



POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

SUMMARY MINUTES

March 26, 2021 – 12:00 p.m.

Rock Hill City Hall – Council Chambers / Zoom

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: David O’Neal; John Gettys; Guynn Savage; Tom Audette; Kathy Pender; Jim Reno (proxy); Bill Harris (proxy); Joel Hamilton; and Brian Carnes.

ADMINISTRATIVE / TECHNICAL / MANAGEMENT STAFF PRESENT:

Berry Mattox (SCDOT); Mark Pleasant (FHWA); Patrick Hamilton (York County); Penelope Karagounis (Town of Fort Mill); Diane Lackey (SCDOT); Susan Britt (City of Tega Cay); Christopher Stephens (York County); Rob Ruth (City of Rock Hill); Dean Hendrix (York County); Vic Edwards (SCDOT); David Hudspeth (York County); Allison Love (SCDOT); Jonathan Buono (York County); Erin Porter (SCDOT); Steve Allen (Catawba COG); Josh Meetze (SCDOT); Chris Herrmann (RFATS); and David Hooper (RFATS).

CITIZENS / VISITORS PRESENT: Scot Sibert (WSP); Jim Van Blarcom (CAC); Luther Dasher (CAC); Cleopatra Allen (CAC); Brandon Murr (Kimley-Horn); Hisham Abdelaziz (CDM Smith); Phil Leazer (KCI); John Fargher (ESP Associates); Ed Evans (Mattern & Craig); Dave Kerns (HDR); Rae’l Jackson (CN2 News); John Marks (The Herald); Matthew Kreh (WRHI); Liz Duda; Vivian Weinberg; and Bill Jordan (AECOM).

1. CALL TO ORDER:

- a. Welcome** – Chair O’Neal called the meeting to order at 12:02 P.M. and welcomed all in attendance.
- b. Citizen Comment Period** – No comments were made at this time.

2. REVIEW / APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. O’Neal asked if there were any changes, deletions, or comments to the minutes of the February 26th, 2021 meeting. Mr. Gettys then made a motion to approve the minutes as presented; this was seconded by Mr. Carnes and the motion was unanimously approved.

3. REPORTS:

a. Celanese / I-77 Interchange Evaluation – Mr. Hooper provided a planning overview of prior work completed assessing operating conditions at the Celanese / I-77 Interchange as well as current and projected demand levels along both the Celanese and Cherry Road corridors. As a point of reference, Mr. Hooper then reviewed applicable federal and state requirements associated with any modification to an interchange (e.g., impact on mainline traffic flow; alternatives analysis, etc). Mr. Mattox next reviewed the initial alternative configuration reflected in the York County SIB application (e.g., Dual Diverging Diamond); and that, part of the planned interchange evaluation will be updating existing planning assumptions and cross checking current and projected demand levels in and around this interchange as well as adjacent interchanges in both directions along the interstate.

Mr. Mattox then transitioned to a review of the current funding available for this project – which includes \$6M in Guidesshare funding, \$5.7M from York County contained in the SIB application, as well as \$32.4M awarded from the State Infrastructure Bank. Mr. Hooper emphasized that dependent on the selection of a preferred interchange configuration other than a dual DDI, would likely result in a higher overall project cost; and that, such an adjustment had been discussed during the Policy Committee’s Workshop in October as part of the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan Update. Mr. Mattox then briefly summarized potential ROW and geographical constraints related to the Catawba River that may impact the overall cost of the project.

Mr. Mattox then briefly summarized the working schedule for this project. Specifically, that the alternatives analysis is expected to occur in 2022; design is anticipated between 2023 and 2025; ROW acquisition between 2024 and 2026; and finally, the construction phase is anticipated to be initiated in 2026. Mr. Mattox added that construction should take approximately two years to complete. As a point of reference, Mr. Mattox highlighted how this project schedule compares to interchange projects at Exits 88, 81, and 85.

Mr. Gettys then asked how much ROW may be needed for the various alternatives that will be analyzed? Mr. Hooper responded that while most configurations should fit within the existing ROW; there is the potential for a unique configuration to emerge that may require additional ROW. Mr. Gettys then emphasized the importance of proactive coordination among and between the affected agencies / jurisdictions / property owners / stakeholders in and around the project area. Mr. Hooper noted that this will be discussed at the Technical Team level with this point being emphasized as things progress on this work effort. Mr. Gettys then asked whether the work at this location may impact traffic at Exit 77? Mr. Mattox responded that interstate traffic impacts are not expected south of Exit 79, but that further analysis would be needed; and this of course will be reported back to the Policy Committee once available.

4. PROPOSED POLICY COMMITTEE ACTION ITEMS:

a. 2050 LRTP Update – Mr. Hooper provided a brief summary of the LRTP update process and the steps completed to date. Mr. Hooper then reviewed projected roadway conditions through 2050 – which reflect both increasing levels of travel demand (consistent with projected growth rates), as well as a shift in demand levels away from I-77 and toward arterial roadways reflecting more trips that both begin and end within the regional transportation network.

Mr. Sibert then briefly reviewed the socio-economic data projections from the Metrolina Regional Model; specifically, population and employment, as well as the build-out projections for the planning area through 2050. Mr. Sibert explained that the horizon year projections portray a robust development pattern through 2025; and then leveling out longer term. Discussion then followed regarding the continuation of expected growth into western York County, and extending further down beyond the panhandle of Lancaster County.

Mr. Hooper next transitioned to summarize the development of the draft project list; highlighting unfunded needs in terms of road widenings and new alignments, intersection improvements, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, public transit and policies / programmatic actions. Mr. Hooper emphasized the importance of policy and programmatic actions in terms of the overall planning process and impacts to transportation system efficiency. As a point of reference, these include recommendations noted in the RFATS Collector Street Plan, Access Management Control Procedures, Commercial Property Connections, Driveway Consolidation & Closures, and Regional TIA Procedures. Mr. Hooper then summarized Transportation Performance Management requirements that must be reflected in the LRTP. Mr. Hooper then briefly reviewed Act 114 project ranking and its applicability to the programming of Guidesshare funded projects.

Mr. Hooper briefly reviewed the existing cost constrained project list which includes: the SC 160 / I-77 Interchange Reconfiguration; Celanese / Cherry Road / I-77 Interchange Reconfiguration; Cel-River Road Widening (Phase II); SC 160 Widening (Phase II); and an Exit 77 Interchange Upgrade. As a point of reference, Mr. Hooper also highlighted the Panthers development and the roadway improvements associated with this development which include the new interchange at Exit 81 and connecting infrastructure to Paragon Way and Mt Gallant Road. Mr. Hooper noted that while RFATS funding is not reflected in these projects, this is a development of regional significance and therefore should constitute a priority focus point of the 2050 LRTP.

Mr. Hooper then transitioned to briefly summarize the current financial outlook and expected funding availability over the 2050 LRTP planning period. Specifically, Mr. Hooper noted the project estimates in “year of expenditure” or YOY dollars for the key transportation improvements included in the cost constrained section of the plan:

- Exit 82 / I-77 Interchange Reconfiguration – Current Cost Estimate: \$79.5M
- Exit 77 Interchange Reconfiguration – Current Cost Estimate: \$6.1M
- SC 160 East Road Widening -- Current Cost Estimate: \$33.8M
- Exit 85 Interchange Reconfiguration – Current Cost Estimate: \$27.1M

Mr. Hooper then outlined a few contingency elements contained in the funding projections through 2050; in particular, that while approximately \$32.8 is currently classified as unprogrammed, it is important to note that this funding is not currently available but will accumulate over time. Additionally, Mr. Hooper noted that with three active interchange projects expected over the next 6 to 8 years, it would not be unexpected that one or more may need supplemental funding during this period – therefore, it is prudent to maintain a reasonable unprogrammed budgetary component during this time. As a point of reference, it was also noted that the funding currently programmed on Cel-River Road (Phase II) should be viewed in the same manner until the final interchange configuration is selected at the Celanese / I-77 location.

With this in mind, Mr. Hooper then transitioned to the Policy Committee’s prior discussions about strengthening the bicycle / pedestrian network in an effort to increase safety, network connectivity, and overall transportation system efficiency. As such, Mr. Hooper recommended that the Policy Committee consider incorporating a specific budgetary commitment of \$10M to undertaking bicycle / pedestrian projects in the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan – utilizing a small portion of the unprogrammed balance noted earlier. Discuss then followed with Ms. Savage stating her support for allocating Guideshare funding for these types of multimodal improvements as well as transit oriented improvements. Mr. Gettys stated that he believes it is important to support bicycle / pedestrian improvements as well as emphasized the need for specific jurisdictional coordination to advance our rapid transit planning efforts.

Mr. Hooper then requested preliminary approval of the draft 2050 LRTP Update and authorization to initiate a 30 day public comment period. Mr. Hooper added that a public hearing will be scheduled prior to the next meeting on April 23rd from 10:00am to 11:30am. Ms. Pender then made a motion to approve the draft 2050 LRTP with the allocation of \$10M in Guideshare funding through 2050 for bicycle and pedestrian projects; as well as authorize a 30-day public comment period and public hearing. Mr. Carnes seconded and this motion was unanimously approved.

b. FY 21-23 UPWP – Mr. Hooper briefly summarized principal work activities outlined in the FY 21-23 UPWP, as well as ongoing administration of grant programs and support of the regional travel demand model. Mr. Hooper then requested preliminary approval of the Draft UPWP and initiation of a 30-day public comment period. Mr. Gettys then made a motion for approval; seconded by Ms. Pender and the motion was unanimously approved.

c. Coronavirus Relief & Recovery Act Funding – Mr. Hooper noted that RFATS is slated to receive \$613,000 in Coronavirus Relief & Recovery Act Funding. Mr. Hooper stated that guidance from SCDOT has been received which recommended allocating this funding toward existing debt service and existing project priorities. Mr. Hooper highlighted that SCDOT has recommended the application of \$360,000 to retire remaining debt from the 27 & 7 Program; and to allocate the remaining \$253,000 to support the US 521 / Marvin Road Intersection Improvement Project. Mr. Gettys then asked if there was potential for additional funding to be designated to RFATS? Mr. Hooper noted that no such guidance has been provided by our federal or state partners at present, though a subsequent funding announcement would not be entirely unexpected in the emerging COVID-19 planning environment. As a point of reference, Mr. Hooper added that independent of COVID-19; financial adjustments following incorporation of 2020 Census data is envisioned, though no guidance is available at this time. Mr. Carnes then made a motion for approval; seconded by Ms. Pender and the motion was unanimously approved.

d. Title VI Plan – Mr. Herrmann briefly summarized the update to the Title VI Plan; highlighting recommended changes. Mr. Herrmann then requested that the Policy Committee grant preliminary approval and authorize a 21-day public comment period. Ms. Savage then made a motion for approval; seconded by Ms. Pender and the motion was unanimously approved.

5. OTHER BUSINESS:

a. Next Meeting – Mr. O’Neal noted that the next Policy Committee meeting is scheduled for April 23, 2021.

6. ADJOURNMENT:

The motion to adjourn was made by Mr. O’Neal and seconded by Mr. Hamilton; the motion was unanimously approved and the meeting was adjourned at 1:31 P.M.