

Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS)
Policy Committee Meeting
Friday, October 11, 2019 10:00 am
TCL New River Campus, Conference Room
MINUTES

Policy Committee Members Present:

Chairwoman – Mayor Lisa Sulka, Town of Bluffton
Barbara Clark, Jasper County
Paul Sommerville, Beaufort County Council
Van Willis, Town of Port Royal
David Spisso, City of Hardeeville
Mayor Harry Williams, City of Hardeeville

Technical Committee Members Present:

Mary Lou Franzoni, Executive Director, LRTA
Katie Woodruff, City of Hardeeville
Rob McFee, Beaufort County
Kraig Gordon, Beaufort County CTC

LCOG Staff Present:

Ginnie Kozak, Planning Director
Christian Dammell, Planning Assistant
Michelle Grimes, Executive Assistant

Others Present:

John Paul Moore, Thomas & Hutton
Jared Fralix, Infrastructure, Consulting & Engineering
Susie Bender, Infrastructure, Consulting & Engineering
Lisa Schwartz, Infrastructure, Consulting & Engineering
Jennifer Bragg, J. Bragg Consulting
Ryan Eckenrode, AECOM
Frank Turano, Alliance Consulting Engineers
Mark Wilkes, CORE MPO
Shawn Colin, Town of Hilton Head
Charlotte Moore, Town of Bluffton
Kell Anderson, SCA
Mark McCain, Beaufort County CTC
Dillon Turner, Kimley Horn
Lawrence _____, Citizen
Joe Croley, Inside Track
John Kemp, Hardeeville Citizen
Dan Wood, Town of Bluffton

Policy Committee Members Absent:

Mayor Samuel E. Murray, Town of Port Royal
Sen. Tom Davis, JC Leg. Delegation Chairman
Richard Hamilton, LRTA
Glenn Stanford, Town of Hilton Head
Mike McFee, City of Beaufort
Robby Robbins, SCDOT Commission Chairman

Technical Committee Members Absent:

Lisa Wagner, Jasper County
Kevin Icard, Town of Bluffton
Anne Cyran, Town of Hilton Head Island
David Prichard, City of Beaufort
Linda Bridges, Town of Port Royal

SCDOT Staff Present:

Craig Winn
Machael Peterson
LaToya Grate
David Gray
Josh Johnson

1. Call to Order: Chairwoman Lisa Sulka called the meeting to order at 10:00 am
 - a. Pledge of Allegiance
 - b. Invocation – led by Barbara Clark
 - c. Introduction of Members, Guests and Staff
 - d. Designees - Van Willis for Mayor Sam Murray, Shawn Colin for Hilton Head, Mary Lou Franzoni for LRTA
 - e. Action on July 12, 2019 Meeting Minutes – Mayor Harry Williams made the motion to accept the minutes. Barbara Clark seconded. **Motion carried unanimously.**
2. Old Business:
 - a. SCDOT US 278 and US 17 Project Update – Craig Winn
 - i. US 278 - Public information meeting to present alternatives was held on September 19th. 340 people attended the meeting. Received 43 comments in person. Had additional 139 comments online. Website activity had 4,000 users since September 1st. Alternatives range from widening/replacing bridges, new 4 lane structure to utilizing power lines. Next steps for SCDOT are to refine/research the alternatives, schedule a workshop in November/December. Next public meeting is October 17th at Hilton Head Public Library, 5-7pm. Comment period was extended to the 25th.
 1. Question: How does SCDOT determine the alternatives? From feedback?
 2. Answer: Yes. Look at environmental and human impacts.
 - ii. US 17 –Still working on financial side and waiting for approval on advancement of guide share funding from LATS and LCOG. Still waiting on individual permits, submitted to the Army Corps of Engineers, Savannah office, in October 2017.
 1. Question: why is it two years for approvals?
 2. Answer: Coordination between two different offices, Charleston and Savannah, of the Army Corps of Engineers.
 3. Question: What is the viability of performing the work at intersection of 315 and US 17 first instead of last?
 4. Answer: still a possibility, SCDOT is looking at it.
 5. Comment: Mayor Harry Williams requested increased advance communication to local businesses on upcoming projects. Mayor Lisa Sulka concurred.
 6. Question: Is there an updated timeline for 315?
 7. Answer: Until a decision is made on the funding, timelines remain TBD. Letter came in two weeks ago (sent mid-September) requesting guide share advancement.
 8. Question: What can we do to help move this along? Send a letter to whom?
 9. Answer: Brent Rewis.
 10. ACTION: Committee agreed to send a letter to Mr. Rewis; Ginnie Kozak will prepare a draft for review.
 - b. Beaufort County Project Update including sales tax referendum projects - Rob McFee
 - i. US 21 Corridor - \$30 million on referendum.
 - ii. 802 turn lane – final plans were submitted to SCDOT for final review.
 - iii. High school alignment on Sunset Bluff Boulevard - conceptual are completed and met with school board. Preliminary public meeting on June 4th. Community offered 200 comments.
 - iv. Airport frontage road – City & County of Beaufort have an MOU, working through the process.
 - v. Question: Can these updates be provided in a handout/attachment?
 - vi. Answer: Yes. Will send to Ginnie for distribution.
 - c. Beaufort County Transportation Committee (BCTC) Update – Kraig Gordon
 - i. Year 3 and partial Year 4 project summary included in meeting materials.
 - ii. This spring, road analysis will be conducted using a sub-contractor.
 - iii. 3 years ago approximately \$1.5 million was awarded in a non-recurring project listing requiring monies to be used on federal or SC primary routes. Committee selected Palmetto Bay Road; unfortunately, \$1.5 million was not enough and Committee has been working past 2 years to gather additional funding. Funds were approved and Pope Avenue repairs were included.
 - iv. Comment: It would be useful if Kraig and Beaufort CTC shared more information with LATS Committee going forward, to include Jasper County. Rudy Smith is the contact person. There will be a more detailed presentation about the CTCs at the December LATS Policy Committee meeting, and the Jasper County TC will be invited to that meeting and future meetings.

- d. Palmetto Breeze Update – Small Urban Area Planning, Phase 2 – Mary Lou Franzoni
 - i. In the midst of conducting Small Urban Area Planning Study, Phase 2 , assessing new bus routes and services in that specific section of the MPO area. Emphasis is on adding routes in Bluffton. The primary driver is getting employees to work, servicing the Palmetto Bluff, Bluffton Parkway and Buckwalter employment concentration areas.
 - ii. Working with AECOM to roll out new services, possibly as early as April 2020. Public meetings will be conducted.

3. New Business:

a. SC 170 Corridor Access Management Study Presentation of Results and Recommendations – Ryan Eckenrode, AECOM

- i. Introduction: Ginnie thanked the committee, who diligently read reports, attended monthly meetings and provided good feedback to Ryan/AECOM. A real systems approach to the results and recommendations was taken throughout the project and it is important to remember that the recommended improvements are all part of that system.

ii. Ryan Eckenrode, AECOM

1. 439 crashes January 2015 thru September 2018 along 4.4 mile segment. Goal is to reduce crashes by half and improve traffic flow to satisfy development by 2040.
2. 4.4 mile segment begins at Okatie Center Boulevard S, ends at SC 462. 16 intersections, varying speed limits, 1 interchange and 4 traffic lights.
3. Existing Traffic Conditions are dangerous:
 - a. 33,000 vpd north of Argent Boulevard
 - b. 41,500 vpd south of Argent Boulevard
 - c. Significant SB queuing at SC 170 prior to US 278
 - d. Significant WB queuing at US 278 Off Ramp
 - e. Access issues between US 278 and Palmer Grace Dr.
 - f. Tidewatch Dr. left-turns
 - g. Significant queuing from NB left-turn SC 170 to SC 462
4. Projected Traffic Conditions by 2040:
 - a. 55,000 vpd (same as I-95)
 - b. Increased developments including: East Argent, Okatie Crossing and Sun City phasing plan
5. Systematic Solution:
 - a. 4 Lane Superstreet (40,000 to 50,000 vpd)
 - b. 6 Lane Superstreet (60,000 to 80,000 vpd)
 - c. Improved Signal Coordination and provides safer conditions for pedestrians
 - d. Reduced delays with shorter cycle lengths
 - e. 60% reductions in fatal and injury crashes and 42% reduction in overall crashes
6. Near Term Safety Driven Projects:

a. Okatie Center Blvd S, Install RCUT and U-turns	\$450K
b. Between US 278 WB On Ramp and WB Loop On Ramp, extend Loop turn lane to WB Ramps with separation	\$400K
c. US 278 WB Off Ramp, remove free flow right-turn lane and replace with triple right-turns	\$700K
d. Cherry Point Rd / Pearlstine Dr., install a nearside head NB SC 170	\$6K
e. Argent Blvd, dual EB left-turn lanes	\$560K
f. Lowcountry Drive (SC 462) Traffic Signal	\$300K
g. TOTAL	\$2.4M
7. Intermediate Projects:
 - a. South of Okatie Center Blvd to US 278 EB Off Ramp, RCUT, Right-in Right Out at Cecil Reynolds, and Roundabout at US 278 EB Ramps \$3.0M
 - b. US 278 EB Loop Ramp to Palmer Grace Dr., New Bypass Lane at US 278 Loop Ramp, RIRO at Okatie Center Blvd N, Cul-de-sac Barrell Landing Rd, RCUT at Commerce Place E. W, and no left-turn into Palmer Grace, \$11.2M to

	\$16.2M
c. Tidewatch Dr., RCUT (signal) along with EMS coordination	\$2.2M
d. Riverwalk Blvd., RCUT (signal)	\$2.3M
e. Cherry Point Rd / Pearlstine Dr., RCUT (signal)	\$2.8M
f. Red Oaks Ln., RCUT	\$1.5M
g. Short Cut Rd / Pritcher Point Rd., RCUT (Signal)	\$2.4M
h. Rivers End Dr. to East Argent Blvd., Concrete / Landscape Median, RCUT at Rivers End Dr., No left in at Argent Blvd (signal) – ¼ mile	\$6.7M
i. Oldfield Way / Future Development (East Argent), RCUT (signal) - Intersection should be closely monitored and plan for significant improvements based on final phase of East Argent Development	\$3.6M
j. Lowcountry Dr. (SC 462) RCUT (signal) – dual left-turns	\$3.6M
k. TOTAL	\$39.3M to \$44.3M

8. Long Term Projects:

a. Palmer Grace Dr. to SC 462), Widen SC 170 to 6-lane section	\$28.1M
b. US 278 EB Loop Ramp to Palmer Grace Dr., Widen US 278 Overpass for a dual lane loop ramp	\$6.0M
c. TOTAL	\$34.1M

9. Future 2040 Traffic Operations:

- a. Assume a 6 lane section from US 278 to Lowcountry Dr. (SC 462)
- b. All signals installed when warranted
- c. All signals two-phases

10. Conclusions:

- a. Not too late to develop a system wide approach using the Reduced Conflict Intersection (RCI) design
- b. Policy level support needed with regular communication
- c. Issue #1: Install a signal at Lowcountry Drive (SC 462)
- d. Issue #2: Southbound SC 170 onto EB Loop On Ramp
- e. Issue #3: SC 170 (US 278 WB Ramps to Palmer Grace Drive) – Coordinate with Okatie Center Crossing
- f. Issue #4: Palmer Grace Drive to Lowcountry Drive (SC 462) – Coordinate with East Argent Development

11. Discussion:

- a. Statement: 462 signal, SCDOT has been working with Jasper County on funding package. Jasper County is asking for \$50,000. SCDOT is contributing the signal.
- b. Link to Final Report (580 pages): <https://we.tl/t-mWpUVb10Y9>
- c. Need a motion to approve the results and accept recommendations.
 - i. Mayor Harry Williams expressed reluctance in approving all of the recommendations based on several factors including: median age of drivers, commuter driving speed, drivers making u turns with or without a signal and TAC Committee buy-in. General discussion period.
 - ii. ACTION: a motion was made by Barbara Clark, seconded by Mayor Harry Williams to accept slide titled, Conclusions, and revisit the discussion on December 6th with all inputs from concerned people and the TAC Committee making a presentation. **Motion carried unanimously.**

4. Other Business: None

5. Public Comment Period: None

6. Next Meeting: Friday, December 6, 2019

7. Adjourn: Barbara Clark made a motion to adjourn. Chairwoman Sulka seconded. **Motion carried unanimously.** Meeting adjourned at 11:15am.