



**POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING
SUMMARY MINUTES
January 25, 2013 - 12:00 p.m. (NOON)
Manchester Meadows Conference Room**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Britt Blackwell; Doug Echols; Danny Funderburk; Wes Hayes; Michael Johnson; Kathy Pender; George Sheppard

ADMINISTRATIVE/TECHNICAL/MANAGEMENT STAFF PRESENT:
Steve Allen (York County); Jimmy Bagley (Rock Hill); Susan Britt (Tega Cay); Chuck Chorak (Rock Hill); Joe Cronin (Fort Mill); Vic Edwards (SCDOT); Cliff Goolsby (SCDOT); Phil Leazer (York County); Allison Love (York County); David Vebaun (Rock Hill)

CITIZENS/VISITORS PRESENT: Jonathan Guy (Kimley-Horn); Frank Myers (CAC); Scot Sibert (STV, Inc.)

1. CALL TO ORDER:

- a. **Welcome** – Chairman Sheppard called the meeting to order at 12:08 P.M.
- b. **Citizen Comment Period** – Chairman Sheppard invited citizens to address the Policy Committee. There were no comments.

2. REVIEW/APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chairman Sheppard asked for any changes, deletions, or comments to the minutes of the November 16, 2012 meeting. Hearing no comments, Mr. Blackwell made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Echols seconded and the minutes were unanimously approved.

3. UPDATES ON CURRENT PROJECTS:

- a. **York County Local Option Sales Tax Program** – Mr. Leazer provided the Policy Committee with the following summary information:
 - SCDOT and York County entered into an agreement to complete the \$12.1 million SC 121 / Albright Road project. Construction began May 2012 and completion is expected by November 2013.
 - Highway 324 / Cameron / Gordon Road intersection roundabout construction began May 2012. The \$2.1 million project is expected to be complete in May 2013.
 - Mt. Gallant Road (Anderson and Celanese Road) has faced several utility issues and serious soil problems. The \$10.4 million project began construction in June 2010 and is expected to be completed by April 2013.
 - McConnells Highway (Heckle Blvd to Fall Road) is being widened to three lanes. Right-of-way acquisition is 75% complete and final plans are ready for review. The project will be ready to bid construction by Spring 2013.
 - Tega Cay / Gold Hill Connector had Geotech exploration begin in October 2012. There is a public meeting scheduled for February 28, 2013. Construction may begin in May 2014.

- Mt. Gallant Road (Anderson Road and Dave Lyle Blvd) is awaiting two construction bids.
- Fort Mill Southern Bypass (Phase I) is under construction and is expected to be complete in December 2013. Phase II bids open in February 2013. Construction is expected to begin in Spring 2013 and is estimated to be complete in 2014. It is a \$53.1 million project.
- US 21 / SC 51 project design is underway and Geotech exploration has begun. There will be a public meeting in Spring 2013.
- Gold Hill Road / I-77 interchange project had a public meeting on January 15, 2013. There were no negative comments; and indeed, 99% of the comments received were in favor of a Double Crossover Diamond interchange. It will be the first in South Carolina.

b. SCDOT Report – In Mr. Klauk’s absence, Mr. Hooper summarized the SCDOT Quarterly Report. Specifically, Mr. Hooper noted that the US 21 bridge widening is complete and that the demolition of the old bridge is also complete. Mr. Hooper then noted that lighting, curb / gutter, and sidewalk work are now in the construction phase. The project is expected to be complete in Spring 2013. Mr. Hooper then noted that the SC 5 Bridge project is 80% complete, and the overflow bridge 100% complete. Full project completion is expected in Summer 2013. Lastly, it was noted that the Springhill Farm Road Project has completed utility relocation and construction is expected to begin in a few weeks.

4. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS:

a. New Urbanized Area Boundaries / Review of Current Bylaws – Mr. Hooper briefly summarized the primary discussion points from the January meeting. Mr. Hooper then confirmed that a presentation was made to the Lancaster County Council on Monday, January 14th regarding the new urbanized area designations – which involves the expansion of the Charlotte Urbanized Area into the panhandle. With this in mind, Mr. Hooper then confirmed that the Lancaster County Council voted unanimously expressing their interest in becoming a member of RFATS.

Mr. Sheppard then stated that he had contacted Mr. Cook (i.e., a suggestion from SCDOT staff at the January meeting), regarding the discussion about potentially shifting the status of the DOT Commissioner from voting to non-voting – and whether such an action would affect his attendance at Policy Committee meetings. Mr. Sheppard noted that Mr. Cook indicated that he would be less likely to regularly attend meetings if the seat was advisory in nature. That said, Mr. Sheppard also noted that his response was not bitter or unkind in any way.

Mr. Echols briefly revisited some of the points of discussion regarding representation and population percentages among members of the Policy Committee. Mr. Echols then transitioned into a discussion about the status and role of the SCDOT Commissioner. Mr. Hooper briefly summarized regional practices in this regard. Mr. Blackwell then expressed his thoughts about the coordination and planning challenges that local jurisdictions do have with SCDOT; and that, any action that could be taken to strengthen constructive interaction with SCDOT could certainly be beneficial.

Mr. Hayes then indicated that he thought that the SCDOT Commissioner was more likely to take notice of things in York County with voting status. That said, Mr. Hayes then moved into a discussion about the Catawba Indian Nation and shared his concerns about their voting status as the only federally recognized indian nation in the state; and that, the Policy Committee should take such a distinction into consideration. Mr. Hayes also noted the longer

term importance of the Catawba Indian Nation in regionally significant project planning in the years to come.

With regard to the size of the Policy Committee, Mr. Funderburk stated that he would like to keep the number of voting members at 11. Chairman Sheppard agreed with maintaining an 11 member board, and noted that this should reflect the addition of one seat for Lancaster County. Chairman Sheppard also noted that he thought that the Catawba Indian Nation would be a constructive partner in securing federal funding.

Mr. Echols said adding one seat would not be problematic and that it is certainly better to be inclusive. Mr. Hooper then confirmed that the Policy Committee is looking to maintain the current voting distribution with the potential of shifting the SCDOT Commissioner's vote to Lancaster County – and that there would be a little more discussion regarding the voting status of the Catawba Indian Nation at the February meeting. Chairman Sheppard asked if there was any more discussion at this point. Hearing none, he said that the Committee will finalize their discussion and vote at the February meeting.

Mr. Hooper then briefly reviewed the primary points of discussion from the Study Team members regarding the current bylaws; specifically, the terms of the Chair and Vice Chair; submission of proxies; and the process for amending the bylaws. Mr. Hooper then transitioned into a review of each item. Discussion then followed with an understanding that these changes and other appropriate updates will be presented for a final review and vote at the February meeting.

b. Long Range Transportation Plan Update – Mr. Hooper briefly reviewed the primary purpose of the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the schedule for its periodic updating. Mr. Hooper then summarized RFATS' current allocation of Guideshare funding and then presented an updated version reflecting two of the more notable changes initiated by SCDOT during the last year; specifically, the 7% annual reduction in Guideshare funds and the new 20% road resurfacing requirement.

With these changes, Mr. Hooper noted that most of RFATS' unobligated funds have been reduced leaving just under \$74 million available for programming at this time. Lastly, Mr. Hooper did note that SCDOT is still actively considering whether some level of flexibility will be available in satisfying the new 20% requirement; and that, this may return some measure of funding for particular project categories such as intersection improvement projects.

Mr. Hooper then reviewed the initial model data on the draft project list and invited Mr. Guy to specifically summarize the potential incorporation of a new East-West Connector into the transportation network. Mr. Guy presented the Level of Service (LOS) projections for the road system in horizon year 2035 without the East-West Connector and then with three alternatives as follows:

1. **Alternative #1** – A new bridge connection from the Mt. Gallant / India Hook area northeast over the river to the Grey Rock road area, transitioning to a new roadway between SC 160 / Gold Hill Road and then connecting to I-77 through a new interchange at Coltharp Road.
2. **Alternative #2** – A new roadway between SC 160 / Gold Hill Road and a new interchange at Coltharp Road – this option does not include a new bridge crossing.

3. **Alternative #3** – A new bridge crossing and a new roadway between SC 160 / Gold Hill Road that does not include a new interchange at Coltharp Road.

Mr. Guy then reviewed all three options, noting the respective benefits and drawbacks of each approach. Specifically, Mr. Guy noted that all three alternatives reduce traffic volume at Gold Hill Road and SC 160, but do increase traffic on SC 160 north of the proposed East-West Connector. Additionally, it was noted that both Alternatives #1 & #3 (i.e., the options that include a new bridge crossing), will increase traffic on Mt Gallant Road by approximately 6,000 to 8,000 vehicles per day. Lastly, it was noted that Alternative #2 (i.e., the option that include a new interchange at Coltharp Road) increases traffic congestion on I-77.

In summary, Mr. Guy noted that Alternative #1 (which includes a new bridge crossing, new roadway between SC 160 / Gold Hill Road and a new interchange at Coltharp Road), has the greatest beneficial impact to the transportation network with a reduction of roughly 11,000 vehicles per day on Celanese Road and a reduction of approximately 5,000 to 7,000 vehicles per day on I-77 between Celanese Road and a new interchange at Coltharp Road. Lastly, Mr. Guy stated that Alternative #2 (i.e., the option with a new roadway and interchange at Coltharp Road, but without a new bridge crossing), is the least beneficial.

Mr. Hayes then asked if there were cost projections for each of the alternatives. Mr. Hooper stated that there were no specific numbers at this time as the potential project is undergoing its initial review and is very much conceptual in nature, but did note that a basic cost estimate will be available at the February meeting. Ms. Pender then asked if all three alternatives were different from the past proposal exploring a new bridge across the Catawba River. In response, Mr. Chorak noted that this proposal is different in two material respects: (1) the potential bridge alignment is located north of Harris Road; and (2) it includes a new roadway between SC 160 & Gold Hill Road as well as a new interchange at Coltharp Road – essentially, it is a much larger project.

Notwithstanding the specifics of this project, Mr. Hayes then asked a broader question of why expensive project alternatives – that are beyond the funding capacity of RFATS – are being discussed if the available resources are not present to undertake them. Mr. Echols agreed with this observation, and then asked staff to identify a short list of approximately 2 to 4 projects that could be undertaken at different problem points within the transportation network, noting the importance of Celanese Road interchange area and the SC 160 area west of I-77.

As a point of reference, Ms. Pender noted that the Pennies for Progress Program used to be utilized for smaller scale projects and Guidesshare funding was dedicated for addressing network deficiencies; and that this focus should be maintained so that the Policy Committee continues to direct its resources to those projects that will have the most productive impact to the regional transportation network.

In terms of addressing network needs, Dr. Blackwell then asked a clarifying question regarding the Dave Lyle Boulevard Extension project; in particular, would it have a favorable effect on the primary pressure points in the network. In response, Mr. Chorak explained that although the Dave Lyle Boulevard project is beneficial, it does have lower impacts than the other projects being discussed. Looking out a little further, Mr. Chorak did state his belief that another bridge crossing over the Catawba River would be needed at some point. In summary, Mr. Hooper noted that staff will present an identified list of network priorities with

cost estimates at the February meeting. Chairman Sheppard asked if there were any more questions. There were no further comments.

5. PROPOSED POLICY COMMITTEE ACTION ITEMS:

a. TIP Amendment – Ms. Love provided background information on the Sutton Road Sidewalk Project. Specifically, Ms. Love noted that work on the project has uncovered several obstacles, including tree and shrub removal, fence relocation, blasting of rock, and the need for additional crosswalk markings. As a point of reference, Ms. Love noted that the York County Council added \$60,000 in funds to the project and the Sutton Place HOA has added \$5,000. Ms. Love then requested that the Policy Committee consider programming an additional \$20,000 in 2012-2013 TEP funds. Chairman Sheppard asked for a motion. Mr. Hayes made a motion to amend the TIP to reflect \$20,000 in additional funding to the Sutton Road Sidewalk Project. Ms. Pender seconded and the TIP amendment was unanimously approved.

b. CMAQ Program – Mr. Hooper stated that the Study Team would like the Policy Committee to consider an alternative approach to the traditional call for projects in FY 2013-14, given the number of existing projects as well as the recent funding change announced by SCDOT with the implementation of MAP-21. Mr. Hooper then briefly reviewed the specifics of the funding change – that the 100% federal funding option is no longer available, even for existing projects that were previously funded on that basis. With this change, there are approximately 10 projects that now have a local match funding shortfall that needs to be addressed. Mr. Hooper then noted that a possible solution has been identified and communicated to SCDOT – and that they are considering its applicability.

Concurrently with this development, Mr. Hooper noted that a funding shortfall has emerged on one of RFATS' other top priority CMAQ projects – the SC 160 / Gold Hill Road Intersection Improvement Project. Specifically, Mr. Hooper noted that right-of-way costs as well as other project scope additions have raised the total cost of the project appreciably. Mr. Hooper then summarized the amount of area planning activity (i.e., planned diverging diamond at the Gold Hill Road / I-77 interchange; planned widening of SC 160 up to the Stateline; a continuous left turn lane up to Zoar Road and the incorporation of dual left turning capacity at the intersection itself) – in short, Mr. Hooper stated that there is a lot of activity in the area and that this project does have a very strong basis and does need to continue towards completion.

Lastly, Mr. Hooper noted that unlike other projects where a local funding match is problematic, planned Pennies work in the area is eligible to be used as a local matching source; and therefore, this project would be able to proceed if these additional funds were applied to the project. Mr. Hayes then noted that the Gold Hill / SC 160 intersection is the worst in York County and that this is a good recommendation. Chairman Sheppard asked for a motion. Mr. Hayes made a motion to amend the TIP to add funding in the amount of \$3,665,220 to the Gold Hill Road / SC 160 Intersection Improvement project. Mr. Echols seconded and the TIP amendment was unanimously approved.

c. Citizens Advisory Committee Reappointments – Mr. Long briefly described the role of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and presented a request to re-appoint the following four members whose terms expire on January 31, 2013: (1) Luther Dasher – York County; (2) Lynn Campbell – City of Rock Hill; (3) Jim VanBlarcom – City of Tega Cay; and (4) Frank Myers – Member-at-Large. Both the members and respective jurisdictions have been

contacted and confirmed a continued willingness to serve. Members will serve a three year term effective February 2013 through January 2016. Chairman Sheppard asked for a motion. Mr. Echols made a motion to reappoint all four members to the CAC. Mr. Funderburk seconded and the reappointments were unanimously approved.

d. Election of 2013 Officers – Mr. Hooper noted that according to the Policy Committee Officer rotation, Mr. Echols will be up for consideration as Chairman, and Dr. Blackwell as Vice-Chairman. Chairman Sheppard asked for a motion. Ms. Pender made a motion to elect Mr. Echols as Chairman and Dr. Blackwell as Vice-Chairman. Chairman Sheppard seconded and the election was unanimously approved.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

a. Administrative Report – Chairman Sheppard asked for any comments regarding the Administrative Report. Mr. Hooper then called attention to a recent denial letter issued by EPA regarding York County's reconsideration request with respect to the 2008 ozone standard – given that there are no monitors in violation. Mr. Hooper essentially noted that EPA continues to apply the rationale, that given the number of vehicles traveling northbound on I-77 each day – that York County is to some extent a contributing factor to Charlotte's deficient air quality.

Mr. Hooper then noted that area concerns about whether the impact of northbound traffic sufficiently rises to the level to warrant a formal non-attainment designation are still present. With this in mind, DHEC is expected to continue to explore further options with concerned stakeholders in the coming months. Mr. Echols then asked if there were any specific adverse impacts of having the non-attainment designation. Mr. Hooper stated that the non-attainment designation does require that RFATS undergo air quality testing – and that this process does influence the project selection, implementation schedule, and decision-making process as we plan for our future transportation needs.

Additionally, Mr. Hooper noted that the non-attainment designation is a factor that businesses certainly take into account when they consider potential relocation to the area – so that although we've adjusted to making things as manageable as possible – it nonetheless does influence the overall metropolitan transportation planning process. Lastly, Mr. Hooper did note that a favorable decision on our non-attainment designation would not eliminate the availability of CMAQ funding as former non-attainment areas are required to transition into a maintenance area designation; and with this designation, CMAQ funding would continue to be available, albeit at a modified level.

b. Next Regular Meeting – Chairman Sheppard announced that the next regular meeting will be February 22, 2013 in the Manchester Meadows Conference Room.

6. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:45 P.M.