



Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS)

Policy Committee Meeting

Friday, February 7, 2020, 10:00 a.m.

MINUTES

Policy Committee Members Present:

Ashley Jacobs as a designee for Paul Sommerville,
Councilman, Beaufort County
Lisa Sulka, Mayor, Town of Bluffton
Harry Williams, Mayor, City of Hardeeville
Mike McFee, Councilman and Mayor *Protem*, City of
Beaufort

Joe DeVito, Mayor, Town of Port Royal

Sen. Tom Davis, Jasper County Leg. Delegation
Chairman

Henry Etheridge, Chair Jasper County Council, as
designee for Barbara Clark, Councilwoman, Jasper
County

Policy Committee Members Absent:

Glenn Stanford, Councilman, Town of Hilton Head Island
Richard Hamilton, Board Chair, LRTA Chairman
Robby Robbins, Chairman, SCDOT Commission

Technical Committee Members Present:

Kraig Gordon, Chairman, Beaufort CTC
Lisa Wagner, Planning Director, Jasper County
Mary Lou Franzoni, Executive Director, LRTA, and
designee for Rich Hamilton
Katie Woodruff, Long Range Division Manager, City of
Hardeeville

Anne Cyran, Senior Planner, Town of Hilton Head Island

Kevin Icard, Planning and Community Development

Marc Orlando, Manager, Town of Bluffton

Technical Committee Members Absent:

David Prichard, Community and Economic Development
Director, City of Beaufort

Linda Bridges, Planning Director, Town of Port Royal

Rob McFee, Director of Engineering & Infrastructure,
Beaufort County

LCOG Staff Present:

Ginnie Kozak, Planning Director
Christian Dammel, Planning Assistant
Sabrena Graham, Executive Director

SCDOT Staff Present:

Craig Winn
LaToya Grate
Megan Groves
Josh Johnson
David Gray

Others Present:

Lou Ann Kelly, Oldfield Resident
Charles Braddock, Oldfield Resident
Hank Johnston, Oldfield Resident
Marsha Harrison, Sun City Resident
Mark Pleasant, FHWA
Allen Wertz, KCI
Jared Fralix, ICE
Matt Davis, City of Hardeeville
Frank Turano, Alliance Consulting Engineers
John Fleming, SCA
Stephanie Rossi, CORE MPO
Dillon Turner, Honey Horn
John Kemp, Resident
Andy Fulghum, Jasper County Administrator
Joe Crowley, Lowcountry Inside Tract
Joe Passiment, Beaufort County Council
Mark McCain, Beaufort County CTC
David Spisso, Hardeeville City Council
Frank Babel, Hilton Head Island
Lisa Schwartz, Infrastructure Consulting and Engineering
Brad Phillips, Sun City General Manager
Dan Willis, Town of Port Royal
Allen Ward, Ward Edwards Engineering
Ross Kikendale, John Paul the Second School
John McCarthy, John Paul the Second School Principal
John Fleming, Southern Carolina Alliance
Dan Wood, Bluffton Town Council
Stu Rodman, Beaufort County Council
Hank Johnston, Oldfield

1. Call to Order.

- a. Pledge of Allegiance
- b. Invocation
- c. Introduction of Members, Guests and Staff
- d. Designees - Mary Lou Franzoni for LRTA, Ashley Jacobs for Paul Sommerville, Henry Eckart as a designee for Barbara Clark
- e. Action on January 10, 2020 Meeting Minutes –Mike McFee made the motion to accept the minutes, Harry Williams seconded. **Motion carried unanimously.**

2. Old Business.

- a. SCDOT US 278 and US 17 Project Update, including Guidesshare Advance status—Craig Winn

US 278 and US 17 Project Updates can be found by clicking on their respective link below.

- i. [US 278 Project Update](#) – SCDOT is currently working on refining the 6 proposed alternatives for the US 278 Project. Craig Win reviewed the current status of US 278 with the committee which can be found by clicking on the following [link](#). Going forward SCDOT will hold a Public involvement session for the Beaufort County Council on Monday the 10th and later, sometime in March, they will hold one for the Hilton Head Island Council. Plans to go out to some potentially impacted residents to listen to their concerns and look at mitigation opportunities.

Senator Tom Davis – Any update on when the SIB board will make determinizations? Heard it would be imminent.

Craig Winn- Heard it would be in February, but has not received an actual date. It will be an evaluation committee meeting, then they will potentially do interviews for each of the projects and any task question etc. SCDOT has done its initial evaluation and made sure it's in the TIP, a viable project, everything is accurate. Beaufort County was the most complete application submitted. Members will be notified.

Tom Davis – Delegation has been meeting with the various SIB members and briefing them on how important it is for our area.

- ii. [US 17 Project Update](#) – The approval for the LATS requested Guidesshare advancement was sent out Thursday night. LATS is being advanced a little under \$5 million in Guidesshare funding. Total project cost has been estimated to be roughly \$15 million less expensive after a modifications and review of the calculations of the Geotec work for the project. True advancement cash is less as a result, with the possibility of it becoming smaller due to significant contingency funding of 20% as well as an additional \$5 million included in estimates. LCOG advancement is larger than LATS because they had 34 million programed for this project but only \$23 to \$24 million “cash on hand”. As a result of this and a previous advancement, the requested advancement is for \$18 million and will tie up LCOG Guidesshare funding until 2025. The notice of intent will go out within the next month. There will be agreement between DOT and LAT as well as DOT and LCOG, with the TIPs need to be updated prior to April. An electronic vote will be required to meet this deadline prior to the next scheduled meeting.

LATS can start looking at projects for 2022, and can start selecting and planning now in order to be ready for construction in 2022.

- b. SC 170 Corridor Access Management Study
 - i. Discussion of coordinated short-term and long-term approach to solving the recognized problems.

Mayor Lisa Sulka, Mayor Harry Williams, and Ginnie Kozak took a “field trip” to 170 and East Argent to address concerns stated in the previous months meeting about the project. They found there are planned bike and pedestrian bike paths in development plans for East Argent Boulevard. Harry Williams stated that the City of Hardeeville would be willing to vote in favor of the project if the plan is adjusted in two ways. There would need to be a full access light for all directions at Oldfield as well as Tidewatch. Due to the length of time involved and after speaking to the residents of Oldfield, Mayor Williams stated that the City of Hardeeville would immediately proceed with applying for the light planned for Oldfield upon the plan’s approval.

Lisa Sulka opened the floor up for relevant public comment at which point former Mayor of Bluffton Hank Johnston spoke on the need for a light at Oldfield as a result of speed and difficulties safely navigating SC -170. He has gathered a petition with over 350 signatures and an additional 75 online as of Friday, February 7th 2020 for a full signalized intersection timed to 45 mph at Oldfield. A full transcript is available upon request.

Joe Passiment – Resident of Riverbend and a Beaufort County councilman

Stated he was in “total support” of the idea of a fully signalized light with left hand turn light for both intersections. There has already been one death at Riverbend due to the light light there not being fully signalized.

Lou Anne Kelly – Resident of Oldfield

In full support of the fully signalized lights at the intersection. Stated she takes her life in her own hands every time she pulls out and attempts to merge into the traffic because people don’t leave the left lane open and that she has to hit the gas to get in there.

Mayor Williams moved that the committee endorse and approve the LATS SC-170 Corridor Access Management Plan with two amendments:

- a) The Oldfield light be a full access light
- b) The Tidewatch intersection be a full access light.

Mayor *pro tem* Mike Mcfee seconded the motion.

Motion carried unanimously.

Senator Tom Davis asks Lisa Sulka to send him the resolution so he can have his delegation take it over to Secretary hall the following week.

- c. Palmetto Breeze Update—Existing Services and Planning
ACTION: Information

Palmetto Breeze is working with LCOG and AECOM on Phase II of the Urban Area Study. The study aims to provide workforce transportation routes for the Town of Bluffton in addition to an expansion of the current Palmetto Breeze Trolley service

on the Hilton Head Island. There will be a town meeting held via social media on the proposed routes to ensure that as many people as possible can participate. Interactive maps as well as the opportunities to comment and discuss proposals with other participants will be available.

- a) Currently, three possible routes under review and consideration for the Town of Bluffton. Ms. Franzoni continued to explain the proposed routes and suggested a very fluid start date of June 1st.
- b) Hilton Head Island
Northward expansion of the current Palmetto Breeze Trolley Route on Hilton Head Island. Planned to start at Shelter Cove and terminate/turnaround in front of the Westin on. The current Palmetto Breeze Trolley route from shelter cover to Coligny beach will start April 1st.
- c) The Heritage
Palmetto Breeze may provide shuttles to the heritage from mid island to the event on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Currently awaiting approval from Shelter Cove for parking.
- d) Dedicated Funding Committee for Board Members
Looking for a mechanism to stabilize their funding from year to year. Ms. Franzoni continued to explain the way Palmetto Breeze is funded with grants from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) that all require local matches of 20 to 50 percent of total project costs. In the Lowcountry this has historically come from the annual allocations of counties and municipalities. The Committee is exploring alternative approaches so that both Palmetto Breeze and local governments would not have to depend on requests from General Funds every year.

In the meantime, Mayor Sulka suggested going to each municipality's strategic planning meetings and to contact the town managers to be added to the agendas to ensure that local funds are requested.

The Transit Association of South Carolina will be hosting a conference on March 5th & 6th at the Westin on Hilton Head Island. All are invited.

Ms. Kozak informed the committee that there will be a town meeting held via social media on the proposed routes. Interactive maps as well as the ability to comment and participate will be available.

3. New Business.

- a. New TIP narrative, as required by SCDOT and FHWA.
ACTION: Approval of new narrative

Ms. Kozak explained the reason for the new TIP narrative and the changes presented to the committee on pgs. 17-23 will be related to meeting the goals set by FHWA and SCDOT.

Mr. Allen – Explained the TIP as well as the Performance Measures (PM) 1,2, and 3 within the TIP narrative. Mr. Pleasant clarified that, at this time, only the amended PMs narrative require committee approval. In the upcoming spring the LATS committee will need to adopt the complete amended TIP narrative which contains the PMs.

Mayor Williams moved to approve. Mayor *protem* McFee seconded the motion. **Motion Passed unanimously**

- b. Amendment to UPWP to include FTA grant funding for LRTA/Palmetto Breeze marketing and planning

ACTION: Approval of Amendment

Ms. Kozak reviewed the UPWP is the unified planning work program which is done every two years for each individual year in the two following. FY 2020 and FY2021 was approved last spring. However, when a new project or grant is added, it must be included in the UPWP as an amendment, and approved by the PolicyCommittee. Ms. Franzoni explained that the consultant that was doing the Palmetto Breeze marketing has recently been hired by Palmetto Breeze as an employee in order to avoid losing grant funding and reduce costs.

Mayor Williams moved to approve the UPWP amendment. Mr. McFee seconded. **Motion Passed Unanimously.**

4. Other Business.

Ms. Kozak informed the Committee that she will be retiring at the end of March and as such will not be at the next Committee meeting on April 3rd.

5. Public Comment Period.

Frank Babel spoke on the importance of bike paths and improvements on Hilton Head and nearby areas. Also advocated for the biking community as well as tourists who highly regard the biking paths. He also mentioned the 10 miles of Spanish Moss Trail in the Beaufort area and its current inclusion in the East Coast Greenway, that connects Maine and Florida. His full comments are available upon request.

Stu Rodman – Spoke on the previous Transportation Referendum in 2018 and stated that it's not too soon to start considering one for next year. Suggests that consideration should be given to transportation investments outside of current geopolitical boundaries.

6. Next Meeting. Friday, April 3, 2020.

7. Adjourn.