

FLATS POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING
March 3, 2008
APPROVED MINUTES

Voting Members Present:

Senator Hugh Leatherman
Mayor Frank Willis
Councilman Billy D. Williams
Councilman Morris Anderson
Representative Kris Crawford

Non-Voting Members Present:

David Williams
William Hoge
Dennis Townsend
Glynn Willis
Janice Baroody

Study Team Members Present:

Michelle James, SCDOT
Tony Edwards, SCDOT
Chris Gossett, SCDOT
Derrell Rice, SCDOT
David Burgess, SCDOT
Michael Bethea, SCDOT
Shane Belcher, FHWA (For Bob Lee (Non-Voting Member))

Staff Present:

Scott Park
Debi Matthews
Renee Proctor

Senator Leatherman called the meeting to order. He introduced Sherwin Welch, Chairman of the County Transportation Committee, and invited him to sit on the podium with the other members.

The first item of old business was to approve the minutes from the June 14, 2007 meeting. Councilman Anderson made 1st motion and Mayor Willis made 2nd motion to approve. Carried unanimously.

William Hoge introduced Scott Park, our new Planning Services Officer. Scott comes to us from Clemson Extension where he has been for about a year now along with his spouse. Previous to that he comes to us from Broward County, Florida where he worked in the environmental business and county government for seven years. It's great to have him here and he's off to a great start.

Scott Park presented the 1st item of old business as noted from the June 14, 2007 minutes. This item is in regards to beautifying some of our interchanges with I-95, I-20 and Highway 52. Scott called the committee's attention to the maps, showing a mixture of jurisdictions of city and county. The first map discussed was the interchange on the North side, I-95 and US52. The area likely to be focused on for beautification is mostly county jurisdiction. The second map is the interchange of I-20 and I-95. The area likely to be focused on for beautification contains a little city jurisdiction overlap and the rest county. The overlay color shown on the map is the city boundary to give you an idea of whose jurisdiction is where. There is an Adopt An Interchange Program of Federal dollars of \$250,000 with a required match of 20% from the municipality or county that would be matching the funds or taking on the project. The match could also be in-kind services. In some cases, we could partner with the city and he has talked to some of the city staff and they would be willing to look at some partnerships potentially.

Senator Leatherman asked Mr. Park if the Feds had committed the \$250,000 if we do the match. Mr. Park advised that it was a competitive process. Senator Leatherman asked if an application had been submitted. Mr. Park said no that at this time we are just brainstorming the procedure. Senator Leatherman asked who would submit the application? Mr. Park indicated that it could be either the city or county depending on who would take up the grant. Ideally it would probably be a partnership between the two. Senator Leatherman asked if the I-95 and US52 was city or county. Mr. Park indicated that it is mostly county at this interchange.

Councilman Williams said he thought the committee had been discussing the beautification from Dargan Street to 52. He was not aware that we were discussing the area just at I-95 interchange. He thought they were looking at starting at the stop light below the bridge at McLeod Hospital down 52 interchange.

Senator Leatherman advised Councilman Williams that he thought Federal dollars would only be available in conjunction with interstate improvements and not down in the area Councilman Williams was discussing. Senator Leatherman asked Mr. Park if this was correct. Mr. Park indicated that would be correct for the Adopt An Interchange Program. Mr. Hoge advised the committee that if there were FLATS money available, they could be used to improve that corridor because that is part of the FLATS urbanized area. The only other thing that could be used along there would be some of our enhancement funds, which is a limited amount of funds. This year the amount is a little less than \$120,000, which is normally our yearly amount for enhancement funds and that is typically for sidewalks, multi-modal transportation, historic renovation and things like that. Councilman Williams said it had been a discussion for years to try to make that area look like David McLeod Boulevard. The next thing they are in the process of looking at is the new Tennis Complex on the old Clemson property. It is going to turn into a maker for traffic coming into the city on that side and I'd hate to see the city end not do anything to make a correction out there, since we are a city of character, isn't that correct, Mayor. Mayor Willis concurred. Councilman Williams said he thought all of us had some interest in this. Councilman Williams mentioned the area on the backside of the airport that has been enhanced changed the whole look of everything over there. Senator Leatherman asked the committee if they wanted to ask DOT to work with the two staffs, whether it be county or city to see what might could be done and what funds would be available to do some things. What would be the will of the committee? Mayor Willis indicated that he would ask Senator Leatherman to make that into a formal motion. Councilman Williams made second motion. Vote carried unanimously. Senator Leatherman asked DOT and staff of city and county to work together to see what they could come up with and report back to the committee at the next meeting.

Representative Crawford asked that since we discussed there is a separate pool of federal money just for the interchange and the journey of how ever far down West Lucas Street we going to have to start with a step, can we entertain the idea separately as a body asking they proceed to decide which municipality or county wants to take the lead on that project for those federal matching funds, not involving DOT but just locally here go get that federal money. Senator Leatherman agreed that he would urge that we do that. Representative Crawford asked to make that a formal motion. Councilman Anderson made second motion. Vote carried unanimously. Senator Leatherman asked staff to proceed with application to see what they could come up with.

The next item of old business is the Darlington Street Extension. Mr. Park updated committee on where this project is on funding in the Long Range Plan. It is currently included in the LRP on the financial sheet under Innovative Financing Projects. Senator Leatherman asked for clarification on the (Hoffmeyer to Beltline). Mr. Park advised the committee that it should read (Hoffmeyer to Cashua). Mr. Hoge advised that Darlington Street is currently five lanes through town up to Cashua, then it goes down to two lanes and then to Hoffmeyer. The proposal was to extend the four lane section all the way to Hoffmeyer. Councilman Anderson indicated this project would relieve a great deal of traffic that has to turn left to get on West Evans to get out. Mayor Willis asked if this project occurs, would there be a traffic signal at Hoffmeyer. If we do not have a traffic signal here, we do not need to four lane this section. Michael Bethea with SCDOT advised committee that a traffic signal has been approved at that location. They are getting ready to install it. Senator Leatherman asked if the time frame depended on when we could furnish the money. Mr. Hoge said we are not exactly in the black in regards to FLATS, so it will be a couple of years down the road before we do anything else.

The first item of new business was an update from SCDOT on current and recently completed projects as well as the financial portion. Michelle James with SCDOT presented. She introduced two new additions to their department. Tony Edwards is a new assistant and Chris Gossett is replacing Randall Young as their new Program Manager. The three of them are fully staffed handling Pee Dee COG and FLATS. Ms. James indicated that the 301 By Pass is completed. It was open to traffic on November 29th so they had they ribbon cutting and all is well with it. They have signed the contract for Phase I on Pine Needles on February 11th (which is foundation work for the bridge). For Phase II they are undergoing right of way acquisition and scheduled to go to letting in July. Phase II is the completion of the bridge and all of the remaining road work so all is well with that project. FLATS had some PE money in that. Mayor Willis asked if the bridge and the road work would be one contract. Ms. James said it would be two contracts. Mayor Willis asked about the rest of the bridge? Ms. James said that would be under Phase II as a second

contract. Ms. James indicated that the superstructure for the completion for the bridge is under two separate contracts. The beginning foundation work along I-95 and placement of some beams is under Phase I. The completion of the bridge and the remaining road work for the entire project is under Phase II. Councilman Anderson asked if the present bridge will have to be raised and how will that be done. Ms. James said it would under Phase I and would probably be when they place the substructure and the beams, that will be taken into account then and of course the grade will be raised under that second contract along the roadway. Councilman Anderson asked when that would take place. Ms. James said they are looking to let Phase II in July. Councilman Anderson asked about the widening of Pine Needles Road. Ms. James said that was part of Phase II. Ms. James said normally it takes about two or three months for construction to begin once they let it, so October time frame to begin construction and they usually allow a year for construction. That is part of the reason why we put it in two different contracts to speed it along.

Dennis Townsend stated that a year is a little bit optimistic. It's probably going to take a little over a year to complete. Mr. Townsend addressed Mayor Willis' question, the deck part of the superstructure will be let when the road lets. Michelle James commented for the record for Pine Needles Phase II, they are allowing a year for construction, but in the schedule it is actually showing two years. There were no further comments on this item.

The next update from SCDOT was the financial status. Ms. James said they are anticipating some savings on the 301 By Pass project. They are still trying to get the final construction cost locked down. Once they do, they will be able to determine how that will affect the overall FLATS program. There could be as much as \$900,000 to work with in 2010 and 2011 for preliminary engineering work. They would recommend the committee thinking of projects that may be a good candidate for funding for preliminary engineering work. Mayor Willis said this could be the Darlington Street widening money. Senator Leatherman said either that or South Cashua that they have already approved. Ms. James said that they have \$200,000 remaining for S. Cashua, but the issue with it is there is so many impacts SCDOT was looking to the committee to determine if that was something that you wanted to move forward with based on the high level of impact. Senator Leatherman asked when SCDOT would bring that back to FLATS? Ms. James asked Mr. Hoge if this was something they would bring before the Study Team? Mr. Hoge said we would look at the final balance sheet on the 301 By Pass so we'll know exactly what money we have to work with. What Ms. James has not shown you is other than that other \$900,000 that may be available to use, FLATS currently has no money by virtue of the bonding program and the payments on the bonding program. We have no money for the next two years and in 2010 we start to accumulate a small amount then we can start an engineering program. We'll mention in just a minute that the Long Range Plan has to be updated in 2010. We'll probably wait until after we get the money then we'll see what we might do in the LRP. The principal projects right now in the LRP revolve around Radio Drive. That's where principal constraint of the LRP puts our money right now. S. Cashua Dr., and Darlington are listed under Innovating Financing, which essentially means if we find a new pool of money, those are things we'd like to be able to do. What we will do is look at the money that's banked, come back to you on how we would like to modify the LRP for priorities and start spending some money. But really we are in a position right now for the next couple of years to do some good planning and maybe some PE work.

Senator Leatherman asked Mr. Hoge to confirm that his explanation had no impact on the one cent sales tax projects. Mr. Hoge confirmed that was correct. He was only talking about the Federal Guideshares money that comes to us as a Metropolitan Planning Organization and through the LRP. It only deals with the urbanized area which is the City of Florence, a section of Florence County and the Town of Quinby. Mr. Hoge explained that we are in the position now that we bonded money to get a couple of projects done and we're paying for that. It does not affect enhancement moneys, the Adopt An Interchange program, the one cent initiative throughout the county, nor does it affect the COG and how they spend the allocation of federal guideshares that they get for the county either for road projects or enhancements.

Mr. Hoge further explained that about 12 years ago, a decision was made that rather than going through saving up a little pile of money every year, the State DOT made bonding available if agreed to pay for that over a period of time. It was to do 24 years worth of projects in seven years. This community as most others did elected to take that bonding and projects like 301 are paid for and done. Mr. Hoge said the way we pay for the bonding program is that up through this year we pay our full guideshare. After this year we

start paying half of our guideshare, so about 1.2 million is our payment for the bond and we start collecting about 1.2 million. The LRP is fiscally constrained. You cannot put any more in the LRP than you can project money to pay. There were no further questions from the committee in regards to this item.

The next item on the agenda was for staff to advise the committee that the Long Range Plan was last updated in June of 2006 and we have to update it again by 2010 if there are any changes. Mr. Hoge explained that the LRP is our plan to spend money out through 2030. We cannot do a project if it is not in the LRP, therefore, we need to continuously look at it and while we may not have to update it until 2010, whatever money we may get, what decision you make then we'll have to change the LRP and in step with that our TIP to make sure that we spend the money accurately and properly.

Mayor Willis asked what was the likelihood that our Federal guideshare money would be cut. Are we getting this year what we got last year or are we getting more? Mr. Hoge said our guideshares only change about once every ten years with census. The money initially goes to the state and they decide how it is allocated to the MPO's. He anticipates that the MPO's will continue to be funded as now. The only change being the 2010 census. Money is divided up by percentage of population. Florence and Sumter are the smallest MPO's. These two counties get the smallest amount. There were no further comments on this item.

The next item on the agenda is the amendments needed for the TIP. Staff reported that from last year SCDOT has consolidated the Mass Transit and PL funding which is strictly a housekeeping issue for staff and our communication with the state as how staff gets funded. No action is necessary.

The next item on the agenda under the TIP amendment that requires action is to remove FTA Section 5311 PD Regional Transportation Authority item from the TIP. This is strictly because it is more rural in nature and does not affect FLATS. Senator Leatherman asked how this would affect the PDRTA. Janice Baroody advised it would not affect them. The FTA 5307 is for the urban area for PDRTA and that will remain in the TIP. Representative Crawford made 1st motion and Councilman Anderson made 2nd motion to approve. Carried unanimously.

The next item on the agenda under the TIP amendment that requires action is to add a \$30K item for the Florence Senior Citizens Association under our Federal Transit. Senator Leatherman asked where this money came from? David Burgess with SCDOT advised committee that this is a Federal program under FTA 5310 to provide transportation for persons with disabilities and senior citizens. The money comes from the Federal Transit System, it is a federal grant. Mr. Hoge explained that this has to be listed in our TIP before it can be allocated for the FLATS area from SCDOT. Representative Crawford made 1st motion to approve and Mayor Willis made 2nd. Carried unanimously. No further discussion on this item.

The next item on the agenda for the TIP, which does not require any action by the committee, is to revise the TIP regarding the funding differences between the let amount and the actual amount for the 301 By Pass. Mr. Hoge advised we know it is going to change, but we do not want to do it until we get the actual number from SCDOT. No further discussion on this item.

The next item is to advise committee that all changes and amendments made in the TIP will go the state to be incorporated in their STIP. No action is necessary. No further discussion on this item.

The final item on the agenda is the Red Doe Plantation application for enhancement funds. Staff discussed briefly the request from Pee Dee Rifle Club, Inc. for Phase I renovation on this structure, a brief history of Red Doe, it's location and that Pee Dee Rifle Club will match with in-kind services. Staff advised committee that the funds are the annual allocation of enhancement funds that FLATS receives. Each year FLATS receives just under \$120,000. Mr. Hoge advised that the Study Team has reviewed this project and recommended to committee. This project does meet the SCDOT requirement since it is a Historic transportation corridor. There are about 10 category requirements by SCDOT for enhancement funds. Councilman Williams asked staff to provide a list of these categories to committee. Mr. Hoge advised that the City has used some enhancement funding for the recent trails.

Sandy Kendall with Pee Dee Rifle Club explained to the committee the background on the formation of Pee Dee Rifle Club and the reason for their request to preserve this structure. Councilman Anderson made 1st motion to approve and Mayor Willis made 2nd motion. Carried unanimously. No further discussion on this.

Public comment:

Peggy Brown spoke on the need for pedestrians on the main corridors coming into the city. Coming in from the airport on 52 she has seen people in motorized wheelchairs on the highway. People on Highway 76 are walking and pushing baby carriages in the median. She feels non-vehicle traffic or people who have no means of transportation except walking or bicycling, needs to be an important part of our transportation planning. On the roads that are widened for a bicycle lane, the speed limit needs to be lowered and the portion for bicycles and pedestrian needs to be marked so everyone will know where their place is. She also mentioned sidewalks installed that dip down at entrances to homes, the people in wheel chairs are not safe.

Agnes Wilcox thanked the committee for their support of Red Doe Plantation.

Murray Jordan concurred with Ms. Wilcox for the support on Red Doe. Mr. Jordan also concurred with Mrs. Brown's comments. He discussed possibly a grass median instead of a sidewalk for pedestrians. He thinks Lucas Street and East 76 are a candidate for this since the median is wider.

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.