



Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS)

Policy Committee Meeting Friday, August 6th, 2021, 10:00 a.m.

Meeting Location: The Rotary Community Center at Oscar Frazier Park, Bluffton & Zoom

Policy Committee Members Present:

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

Policy Committee Members Absent:

Sen. Tom Davis, JC Leg. Delegation Chairman

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

Technical Committee Members Absent:

Noah Krepps, Town of Port Royal
David Pritchard, City of Beaufort
Rob Merchant, Beaufort County

LCOG Staff Present:

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

SCDOT Staff Present:

Robby Robbins, SCDOT Commission Chairman
Craig Winn
LaToya Grate
David Gray
Betsey McCall
Scott Donahue
Travis Cooper
Erin Porter
Josh Johnson
Megan Groves

Others Present:

Joe Crowley, Lowcountry Inside Track
Matt Davis, Hardeeville
Kelly Farabee, S&ME Inc.
R. Pinckney
Jared Felix, Beaufort County
Matt Gates, Hardeeville
Barbara Childs
Dan Woods, Town of Bluffton

AGENDA

1. Call to Order.

- a. Pledge of Allegiance
- b. Invocation
- c. Introduction of Members, Guests and Staff
- d. Designees
- e. Action on [June 4, 2021 Meeting Minutes](#).

Harry Williams made the motion to approve the [June 4th 2021 meeting minutes](#), Lisa Sulka seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

2. Old Business.

- a. LATS Technical Committee Update—Katie Woodruff

The Technical committee had a meeting in the end of July, kicking of the LRTP update process. Kimley-Horn presented an overview of the project and offered an opportunity for input from the committee. Several municipalities offered additional plan and documentation to share for the plan development. The municipalities were asked to submit information to Stephanie Rossi to pass on to Kimley-Horn.

- b. [SCDOT US 278 and US 17 Project Update](#)—Craig Winn

A public hearing was recently held for the US 278 project on July 22nd,2021. A total of 355 attendees were present. As of July 30th 2021, the webpage dedicated to the project had a total of 13 thousand views and SCDOT has received a total of 359 comments with the comment period ending on August 22nd,2021. The next event SCDOT will have will be in-person office hours on August 18th to August 21st at the Island Recreation Center on Hilton Head Island. Any individual who still has questions regarding the project will be able to address them and learn more about the project during the one-hour appointment windows.

SCDOT started working on the Phase two contract and scope which is close to being finalized. The next steps are to analyze and respond to the comments received and to develop the findings of no significant impact required for a federal approval.

- Glenn Stanford stated that he attended the public hearing for US278 and that he was impressed with the quality and turnout. He proceeded to ask whether SCDOT had received any comments or formed any preliminary reviews thus far? Craig Winn responded that he didn't have a chance to read over all of the comments, however of those he has read over thus far, reoccurring themes such as concerns over the intersections. Craig Winn went on to state that prior to the next LATS Policy Committee meeting, a complete analysis of the comments will be completed, the results of which, will be shared with the LATS Policy Committee on October 1st,2021.
- Glenn Stanford asked whether a strong consensus or opinion with one issue or another could result in a possible revision of the recently released third alternative. Craig Winn responded saying that it depends on what it is since some parts of the project would be difficult to alter due to the balance between impacts and performance as well as certain protections in place.

US 17, contractors continue to install the Geo Textile fabric and granular bridge lift for the widening portion of the road behind the barrier. A turtle barrier fence was installed to protect turtles that were attempting to cross the road. The earthwork for the first installment and settlement period will begin.

c. Beaufort CTC Update—Kraig Gordon

Over the past 4+ years, the Beaufort CTC has touched over 75 miles of roads in Beaufort County. Goethe Road, has had a complication arise and the Beaufort CTC will hire an engineer to resolve said issue. An analysis for the roadways of the three municipalities, in addition to Beaufort County's, has been completed by the Contractor. PMS should be done around October at which point it will be provided to the municipalities.

- Lisa Sulka asked who the Goethe Road information was relayed to in the Town of Bluffton. Kraig Gordon responded by saying that the contractor raised questions in regards to the depth of the current pavement, which upon further investigation, was found to be not the depth that was anticipated in portions of the road. This resulted in the need for redesign and, as such, Kraig Gordon had not yet reached out to Bluffton town employees. Lisa Sulka asked Jared Felix to make sure coordination occurs with Kevin Icard. Jared Felix responded by stating that the current plans would need to be redesigned. Jared had planned for resurfacing but which may cause a delay. Jared Felix said he would coordinate with Kevin Icard.

d. Palmetto Breeze Update—Mary Lou Franzoni

Mary Lou stated that the HHI trolley system that began on April 10th, 2021 and finished at the end of July carried 39,224 passengers. A substantial increase from the first year counts of 5,600 and following year passenger counts of 18,000. In 2020, due to covid-19 a total of only 4,400 passengers were recorded as having had used the trolley.

The new Bluffton shuttle service was anticipated to begin July 1st, 2021, however, due to a lack of drivers it was delayed to the September 7th, 2021. It is still currently on tract for the revised start date. The route will run Monday through Friday 7am-6pm and has two routes which cover the Bluffton parkway and Buckwalter parkway.

University of South Carolina – Beaufort canceled the Bluffton to HHI campus shuttle service that Palmetto breeze provided last year due to COVID. This year the university has requested that the route be expanded to include the City of Beaufort campus. Mary Lou said the reason for the request was due to many of the student's majors require classes offered at two or more of the campuses. Palmetto Breeze is currently wrapping the shuttles for this service to show the schools mascots.

The Daufuskie Island Ferry shuttle that was supposed to end September 15th, 2021 has not ceased yet to demand and its overall popularity. Shuttles run four times a day currently.

- Glenn Stanford asked whether Palmetto breeze has data on where passengers board and depart the trolleys. Mary Lou responded stating that they're working on getting that data, however, the passenger counters they installed on the trolley conflict with manually recorded counts. They are currently working with the company that made the devices, to fine tune and fix the issue. Glenn Stanford responded saying that even if the numbers aren't perfect, he would be interested in seeing the data to determine trends. Mary Lou responded saying that she would provide those ridership counts. Lisa Sulka asked that she shares it with Stephanie Rossi who would in turn distribute it to the LATS Policy and Technical Committee members.

- e. [Update on the LATS Long Range Plan & project kick off](#)—Stephanie Rossi & Kimley-Horn Kimley Horn gave a presentation on the LATS LRTP providing an overview of the planning process, key milestones and public engagement. The presentation can be viewed by clicking on the following [link](#).
- Susan Zelman asked who develops and who would be scoring the prioritization of the projects and whether the Technical Committee has a roll in the matter. Allison Fluitt replied saying that part of the Act 114 process, SCDOT has put together a list of prioritization criteria. These are a series of quantified and weighted prioritization criteria that have been established statewide. At the local MPO level, the option to customize the prioritization process is possible. Any customizations to the prioritization criteria would need to go to the Board of Transportation and be approved. Once the projects are scored, they will be compared against available revenues to develop a fiscally constrained list of prioritized transportation projects.
 - Harry Williams asked whether the public survey will be made available to the everyone at the local municipal level to increase awareness and response rate. Allison Fluitt and Stephanie Rossi responded saying it would. Harry Williams proceeded to ask about the plans reviewed and stated that the MPO is larger than Beaufort County. Kimley-Horne responded stating that the slide showing findings from reviewed plans were merely a small portion of the total reviewed plans and findings and only meant to serve as an example. Additional recent information, plans, and studies were uncovered during a meeting with the Technical Committee as well.
 - Stu Rodman asked whether it would be possible to condense the project list after local plans and staff review so as to not spread funding too thin as well as oversaturate the public with too many potential projects over the next 8-10 years during the public comment phase. Lisa Sulka said that the committee has to be aware of all projects and that major projects are needed all throughout the region.

3. New Business.

- a. [Amendment to FY 2021-2027 Transportation Improvement Program](#)—Stephanie Rossi Stephanie Rossi explained that the [proposed amendment](#) was to amend \$100,000 from the Recreational Trail Program into the TIP for a Hardeeville City Loop trail project. Glenn Stanford made the motion to approve, Mike McFee seconded, the motion passed unanimously.
- b. [CRRSAA funding to satisfy LATS debt service for FY 2022 & FY 2023](#)—Stephanie Rossi Stephanie Rossi explained that CRRSAA funds received by SCDOT were used to pay off the debt service of some of the smaller MPOs. As such LATS debt service for FY2022 & FY 2023 was paid off and slightly less than \$800,000 in Guideshare will become available.

4. Other Business.

- a. [MSA threshold will remain 50,000](#)—Stephanie Rossi Stephanie Rossi told the LATS policy committee that the MSA threshold will remain unchanged.

5. Public Questions via Facebook Live.

No questions via Facebook Live.

Jared Felix informed the Committee that Beaufort County recently applied for two federal grants, one for \$25 million dollars for the Lady's Island Corridor Projects, and the other a \$4 million dollar grant through the Department of Defense for a pathway along SC-116 from the air station to the neighborhood of Laurel Bay. Jared Felix stated that one of the questions on the grant applications are whether the projects are on the TIP or the STIP. As such, Jared Felix asked whether the LATS Policy Committee would consider incorporating Beaufort County locally funded projects so as to increase to probability of being awarded federal grants. Lisa Sulka asked about the funds from the penny sales tax are available to which Jared Felix responded stating that the funds available from the sales tax is \$30 million and meant for the initial project elements preceding the construction portion of the project. He added that the total project cost far exceeds those available funds from the Penny Sales Tax. Lisa Sulka stated that she hasn't see any action and would like updates on project statuses. Stu Rodman stated that there may be some things that Beaufort County could do to get the engineering started. Stu Rodman went on to say that construction costs for SC-170 would need to be put together sooner rather than later and asked Jared Felix when the design portion would be complete. Jared Felix responded the initial design will be completed by the end of the year.

6. Next Meeting.

- Friday, October 1, 2021

7. Adjourn.