



Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS)
Policy Committee Meeting Friday, April 1st, 2022, 10:00 a.m.
Meeting Location: In-Person TCL New River Campus Conference Room

Policy Committee Members Present:

Lisa Sulka, Town of Bluffton
Barbara Clark, Jasper County
Harry Williams, City of Hardeeville
Mike McFee, City of Beaufort
Glenn Stanford, Hilton Head Island
Charles Mitchell, LRTA

Policy Committee Members Absent:

Sen. Tom Davis, JC Leg. Delegation Chairman
Paul Sommerville, Beaufort County Council
Joe DeVito, Town of Port Royal

Technical Committee Members Present:

Kraig Gordon, Chairman Beaufort CTC
Lisa Wagner, Jasper County
Anne Cyran, Town of Hilton Head
Katie Woodruff, City of Hardeeville
Kevin Icard, Town of Bluffton
Carrie Gorsuch, City of Beaufort

Technical Committee Members Absent:

Mary Lou Franzoni, LRTA
Noah Krepps, Town of Port Royal
Rob Merchant, Beaufort County

LCOG Staff Present:

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

SCDOT Staff Present:

Craig Winn
Travis Cooper
David Gray
Josh Johnson

Others Present:

Henry Criss, LRTA
Neil Parsons, City of Hardeeville
Dan Wood, Town of Bluffton
Jackson Puckey, Congresswoman Nancy
Mace's Office
Mark Pleasant, FHWA
David Johnson
Jared Fralix, Beaufort County
Barbara Childs, LRTA



AGENDA

1. Call to Order.

- a. Pledge of Allegiance
- b. Invocation
- c. Introduction of Members, Guests and Staff
- d. Designees
- e. Action on February 4, 2022, [Meeting Minutes](#) (Draft minutes attached.)
Glen Stanford made the motion to approve the February 4th 2022 meeting minutes, Barbara Clark seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

2. Old Business.

- a. [SCDOT US 278 and US 17 Project Update](#)—Craig Winn, SCDOT
ACTION: Information

US 278

Craig Winn informed the committee that SCDOT conducted a third Public Information Meeting at the Hilton Head Island Recreational Facility on March 3, 2022. The additional public meeting was held to ensure that the public had a chance to review and comment on the proposed modifications to the revised preferred alternative. The comment period was closed on March 26th. He went on to state that conceptual bridge plans were submitted on March 31st, 2021.

US 17

Craig Winn informed the Committee that the widening of the roadway embankment on US 17 is mostly completed behind the barrier wall and that surcharge installation has begun and will continue for the coming months. He stated that temporary drainage system will be installed. Utility work is ongoing to Work around the intersection of SC 315 to allow for the signal installation in the coming month. Once the surcharge is constructed, a settlement waiting period will commence until settlement is reached (12-18 months). SCDOT is coordinating the second US-17 Back River Bridge with GDOT.

I-95

Craig Winn informed the Committee that SCDOT is also working on the I-95 design permits. A public meeting is anticipated later this year likely around September with construction anticipated to begin in 2024. SCDOT is currently looking to replace all the bridges along the I-95 corridor during phase I with the exception of the exit 5 bridge. Phase 1 include I-95 from the GA state line to the exit 8.

- Harry Williams asked Craig Winn when the signal installation at US 17 and SC 315 will be done. Craig Winn responded stating after the utility reconfiguration work is complete, signal installation will begin. Anticipated completion of the intersection signal is within two to three months.



- Harry Williams asked Craig Winn about whether it was true that the City of Hardeeville could pass an ordinance to prevent trucks from getting on a segment of John Smith Road which has become heavily utilized by trucks. Craig Winn responded he was unsure, and that Harry Williams should speak with the district traffic engineer.
- Glenn Stanford inquired as to how long the I-95 project would take. Craig Winn responded that once it begins it will take three to four years to complete. Glenn Stanford went on to thank and state his appreciation of SCDOT, Craig Winn and his team for the extraordinary public outreach that has been undertaken for public input on the US 278 project and attending to peoples input as well as the positive impact it has made in the community.
- Lisa Sulka asked Craig Winn whether US 17 will be protected in any manner while it settles during those 12-18 months and if SCDOT is taking any measures to monitor it during that settlement period from possible issues such as hurricanes. Craig Winn responded saying that the contractor will be doing checks throughout the period to monitor and mitigate erosion.

b. **Beaufort County Engineering Update—Jared Fralix, Beaufort County**
ACTION: Information

Jared Fralix informed the committee that Beaufort County is undertaking the access management study on US 278 from SC 170 to Argent Boulevard. He anticipates a timeframe of four-to-six-months including a public outreach effort. There will be coordination with LATS to “get the word out” so as to receive as much public input as possible. Jared Fralix went on to state that Beaufort County is also working on the short term recommendations (six locations) for SC 170,outlined in 2019 [LCOG SC 170 Corridor Access Management Study](#). Beaufort County is working with Hardeeville and Jasper County on the funding. The project will be out for bid in the summer and begin in the fall.

Beaufort County Council commissioned a Citizens’ Transportation Advisory Committee earlier in the year. The Committee, which has met six times so far, has been meeting weekly regarding whether there should be a sales tax on the 2022 referendum. Their recommendation, if in favor, will determine how long, how much money, and which projects would be included in the referendum. Their recommendations will be provided to County Council by the end of April.

- Lisa Sulka asked whether there were recordings she could view of the meetings. Jared Fralix responded saying that they’re public meetings and are recorded but not broadcasted live. They should be posted at some point, however he will look into locating them so as to provide them for her.

c. **[Beaufort County Transportation Committee Update—Kraig Gordon, BCTC](#)**
ACTION: Information

Kraig Gordon updated the Committee on the progress made over the past 5 years by the Beaufort County CTC. To date the BCTC has touched 25% or roughly 55 or 60 miles of the



Beaufort County roads. Additionally, BCTC has worked on roughly 18 miles of state secondary roadways within Beaufort County. The BCTC is required by law to spend 33% of the dollars received on the state road network. A program was started this year by the BCTC to put look at the 210 miles of state secondary roadways with less than 500 AADT within Beaufort County. The BCTC has anticipates to receive 5.8 million from the state legislature that will be earmarked for the low AADT routes.

- Lisa Sulka inquired about Jasper County giving a similar update. Kraig Gordon replied saying that Jasper County doesn't have a self-administered CTC and that SCDOT takes care of it for them. Lisa Sulka responded saying there must be someone who could report on Jasper County and asked whether in future meetings someone could be present to update the Committee. Barbara Clark responded saying that wouldn't be a problem, but it is handled by to SCDOT. Craig Winn said that he will speak to the resident maintenance engineer about doing so.

d. Palmetto Breeze Update—Mary Lou Franzoni, Palmetto Breeze

ACTION: Information

Henry Criss filled in for Mary Lou Franzoni who was unable to attend the meeting. He updated the Committee on the Hilton Head Island Airport Service. Their consultant, RS&H, has begun public outreach and stakeholder engagement which has received a large number of responses and valuable input. Palmetto Breeze and their consultants are currently reviewing that information and input and expect to have some proposals regarding route design soon. They will reach out to the stakeholders with the proposed route.

Criss Henry informed the Committee that the Bluffton Breeze shuttle ridership has been growing and additional stops have been added recently. Those stops include the RV park at Hilton Head National which allowed for a stop at old town as well. Changes have also been made to the Hilton Head Island Breeze Trolley service which is scheduled to begin on April 9th, 2022. The previous season passenger counts broke previous records and it is anticipated that this season will exceed last.

- Glenn Stanford commented that the cooperation between the Town of Hilton Head Island and Palmetto Breeze has been outstanding. He went on to say that the way to get more people to ride is by making it a free ride, which in his opinion is what brought it to “life”. He hopes that more cars will be taken off the road as a result of continuous utilization and to keep up the good work.
- Lisa Sulka commented that whatever materials Criss Henry could get the town officials to increase attention and usage of the trolley and shuttles would be appreciated. Lisa Sulka went on to state that she heard of a minor issue with the Buckwalter stop, where the breeze shuttle doesn't stop but is supposed to and is utilized by a lot of kids. Criss Henry responded that he would speak with Jared Fralix about the matter to resolve it.



- e. Update on the LATS Long Range Plan—Stephanie Rossi
ACTION: Information

Stephanie Rossi informed the Committee that staff have been reviewing the chapters individually and a draft will be ready to be sent out for review on Monday April 4th, 2022. Stephanie Rossi reiterated that there will be two financial plans within the document, one based on strictly Guideshare and one with Guideshare plus a local sales tax. The document will be out for public comment for 30 days which will also serve as the feedback period from the committee as well. The Technical Committee will meet on April 13th, 2022 to go into the finer details and ask any questions they may have.

3. New Business.

- a. [Amendment to Transportation Improvement Program to add \\$40,000,000 of South Carolina State Infrastructure Bank \(SIB\) Funds to the TIP for Exit 3](#)—Stephanie Rossi

ACTION: Approve adding project to the TIP

Harry Williams makes the motion the approve the amendment to add \$40,000,000 of South Carolina State Infrastructure Bank (SIB) Funds to the TIP for Exit 3 in the TIP, Glenn Stanford seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

- Lisa Sulka asked when the I-95 Exit 3 project is expected to begin. Craig Winn replied asking if the agreement has been signed with the City of Hardeeville to which Neil Parson responded that they're still working on that. Craig Winn proceeded to inform the committee of the steps following the agreement required for SCDOT to continue.
- Lisa Sulka inquired as to whether Craig Winn could provide a more detailed breakdown by time for large more important projects such as I-95 Exit 3 and/or the "top 5" projects. Craig Winn responded saying that SCDOT could add that for the I-95 project to the project updates, however, in regards to Exit 3, SCDOT cannot proceed until they receive the agreement between Jasper County and Hardeeville.
- Harry Williams went on to the clarify that the reason why the IJA hasn't been signed as of yet was due to wetland regulations having been reverted back the previous rules dues to litigation. This caused delay to completing the environmental work.

- b. [Amendment to Transportation Improvement Program for modifications to the funding and funding years for the US 278 Corridor Improvements](#)—Stephanie Rossi

ACTION: Approve adding project to the TIP



Glenn Stanford made the motion to approve the modifications to the funding and funding years for the US 278 Corridor Improvements on the TIP, Harry Williams seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

- c. [Amendment to Transportation Improvement Program to add SCDOT Safety Improvement Projects](#) —Stephanie Rossi

ACTION: Approve adding project to the TIP

Glenn Stanford made the motion to approve the SCDOT Safety Improvement Projects to the TIP, Harry Williams seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

- d. Special Called meeting for LRTP Adoption on May 13th, 10am at TCL New River Campus/Virtual

ACTION: Approve adding a Special Called meeting May 13th, 2022

Glenn Stanford made the motion to approve a special called LATS Policy Committee meeting on May 13th, 2022, Harry Williams seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

- e. Discuss Regional Planning Studies —Stephanie Rossi

ACTION: Discussion

Stephanie Rossi went over the potential Regional Planning Studies identified during the LRTP process and informed the committee that these were being looked to be divided up among different year segments over the course of the LRTPs span. She informed the Committee that there was a potential transit study for northern Beaufort County that would be added to the list of studies provided. The Committee was asked to discuss these projects and help establish a prioritization of the studies identified through the LRTP.

- Harry Williams commented that he believes that SC 46/SC 315 Access Management Study is a critical study given the amount of warehousing as well as housing that has is and has been built thus far in that area. He went on to state that he would like to see this study and project done and have it expanded into Levy Road and Freedom Parkway. He went on to state that the southern portion of US 17 going right into Bluffton at the roundabout with SC 170 could be part of the SC 170 access management study due to another housing development which is currently seeking approval to potentially build 3,300 homes. He would like to get this made into a priority so an estimate can be established that the City of Hardeeville may be able contribute funds to.
- Lisa Sulka agreed with Harry Williams stating that Jasper and Hardeeville will see the roughly 3,300 homes built in an area that would have two routes available to the them, both exiting onto SC 46 according to current plans. She and went on to state that this is one of the driving factors behind the Bluffton Parkway expansion and I-95



exit 3. The Bluffton Parkways expansion would help ease the gridlock resulting from the development and that of the current traffic on SC 46/315. Lisa Sulka would like to proceed with SC 46/315 access management study as well but would not believe any widening recommendations would be feasible and would want guarantees that the scenic highway designation would not be jeopardized.

- Glen Stanford asked whether the I-95 Feasibility Study was warranted given that the status of the I-95 project. Stephanie Rossi responded that it was already underway and funded by SCDOT. Federal and state funded projects need to be identified in the LRTP plan.
- Jared Fralix stated that he would like to recommend that there be not just comments on the proposed project but also action, if not today than in the very near future. He went on to state the importance of doing so and the benefits that would be had such as is seen with the progressions of the Multi-jurisdictional SC170 project. Lisa Sulka asked whether the budget would need to be completed first. Stephanie Rossi responded that LATS would need to have the adopted LRTP plan before any new projects can be entered into the TIP. Jared Fralix responded asking whether they could be added onto the special May 13th meeting agenda for the adoption of the LRTP. Stephanie will inquire with SCDOT on the process.

4. Other Business.

- a. [Administrative modification to the FY 2022- FY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program](#)

ACTION: Information

Stephanie Rossi informed the committee about the administrative modification the FY 2022-2023 UPWP. There were no questions or discussion.

5. Public Questions via Facebook Live.

There were no questions via Facebook live or zoom.

6. Next Meeting.

- a. **Friday, May 13th, 2022 Special Called meeting**

7. Adjourn.