

Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS)

Policy Committee Meeting

Friday, April 6th, 2018

10:00 a.m.

TCL New River Campus, Conference Room

Policy Committee Members Present:

Chairman Lisa Sulka, Mayor, Town of Bluffton
Vice Chair Paul Sommerville, Beaufort County
Richard Hamilton, LRTA Board Chair
Sen. Tom Davis, Beaufort County Leg.
Delegation
David Bennett, Mayor, Town of Hilton Head
Island
Barbara Clark, Jasper County Council
Samuel E. Murray, Mayor, Town of Port Royal
Harry Williams, Mayor, City of Hardeeville
Mike McFee, Council and Mayor *pro tem*, City of
Beaufort

Policy Committee Members Absent:

Robby Robbins, SCDOT Commission
Sam Glover, SCDOT Commission
Rep. Bill Herbkersman, Jasper County Leg.
Delegation Chairman

Technical Committee Members:

Lisa Wagner, Planning Director, Jasper County
Colin Kinton, Chair, Beaufort County
Mary Lou Franzoni, LRTA Executive Director
Carolyn Kassel, City of Hardeeville
Katie Woodruff, Planner, City of Hardeeville
Kevin Icard, Planner, Town of Bluffton
Shawn Colin, Planner, Town of Hilton Head
Anne Cyran, Town of Hilton Head
Kraig Gordon, Chair, Beaufort County CTC
Neil Parson, City of Hardeeville

Technical Committee Members Absent:

Lauren Kelly, Planner, City of Beaufort
Linda Bridges, Planning Director, Town of Port
Royal

LCOG Staff Present:

Ginnie Kozak, Planning Director
Lawrence Holdsworth, Regional Planner
Christian Dammel, Planning Assistant

SCDOT Staff Present:

Craig Winn, Project Manager
Michael Pitts, Program Management
Kenny Larimore, Program Manager
Megan Groves, Program Management
Jim Frierson, SCDOT Office of Public
Transportation

Others Present:

Al Jenkins, Senator Tim Scott Staff
Dan Head, Senator Lindsay Graham Staff
Toby Tyler, Senator Lindsay Graham Staff
David Spisso, Mayor Pro Tem, City of
Hardeeville
Carolyn Kassel, City of Hardeeville
Susan Zellman, LRTA Board
Stephanie Rossi, CORE MPO
Chip Berger, AECOM
Lauren Travis, AECOM
Frank Turno, Alliance Consulting Engineers
Joe Fragalo
Joe Croley, Lowcountry Inside Track

1. Call to Order.

- a. Pledge of Allegiance
- b. Invocation
- c. Introduction of Members, Guests and Staff
- d. Designees
- e. Action on February 23, 2018 Meeting Minutes (Draft minutes attached.)

2. Old Business.

- a. SCDOT US 278 Project Update
ACTION: Information

A handout containing all transportation projects between the fiscal year 2018-2021 in the LATS MPO area was provided. To view this handout please visit; [SCDOT Projects Update](#)

- b. Beaufort County Project Update—handout
ACTION: Information

A handout containing updates on current Beaufort county projects was provided. It included the details pertaining to Boundary Street, US 278/Jenkins Island, US 278 Signal system initiatives, and new traffic signals. To view this handout please visit; [County Project Updates - 2B](#)

- c. LRTA/Palmetto Breeze Small Urban Area Transit Planning Update—
Presentation by AECON Consultants —Chip Berger
ACTION: Information

Service scenarios have been developed and are being evaluated for LRTA and its market. Mr. Burger discussed the results of the survey responses returned from residents as well as from seven major employers pertaining to transit in the Bluffton and Hilton Head areas. Many responses showed that navigating Bluffton and Hilton Head is difficult via car. It was noted that most cars on the road are single drivers, which congest roadways daily. A lack of public transit services and carpooling programs, busy schedules, and limited options play a role in this. Of the Palmetto Breeze riders, most use the service to get to work from off-island locations. Some respondents said that they would not mind walking a short distance to access a LRTA route if it was convenient and that they would benefit if there was an app to better gauge pick-up times and also so they could pay fares electronically.

A route map for Palmetto Breeze's current services was shown. It serves the four Lowcountry counties and Allendale County. Primarily, these services are utilized by commuters going onto Hilton Head Island.

A planned trolley route system for Hilton Head Island was discussed as well. Mr. Burger noted potential new services beginning about 2020. Local demographics,

population density, employment density, major regional employer analysis were used to project demands and likely routes for transit services. Additional trolley services on Hilton Head and circulator routes in Bluffton, as well as commuter or express services to and from Hilton Head Island are among possible future services for LRTA.

This planning project will be completed by the end of June.

Ms. Franzoni responded to a question about the Trolley service planned for 2018. The Hilton Head Island Trolley is expected to begin running in July, with a promotional program to raise awareness of the new service to begin in late April, with the hiring of a marketing consultant.

Mr. Burger stated that alternative funding is being sought out and will be discussed at a future meeting.

3. New Business.

- a. Discussion of Infrastructure Projects submitted to SC US Senators' offices by LATS members. **NOTE:** Sen. Graham's Regional Director will be in attendance and the Grants Coordinator will be on the Phone from Washington D.C.

ACTION: Information

Mayor Sulka and Ms. Kozak inquired about any feedback on the current projects members were asked to submit. Mr. Head informed the committee members that the infrastructure bills are still awaiting approval. Ms. Sulka suggested compiling a joint LATS list and, as a group, ranking those projects using the LATS project priority matrix.

Mr. Head said that the best thing to do, at the current time, in addition to having Senator Graham write a letter of support is to ensure that projects competitive. If a project is denied, the Senator can also request a debrief so the applicant can find out what could have been done to improve the application.

Senator Graham's Grants Coordinator Toby Tyler called in to discuss items pertaining to grant applications and increasing odds of success in obtaining them. A general consensus on the current situation regarding denied applications was discussed. The main points discussed during Ms. Tyler's conference call were that higher-than-required local matches, collectively submitting multi-jurisdictional projects, regionally consolidating high priority projects, and incorporating creative funding alternatives would all decrease the likelihood of project grants being denied. Additionally, Ms. Tyler mentioned that there is speculation that the TIGER grant will not have a fy 2018 application period, but that there will be a new Program. She said she will reach out to DOT to find out the breakdown of TIGER grant matching funds this year as well as provide info on the creativity aspect of grants in addition to offering to walk people through the INFER program. The option

to setup 1 on 1 calls to discuss grant applications and provide examples of other rural communities was also offered by Ms. Tyler.

Referring to the INFER application made by Hardeeville for Exit 3, she said that announcements concerning the submitted projects that were to be originally released in April will now be released in June.

4. Other Business.

Ms. Kozak returned to the suggestion that all committee members working together as a team to submit applications for large projects. Mayor Sulka recommended that all of the local governments send their large projects to Ms. Kozak to compile a list and then have the Technical Committee rank them using the LATS priority criteria that are in the LRTP and have been approved by the LATS Policy Committee, SCDOT and Federal Highways. Mayor Sulka added the possibility of bundling projects, where it's possible, to make stronger grant applications. Mayor Bennett responded by pointing out that, in addition to a government not having the majority of funds needed for local match, a considerable length of time is needed for designing, planning, and permitting.

Mr. Gruber emphasized the urgency of projects such as replacing the three US 278 bridges that are not be provided by Safety funding from SCDOT. That project, and related corridor improvements, will be on the Beaufort County sales tax referendum this fall.

5. Public Comment Period.

6. Next Meeting. Friday, May 4, 2018.

7. ADJOURN.