



**POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING
SUMMARY MINUTES
November 18, 2022 – 12:00 p.m.
Rock Hill Operations Center – Room 132**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: John Gettys; Guynn Savage; Jim Reno; Brian Carnes; Chris Gray; Tom Audette; Heath Sessions (P); Kathy Pender; Bill Harris; Joel Hamilton; Wes Climer; and Gene Branham.

ADMINISTRATIVE / TECHNICAL / MANAGEMENT STAFF PRESENT:

Berry Mattox (SCDOT); Patrick Hamilton (York County); Vic Edwards (SCDOT); Penelope Karagounis (Town of Fort Mill); Josh Meetze (SCDOT); Dennis Marstall (Lancaster County); Chris Herrmann (City of Rock Hill); Jason Johnston (SCDOT); Terrence Nealy (City of Rock Hill); Susan Britt (City of Tega Cay); Jimmy Bagley (City of Rock Hill); David Hudspeth (York County); Leah Youngblood (City of Rock Hill); Chris Stephens (York County); Brent Denton (City of Rock Hill); Steve Allen (CRCOG); Diane Dil (York County); Amy Britz (City of Rock Hill); Jonathan Buono (York County); Rob Ruth (City of Rock Hill); Jeremy Winkler (City of Rock Hill); Katie Compton (City of Rock Hill); Brent Rewis (SCDOT); and David Hooper (RFATS).

CITIZENS / VISITORS PRESENT: John Delfausse (Lancaster County); John Marks (Herald); Morgan Newell (WBTV); Patti Mercer (Talk of the Town Carolina's); Zane Cina (CN2); Tina Terry (WSOC-TV); Cleopatra Allen (CAC); Mike Fry (CAMPCO); Kenneth Johnson (AECOM); Liz Duda; Frank Myers (CAC); Zachary Zapack; Brett Harrelson; Tyler Cupp (WRHI); Jim Van BlarCom (CAC); David Keely (CAC); John Fargher; William Roddey (York County Council); Teresa Thomas (Office of Senator L Graham); David O'Neal (SC House); Scot Sibert (WSP); Bradley Reynolds (WSP); and Sierra Hayes (WSP).

1. CALL TO ORDER:

- a. **Welcome** – Chair Gettys called the meeting to order at 12:00 P.M. and welcomed all in attendance.
- b. **Citizen Comment Period** – Mr. Delfausse (member of the Lancaster County CTC and resident of Sun City) provided comments on the US 521 Corridor Study; and the importance of land use and infrastructure decisions on the preservation of an area's quality of life.

2. REVIEW / APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Gettys asked if there were any changes, deletions, or comments to the minutes of the September 23rd, 2022 meeting. Mr. Gettys then made a motion to approve the minutes as presented; this was seconded by Ms. Savage and the motion was unanimously approved.

3. REPORTS:

- a. **SCDOT Progress Report & Notification of Guideshare Funding Adjustment** – Mr. Mattox provided an overview of all active projects in his written report, and highlighted the latest progress on a few priority projects; specifically, the US 521 / Marvin Road Intersection Project (pending completion of ROW); India Hook / Celanese Intersection Project (pending completion of project utility work and upcoming precon meeting); and the SC 160 / I-77 Interchange Project (minor roadway adjustment due to

positioning of grave sites east of I-77; project bids expected early summer 2023). Mr. Rewis then provided an overview of action taken by the SCDOT Commission to augment the aggregate funding level to all MPOs & COGs statewide.

b. US 521 Corridor Evaluation (Presentation of Study Progress) – Mr. Hooper briefly reviewed the Policy Committee’s guidance to initiate this work effort, and the importance of the US 521 Corridor Study within the transportation network serving the planning area. Mr. Reynolds then walked through the different alternative configurations being evaluated and the benefits and drawbacks of each (i.e., degree of operational improvement and reliability; impact on corridor safety; and ROW considerations, etc). Discussion then followed regarding general cost bands for each configuration and the need for further discussion at a subsequent meeting.

4. PROPOSED POLICY COMMITTEE ACTION ITEMS

a. 2050 LRTP & FY 21-27 TIP Amendment – Mr. Hooper briefly referenced the recent award from the South Carolina State Infrastructure Bank to the I-77 / Carowinds Blvd Interchange Project in the amount of \$64,354,500 and \$21,451,500 from York County. As a point of reference, Mr. Hooper noted that this total funding amount of \$85.8M will enable a critical convergence point in the transportation network to be addressed in a comprehensive manner. Mr. Hooper then asked for final approval from the Policy Committee pending completion of the 30-day public comment period. Ms. Savage then made a motion to approve; second by Mr. Carnes and unanimously approved.

b. 2050 LRTP & FY 21-27 TIP Amendment – Mr. Hooper briefly summarized a reallocation request shifting a portion of funding from the Celanese / I-77 Interchange Project (i.e., it should be noted that overall project funding is above project cost estimates by some margin), to two other network projects along I-77; specifically, adjacent roadwork to the new interchange at Exit 81 – enabling it to be fully operationalized when the interchange is complete, as well as planned project work at Exit 77. Mr. Hooper then noted that this action is requesting approval contingent on completion of a 30-day public comment period.

Discussion then followed with Mr. Audette expressing concerns about the utilization of funding on a private roadway while in litigation. Additional points of discussion included questions about the reallocation process more generally (i.e., committee reviews; etc). Mr. Gettys then offered a point of clarification regarding bankruptcy proceedings and litigation, and options for making improvements at a project location. Mr. Gettys then noted that this reallocation request is centered on providing funding support to undertake related infrastructure work so that area drivers can utilize the new interchange once all other work is complete. Lastly, Mr. Gettys noted that this action also assumes that this funding would not be utilized until the subject roads are owned by a public body.

Mr. Carnes then shared his thoughts about the timing of the reallocation request and a pending resolution date later this year. In response, Mr. Gettys noted that completion of the settlement process is slated for December 14th, and this request is contingent on completion of a 30-day public comment period, which would place finalization after this date thereby avoiding any conflict. Mr. Hamilton asked if an amendment to the motion can be made that completion of this action is contingent on the adjacent roadways being subject to public ownership? Mr. Audette then expressed continued concerns about taking action while litigation remains active. Mr. Hamilton then shared additional comments about the need and value of bringing the new interchange to a state of public utility for the benefit of taxpayers of York County; and that, this discussion is being placed somewhat in a brierpatch of other matters not related to RFATS.

Mr. Climer then asked a clarifying question regarding the exact language of the motion so that contingency of public ownership is clear. Mr. Gray then expressed his concern that this action feels like we're putting the cart before horse and would suggest tabling this motion. Ms. Savage then shared her assessment of the work of RFATS and the important work all the jurisdictional members do. Ms. Savage also noted guidance from her town council and town attorney about participating in vote associated with the prior project; as such, she noted that she would be recusing herself on this matter.

Mr. Harris then offered his assessment that this is a complex problem that needs to be addressed, and it should be noted that this type of reallocation request has been undertaken previously at multiple times by various jurisdictions within RFATS. Mr. Harris then noted that our objective should be to allocate funding wisely and solve the problem. Discussion concluded with the Policy Committee voting to approve the amended motion with a vote of 8 to 3. Those in favor included: Mr. Gettys; Mr. Hamilton; Ms. Pender; Mr. Branham; Mr. Sessions; Mr. Reno; Mr. Climer; and Mr. Harris; Those opposed included: Mr. Audette; Mr. Gray; and Mr. Carnes; Lastly, Ms. Savage did not vote due to her earlier stated recusal.

c. FY 21-27 TIP Amendment – Mr. Hooper briefly noted that York County DSNB was recently awarded 5310 funding in the amount of \$100,000 for capital acquisition and requested preliminary approval and authorization of a 21-day public comment period. Motion to approve was made by Mr. Carnes; and seconded by Ms. Savage and the motion received unanimous approval.

d. 2023 Policy Committee Meeting Schedule – Mr. Hooper briefly reviewed the proposed schedule for 2023 and then requested its approval. Mr. Gettys then made a motion for approval; seconded by Ms. Savage and the motion was unanimously approved.

5. OTHER BUSINESS:

a. Administrative Report – Mr. Hooper briefly noted RFATS long standing commitment to effective regional coordination through CRAFT; and then transitioned to a few recent work efforts during the last couple of years; specifically the Beyond 77 study and CONNECT Beyond, and the resulting decision of RFATS to formally withdraw from the former for a range of policy and programmatic reasons as well as the decision to table taking action on CONNECT Beyond given how it was developed omitting the proper role of Catawba Regional in South Carolina as well as other comments / recommended changes from RFATS that were not ultimately incorporated into the final plan document, etc).

Mr. Hooper then cited a recent email he received from Centralina related to their decision to issue an RFQ for consultant proposals to support the implementation of recommendations from CONNECT Beyond for the next three years, and asking for representation from RFATS or Catawba Regional as part of the selection committee. As a point of reference, Mr. Hooper noted that there was no coordination or consultation in developing the RFQ or the wisdom of its condensed evaluation schedule in December. Mr. Hooper then stated that he has informed Centralina that given the Policy Committee's decision to table taking any action, it logically would not be appropriate for him to then participate in that very activity. Mr. Audette then offered his assessment that RFATS was very clear a number of months back about our concerns with CONNECT Beyond, and that RFATS will not be a part of this work effort – though Mr. Hooper did add that the continued advancement of transit service availability and planning will occur at RFATS and be broadly coordinated with adjacent planning agencies / transit operators as appropriate.

Mr. Hooper then cited one additional example of unwelcome behavior from Centralina when they apparently attempted to make a presentation at the South Carolina American Planning Association Fall Conference by contacting Catawba Regional to gauge their interest – effectively bypassing RFATS even though the entire portion of the study component in South Carolina is contained within RFATS? Mr.

Hooper stated that he thought the Policy Committee should be aware that this type of behavior is occurring “behind the scenes,” and is not consistent with the purpose or effective functioning of CRAFT.

Mr. Climer then asked what other additional steps are needed to bring this type of unprofessional conduct to a stop. In response, Mr. Hooper noted that this behavior is occurring within the broader context of the pending release of the 2020 Decennial Census, and is not coincidental. Mr. Hooper then noted previous examples of the timing of work efforts just prior to the 2020 Census (i.e., Beyond 77; CONNECT Beyond; the attempted scheduling of meetings in Charlotte without even considering the availability of RFATS; etc).

Mr. Hooper then cited similar behavior during the 2010 Census where Centralina undertook a transportation planning study regarding potential organizational changes (though this was not sought or supported by a majority vote of the CRAFT members), and ultimately every agency responded in the negative that no such approach is desired, needed or consistent with the historical evolution of the MPO planning process in the CRAFT area. Mr. Rewis then commented that SCDOT is aware of this behavior and is strongly supportive of the work of RFATS.

b. Next Meeting – Mr. Gettys noted that the next Policy Committee meeting is scheduled for January 27, 2022.

6. ADJOURNMENT:

The motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Gettys and seconded by Ms. Savage; the motion was unanimously approved and the meeting was adjourned at 1:52 P.M.