



POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY MINUTES

**January 24, 2025 – 12:00 p.m.
Rock Hill Operations Center – Room 132**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Brian Carnes; Guynn Savage; John Gettys; Jose Luis; Christi Cox; Michael Johnson; Tom Audette; Ben Hudgins (P); Chris Gray; Watts Huckabee (P); Health Sessions; and Jim Reno.

ADMINISTRATIVE / TECHNICAL / MANAGEMENT STAFF PRESENT:

Patrick Hamilton (York County); Tony Edwards (SCDOT); Penelope Karagounis (Town of Fort Mill); Josh Meetze (SCDOT); Chris Herrmann (City of Rock Hill); Diane Dil (York County); Tommy Feemster (SCDOT); Christopher Stephens (York County); Nick Cauthen (Tega Cay); Jimmy Bagley (City of Rock Hill); Josh Edwards (York County); Jason Johnston (SCDOT); Cliff Goolsby (City of Rock Hill); Chris Moody (Fort Mill Town Council); Cary Vargo (Town of Fort Mill); D'Mont Zeigler (SCDOT); Leah Youngblood (City of Rock Hill); Jonathan Buono (York County); David Martin (SC House); Rob Ruth (City of Rock Hill); Steve Allen (Catawba Regional); Andrew Fisher (STV, Inc); and David Hooper (RFATS).

CITIZENS / VISITORS PRESENT: John Marks (Herald); Frieda Price (CAC); Scot Couchneour (Lancaster County Resident); Cleopatra Allen (CAC); Jim Van Blarcom (CAC); Phil Leazer (KCI); Dr. David Keely (CAC); Liz Duda (Tega Cay Resident); Luther Dasher (CAC); Sherri Williamson (HDR); Shawn Epps (HDR); Frank Myers (CAC); David Kearns (HDR); Ben Jones (HDR); Brett Harrelson (Stantec); Chris Guido (HDR); Christina Lewis (AECOM); and Stephen Comer (Lancaster County);

1. CALL TO ORDER:

a. Welcome – Chair Carnes called the meeting to order at 12:00 P.M. and welcomed all in attendance.

b. Citizen Comment Period – Mr. Couchneour highlighted three items of concern: (1) area speed limits and consistency with SCDOT guidelines; (2) importance of having grass buffers between roadways and pedestrian infrastructure (sidewalks; bike lanes, etc); and (3) the operational outcome associated with Carolina Commons Dr. Ms Duda then briefly reiterated prior comments about the meeting format. As a point of reference – it was noted that there has been discussion about the range of approaches to public participation, and the recognition of how the work of MPOs differs from city / town / county council meetings; and of course, the value of “in person” participation. Lastly, Mr. Hooper then referenced the Policy Committee’s prior decision on this point.

2. REVIEW / APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Carnes then asked if there were any changes, deletions, or comments to the minutes of the November 22, 2024 meeting. Mr. Carnes then made a motion to approve; this was seconded by Mr. Gettys and unanimously approved.

3. REPORTS:

a. Pennies For Progress Status Report – Mr. Hamilton provided the latest information on area project priorities – highlighting SC 160 East; Hwy 557; Riverview Road; Hwy 72 as well as work on US 21 / Hwy 51.

b. Carowinds Blvd Interchange (Feasibility Study Announcement) – Mr. Hooper provided a brief overview of the announcement by Governor McMaster to fund a feasibility study at this location to comprehensively evaluate both existing and projected needs as well as potential configuration options for strengthening operating conditions; improving safety and overall system reliability. Against this backdrop, Mr. Hooper then noted a recent work effort initiated by NCDOT to evaluate the incorporation of HOV lanes along I-77 from Charlotte to the State Line in response to an “anonymous proposal” received last year regarding the potential benefits to be realized by this type of infrastructure improvement.

As a point of reference, Mr. Hooper then noted that this action (i.e., to evaluate HOV lanes from Charlotte to the SC State Line) represents a reversal of the so-called NC Fast Lanes Study to not pursue this option given physical attributes along this stretch of the corridor as well as the expected cost level; notwithstanding a subsequent action later taken by CRTPO to put this type of planning back on the table but without any dedicated funding or announced schedule for further consideration.

It was then noted that the first communication regarding this work effort was received via email in late December from the consultant team selected by NCDOT. Mr. Hooper then mentioned that a teams call occurred where it was stated that the consultant team had already scheduled a presentation with the York County Chamber, and that they were planning to contact other area stakeholders. Mr. Hooper then stated that this approach is unfortunately inconsistent with the established protocol to discuss and review such work efforts through a coordinative process known as CRAFT where all federal and state agencies regularly meet to consider the best ways to approach studies / work efforts of this type.

As a point of reference, it was noted that CRAFT or the Charlotte Regional Alliance For Transportation is a product of a signed MOU among all MPOs; NCDOT; SCDOT; the Federal Highway Administration as well as area councils of government to ensure that effective regional coordination occurs in its proper sequence so that a productive and useful outcome is generated. Discussion then followed with a request that Mr. Hooper confirm with SCDOT the full summary of the evolution of this work effort; and that, there have been no policy / planning changes at SCDOT that would adversely impact the substantial investments and work completed to date along the I-77 Corridor within York County.

4. PROPOSED POLICY COMMITTEE ACTION ITEMS

a. FY 24-33 TIP Amendment – Mr. Hooper briefly summarized a federal funding award through the Reconnecting Communities Grant in the amount of \$10,109,073 to construct a pedestrian flyover bridge in Downtown Rock Hill. The Policy Committee then granted approval of this action and authorized initiation of a 21-day public comment period.

b. FY 25-26 Transportation Alternatives Program – Mr. Hooper requested that the Policy Committee consider approval of the Transportation Alternatives program schedule and project selection criteria for the FY 2025-2026 funding cycle. Mr. Hooper then outlined the application format, program criteria and schedule and requested the Policy Committee’s approval. A motion for approval was made by Ms. Savage; seconded by Mr. Reno and then was unanimously approved.

c. FY 25-26 Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement Program – Mr. Hooper requested that the Policy Committee consider approval of the Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement Funds program schedule and project selection criteria for the FY 2025-2026 funding cycle. Mr. Hooper then outlined the application format, program criteria and schedule and requested the Policy Committee’s

approval. A motion for approval was made by Mr. Reno; seconded by Ms. Savage and then was unanimously approved.

d. Annual Election of Officers – Mr. Hooper noted the rotation schedule for committee leadership; and that Ms. Savage is slated to serve as Chair and Mr. Gray as Vice-Chair. A motion was made for approval by Mr. Carnes; seconded by Ms. Cox and unanimously approved.

5. OTHER BUSINESS:

a. Administrative Report – No discussion occurred on this item.

b. Next Meeting – Mr. Carnes noted that the next Policy Committee meeting is scheduled for February 28, 2025.

6. ADJOURNMENT:

The motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Carnes and seconded by Mr. Reno; the motion was unanimously approved and the meeting was adjourned at 12:51 P.M.