and Federal (FHWA). We have until December 2021 to complete the LRTP. In the meantime, we released the RFP to hire consultants to assist with LRTP updates. We collected responses on September 23. We got 4 great responses from CDM Smith, RKA with AECOM, RS&H, and Kimberly Horne. Currently, we are scoring and reviewing responses. The LATS Tech Committee will meet Friday to discuss scores and an agreement on who we would move forward with.
 - ii. Lisa Sulka said, “If this is something you have an answer on, I would like to call a special meeting on in November.”
 - iii. Q: Lisa Sulka asked, “There are roads that had been completed a couple years ago but the maps do not reflect that, especially for Bluffton. Is that something that you can update while we are working on the LRTP? What do you need from the committee and/or municipalities to update this information?”
 - iv. A: Stephanie Rossi responded, “We will update the project list. We have been working on pulling the maps together from the original plan, the interim plan, and the 170 Access Management Study, so that the LATS Tech Committee can start looking at that. If the road work is already done, it will get reflected. The consultants will update the models as well. Everything will be updated. In the near term, we can provide an updated map on the website over the next month or so.
 - b. SCDOT US 278 & 17 Update – Craig Winn
 - i. US 17 was let for construction in August. It was awarded to Arby Baker Construction of Savannah, GA with a completion date of September 30, 2025. The bid amount was under \$42M therefore no additional funds are needed from LCOG or LATS. There is one more permit to be acquired before construction can commence.
 - ii. SCDOT has held presentations with Hilton Head Island and Beaufort County Councils and engaged with the community about US 278. The bridge team is assessing the reasonable alignments and exploring 3 alternatives for the bridges. Phase 1 of the Traffic Report has been finalized now they are working on supplementals for the intersections (Jenkins Island, Squire Pope, and Spanish Wells). SCDOT has obtained a level of service C or better for the major intersections within the corridor which is a significant increase from level of service D and E presented in August. They are finalizing final touches on the Environmental Assessment.
 - iii. In March, SCDOT analyzed to see if the Stoney Community qualifies as cultural property or historic district. Initially, it did not qualify but the team is conducting 5 additional interviews with residents of the community. A final determination should be available in a few months. There are multiple community mitigation options such as improvements at the Jenkins island Cemetery, eliminating driveways to improve safety, and oral/video history of the Stoney Community. The Environmental Assessment is almost done therefore anticipate a public hearing in January – March 2021.
 - iv. Q: Mike McFee asked, “With achieving the levels of service C, what would it require to bring that score higher?”
 - v. A: Craig responded, “We would have to add lanes. The roadway would need to have 8-lanes. The standard that we look for in 20 years is a level of service D or better. For an urban area, D is what is desired. On Hilton Head Island, the only intersection that does not meet that standard is the Squire Pope Intersection.

- vi. Mayor Sulka added, "It would be helpful to educate us about the service levels via a document."
- vii. Craig encouraged everyone to visit the [278 Project website](#) to see all presentations on the project that define the level of service.
- viii. Q: Glenn Stanford asked, "Could you describe the effort used for community mitigation in the Stoney Community?"
- ix. A: Craig Winn replied, "Since the start of the project, we have actively met with the community and they are involved in our stakeholders' committee. Initially, we met with all the families within the community to ask what would they like to see from community mitigation and to improve quality of life. The improvements to the Jenkins Island Cemetery are a result of meeting with the community. Also, there will be a website for individuals who'd like to gain additional information about the community."
- x. Q: Glenn Stanford added, "I think that is very useful, but to you, community mitigation is not the same as condemnation because of the highway improvement. Is that correct?"
- xi. Craig answered, "That is correct. There will be just compensation for any Right-of-Way that is required. There are 2 businesses that must be relocated: Wille Young's Upholstery and Psychic Building. We will work with property owners and tenants to help the businesses relocate. We have coordinated with the Town of Hilton Head Island to perform some improvements to businesses in the area or potentially relocating Willi Young's Upholstery further back on that property."
- xii. Glenn Stanford said, "He is impressed with SCDOT's mitigation efforts. It is appreciated."
- xiii. Lisa Sulka added that the LATS Policy Committee needs regular updates on the Exit 3 project.
- xiv. Craig said, "Exit 3 is not a SCDOT project but we are coordinating with the City of Hardeeville. Next week, I will meet with the Federal Highway Administration to discuss a draft interchange justification report."
- xv. Q: Mayor Harry Williams asked, "I was shocked to see that we are 5 years out from the completion of US 17. Is that a worst-case scenario? Is there a way to expedite that date?"
- xvi. A: Craig replied, "A reason for such time is building a roadway in the marsh. We are surcharge loading, which is building the embankment, allowing it to settle, adding more dirt, and then allowing it to settle again. Each settlement period is estimated to be 240 days. The completion date is drawn out because of the Earth Work time for the project."
- c. Palmetto Breeze Update – Mary Lou Franzoni
 - i. Palmetto Breeze's ridership is about 70% of last year's ridership. Safety measures are still being used daily. Currently, Palmetto Breeze is working on facility upgrades. The Urban Studies Phase 2 Report by AECOM will be finalized within the next month. Once released, it will be shared with LCOG and on the Palmetto Breeze website.
 - ii. Susan Zellman said, "The Board of Palmetto Breeze is very proud of the staff and executive director. Thank you from all of us!"
- d. Beaufort County Transportation Committee Update – Kraig Gordon
 - i. Beaufort County is 1 of 20 self-administered CTCs; therefore, there are additional annual requirements for the Beaufort County Transportation Committee. They have completed the annual financial review. This year, 27.5% of dollars received must be spent *on state routes*. The CTC is drafting the 2021 Transportation Plan, and it is out for review. It is available on Beaufort County's and SCDOT's websites. The City of Beaufort has been awarded \$50,000 for the resurfacing of Twin Lakes Road in the Mossy Creek subdivision. There has been difficulty getting updated PMS studies completed on State Secondary roads in Beaufort County because much of the data is 7-10 years old. The bid for County, State Secondaries, and Municipal PMS studies will be put out to bid.
- e. Beaufort County Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force/Comprehensive Plan Update—Noah Krepps
 - i. The task force ensures that biking and walking are routine, safe options and ensures that people have equitable access to those options. The goal is to expand the multi-use pathway network throughout the county. Guiding principles of the task force are to connect people to jobs by building on the existing pathway network and use the spine and spur approach (using existing trails as a "backbone"

and build spurs to reach into communities). The task force has created a conceptual map of possible extensions to the multi-use pathway network. The next steps are to draft a comprehensive plan and engage with stakeholders ongoingly, incorporate the recommendations of the plan into the LATS LRTP, and then present the plan to municipalities for consideration of adoption.

- ii. Mayor Sulka suggested coordinating with Hardeeville and surrounding municipalities. The Linear Trail can connect Hardeeville and USCB.
- iii. Glenn Stanford added that the pedestrian and bicycle piece should include the widening of US 278 because the pathway can connect Bluffton to Hilton Head Island.
- iv. Mayor DeVito advised to incorporate Yemassee into the plans.

3. New Business:

- a. Approval of Amendment to add a new project to the FY 2021-2027 TIP—Stephanie Rossi
 - i. At the last meeting, we adopted the 7 year TIP. Our first amendment/correction is now up for approval. The I-95 Corridor Improvement was inadvertently coded to be included in the LCOG TIP. We are correcting this error.
 - ii. Mayor Harry Williams made a motion to approve the I-95 Corridor Improvement from Georgia State Line to US 278 amendment in the MPO TIP. Mayor Joe DeVito seconded. **Motion carried unanimously.**
- b. Approval of the 2021 LATS Policy Committee Meeting Schedule—Stephanie Rossi
 - i. Mike McFee moved to approve the 2021 LATS Policy Committee Meeting Schedule. Barbara Clark seconded. **Motion carried unanimously.**

4. Other Business:

- a. Thank you letter to SCDOT Secretary of Transportation – Information only.

5. Public Comment Period: None

6. Next Meeting: Friday, December 4, 2020

7. Adjourn: Susan Zellman made a motion to adjourn. Mike McFee seconded. **Motion carried unanimously.** Meeting adjourned at 11:00 am.

[US 278 Project Status Update](#)

[SCDOT Project Status Report](#)