

**FLATS POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**July 1, 2008**  
**APPROVED MINUTES**

---

**Voting Members Present:**

Senator Hugh Leatherman  
Councilman Billy D. Williams  
Councilman Morris Anderson  
Commissioner Marvin Stevenson  
Sherwin Welch

**Non-Voting Members Present:**

William Hoge  
Janice Baroody  
Richard Starks

**Study Team Members Present:**

Michelle James, SCDOT  
Tony Edwards, SCDOT  
Derrell Rice, SCDOT  
Kevin Sheppard, SCDOT  
David Burgess, SCDOT  
Michael Bethea, SCDOT  
Brenda Perryman, SCDOT  
Doug Frate, SCDOT  
Shane Belcher, FHWA

**Staff Present:**

Scott Park  
Debi Matthews  
Renee Proctor

---

Senator Leatherman called the meeting to order.

The first item of old business was to approve the minutes from the March 3, 2008 meeting. A motion and 2<sup>nd</sup> was made to adopt. Carried unanimously.

The next item of old business were updates from SCDOT. Michelle James with SCDOT presented all updates:

- N. Ebenezer Road: Project LET in March. Just completed the clearing and grubbing. Estimated completion is this fall. Project consist of a realignment of two 90 degree curves. This is a safety project.
- South Cashua: Have done the preliminary design, based on a five lane curb and gutter with bike lane. There are approximately 10 each residential and commercial R/O/W impacts. They have a concern that for a 2.7 mile stretch, is this something FLATS wants to pursue further or does FLATS want to put the PE money towards something else. Mr. Hoge explained that impacts means we will have to buy the 10 residential and commercial buildings. Multi-million dollars just for R/O/W impacts. More expense in the R/O/W portion than the actual road project. Ms. James also mentioned we are also up against the issue of a cemetery. SCDOT would never impact a cemetery. Senator Leatherman asked if SCDOT could come up with another plan to improve that traffic and report back to them? Ms. James said they would. Mr. Hoge mentioned that one issue that creates a traffic problem in the three lane section is the multiple turning at any location. Control with traffic control devices. Councilman Williams also mentioned the problem at the corner of Jefferson and Cashua. Extremely difficult and dangerous to turn left off of Jefferson on the Cashua.
- Financials: The balance FLATS is projected to have in 2012 is 3.4 million. The 301 Bypass project is complete and they anticipate about 1 million in savings from it available to spend in FY09. Senator Leatherman asked if the 1 million would be in addition to the 3.4 million. Ms. James concurred that it would, but 1 million would only be available for FY09. The 3.4 million cannot be used until 2012. Senator Leatherman asked if any of these funds could be used towards bonding? Ms. James said she was not sure, but she would find out and report back.

The first item of new business is Enhancement Projects:

- Red Doe has gone through the technical review process with SCDOT. Edits have been made on the application and now SCDOT is looking to attach Federal funds to that project. Moving right along in positive aspect. Senator Leatherman asked if funds for Red Doe were all Federal or if some of it was State. Janice Redd with SCDOT and Shane Belcher with FHWA both confirmed the funds are all federal. Scott Park also confirmed to Senator Leatherman that this grant was an 80/20 match. Red Doe applied for the full grant available for FY08, which was \$118,000 with the Red Rifle Association making the 20% local match through in-kind services.
- Adopt-an-Interchange update for Highway 52 and 95. Mr. Park advised there had been no response from any government entity on the local match requirement, but as indicated by Councilman Williams, he understands the City is interested in taking on this. Mr. Park advised we would need some feedback from the City in regards to this in order to bring this before the Policy Committee. Councilman Williams said we needed to get Drew Griffin involved with this. Mr. Park said he would do so. Councilman Williams said he will also contact Mr. Griffin. Senator Leatherman asked is this money was available if we could come up with the match. Janice Redd with SCDOT concurred. Senator Leatherman suggested we go forward with contacting the City. Councilman Williams asked who the County Councilman for this area was. Councilman Anderson responded Al Bradley. Councilman Williams is going to check with Councilman Bradley to see if the County would assist the City with the match.
- FY09 Application – Downtown Gateways Enhancement application: The City of Florence has applied for the FY09 funds in the amount of \$118,000. Location is the Northeast corner of S. Irby and Cedar, just south of the main Library. Florence County is donating the site to the City fulfilling a portion of the 20% match and the City will also provide a portion for the match as well. The property from the County is valued at \$56,000 and the City of Florence in-kind will be \$10,000. Brantley Carter with the City of Florence made a short presentation of the City's plans for this corner lot. The City envisions some of the same design elements as the current Downtown Plaza, they have completed. Large canopy trees and walkway with some sort of a design element in the center which could possibly be a water feature, sculpture, a gazebo or some other yet to be determined. It is envisioned to be a downtown gateway or entrance site, which provides high visibility for traffic going by. The City has submitted the application to FLATS. No set design layout has been done, as the City is waiting for the Policy Committee's endorsement. Sherwin Welch made a motion to approve and Councilman Anderson 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. Carried unanimously.

The second item of new business was the Long Range Plan/Transportation Element (Request for Qualification): Mr. Park advised committee that since we have some time between funding opportunities through the FLATS dollars, it's a great time for planning our Long Range Plan. In order to do that we need to have a Request for Qualification sent out to the community to contract for a third party contractor to come in to look at the FLATS area and fulfill the seven tasks under scope of work as outlined in the RFQ. Mr. Park went over each task. A review selection committee would look over all of the proposals that come in, which would be the FLATS staff, all of our stakeholders, including the Pee Dee Cog, the City of Florence, Florence Economic Development and other people that would have a stake in that plan. We would rank these proposals and bring thing back before the Policy Committee for final approval. The Study Team has looked at this RFQ, which includes all of SCDOT and FHWA and have recommended approval to the Policy Committee. Senator Leatherman asked if this would include S. Cashua as a study? Mr. Park concurred that it would. Mr. Hoge advised the committee that this outside consultant will look at options such as do we need to build a new road somewhere or what's the best way to design that bypass to alleviate traffic problems. They will take the funding and look at it 30 years out and project what we can pay for and where we may need innovative funding sources. It is a great way to get a third party look and professionals that look at it at a different perspective and they will come in and hold stakeholder meetings. Senator Leatherman asked if this consultant group would be chosen through an RFP? Mr. Hoge advised they would be chosen through an RFQ. An internal group of about five or six people will grade them, pick top one or two and come back to you for approval, then we will negotiate the Request For Proposal with them on what they would charge to do the things outlined in the RFQ then have a six to nine month time frame to complete them. Senator Leatherman mentioned after we go through the RFQ process, he would strongly urge us to do a full scale RFP. Mr. Hoge assured Senator Leatherman that we will certainly make

sure it is done correctly. We have examples of what other communities have paid so we know what the approximate price range should be. Mr. Hoge also mentioned that the real reason we need approval from the committee, is because we can get 80% funding back from FLATS. County Council has been nice enough to put this in the budget, so when we get this done we send the bill back to SCDOT and can be reimbursed 80%. Sherwin Welch asked if any study has ever been done on Palmetto Street on turn lanes in the LRP. Mr. Hoge advised he was not aware of one, but that's the kind of things by going through an RFQ process and negotiation, we can make sure it gets in the proposal and then stakeholders can provide them questions and input. Mr. Park advised the committee that one of our largest stakeholders has been the Freight community. A lot of their input and suggestions to the LRP is that it would be very helpful for it to be a multimodal plan. We have met with the freight community and we plan to continue meeting with them. Councilman Anderson made a motion to approve and Councilman Williams 2<sup>nd</sup> motion. Carried unanimously.

The third item of new business is dealing with our air quality for the area. Mr. Park advised committee that recently the EPA has lowered our air quality standard for ozone. We were originally at 0.084, now it is at 0.075 and we are bumping up against that number. Our air quality is obviously affected by more people, more cars, and more industry. Our air quality numbers has actually increased over the last three years. From 2005 to 2007 our air quality was 0.079, 0.076, then 0.073. Senator Leatherman asked if Mr. Park had any feel for why we are decreasing. In 2004 or 2005, there was an Early Action Compact that dealt with air quality so it brought a lot of people together in the community to deal with air quality, which could contribute to this. Mr. Park advised that he has some 2002 numbers that are looking at where all of our pollution is coming from and most of it is on road vehicles. Data like that gives us an opportunity to focus our efforts on what to improve. Mr. Hoge advised the committee that the other thing that was significant was that the early portion of last summer was very cool and summer temperatures is another thing that helps drive up the ozone and this probably helped us reach the 0.073 number. However, this year obviously has been warmer and our numbers are back up again so far, so we're not doing as good right now. Mr. Park advised for 2008 in order to keep us in conformity, under these standards, we need to maintain at most a 0.076 reading and so for this year, that is our reading and we cannot go above it. Senator Leatherman asked what would happen if we do. Mr. Park advised we have been presented this Memorandum of Agreement from SCDOT. This MOA is based on if we do not reach those standards, we are considered a non-conformity area. Once we are in non-conformity, we have to go through a process to try to increase our air quality. Mr. Hoge said the specific penalty for being in non-conformity is more in terms in impact on what you do for air quality. If you have a new business that wants to come in or an existing that wants to expand, they have to go to the industry best standards in order to reduce pollution. They will have to spend a lot more money to help insure they are helping clean up the air. If you do get to a certain point in this process, there can be a restriction on your use of federal highway funds and how you allocate those funds. Mr. Park added that in essence what we would have to produce if we are in non-conformity is a vehicle emissions budget that the whole area could not go over. Maeve Mason with DHEC advised committee also that if area is in non-attainment status, you have a year to reach attainment status again. She advised that she had brought with her an MOA for signature today. Mr. Park further explained a brief timeline what would happen over the next few years, then farther out if we are in non-attainment. State DHEC will recommend the boundaries by March of 2009. It may not necessarily be a county boundary, it may coincide with the FLATS boundaries, they are not sure yet. Then the EPA will finalize those boundaries. Then the state is under the obligation to provide a state plan of action by 2013. Mr. Park presented committee with potential solutions to focus on improving air quality. Councilman Anderson asked Mr. Park how the proposed coal plant would affect our air quality. Mr. Park mentioned that the plant is going to be far away from our monitor, so he was not sure if our monitor would pick up the emissions from that plant. Electricity production is a big influence on air quality in Darlington County for some reason and he is still looking into the reason why for that. It's going to influence someone's air quality. Senator Leatherman asked who the MOA was between. Mr. Park stated it was between SCDOT, DHEC and FLATS. Mr. Hoge added, this MOA says that if any area is in non-attainment, since all MPO's are asked to sign this, before another area is faced with this same issue, we will all come together to discuss what can be done to fix this problem. We are not committing any funds. Ms. Mason concurred that Mr. Hoge was correct. Commissioner Stevenson made a motion to approve and Sherwin Welch 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. Carried unanimously.

The fourth item of new business is the Public Participation Plan: Mr. Park advised this is a plan of action to let everyone in the public know what we're doing here. It assigns a certain amount of time for public comment on all of our documents, a certain amount of resources to get this done, in addition to identifying our stakeholders. Mr. Hoge added that this plan spells out all the steps we have to do to make sure we adequately reach the public and it meets the SAFETEA-LU requirement that we need to adopt to make sure the public gets adequate notification. Councilman Williams asked that we check into Pee Dee Times advertising for minority outreach. The City uses this in addition to the Morning News. A motion and second was made to approve. Carried unanimously.

The final item of new business was the Public Advisory Group (TPAG) formation: Mr. Park advised as recently passed in the new Bylaws by Policy Committee, it establishes a public committee, which gives additional input to the Policy Committee, as the Study Team gives additional input on technical issues. This being in an effort to expand our community outreach. Each Policy Committee member has the ability to appoint two people; one from a residential standpoint that lives in the FLATS area and one that is more business oriented. These nominations can be sent to staff or if you have them, can be given to us today. Senator Leatherman's concern was that this would prohibit the members from being able to have the benefit of hearing what those public concerns were on an individual basis. Mr. Hoge stated that hopefully this committee would be a way of having the public more involved and more informed prior to the Policy Committee meetings and have that body make recommendations to the Study Team and then you. We would like to try it and if we find it is not beneficial, then we could change it in the future. Senator Leatherman again stated that he feels that we are just creating another layer and then the members are getting the concerns second hand instead of directly from the individual with the concerns. All members were in agreement with Senator Leatherman. However, Councilman Williams said he could understand the possible need for this committee. Sherman Welch made a motion to table this for now and Commissioner Stevenson 2<sup>nd</sup> motion. Councilman Williams votes no on having this tabled. He feels we need to do everything possible to involve more of the public in these meetings.

The final discussion as needed was a FY2009 calendar: Mr. Park suggested we propose to meet three times a year; October, February and June. The Study Team would meet two weeks prior to each Policy Committee meeting. This would enable us to satisfy all documents and policies including the TIP and the UPWP as required by the state and federal companies and have the documents to them in a timely manner. Councilman Anderson made a motion to meet three times a year in the proposed months, if needed and Sherwin Welch 2<sup>nd</sup> motion. Carried unanimously.

Senator Leatherman asked for an update on Pine Needles. Ms. James from SCDOT stated that the Phase I portion, which is just the bridge, they are anticipating completion by the end of this month. The second phase which is the rest of the bridge and the rest of the widening project is to LET this month. Construction is anticipated to be completed by the summer of 2010.

Sherwin Welch asked if there was any other plan to start any of the other projects that were in the one percent? Ms. James reported on the following projects in the LRP:

- SCDOT is actively working on section one and two of Highway 378. They have a footprint and are going with a five lane section as opposed to the four lane divided. They are in the process of preparing R/O/W plans. They have had the public information meeting. The ball is rolling.
- On the TV road project, they are in the process of negotiating that contract. They have chosen a consultant, Earthtech, who will be doing the preliminary design work.
- For US Highway 76, they have selected a firm, and negotiated the contract. The firm is putting together alternatives. They should be coming before the County Council with typical sections for you to look at and make a decision on what we want to go with there.
- They have split the Pamplico Highway project into four sections. They are anticipating to keep that internal versus consulting it out. Once they get it programmed internally, they'll be able to start preliminary design and start that ball rolling as well.

Preliminary Engineering on all of these project should start within the next two years.

Public comments:

One gentleman asked Ms. James if they had acquired all R/O/W for the Pine Needles project? Ms. James said they modified the scope slightly along S. Ebenezer, so they are extending it right down near that disposal sight. The gentleman asked if they were going to relocate the Kangaroo pumps. Ms. James said they were, and they are working with the utilities, but it is not 100% complete as of yet.

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.