



**POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING
SUMMARY MINUTES
May 15, 2015 - 12:00 p.m. (NOON)
Manchester Meadows Conference Room**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Danny Funderburk; Doug Echols, George Sheppard; Ralph Norman; Brian Carnes; Ann Williamson; Britt Blackwell; William Harris; and Wes Hayes

ADMINISTRATIVE / TECHNICAL / MANAGEMENT STAFF PRESENT:
Bill Jordan (SCDOT); Anna Gallup (CDOT-MRM); Ryan Blancke (York County); Steve Ikerd (FHWA); Susan Britt (City of Tega Cay); Jimmy Bagley (City of Rock Hill); Kara Drane (Catawba COG); Michael Dennis (SCDOT); David Larson (York County); Joe Cronin (Town of Fort Mill); Darlene Broughton (SCDOT); Allison Love (York County); Steve Willis (Lancaster County); Elizabeth Harris (Catawba Indian Nation); Vic Edwards (SCDOT); Ron Pompey (York County); Brian Klauk (SCDOT); Rob Dubnicka (STV, Inc.); and David Hooper (RFATS)

CITIZENS / VISITORS PRESENT: Larry Huntley (Fort Mill Town Council); Frank Myers (CAC); Jim Van Blarcom (CAC); Luther Dasher (CAC); Merritt King (KCI); Kerry Adkins (KCI); Tony Spacek (Kimley-Horn); Scot Sibert (Parsons-Brinckerhoff); Jonathan Guy (Kimley-Horn); and Sheri Williamson (STV)

1. CALL TO ORDER:

a. Welcome – Chairman Funderburk called the meeting to order at 12:15 P.M. and welcomed all in attendance.

b. Citizen Comment Period – No comments were made at this time.

2. REVIEW / APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Funderburk asked if there were any changes, deletions, or comments to the minutes of the March 27, 2015 meeting. Mr. G. Sheppard noted two points to be corrected on agenda items 5a and 5b. The minutes were then accepted as amended.

3. UPDATE ON CURRENT PROJECTS:

- a. SCDOT Report** – Mr. Klauk provided an update on the following projects:
- India Hook / Celanese Road – surveys have been completed and preliminary design has been initiated.
 - Dave Lyle Blvd (I-77 / Chamberside Dr) – project is active and construction is slated for completion by July 31, 2015
 - SC 160 / Gold Hill Road – project is on schedule to open in summer 2016.
 - E. White Street / SC 72 – project is fully funded and ROW is slated for initiation in June 2015
 - S-101 Ogden Road Bridge over Wildcat Creek – construction phase is active and slated for completion in fall 2015

- SC 72 (Saluda Road) Bridge over Fishing Creek – traffic will continue to operate on existing alignment during construction – which is slated for completion in October 2016.
- S-50 (Red River Road) Bridge over Manchester Creek – project scheduled to go out for bid in summer 2015; construction slated for completion in fall 2016.

Mr. Funderburk then inquired about the current schedule on the Clebourne / North White Street CMAQ project – and whether there are opportunities to accelerate its schedule? Mr. Klauk noted that surveys have been completed and preliminary design is underway. Project is slated for bid in fall 2017 – with construction expected to be complete in fall 2018.

4. REPORTS:

- Pennies for Progress / RFATS (Joint Project Programming)** – Mr. Hooper briefly reviewed the Policy Committee’s prior discussions about a partnership arrangement between RFATS and Pennies for Progress to accelerate two interchange projects at SC 160 & Celanese Road. As part of this discussion, Mr. Hooper noted that the Policy Committee requested that staff complete a broader I-77 Corridor Review that evaluated the regional travel sheds connecting into I-77 from the Carowinds interchange down to Dave Lyle Blvd.

Mr. Hooper then summarized the principal evaluation points of the review; specifically, (1) traffic counts within the regional travel sheds; (2) operating variables at each interchange location; (3) summary of pipeline needs based on current and projected development potential / demand levels; and (4) an overview of available funding. As a point of reference, Mr. Hooper noted that the regional travel shed map had been updated to reflect current traffic counts as well as looking out 10 years to 2025. Mr. Hooper also noted that the numbers along the SC 160 corridor do reflect what is contained in the Kingsley TIA.

Beginning with Carowinds Boulevard, Mr. Hooper noted that principal determinants of travel demand include heavy weekend and holiday volume; that weekly demand is heavily influenced by North Carolina traffic coming from NC 49 on the west and NC 51 on the east. Mr. Hooper then noted that the NC 49 demand sources were particularly felt on the NB entrance loop. It was also noted that SCDOT has identified this corridor as a high accident location. In considering the impact of undeveloped land, the area near Lakemont Business Park was cited as particularly relevant as it has access points on both Carowinds Blvd and Pleasant Road. Mr. Hooper then summarized pipeline needs as improving the turning movement capacity at the intersection of Carowinds / Pleasant Road; consideration of widening Pleasant Road (potential ROW constraints were noted as a variable here) as well as efforts to improve the NB entrance / merging function on the eastside of the interchange.

Mr. Hooper then transitioned to a summary of Gold Hill Road. Principal determinants of travel demand include weekday morning and evening peak period demand as well as operational challenges at adjacent intersections. It was also noted that back-ups on I-77 occurred fairly frequently during the evening peak period. In terms of undeveloped land, both Springfield Pkwy (further residential / retail development) and Pleasant Road (apartments and the new school location behind Pleasant Knolls) were cited as notable variables. Mr. Hooper then stated that pipeline needs included undertaking operating improvements to the Gold Hill / Pleasant Road intersection and widening Pleasant Road;

and that, close reviews of future TIA's for the redevelopment of the Knights Stadium as well as along Springfield Pkwy more broadly, will certainly be needed. As a point of reference – Mr. Hooper noted that both Pleasant Road (2 to 3 lanes) and Springfield Pkwy (2 to 5 lanes) are already planned assumptions in the travel demand model.

Mr. Hooper then reviewed the SC-160 / I-77 interchange – principal determinants of area travel demand include regular weekday morning and evening peak period volume. As a regional travel shed, Mr. Hooper noted that there is heavy east-west through movement. Additionally, it was noted that there are operational challenges at adjacent intersections. In addition to what has already been announced at Kingsley, it was noted that there are approximately 350 acres within the Kingsley tract as well as roughly 250 acres of planned residential / business zoned land that is relevant to the corridor.

As a point of reference – Mr. Hooper then reviewed the planned improvements outlined in the Kingsley TIA. Specific items mentioned included: (1) an eastbound left turn lane for exiting NB I-77 traffic is to be extended so that drivers can pull directly into a full width lane; (2) the I-77 NB entrance lane will be extended to a point east of Munn Road in an effort to eliminate potential merging conflicts at the nearest exit from Kingsley (i.e., Access Point A); (3) I-77 SB exit ramp will include a full width right turn lane to assist with morning peak period demand volume; and (4) it was noted that loop ramps may be necessary at build out and a connector road is reflected extending to Coltharp Road and ultimately to Gold Hill Road. Mr. Hooper then summarized additional pipeline needs as longer acceleration lanes to get onto I-77 NB; widening US 21 from SC 160 to Gold Hill Road; potential widening of SC 160 up to Gold Hill Road should be open for discussion; and that, the expected demand levels at full build out will raise the question regarding the need for the potential incorporation of a new interchange at Coltharp Road.

Reflecting on the build out of Kingsley; and particularly, on the 350 acres located above the current announcements nearest to SC 160, Mr. Echols asked whether development in that area was included in the demand forecast along the corridor for today's discussion? In response, Mr. Hooper noted that the adjusted traffic count data along SC 160 is reflective of what is contained in the Kingsley traffic impact analysis; and that, general projections regarding changes in population and employment in the area are reflected as well – though not as specific as that contained in a TIA.

Mr. Echols then asked for Mr. Hooper to expand on the statement about the potential need to consider the incorporation of an interchange at Coltharp Road. From an operational and connectivity standpoint, Mr. Hooper noted that the expected traffic volume on SC 160, the multiple exit points from Kingsley Park Drive to US-21, as well as the potential for a hospital at this location – would be challenging long-term to route traffic back to SC-160 or up US-21 without additional area improvements. Mr. Hooper then noted the expected connector road within the Kingsley tract, and the role an interchange at Coltharp Road could serve in managing area demand levels on US 21, SC 160 and Gold Hill Road.

Mr. Dubnicka then briefly reviewed the operational analysis of the expected change in area demand levels based on the announcements at Kingsley and how a six lane DDI configuration would function. As a point of reference, it was noted that as with any proposed adjustment at an interchange, that FHWA will evaluate this approach as well as other alternative arrangements in arriving at a preferred configuration to most effectively address area operational needs.

Mr. Hooper then reviewed the Sutton Road / I-77 interchange. Principal determinants of travel demand included area geography; and the relatively low utilization level currently, though this is expected to notably change with the demand that will come from the Fort Mill Parkway on the east. Mr. Hooper then noted current planned projects as the TIA recommendations from the Masons Bend development – which includes a roundabout at Sutton Road / Francis Circle and projected signalization over the next 5 years. Mr. Hooper then stated that area pipeline needs include the widening of Sutton Road and consideration of widening from US 21 to the interchange.

Mr. Hooper then reviewed the I-77 / Celanese Road interchange and noted that as with SC 160, the Celanese Road Corridor serves a regional travel shed within the transportation network. Principal determinants of area travel demand include heavy weekday morning and evening peak period demand; heavy through movement along the corridor; and the unique interchange geometry reflected in how demand from Cherry Road impacts the operational capacity of the interchange on Celanese Road. As a point of reference, Mr. Hooper then noted that communication between the Technical Team and FHWA has focused on the unusually high NB demand; and whether FHWA would consider the prospect of restricting the use of the fourth lane during the morning hours to help with the merge function – though Mr. Hooper did note that this is a big if – but it may be something that FHWA might be open to considering.

Mr. Dubnicka then reviewed the operational data at the interchange and emphasized the particular challenge associated with the NB demand level and merge function. Specifically, Mr. Dubnicka pointed out that there is actually more traffic merging on to I-77 in the morning peak hour, than mainline traffic that is already on I-77. Mr. Dubnicka then noted that the afternoon peak hour figures also reflect capacity problems; and that the SB right turning movement will need to go to a triple right configuration. Reflecting on the earlier statement about FHWA potentially being willing to restrict the fourth lane during the morning peak period, Mr. Funderburk asked whether this could change the model outputs. In response, Mr. Dubnicka noted that it would make it look a little different, but how much different would be hard to say at this point. Mr. Funderburk stated that potential dedication of the fourth lane would seem to be cost-effective and Mr. Dubnicka agreed if doing is permitted by FHWA – recognizing that it would be a very unusual arrangement.

Mr. Echols asked Mr. Dubnicka to revisit the data shown for merging traffic from Celanese to I-77 and stated that this particular problem is significant and just going to continue given the regional demand level along the corridor. Mr. Echols then stated that there has been much discussion among the Rock Hill City Council regarding continuing development on Celanese Road, and the current traffic count numbers as well as the projections that indicate a continuing dilemma going forward.

Mr. Hooper then reviewed the specific options identified by the engineers, in addition to a DDI configuration. As a point of reference, Mr. Hooper noted that the operational challenges along this corridor reflect a multi-component problem: (1) the efficiency with which drivers can move through the interchange; (2) the NB merge function during the morning peak period where drivers merge with the traffic coming from Cherry Road and then again as both demand sources merge on to I-77; and (3) the underlying demand level along the corridor. With this in mind, Mr. Hooper then reviewed how a two lane flyover option could conceivably function. Specifically, it was noted that although such an approach could improve movement through the interchange as well as through movement traffic, that the merge function as well as broader corridor demand challenges would

continue. Additionally, Mr. Hooper briefly noted structural, ROW, and cost implications of such an approach.

Mr. Norman then reviewed how the volume and close proximity of traffic lights at Riverview Road and Riverchase Boulevard appear to be contributing variables to the back-up activity and congestion approaching the interchange; and whether de-signalization and / or other adjustments might be undertaken to mitigate some of the operational challenges. Mr. Norman then asked Mr. Hooper if there is a way to address this? Mr. Hooper stated that traffic signal spacing as a general matter is certainly a relevant variable to operational flow along the corridor; and that, the 1st signal at Riverchase Blvd does stand out given its proximity to the SB interchange ramp. Mr. Hooper then asked Mr. Edwards for his assessment. Mr. Edwards noted that although the proximity is challenging, but that the residents of Paces River Apartments would have no way to get out if the traffic signal was removed. That said, Mr. Edwards noted that once Ligon Drive is built, it will make the signal light less necessary, but that it will be very hard to remove that signal, given the volume coming from the apartment complex, medical facility and area restaurants.

Mr. Blackwell asked if it would be practical to block off Riverchase Blvd. at Outback Steakhouse to route traffic over to Riverview Road. Mr. Hooper stated that this approach to routing side street traffic could be considered, but would constitute an imperfect arrangement; Mr. Edwards agreed with this characterization. Mr. Hooper then asked Mr. Edwards if there was anything else that could be considered to improve the operational flow. Mr. Edwards explained that signal timing changes have been performed (i.e., extending the length of the cycle at Riverview Road where it is twice as long as at Riverchase Blvd., etc.), and that SCDOT continues to work with the synchronization of these signals along the corridor more broadly.

Mr. Hooper then reviewed the other option identified by the engineers; specifically, the incorporation of an alternative route or bridge crossing. Mr. Hooper then reviewed the modeling results of such an approach – with particular attention to how the demand levels would shift along Celanese, Cherry and Sutton Road as well as SC 160, US 21, I-77 and the Fort Mill Parkway. Mr. Dubnicka then stated that the incorporation of a new bridge does provide a significant drop in demand, particularly on the NB ramp traffic. Notwithstanding the operational benefits along the Celanese Corridor, Mr. Funderburk noted that the modeling results reflect the operational impact of a bridge (under ideal circumstances), but do not reflect the practical conditions that exist along Sutton Road. Mr. Echols then noted that today's discussion is designed to evaluate the operational needs along the regional travel sheds as well as the impacts of different transportation improvements – and to see which types of options can effectively provide relief along each corridor and supporting interchange.

Mr. Norman then stated that the incorporation of a bridge would lessen the level of traffic congestion along the corridor, but that the costs associated with the bridge are high and would not provide an opportunity to recoup the tax dollars. As a point of reference, Mr. Hooper then provided a summary breakdown of the different cost components of a bridge and supporting improvements during the feasibility study conducted in 2012. Specifically, Mr. Hooper noted that the estimate for the bridge was \$37.0M, \$7.0M was slated for a major upgrade to the Sutton Road interchange; and that there was a contingency amount of 40% given the typical variables associated with these types of projects. Mr. Blackwell then asked if the bridge would be stretching parallel along the river and essentially connect in at the Sutton Road interchange; Mr. Hooper confirmed

that that does reflect the preferred alignment identified during the feasibility study. Mr. Blackwell then noted that constructing a bridge crossing in this manner would raise a number of concerns with all the issues and variables involved with connecting in at this point along Sutton Road.

Mr. Funderburk then asked for additional information on the modeling results and the distribution and / or projected changes in driver behavior and travel demand. Ms. Gallup then provided an overview of the modeling process, underlying assumptions, and changes in driver behavior that typically occur when a new connection point or route is incorporated into the transportation network. Mr. Funderburk then noted his concern that a bridge crossing may have the unintended effect of pushing the traffic issue from one location and creating a problem at another location. Discussion then followed that this comprehensive look will have to continue given the lateness of the hour.

Mr. Hooper then reviewed the I-77 / Dave Lyle Blvd interchange. Principal determinants of travel demand include heavy weekday morning and evening peak period volume; seasonally high weekend and holiday volumes serving the Manchester and Galleria areas, as well as heavy east-west through movement. Mr. Hooper then noted that the biggest variable affecting functionality along this corridor would be the Dave Lyle Blvd Extension Project. Mr. Hooper then stated that pipeline needs include improvements to the NB & SB turning movements and improving intersection storage lengths.

Mr. Hooper then provided an overview of RFATS funding availability and a listing of the specific projects RFATS is already committed to. Mr. Hooper then reviewed how available funding levels would be affected by moving forward with the joint funding approach outlined previously between RFATS and Pennies for Progress. Specifically, it was noted that the unprogrammed funding balance (which is not currently available, but is slated to be received through 2035) is projected to increase from \$47.0M to \$72.0M.

Mr. Hooper then summarized a proposal recently submitted by York County to the Transportation Infrastructure Bank that is seeking funding support for improvements at four interchanges along the I-77 Corridor; specifically, Carowinds Blvd, Gold Hill Road, SC 160 and Celanese Road. Mr. Hooper then noted that the total funding request is for \$60.0M. As a point of reference – Mr. Hooper noted that four of the top five or six most heavily congested sections of I-77 in the statewide multi-modal plan, are all in York County between Carowinds Blvd and Celanese Road – which should constitute a fairly compelling funding application.

5. PROPOSED POLICY COMMITTEE ACTION ITEMS:

- a. LRTP & Transportation Conformity Determination Report Amendment** – Mr. Hooper briefly reviewed the joint RFATS / Pennies for Progress funding arrangement to accelerate the planning and implementation process. Mr. Hooper then summarized the amended documents that reflect the proposed work as well as the results of the conformity analysis, and then requested preliminary approval and authorization of a 30-day public comment period. Mr. Carnes made a motion to approve; Mr. G. Sheppard seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.
- b. TIP Amendment (Poe / Quantz Connector Trail Project)** – Ms. Love briefly reviewed the Transportation Alternatives Program and the one application submitted during the FY 15-16 funding cycle; specifically, the City of Rock Hill's Poe / Quantz Street Trail

Connector Project. Ms. Love then noted that the requested funding amount is \$108,666; and that, the TAP subcommittee has reviewed the project and is recommending consideration by the full Policy Committee. Mr. Carnes made a motion to approve funding as requested. Mr. Haynes seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

6. **Other Business**

- a. **Administrative Report** – Mr. Hooper noted that the CATS 82X would be adding back a fourth park-n-ride lot at the Wells Fargo Business Park – replacing the former site at Plaza Fiesta. Mr. Hooper then noted favorable feedback received from CATS regarding Mr. Norman’s effective advocacy and outreach in achieving this outcome.
- b. **Next regular meeting** – Mr. Funderburk announced that the next regular meeting will be held on Friday, June 26, 2015 at 12:15 PM at Manchester Meadows.

7. **Adjournment**

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:48 P.M.