



**POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING  
SUMMARY MINUTES  
May 20, 2016 - 12:00 p.m. (NOON)  
Manchester Meadows Conference Room**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:** George Sheppard; Kathy Pender (Proxy); Doug Echols; Brian Carnes; Guynn Savage; Bill Harris; Jim Reno (Proxy); Ralph Norman; Britt Blackwell (Proxy) and David Branham.

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

Bill Jordan (SCDOT); Joe Cronin (Town of Fort Mill); Cliff Goolsby (City of Rock Hill); Kati Price (SCDOT); Darlene Broughton (SCDOT); Patrick Hamilton (York County); Rob Green (City of Rock Hill); Elizabeth Harris (Catawba Indian Nation); Bill Meyer (City of Rock Hill); Audra Miller (York County); Vic Edwards (SCDOT); Jimmy Bagley (City of Rock Hill); Tommy Feemster (SCDOT); Jeremy Winkler (City of Rock Hill); Cole McKinney (CRCOG); Steve Willis (Lancaster County); Chris Herrmann (RFATS); and David Hooper (RFATS).

**CITIZENS / VISITORS PRESENT:** Luther Dasher (CAC); Frank Myers (CAC); Cleopatra Allen (CAC); Quinlan Canty (CAC); Hisham Abdelaziz (HDR); Amy Massey (Kimley Horn); Larry Huntley (Fort Mill Town Council); Phil Leazer (KCI Technologies); Erin Pratt (Campco Engineering); Olivia Lawrence (CN2); and Scot Sibert (Parsons-Brinckerhoff).

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

- a. **Welcome** – Chairman Sheppard called the meeting to order at 12:05 P.M. and welcomed all in attendance.
- b. **Citizen Comment Period** ó No comments were made at this time.

**2. REVIEW / APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Sheppard asked if there were any changes, deletions, or comments to the minutes of the March 25, 2016 meeting. Mr. Sheppard asked for a motion. Ms. Savage made a motion to approve the minutes as presented; Mr. Echols seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

**3. REPORTS:**

- a. **Catawba River Crossing** – Mr. Hooper briefly reviewed a request from the Policy Committee to provide a status update on the 2012 feasibility study identifying and assessing alternate alignments for a river crossing in the Mt Gallant and Sutton Road area. As a point of reference, Mr. Hooper noted that this request emerged during the Celanese / Cherry Corridor Study which analyzed regional travel demand along the Celanese Corridor and the unique operating dynamics associated with the functional integration of the Celanese and Cherry Road interchange at Exit 82. Mr. Hooper then summarized information in five key areas: (1) the status of the 2012 feasibility study; (2) updated travel shed information; (3) the latest modeling results reflecting current travel demand conditions as well as future year network operations with and without an additional crossing option; (4) updated cost estimates; and (5) an overall summary of funding available to RFATS.

Mr. Hooper then briefly reviewed the various elements of the feasibility study (i.e., environmental screening, utility placement, location of cultural / historical resources, traffic data / analysis, etc.), and then noted that all other major components have been completed and are in a draft final report format. Ms. Savage then asked how the gathering of public input was performed during the study? Mr. Hooper noted that there were a series of public meetings held throughout the RFATS Study Area, along with newspaper advertisements and website placements. Additionally, Mr. Hooper noted that submitted questions / feedback from the public meetings were gathered, summarized and documented as well. Lastly, Mr. Hooper briefly summarized the recommended alignment (Alternative #1) which would begin near Dalehurst Road off of Mt Gallant Road and connect into Sutton Road near the interchange at Exit 83. Mr. Echols then asked how far the recommended alignment would be from the Sutton Road interchange. In response, Mr. Edwards stated that it would be approximately 500 ft from the interchange.

Ms. Savage then briefly noted that with the 2012 feasibility study not proceeding to full completion, that it was her understanding that the evaluation of a potential river crossing was no longer under consideration. Notwithstanding the continuing network challenges along the Celanese Corridor, Ms. Savage stated that while she will wait for the discussion to more fully develop during today's meeting, that she did want to be open and state her concern that a river crossing would not beneficially impact network operations within the Town of Fort Mill. That said, Ms. Savage noted the operating issue along the Celanese Corridor, and that it is a critical one deserving of attention and resolution. Discussion then transitioned to the regional nature of project planning and a summary of next steps involved should the Policy Committee decide to continue the evaluation of a river crossing and / or update the 2012 study information and bring that work effort to completion.

Mr. Harris then asked about the alternatives that would connect Mt. Gallant Road to Harris Road and whether such an alignment would more effectively route travel demand further north along I-77? In response, Mr. Hooper noted that a Harris Road alignment would route travel demand further north on I-77, and then briefly reviewed the different operational considerations between Harris and Sutton Road (i.e., environmental, parcel, utilities, variation in cost range, etc). Mr. Sheppard then shared his concern about the potential for a bottleneck to emerge if an alignment were linked with the Sutton Road interchange.

Mr. Hooper then reviewed regional travel shed information within the RFATS Study Area and the range of channelization each travel shed provides in gathering and facilitating access to the interstate. As a point of reference, Mr. Hooper then discussed how the nature of an area's geography and development pattern are influenced by the number and spacing of interchange access points and how these two variables correlate with the operational capacity of the principal corridor serving each travel shed.

Mr. Hooper then summarized the scale and complexity of the regional travel demand along the Celanese Corridor and highlighted the operational impact of the close proximity of Celanese Road and Cherry Road as they approach I-77; the rough approximation of travel demand on each roadway; the unique configuration of the interchange where two principal arterial roadways are functionally integrated at Exit 82; and the broader geographic constraint where there are no connecting points for northbound movement along the travel shed leading to the interstate. Essentially, Mr. Hooper noted that it is this confluence of operational variables that substantially explains why travel demand modelers and traffic engineers characterize this corridor as a "choke point" within the regional transportation network.

Mr. Norman then asked if the modelers analyzed the use of Ebinport Road, Riverview Road, Riverchase Blvd (among other roads) being used to travel from Celanese Road to Cherry Road in

order to provide access to US 21 or I-77? In response, Mr. Hooper noted that the modelers are generally reluctant to make this assumption given that drivers typically will not move away from their destination (given the predominant movement east to access I-77) in order to correct at a later point. Additionally, Mr. Hooper noted that the comparable demand level on Cherry Road also tends to work against modeling this assumption. That said, Mr. Hooper stated a few drivers whose trips are more localized in nature may opt for this option if there are multiple trip destinations at different points in the network, where minor route modifications can be accommodated through slight adjustments in the sequencing of the driver's destination points.

Mr. Hooper then reviewed the latest available traffic count data from 2015 and then transitioned to Horizon Year projections in 2040 with and without an alternate river crossing. In reviewing the initial 2040 modeling numbers without an additional river crossing, it was noted that demand increases are expected on all major and minor arterial roadways in the area (i.e., Celanese Road, SC 160, Cherry Road, US 21, Fort Mill Southern Parkway, Sutton Road etc). Specifically, travel volume changes were noted as follows:

- Sutton Road volumes are projected to increase from 8,300 to 22,800
- SC-160 volumes are projected to increase from 30,100 to 48,750
- Celanese Road volumes are projected to increase from 44,400 to 62,100
- Cherry Road volumes are projected to increase from 33,700 to 54,800
- Cel-River Road volumes are projected to increase from 10,400 to 15,400
- Fort Mill Southern Parkway volumes are projected to increase from 10,100 to 32,900

Mr. Hooper then reviewed the projected volumes with an alternate river crossing in 2040:

- Sutton Road volumes are projected to increase from 22,800 to 31,400
- SC-160 volumes are projected to decrease from 48,750 to 48,500
- Celanese Road volumes are projected to decrease from 62,100 to 54,100
- Cherry Road volumes are projected to decrease from 54,800 to 53,500
- Cel-River Road volumes are projected to increase from 15,400 to 18,100
- Fort Mill Southern Bypass is projected to increase from 32,900 to 33,700
- Mt Gallant Road is projected to decrease from 13,100 to 8,700
- The alternate river crossing has projected volume of 22,600

Discussion then followed regarding the modeling process (i.e., bi-directional nature of travel movement, annual update to socio-economic data, development activity, etc.). Mr. Hooper then briefly reviewed the range of modeling assumptions that are made when accounting for the incorporation of a new connecting route and / or a road widening project (i.e., adjustments in total travel demand, changes in driver behavior at different points in the network, etc). Mr. Sheppard then asked about the negligible adjustment envisioned along SC 160 with the incorporation of a river crossing? In response, Mr. Hooper noted that with a connection point on Sutton Road roughly 500 ft from the interchange, that the modeling process is projecting that very few drivers are likely to turn left and proceed northbound on Sutton Road (unless their trip destination is one of the residential developments on Sutton Road prior to SC 160), given their original proximity to the interchange.

Mr. Harris then offered a broader assessment about the potential for an additional river crossing that might result in similar congestion challenges within an area that contains the Celanese Corridor, SC 160 and Cel-River Road versus the incorporation of an "outer loop" as an alternative approach to improving regional mobility? Notwithstanding the operational benefits that an outer loop can provide within a transportation network (i.e., connectivity, growth management, etc), Mr. Hooper noted that

that type of facility (given the predominant northbound movement towards Charlotte), would tend to provide a favorable impact further south within the network; and therefore, would not appreciably alter the operational challenges near Exit 82.

Discussion then followed regarding the relative costs associated with a river crossing; planned interchange reconfigurations along I-77; recently discussed innovative intersection reconfiguration options along Celanese Road; prior transportation investments along Hwy 274 and Pole Branch Road and the projected growth anticipated on the western side of RFATS. Mr. Hooper then reviewed potential locations for a river crossing from the Buster Boyd Bridge to I-77 ó taking account of geographic constraints and potential connection points that are already experiencing elevated levels of congestion. Lastly, it was noted that the capacity of the transportation network to serve existing conditions, accommodate growth, and efficiently distribute demand in a balanced manner is directly related to the degree that the principal travel corridors are effectively integrated and spaced system wide.

In reflecting on the modeling analyses, Mr. Sheppard noted that additional information on the key data inputs, planning assumptions, and formula would be helpful in more fully digesting the information presented today as well as for other project planning in the future. Mr. Hooper then briefly reviewed the annual update process incorporating the latest information on socio-economic data and development activity and how that influences the modeling process. In addition to what has been discussed today, staff is to prepare a broader summary of modeling inputs / outputs and then distribute to the Policy Committee.

Discussion then transitioned to a review of updated cost estimates for the four conceptual alignments originally developed during the 2012 feasibility study. In summary, Mr. Hooper noted that the two options that connected in / near the Sutton Road interchange (including funding for an upgrade to the interchange) were approximately \$65.0M - \$67.0M, and the two options connecting to Sutton near Harris Road (which includes the construction of a new interchange) were roughly \$95.0M-98.0M. Mr. Norman then asked whether the alternative improvements at the intersections along the Celanese Corridor that were presented at a previous meeting ó whether they would need to be implemented with the alternate bridge crossing as well? Mr. Hooper then responded that the improvements at the intersections would not be needed if an alternate river crossing was constructed.

Mr. Hooper then provided an overall summary of funding available to RFATS (as requested by Mr. Hayes at the previous meeting). In reviewing current information, Mr. Hooper noted that there is a current unprogrammed balanced of roughly \$42.0M. As a point of reference, Mr. Hooper noted that there are a number of variables that would impact future funding: (1) the inclusion of funding for the construction phase (as part of the Pennies IV Referendum) for the interchange reconfigurations at Exits 85 & 82 through the joint project programming approach implemented last year; (2) the pending SIB application; and (3) an anticipated increase in annual funding following the next census in 2020. Mr. Norman then asked what the local match for the SIB Application would be? Mr. Hamilton then responded that the local match includes the work at Gold Hill / I-77; RFATS funding for PE & ROW at Exits 85 & 82 ó in total, the local match is approximately \$30.0M.

Mr. Echols then asked if the Policy Committee was inclined to proceed with the discussion relative to the alternate bridge crossing and what would be the next step in that process be? Mr. Hooper then provide a brief summary of steps to complete the 2012 feasibility study; it was also noted that next steps could include continuation of the analysis process as part of the Long Range Transportation Plan update that will occur in FY 16-17. Mr. Harris then made a motion that the Policy Committee move forward with completing the feasibility study for the alternate bridge crossing; the motion was seconded by Mr. Echols.

Mr. Norman then asked for an explanation of the timeline if the motion is passed? Mr. Hooper then responded that a request would need to be made at the June Policy Committee meeting to reflect funding to complete this work, and that this work could be completed over the summer. Ms. Savage then asked if the completion of the feasibility study was likely to result in another recommendation other than a river crossing? Mr. Hooper noted that the feasibility study is an assessment of a river crossing rather than a broader evaluation of options which was undertaken prior to the initiation of the study back in 2012. Ms. Savage then stated that this would be a step-forward in building the bridge.

Mr. Norman then stated that he would vote against moving forward because of a need to further digest the information. Group discussion then followed regarding the motion on the floor with a consensus arriving at the decision to table voting on the matter until the June Policy Committee meeting. Mr. Harris then removed the motion that the Policy Committee move forward with completing the feasibility study for an alternate bridge crossing. Given the earlier discussions about continuing the analysis of alternate crossing, Mr. Sheppard then suggested that the initiation of the LRTP update should be tabled until the June meeting as well. In preparation for the June meeting, Mr. Norman asked if a cost estimate for right-of-way acquisition could be prepared since the cost of this project would substantially commit most of available funding to RFATS for the next 15 years. Lastly, given that annual funding levels are periodically adjusted with the decennial Census, it was requested whether a general estimate could be provided. Mr. Hooper responded that he would look into whether a general range could be prepared.

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

- a. **LRTP / TIP Amendment** – Mr. Hooper briefly reviewed the LRTP / TIP Amendment which would reflect all elements of Exit 82 (82A, 82B, & 82C), as part of the planned interchange reconfiguration work. As a point of reference, Mr. Hooper noted that all three components of Exit 82 are reflected in both the SIB application and in the project recommendation made to the Pennies IV Sales Tax Commission. Mr. Hooper then stated that the planning documents need to be updated to reflect planned improvements and supporting funding as the PE, ROW and alternatives analysis is initiated. Mr. Hooper then requested that the Policy Committee grant preliminary approval to amend the LRTP & FY 14-19 TIP to support this action (Guideshare funding commitment is \$3.0) and authorize a 30-day public comment period. Mr. Echols made a motion to approve; Mr. Harris seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.
- b. **TIP Amendment** – Mr. Hooper briefly noted that the Policy Committee granted preliminary approval to program supplemental funding in the amount of \$1.7M for the SC 160 Widening (Phase II) from the York County Line towards US 521. Mr. Hooper then stated that the public comment period has now ended and no comments were received. Mr. Hooper then requested that the Policy Committee grant final approval for this TIP Amendment. Mr. Carnes made a motion to approve; Mr. Norman seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.
- c. **TIP Amendment** – Mr. Hooper briefly noted that funding was programmed for an interchange feasibility study for Coltharp Road when the East-West Connector Project was identified during the development of the Long Range Plan; and that, since this project has been determined infeasible for a variety of reasons, that the TIP needs to be amended to release the \$350,000 in Guideshare funding for general programming purposes. As a point of reference, Mr. Hooper noted that should such a study be needed at a later point, it can of course be amended back into the TIP at that time. Mr. Hooper then requested that the Policy Committee grant preliminary approval to amend the TIP to reflect a withdrawal of the interchange feasibility study and reallocate \$350,000 in Guideshare

funding. Mr. Norman made a motion to approve; Mr. Carnes seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

- d. **Transportation Alternatives Program** – Mr. Herrmann briefly reviewed the Transportation Alternatives Program and the application submitted by the City of Rock Hill for the Columbia Avenue Pedestrian Improvements Project; noting 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 15-day public comment period to amend the TIP to reflect \$110,833 in TAP funding. Ms. Savage made a motion to approve; Mr. Harris seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.
- e. **Public Participation Plan** – Mr. Herrmann briefly reviewed the Public Participation Plan, noting that this Plan outlines all the steps that are taken in disseminating information and making sure that work products are broadly announced and available to everyone. Additionally, Mr. Herrmann noted that the PPP contains information about ongoing efforts to improve the process by assessing which outreach approaches are working best and which would benefit from further refinement.

Mr. Herrmann then identified areas in the Plan that are being recommended for updating: (1) inclusion of references to the FAST Act; (2) the interactive mapping now available through ArcGIS Online; (3) adding the tracking of issues or concerns voiced by the Citizens Advisory Committee; (4) reflecting a specific reference to the names of newspapers where ads and notices are published; (5) that the sign-in sheet for Policy Committee meetings is being adjusted so that attendees can easily add their contact information so they can be added to the regular distribution list for future announcements; and (6) tracking news articles and media stories on the planning process and / or related activities.

Mr. Herrmann then requested that the Policy Committee grant preliminary approval and authorize a 45-day public comment period. Mr. Norman made a motion to approve; Ms. Savage seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

- f. **2017 Long Range Plan Update** – This item was tabled until the June 24, 2016 Policy Committee Meeting
5. **Other Business:**
- a. **Administrative Report** – Mr. Hooper briefly reviewed the Administrative Report.
  - b. **SCDOT Project Status Report** – Mr. Sheppard briefly noted that the last report from SCDOT occurred at the February meeting and asked when the next report is envisioned. Mr. Hooper briefly reviewed prior discussions about incorporating a quarterly reporting schedule (recognizing that if there is notable activity on a project in the interim that that would certainly be reported to the Policy Committee). With this in mind, Mr. Hooper said that the next project status report from SCDOT is slated for the Policy Committee's June meeting.
  - c. **Next regular meeting** – Mr. Hooper highlighted that the next regular meeting will be held at the City of Rock Hill Operations Center on June 24, 2016 at 12:00 P.M.
6. **Adjournment**  
With no further business, the motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Harris and seconded by Ms. Savage; the motion was unanimously approved and the meeting was adjourned at 1:27 P.M.