



Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATs)

Policy Committee Meeting Friday, June 7th, 2024, 9:30 a.m.

Meeting Location: In-Person TCL New River Campus Conference Room

AGENDA

Policy Committee Members Present: Jim Iwanicki, Hilton Head Island, Mike McFee, City of Beaufort, Harry Williams, City of Hardeeville, Charles Mitchell, LRTA, Joe Passiment, Beaufort County, Dan Wood, Town of Bluffton, John Kemp, Jasper County

Staff & Engineers: Katie Woodruff, City of Hardeeville, Brittanee Bishop, Beaufort County, Travis Cooper, SCDOT, Craig Winn, SCDOT, Megan Groves, SCDOT, Christina Lewis, SCDOT, David Baker, Lowcountry Bike/Walk, Abraham Champagne, WSP, Zach Verhage, Mead and Hunt, Anna Maria Tabernik, Beaufort County Council, Kevin Ulmer, WSP, Jennifer Bihl, Bihl Engineering, Lillian Kindwall, Bihl Engineering, Art Handman, BCTC, Craig Gordon, LATs Technical Committee/BCTC, Bill Jordan, AECOM, Lisa Wagner, Jasper County, Sabrena Graham, LCOG, Michael Gagliardi, LCOG, Stephanie Rossi, LCOG

Residents: Brian Baxter, Richard Baker, Tina Hints, Mike Hagen, Anthony LaMartina, Jack Diuer, David Hettenhouser, Carmen Avon Manning, Paul Manning, Jim Armstrong, Marilyn Arseneau, Ty Kopke, Joe Fragale, Joy Coe, Susan Gooch, Michael Burnce, Katie Burnce, Catherine O'Connor

1. Call to Order.

- a. Pledge of Allegiance
- b. Invocation
- c. Introduction of Members, Guests and Staff
- d. Designees: John Kemp for Jasper County and Jim Iwanicki for Hilton Head Island
- e. Action on February 2nd, 2024, Meeting Minutes
 - Mike McFee moved to approve, Joe Passiment seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

2. Committee Reports.

- a. LATs Technical Committee meetings March 22nd & May 17th —Kevin Sullivan
ACTION: Information
 - Stephanie (in place of Kevin Sullivan) updated the Policy Committee on the Technical Committee meetings. She states that the committee met in March and May. There were no action items. The committee primarily discussed the TIA Ordinance, which has been passed by the county planning commission and the guidebook for pavement markings was also discussed which involves identifying locations and methods to enhance pavement markings and visibility.



- Stephanie stated that the next meeting is in two weeks where they will discuss the Federal Functional Class update.

3. Business.

- a. Adoption of the FY 2025 Unified Plan and Work Program Amendment —Stephanie Rossi, LCOG
ACTION: Approve Unified Planning Work Program for FY 2025
- Stephanie describes the UPWP is one of the documents that focuses internally on what the LATS staff is working on and any planning activities that are happening in the region that use federal dollars. They are currently in the second year of a 2 year UPWP.
- The amendments made include adjustments to the budget as well as the addition of a new grant the MPO was awarded.
- Joe Passiment made the motion to approve, Charles Mitchell seconded, the motion passed unanimously.
- b. Letter of Support for SCDOT East Coast Greenway Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment (ATIIP) Grant — Stephanie Rossi, LCOG
ACTION: Approve SCDOT ATIIP Letter of Support
- Stephanie is looking for the Committee's approval to send in a letter of support for SCDOT's Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program application. SCDOT is proposing a project that would complete the planning work for the East Coast Greenway through South Carolina from the northern border of South Carolina to the southern border. The East Coast Greenway is a routing from Maine to Key West for cyclists and non-motorized transportation. There are several sections that are identified as high risk in the LATS region.
- Mike McFee made the motion to approve, Joe Passiment seconded, the motion passed unanimously.
- c. Election of Policy Committee Chair for a 2-year term per LATS By laws.
ACTION: Nomination and election of Chair
- Interim Chair Harry Williams nominates Mike McFee as chair.
- Motion by Harry Williams, Dan Wood seconded, the motion passed unanimously.
- d. Election of Policy Committee Vice Chair for a 2-year term per LATS By laws
ACTION: Nomination and of election Vice Chair
- Interim Chair Harry Williams nominates Dan Wood as vice chair.
- Harry made the first motion, Mike McFee seconded, the motion passed unanimously.
- Both new electees will take over in August.
- e. FINAL FY 2024- FY 2033 TIP—Stephanie Rossi
ACTION: Information
- Stephanie submitted the approved TIP to SCDOT in February. In April staff worked with the SCDOT/FHWA and project sponsors to address comments made by SCDOT and FHWA. Modifications included project name revisions. New projects that were in programmed in FY



2024, were moved to FY 2025 due to the timing of the STIP adoption. Three Beaufort County projects were removed having determined that they would continue to be locally funded (and were moved to the locally funded section of the TIP). These projects include Burnt Church Road, SC 46, and the Lady's Island Mainline improvements.

- The Town of Bluffton removed the federal funding from the Frontage Road Connector project and the project was moved to the locally funded section of the TIP.
- Joe Passiment commented that the county projects removed from the federal section of the TIP have already had a large amount of local funds and the projects were too far along to risk having to redo work to accommodate federal regulations that come with the using federal dollars.

- Chair Harry Williams opens up this item to public comment.

- Resident would like to have the board look at the Strategic Highway Safety Plan to identify a safety target that is 0 rather than the current adopted state targets.

- Resident state the May, Okatie, and Colleton rivers as identified by DHEC classifies those freshwaters and saltwaters as an outstanding recreational and ecological resource, and those freshwaters are suitable as a source of drinking water. The May River watershed is exceeding 20% in impervious cover as of 2018, the Okatie watershed is at 25% in impervious cover as of 2018. The US EPA Watershed Academy classifies a watershed with more than 25% impervious cover as a non-supporting stream with characteristics like eroding banks, poor biological diversity and high bacteria levels.

- Resident asks why there's a road being proposed when there's already a road there.

- Resident Wants quality review of reports.

- Resident states more than 2500 Bluffton residents have signed a petition against 5B and questions why 5B is being pushed by the LATs Committee.

- Rose Hill resident mentions induced demand. States that when you build a road you induce the demand and then in no time the new road will have further congestion. Would like to see current infrastructure improved and congestion reduced.

- Rose Hill resident disliked the 278 widening because of runoff into the neighborhood and he's worried 5B will do the same thing.

- Resident would like to get 5B out of the TIP.

- Stephanie responds with saying the project sponsor (Town of Bluffton) would have to decide if they want to remove the project from the TIP. Bluffton representative explains that 5B was apart of a plan to extend the parkway to help with hurricane evacuations which was brought up in 2006 by Bluffton Town Council.

- Harry Williams closes public comment.

4. Status Reports (as time allows).

a. SCDOT Project Updates—Craig Winn/Megan Groves/Lyle Lee, SCDOT



ACTION: Information

- Craig Winn opens up with stating the appointment of Justin Powell as the Secretary of Transportation. The current work program is over 6 billion dollars. In the 10-year plan as part of the gas tax increase (in 2017 there was four funding categories that SCDOT focused on including railroad safety, pavements, bridges, and interstates. Since 2017 they have completed over 1009 miles of railroad safety projects, 8800 miles paved, 349 bridges in development and 109 miles of interstate.
- Interstate 95 update; in the Lowcountry SCDOT has the first 33 miles, staggered in phases. I-95 from state line to Exit 8 is the first phase. Exit 8 will become a diverging diamond interchange. The final construction plans have been submitted and special provisions are being developed now. Late this fall they will go to construction obligation. The next phase is Exit 8 to just north of 21. SCDOT will look at replacing the mainline bridges and possible improvements to Exit 18. Phase 3 is replacing all mainline bridges, and overpasses, as well as full reconstruction of the US 17 exit (Exit 33).
- US 17 project is currently removing the surcharge in the SB lanes, as they remove that they're getting as much as the base paving done. They anticipate traffic shifting into the new SB lanes in July. Then they would start on the surcharge in the NB lanes.
- Megan's title has changed to Senior Assistant Program Manager.
- Question on when I-95 will be widened up to I-26. Craig said it's not planned yet. It is on the SCDOT priority list.
- Question on when Exit 8 construction will start. Craig replies with spring of next year (2025).
- Question on the status of the John Smith Bridge. Craig states that the bridge would be closed for about 9 months within the first year of the project. The John Smith Road Bridge has to be complete before they start construction on Exit 8 travel lanes.

b. Beaufort County Engineering Update—Jared Fralix, Beaufort County

ACTION: Information

- No update at this time.

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

ACTION: Information

- Charles states he'll take any comments and pass it onto the director since Mary Lou isn't here.

d. Corridor Studies Update—Stephanie Rossi, LCOG

ACTION: Information

- Stephanie mentions the addition of a new project to the list of corridor studies. She starts discussing SC 315/46/Bluffton Parkway Extension Study. The consultant has been working behind the scenes in identifying improvements for SC 46 and the surrounding intersections. There will be a public meeting in late July, introducing the Bluffton Parkway Extension piece of the study.
- Bluffton Parkway Study, which looks at the existing portion of the Bluffton Parkway is still in procurement and has made changes to local match portions with the town of Bluffton adding an additional \$10,000.



- Safety Action Plan is still in the works, with a draft from the consultant arriving soon. Expecting the draft report this month with the final report next month.
 - Regional ITS Plan, US 278 and SC 170 studies are being managed by Beaufort County. They are awaiting the grant agreements with SCDOT.
 - The SC 170 Study is also under management of Beaufort County.
 - LCOG was awarded a new grant to do a resiliency improvement plan to primarily focus on the MPO and the roads that deal with flooding.
- e. Advisory Comments—Policy Committee members
- ACTION: Information
- Joe Passiment mentions the 2024 referendum which was amended to a 10-year referendum.

5. Other Business

- a. Corrections to the FY 2024-FY 2033 TIP—Stephanie Rossi, LCOG
- ACTION: Information
- Stephanie describes minor TIP corrections which include fiscal year shifts in funding for two projects: Intersection Improvements of SC-116/Stanley Farm Road and the US 278 Corridor Improvement Project. The Bluffton Parkway Corridor Study had an increase of 10,000 dollars in local match provided by the Town of Bluffton.
- b. Mapping Correction to the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan—Stephanie Rossi, LCOG
- ACTION: Information
- Stephanie stated that a mapping correction was made to L. The original document approved in 2022 had a location mapped incorrectly. The map has been updated to reflect the correct project location.
- c. PROTECT Grant Award—Stephanie Rossi, LCOG
- ACTION: LCPG was awarded a PROTECT grant to complete a Transportation Resilience Improvement Plan for the region. The project will focus on identifying roadways vulnerable to flooding. Stephanie anticipated that the project would kick off in the fall 2024.

6. Public Comment.

- Question about the LATS committee and how something can get off the TIP.
- Stephanie responds by saying LATS is a voting body and they can vote to amend the TIP. The project sponsor would initiate the process.
- Public states want 5B off the TIP.
- Resident follows up on the previous comment stating that 5B was brought up in 2006 and that the population has since changed. They think the Tip should be amended to remove 5B.
- Resident thanks committee for changing the location of the project in LRTP. However, would like a description of the project to also accurately reflect the project. She had several questions regarding the details of the project and stated she would follow up with an email.



7. Next Meeting.

a. **Friday August 2nd, 2024, at 9:30 a.m.**

8. Adjourn.

- Joe Passiment motions to adjourn, Charles Mitchell seconded, motion passed unanimously.