



**POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING  
SUMMARY MINUTES  
June 23, 2017 – 12:00 p.m. (NOON)  
Rock Hill Operations Center, Room 132**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:** Doug Echols, Brian Carnes, George Sheppard; Britt Blackwell; Guynn Savage; Bill Harris (proxy); Kathy Pender; Michael Johnson; Jim Reno (proxy); Wes Climer; Gary Simrill; and Gene Branham.

**ADMINISTRATIVE / TECHNICAL / MANAGEMENT STAFF PRESENT:**

Vic Edwards (SCDOT); Susan Britt (City of Tega Cay); Berry Mattox (SCDOT); Cliff Goolsby (City of Rock Hill); Melanie Mobley (SCDOT); Joe Cronin (Town of Fort Mill); David Gray (SCDOT); Wade Luther (SCDOT); Allison Love (York County); Rob Ruth (City of Rock Hill); David Burgess (SCDOT); Bill Meyer (City of Rock Hill); Audra Miller (York County); Jason Johnston (SCDOT); Penelope Karagounis (Lancaster County); Diane Dil (Town of Fort Mill); Steve Allen (York County); Jessica Hekter (FHWA); Steve Willis (Lancaster County); Patrick Hamilton (York County); Keith Powell (SCDOT); Robby Moody (CRCOG); David Harmon (York County); Jennita Sumter-Jacobs (SCDOT); John Boylston (SCDOT); Chris Herrmann (RFATS); and David Hooper (RFATS).

**CITIZENS / VISITORS PRESENT:** Frank Myers (CAC); Larry Huntley (Fort Mill Town Council); Luther Dasher (CAC); Jim Van Blarcom (CAC); Dr. David Keely (CAC); Hisham Abdelaziz (HDR); Merritt King (KCI); Phil Leazer (KCI); Rhonda Stewart (KCI); Kenneth Johnson (AECOM); John Marks (Fort Mill Times); Tom Adams; Mike Spratt; Tom Spratt; Lisa McCarley (Fort Mill Town Council); Steve Turney; Wink Rea (Fort Mill Economic Council); Trudie Bolin Heemsoth (Fort Mill Town Council); Chris Moody (Fort Mill Town Council); Ronald Helms (Fort Mill Town Council); Brandon Guffey (Rock Hill); Swain Sheppard; Frieda Price (CAC); Laura Elder; Marlene Pittman; Skip Tuttle (Tuttle Company); Teresa Thomas (Office of Sen. Lindsey Graham); and Colleen Dick (York County Regional Chamber).

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

**a. Welcome** – Chairman Echols called the meeting to order at 12:05 P.M. and welcomed all in attendance.

**b. Citizen Comment Period** – Mr. Tuttle voiced support regarding the reallocation of CMAQ funding to support the Downtown Traffic Management Project and the initiation of a Fixed Route Transit Service; specifically highlighting residential and mixed-use developments needing connectivity and the benefits to reducing congestion in the downtown area.

Mr. Guffey voiced support of the Catawba River Bridge Feasibility Study; noting the benefits of having the appropriate research / data on the topic in considering options for improving connectivity within the transportation network.

Mr. Huntley (Fort Mill Town Council) voiced concern regarding the Catawba River Bridge Feasibility Study; specifically highlighting the need for updated traffic projections as well as other operational variables for improving area traffic flow.

Mr. Adams voiced concern regarding the Catawba River Bridge Feasibility Study; specifically noting that no additional money should be spent on a project that would likely generate considerable public opposition. Additionally, Mr. Adams emphasized the importance of being forward thinking in making decisions that will extend far into the future.

Mr. Mike Spratt voiced concern regarding the Catawba River Bridge Feasibility Study; specifically highlighting how growth in the region has generated both economic development and traffic, and the operational capacity of I-77 in processing northbound travel demand from principal arterial roadways.

Mr. Tom Spratt voiced concern regarding the Catawba River Bridge Feasibility Study; specifically highlighting the development of long term solutions that will not funnel traffic from one section of the region to another.

Mr. Hooper then briefly summarized public comments received via the RFATS website regarding the Catawba River Bridge Feasibility Study; specifically, it was noted that Ms. McCart has concerns regarding the potential increase in traffic congestion on Sutton Road and the level of funding that would be associated with the project; Ms. Long has concerns regarding the potential increase in traffic congestion on Sutton Road; and Ms. Mabrey has concerns regarding the potential to unintentionally shift traffic challenges from one location to another. Ms. Mabrey also noted that a better regional solution would be to extend Dave Lyle Blvd.

Mr. Hooper then referenced a letter from Crescent Communities regarding the Catawba River Bridge Feasibility Study. Specifically, it was highlighted that the cumulative investment level in the Masons Bend Development is roughly \$41.0M currently, and that they oppose an additional bridge crossing as well.

## **2. REVIEW / APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Echols asked if there were any changes, deletions, or comments to the minutes of the May 19, 2017 meeting. Mr. Sheppard then noted that the requested verbatim transcript of agenda item 4.a. should be added to the overall summary minutes of the May meeting. Mr. Sheppard then made a motion to approve the minutes as amended; this was seconded by Ms. Savage and the motion was unanimously approved.

## **3. REPORTS:**

**a. Catawba River Bridge Draft Feasibility Study** – Mr. Hooper briefly reviewed principal components of the draft feasibility study (i.e., assessment of parcel information, environmental variables, historic sites, utility crossings, traffic modeling, etc.), and then noted that this work effort was discontinued prior to finalization in May 2012. With this in mind, Mr. Hooper then noted the request that staff provide a follow-up report outlining what specific elements of the original study would need to be updated if the Policy Committee wanted to revisit this work effort and bring the study to finalization currently.

As a point of reference, Mr. Hooper then reviewed the study's original project area, and the four potential alignment options identified for establishing a transportation link between Mt Gallant Road and Sutton Road nearest the Sutton Road interchange, or a connection between Mt Gallant Road and Harris Road – which would involve construction for new interstate access. Mr. Hooper then stated that based on feedback from FHWA, that completion of the study would need to involve updating key planning assumptions and operating conditions (i.e., new developments, new or changed infrastructure, updated traffic volumes, adjustments to alignment options and resulting cost impacts, as well as current and projected roadway conditions, etc.), based on the latest information available. Mr. Hooper then stated that the estimated time necessary to complete this work would be five to six months with an anticipated cost

of roughly \$55,000. As a point of reference, it was noted that the original cost estimate for the study was \$250,000, with \$170,000 having been expended to date.

Ms. Pender then asked about the key assessment points of the feasibility study, and whether area infrastructure improvements were included. In response, Mr. Hooper noted that such improvements were not contained in the feasibility study – since its focus was on assessing all the environmental / historic / parcel variables referenced earlier with the construction of a new bridge alignment. That said, Mr. Hooper then noted that area infrastructure improvements were identified in the comprehensive transportation needs list of the Long Range Transportation Plan that would have to occur should such a project proceed to construction, so that area traffic movement could function in an efficient and reliable manner. Lastly, Mr. Hooper did state that upgrades to the Sutton Road interchange were added to the feasibility study's cost estimate at a later point based on feedback / guidance received during the study itself.

Ms. Savage then offered an apology to Mr. Carnes regarding periodic discussion / questions about the potential extension of Dave Lyle Blvd (and resulting bridge components), without having consulted with Lancaster County about potential benefits as well as drawbacks that might be associated with such a project. Ms. Savage noted that this is not the preferred approach to project planning and thinking regionally.

Ms. Savage then transitioned to a historical question and asked how the Policy Committee arrived at the point where an additional bridge connection was the sole focus of the feasibility study? Mr. Hooper briefly summarized the evolution of the project dating back to its original identification during the Long Range Transportation Plan Update in 2002. As part of that process, Mr. Hooper noted that a modeling analysis was performed to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the network and identify operational choke points that should be prioritized. The analysis process then examined what types of improvements would make an appreciable difference in network operations. The end result of the modeling analysis noted that a link was missing in the network that would favorably impact the distribution of area travel demand. With a recommendation to incorporate an additional bridge crossing, it was recommended that a feasibility study be completed to gather all relevant variables that would be associated with project construction.

Mr. Johnson then asked a clarifying question regarding the modeling assumptions associated with the feasibility study, given the amount of time that has occurred since original project identification in 2002 and current operating conditions in 2017. Mr. Hooper noted that while modeling assumptions are regularly updated (based on input provided by each member of RFATS) to properly reflect current as well as projected operating conditions, that if the Policy Committee would like to bring the feasibility study to completion currently, then the modeling assumptions would have to be updated to reflect the latest operating information available.

Dr. Blackwell then briefly noted a prior alternative connection option (referred to as the East-West Connector), which was later determined to be infeasible – and highlighted changing land use conditions and how best to manage pressure points within the transportation network. Dr. Blackwell then asked whether it might be feasible to explore an alternative connection route between Mt Gallant Road and I-77 south of the Catawba River, combined with increasing traffic diversion to US 21 as one potential approach to improving the network overall. While interstate spacing was noted as a constraining variable to the specific option mentioned, the role of expanding the study parameters in evaluating improvement options was further discussed by members.

Mr. Echols then asked what flexibility may be possible in regards to the scope of the study. Ms. Hekter responded that it would be possible to re-scope the study but doing so would impact both the time and

cost needed to perform the work. Ms. Hekter then stated that re-scoping the study outside of the original study area would initiate new elements and would therefore necessitate a new feasibility study. Mr. Climer then asked for clarification as to how much latitude there would be in the scope before a new feasibility study would be required? Ms. Hekter responded that there would be latitude in examining other alternatives within the original study area that would share the same purpose and need of what was being studied. As a point of reference, Mr. Hooper noted that key study components included analysis of the Celanese Corridor Travel Shed, Network Connectivity, and the improvement of access both to and from I-77, among others.

Mr. Sheppard then offered a clarifying comment that the East-West Connector concept was not able to proceed due to area development activity near Coltharp Road rather than funding constraints as mentioned in earlier discussion. Mr. Sheppard then stated that he is extremely disheartened that the Policy Committee chose to re-visit the bridge discussion at the May Policy Committee meeting while several members who had previously voted against the study were not slated to be present. Mr. Sheppard emphasized the importance of approaching the planning process with a regional rather than a jurisdictional focus. As a point of reference, Mr. Sheppard then noted prior discussions of other suggestions (i.e., light rail, expansion of US 21, etc.), for addressing operating challenges along the Celanese Corridor as more reflective of regional options.

Mr. Sheppard then noted that the support staff of RFATS is housed at Rock Hill City Hall, and perhaps consideration should be given to discussing other arrangements and/or adjustments regarding the administration of the MPO; specifically, considering movement of the support staff to the county or better yet the COG. With this in mind, Mr. Sheppard made a motion that a review of the original agreement establishing the MPO be undertaken and explore what options might be appropriate to consider. Mr. Climer then noted his agreement with the objective of Mr. Sheppard's motion; and that, it would be beneficial if the Policy Committee could receive more detailed information on all relevant procedural variables and administrative steps before further consideration is taken. With this in mind, Mr. Sheppard restated his motion that he would like staff to provide a follow-up report on what would be involved with consideration of such an action at the September meeting; this was seconded by Mr. Johnson and the motion was unanimously approved.

Dr. Blackwell then noted that he doesn't have a problem with the facts being provided to evaluate whether such an action would be a wise thing to do or not. Ms. Pender then expressed her support for receiving this information as well. As a point of reference, Ms. Pender then noted that the discussion about the status of the draft feasibility study at the May meeting was related to the pending finalization of the Long Range Transportation Plan Update, and was not intended to occur because some members were not slated to be in attendance. Additionally, Ms. Pender expressed her support for approaching things from a regional viewpoint; and that the current environment originally started when others on the Policy Committee were blindsided by a motion to suspend the original feasibility study.

Ms. Savage stated that the Policy Committee has spent five years examining an existing traffic issue without being able to come to an agreement on a solution; noting that the solution discussed thus far of an additional bridge crossing has brought forth much emotion from Policy Committee members and caused much delay. Ms. Savage then stated that perhaps a better approach to resolving the existing traffic issue on the Celanese Corridor would be to examine all other solutions not involving an additional bridge crossing.

Mr. Echols then asked for confirmation that there is flexibility to expand the scope of the feasibility study to examine alternative solutions that were not addressed in the original scope. Mr. Hooper then responded that there is flexibility, provided it is broadly consistent with the purpose and need of the

original study; and that this information could be presented to the Policy Committee in September. Mr. Johnson then made a motion to defer a vote on the feasibility study until September meeting.

Mr. Hooper then stated that in order to provide a cost estimate of a broader analysis, staff would need to know what the planning area would be in that analysis. Mr. Echols stated that planning area should cover the Celanese Corridor. Mr. Johnson then stated that the planning area should be expanded to include US-21, Gold Hill Road, SC 160, Sutton Road, and Pleasant Road; noting the importance of examining all parts of the network that would be impacted by an improvement to the Celanese Corridor. Mr. Hooper then asked if the Policy Committee is requesting to initiate a new study that will analyze the entire model area, including an additional bridge crossing as well as a broader range of alternatives. Mr. Johnson then affirmed this and requested staff provide information regarding that approach including a cost estimate at the September meeting. The motion on the floor was then seconded by Ms. Savage and the motion was unanimously approved.

#### **4. PROPOSED POLICY COMMITTEE ACTION ITEMS:**

**a. 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan Update** – Mr. Hooper briefly summarized the planning and procedural steps that have been completed for the 2045 LRTP Update; noting that preliminary approval had previously been granted. Mr. Hooper then requested that the Policy Committee grant final approval to the adoption of the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan, FY 17-22 Transportation Improvement Program and Air Quality Conformity Determination, as well as authorize staff to submit these documents to SCDOT and FHWA for processing. A motion to grant approval was made by Mr. Sheppard; seconded by Mr. Carnes and the motion was unanimously approved.

**b. FY 17-19 UPWP** – Mr. Hooper briefly summarized principal work activities outlined in the FY 17-19 UPWP, as well as ongoing administration of grant programs and support of the regional travel demand model. Mr. Hooper then requested final approval of the FY 17-19 UPWP. A motion to grant approval was made by Mr. Sheppard; seconded by Ms. Savage and the motion was unanimously approved.

**c. FY 17-18 Transportation Alternatives Program** – Mr. Herrmann briefly reviewed the Transportation Alternatives Program and the application submitted by the City of Tega Cay for the Windjammer Drive Sidewalk Project; highlighting that the application is requesting the full allocation of TAP funds for FY 17-18 as well as Guideshare funding. Mr. Herrmann then noted that the application has been reviewed by the TAP Sub-Committee and is being forwarded for full consideration by the Policy Committee. Mr. Herrmann then requested that the Policy Committee accept the Sub-Committee's recommendation and authorize a 21-day public comment period to amend the TIP to reflect \$110,833 in TAP funding and \$384,510 in Guideshare funding. A motion to grant approval was made by Mr. Sheppard; seconded by Mr. Carnes and the motion was unanimously approved.

**d. CMAQ Reallocation Request** – Mr. Herrmann briefly reviewed the original scope of the Sidetrack Extension Project, which was previously allocated \$3.5 M in CMAQ funding. Mr. Herrmann then reviewed a request to reallocate this funding to an alternative project concept (i.e., the Downtown Traffic Management System) that would effectively achieve a comparable operational outcome. Specifically, Mr. Herrmann noted that this project is designed to reduce the amount of time drivers wait for train blockages to clear through a coordinated traffic signal system and supporting signage in downtown Rock Hill. Mr. Herrmann then requested that the Policy Committee grant approval of the reallocation of \$2.6 M in CMAQ funding to the Downtown Traffic Management Project, authorize staff to undertake a 21-day public comment period and submit the request to SCDOT for processing. A motion to grant approval was made by Mr. Carnes; seconded by Mr. Sheppard and the motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Herrmann then reviewed the second component of this reallocation request to provide \$900,000 in CMAQ funding to support the initiation of a Fixed Route Transit Service. Mr. Echols then asked if the

initiation of a fixed route transit service is consistent with the programmatic requirements of the CMAQ program. Ms. Hekter affirmed this, noting FHWA had reviewed the proposal which does follow the guidelines of the CMAQ program.

Mr. Climer then asked what other pending CMAQ projects were currently in development. Mr. Herrmann responded that there are two existing intersection improvement projects located at India Hook / Celanese and Carowinds / Pleasant. Mr. Climer then asked how much additional funding would be required for the India Hook / Celanese project. Mr. Hooper responded that the cost estimate for construction was roughly between \$7M to 9M, and thus far \$4.5M has been allocated. Mr. Climer then asked if it was possible for the Policy Committee to direct this remaining \$900,000 to the existing project at India Hook / Celanese. Mr. Hooper responded that this approach would be acceptable based on CMAQ program guidelines. Mr. Climer then asked which project would generate greater benefit to regional air quality, the fixed route transit service or an intersection improvement project. Mr. Hooper then responded that as a general proposition, intersection improvements tend to produce the highest results.

Mr. Echols then asked what the typical process has been when other reallocation requests have been presented to the Policy Committee. As a point of reference, Mr. Hooper noted that historically when a jurisdiction has a project that cannot move forward as originally conceptualized, the Policy Committee has granted the jurisdiction the opportunity to revise their approach and then the request is presented to the Policy Committee for review and approval. Mr. Hooper then stated that the revised approach must remain consistent with the programmatic requirements of the CMAQ funding.

Mr. Carnes then stated that the remaining funding in question would appear appropriate to be reallocated to support the initiation of the fixed route transit service; noting that the fixed route transit service would provide benefit in the near future and the intersection improvement still requires multiple years of additional funding. Mr. Simrill then asked for a summary of the projected timeline for the India Hook / Celanese project and if the additional \$900,000 would provide significant benefit to that timeline? As a point of reference, Mr. Herrmann stated that RFATS receives \$2M in CMAQ funding annually and in recent years that allocation has been divided to provide funding for both existing identified priorities at India Hook / Celanese and Carowinds / Pleasant. Mr. Herrmann then noted that if this approach continues the India Hook / Celanese project will need further allocations for at least three more years.

Discussion then followed regarding the impact of the additional \$900,000 to the timeline of the India Hook / Celanese project compared to supporting the initiation of the fixed route transit service. Ms. Pender then stated that there is no assurance that an additional \$900,000 would significantly impact the projected timeline of the project. Mr. Echols then stated that the fixed route transit service is scheduled to be operational in FY 2018. A motion to grant approval was then made by Mr. Carnes and seconded by Mr. Sheppard. The motion was then passed with a vote of 10-2 (Mr. Climer and Mr. Johnson dissenting).

**e. TIP Amendment** – Mr. Herrmann briefly summarized the TIP Amendment for the York County Board of Disability and Special Needs to receive \$50,000 in FTA Section 5310 funding and the City of Rock Hill to receive \$228,780 in FTA Section 5307 funding for the Express Bus Route Service and York County Access. Mr. Herrmann noted that while there is no RFATS funding included, it would need to be reflected in the TIP. Mr. Herrmann then requested final approval of the amendment from the Policy Committee. A motion to grant approval was made by Mr. Carnes; seconded by Mr. Sheppard and the motion was unanimously approved.

**f. FY 15-17 UPWP Amendment** – Mr. Hooper briefly reviewed a proposed amendment to the current UPWP regarding a request to add \$30,000 in existing planning funds to be utilized in completing existing activities. Mr. Hooper noted that this existing funding was budgeted for last year and the planning activities have carried forward and are actually being completed this year; also highlighting that this does

not involve any change to the total budgetary commitment for the two year planning period. Mr. Hooper then requested final approval of the amendment to the FY 15-17 UPWP. A motion to grant approval was made by Mr. Sheppard; seconded by Ms. Savage and the motion was unanimously approved.

**5. OTHER BUSINESS:**

**a. Administrative Report** – Mr. Hooper briefly summarized the Administrative Report.

**b. Next Meeting** – Mr. Echols noted that the next Policy Committee meeting will be held on September 22, 2017 at the Manchester Meadows Conference Room.

**6. ADJOURNMENT:**

With no further business, the motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Sheppard and seconded by Mr. Johnson; the motion was unanimously approved and the meeting was adjourned at 2:00 P.M.