

Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS)
Policy Committee Meeting
Friday, August 7, 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
Susan Zellman, LRTA
Mike McFee, City of Beaufort
Mayor Harry Williams, City of Hardeeville
Robby Robbins, SCDOT Commission Chairman
Barbara Clark, Jasper County
Glenn Stanford, Town of Hilton Head

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, Beaufort County
Lisa Wagner, Jasper County

LCOG Staff Present:

Sabrena Graham, Executive Director
Stephanie Rossi, Planning Director
Maleena Parkey, Senior Planner
Christian Dammal, Planning Assistant
Kira Fuller, Executive Assistant

Others Present:

Mark Wilkes, CORE MPO
John Fleming, SCA
Mark Pleasant, FHWA
Betsey McCall, SCDOT
Rob Merchant, Beaufort County
Barbara Childs, LRTA

Policy Committee Members Absent:

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

Technical Committee Members Absent:

Linda Bridges, Town of Port Royal
David Pritchard, City of Beaufort
Bill Harkins, Town of Hilton Head

SCDOT Staff Present:

Megan Groves
Craig Winn
LaToya Grate
Josh Johnson
David Gray

1. Call to Order: Chairwoman Lisa Sulka called the meeting to order at 10:08 am
 - a. Invocation – led by Barbara Clark
 - b. Pledge of Allegiance
 - c. Introduction of Members, Guests and Staff
 - d. Designees – Barbara Childs of LRTA
 - e. Action on June 5, 2020 Meeting Minutes
 - i. Susan Zellman is Chairwoman of LRTA.
 - ii. Mike McFee made the motion to accept the minutes with changes. Barbara Clark seconded. **Motion carried unanimously.**
2. Old Business:
 - a. Introduction of LCOG Planning Director – Sabrena Graham
 - i. Stephanie Rossi, originally from the West Coast, worked for the Puget Sound Regional Council for 15 years where she performed regional transportation planning. For the last 5 years, she worked at the Chatham County Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission. She worked updating the nonmotorized transportation plan and incorporating federal FAST Act requirements into their Long Range Plan. Her areas of expertise are transportation planning, congestion management, intelligent transportation systems planning, emergency management planning, safety planning, multi-motor long-range planning and grant writing. She brings 20 years of transportation experience. LCOG is very happy to have her!
 - ii. Mayor Sulka extends a welcome on behalf of everyone.
 - iii. Mayor Williams and Mayor Sulka met with Gene (she is unsure of full name) went around to look at on-going projects in the area. It would be nice to have input from LCOG. Hopefully, we (*LCOG and LATS*) can do this later.
 - b. SCDOT US 278 & 17 Update – Craig Winn
 - i. SCDOT is continuing to develop the intersection alternatives for Spanish Wells Road, Squire Pope Road, Old Wild Horse Road, and the Jenkins Island area. The draft of the Environmental Assessment is under review at DOT and comments were sent to consultants. SCDOT anticipates hosting a public hearing late Fall or early Winter to unveil the intersection alternatives. They will meet with the Town of Hilton Head on August 18th where they will discuss community mitigation as part of environmental assessment. Next week, DOT will discuss 5 different bridge alternatives and work through challenges. SCDOT will provide an update to Beaufort County Council soon. The SC Transportation Infrastructure Bank (SIB) application goes for final approval next Tuesday before it goes Joint Bond Review Committee.
 - ii. US 17 construction letting is next week. Its anticipated completion date is Fall 2025. SCDOT is coordinating with Georgia DOT regarding the Back-River Bridge, which is scheduled for Fall 2024.
 - iii. Question: Mayor Sulka asked, “The contract will let next week. Is it numbers firm until completion so that we do not go through any unknown increases? Will we stall?”
 - iv. Craig answered, “During construction, there is always a chance of unknowns that may increase the cost. In all our numbers, we factor in contingencies. The numbers that LATS and LCOG approved for funding should be sufficient but we will now more next week once we get construction bids.”
 - v. Question: Mayor Sulka asked, “When will people driving to and from see changes?”
 - vi. Craig answered, “The contract will not be awarded until mid-October, so maybe later this year.”
 - vii. Question: Mark Wilkes asked, “Is SCDOT coordinating with GDOT in their study to replace the Talmadge Bridge? I have seen an RFP and wanted to mention that they are looking into a feasibility study to replace the bridge. It seems wide-open in terms of concepts.”
 - viii. Craig Winn responded, “I have not had any coordination with that.”
 - ix. Mayor Sulka asked, “Could we count on Mark or maybe DOT to keep LATS updated? It would be nice to know since that is our neighbor.”
 - x. Mark Wilkes will share what he can. Also, Stephanie Rossi will keep tabs on the project.
 - xi. Mayor Sulka asked, “When will SCDOT know the final alternatives for 278?”

- xii. Craig replied, “We will know the final alternatives at the public hearing, so late this year or early next year.”
 - xiii. LATS is very happy with all the help Robby Robbins provided. All projects were well received by members of the commission. We are excited to see them move forward. LATS will send a Thank You note to the Secretary Hall at the commission. Stephanie will assist with that.
- c. Palmetto Breeze Update: Small Urban Area Planning, Phase 2 – Mary Lou Franzoni
 - i. Palmetto Breeze is operating commuter buses in 5 counties to transport people to work. The trolley is operating on Hilton Head Island and it is still fare-free, however, there has been no increase in ridership. The shuttle for the Daufuskie Island ferry is doing well. Palmetto Breeze is offering demand response services in Beaufort, which is a service that transports riders to doctor’s appointments etc. By the end of the year, they will have 3 new MCI buses, which are large buses for commuter services, replacing the oldest buses in the fleet. Also, they are renovating the administration building. Unfortunately, Palmetto Breeze is unable to continue the Second Helpings programs due to COVID concerns.
 - d. Beaufort County Transportation Committee Update – Kraig Gordon
 - i. Three years ago, the County Transportation Committee (CTC) started collecting nonrecurring funds which were used to pave Palmetto Bay Road and trace bridge approaches. The bridge approaches were finished last month and approved by SCDOT. Also, they completed 48 miles of resurfacing in Beaufort County, for example, Bluffton Parkway. The CTC is preparing to write an RFP on Pavement Management Systems for roads this year. In conjunction with the PMS review, the CTC will include municipalities which will save local governments many dollars. Several years ago, the CTC started working with District 6 and the Resident Engineer to create a program where SCDOT was 1 year out on resurfacing and work projects. The agreement was reached at 2 years. Now, it is a statewide program.
 - ii. Question: Mayor Sulka asked, “Is there a website where the public may view the information given to us?”
 - iii. Kraig Gordon answered, “Yes, at <https://beaufortcountysc.gov/county-transportation-committee/>”
3. New Business:
- a. Informational Overview of SCDOT and Metropolitan Planning MPO – LaToya Grate
 - i. Presentation: [LATS MPO Overview](#)
 - b. Approval of the FY 2021 - 2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) – Stephanie Rossi
 - i. Presentation: [TIP 2021 - 2027](#)
 - ii. Question: Mayor Harry Williams asked, “With the Hilton Head Island Bridge and Exit 3 funding, do we need to update the TIP and add those funding sources?”
 - iii. Stephanie replied, “As soon as we receive transmittals for any project, we enter them into the TIP. If it is not seen in the TIP, it means that it is one step in the process that has not made it to our desks yet. We anticipate many amendments in the future. We are aware of projects coming up.”
 - iv. Question: Mayor Sulka asked, “Are changes in project costs added to the TIP?”
 - v. Stephanie answered, “There is a threshold that must be met for project cost changes to come before the policy committee for a vote. If it is a small bookkeeping exercise or administrative modification, we would inform the committee, but it would not be something to vote on.”
 - vi. Mayor Sulka thought it would be helpful to know about administrative modifications, and Stephanie added administrative modifications will be included in packets when they occur.
 - vii. MOVED by Mike McFee, seconded by Mayor Harry Williams, to approve the LATS FY 2021-2027 Transportation Improvement Plan. **Motion carried unanimously.**
4. Other Business: Robby Robbins reported that Tony Cox, Chairman of SCDOT Commission, told him that the 278 presentation was one of the best of the entire group. The SCDOT Commission was very impressed.
5. Public Comment Period: None
6. Next Meeting: Friday, October 2, 2020
7. Adjourn: Mike McFee made a motion to adjourn. Robby Robbins seconded. **Motion carried unanimously.** Meeting adjourned at 11:10 am.