

**FLATS POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**June 7, 2010**  
**APPROVED MINUTES**

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**Voting Members Present:**

Senator Hugh Leatherman  
Councilman Billy D. Williams  
Representative Kris Crawford  
Sherwin Welch  
Mayor Stephen Wukela  
Councilman Morris Anderson  
Mayor Ashby Gregg

**Non-Voting Members Present:**

Richard Starks  
Kevin Griffin  
Janice Baroody  
Peter Knoller  
Glynn Willis

**Study Team Members Present:**

Michelle Shepherd, SCDOT  
Phil Goff, PDCOG  
Kevin Sheppard, SCDOT  
Doug Frate, SCDOT  
Michael Bethea, SCDOT  
Jessica Hekter, FHWA (for Shane Belcher)  
Tony Edwards, SCDOT  
Paul Thebo, City Urban and Planning (for Phillip Lookadoo)

**Staff Present:**

Scott Park  
Debi Matthews  
Renee Proctor

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Senator Leatherman called the meeting to order.

The first item of business on the agenda was the election of Chair & Vice Chair for 2010. Sherwin Welch made a motion and Councilman Anderson made a second motion for each position to remain as held: Senator Hugh Leatherman, Chair and Representative Kris Crawford, Vice Chair. Vote carried unanimously.

The second item of business on the agenda was to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. Mayor Wukela made a motion to approve and Councilman Anderson made a second motion. Vote carried unanimously.

The third item of business: Updates from the CTC, PDCOG, PDRTA and SCODT:

- Sherwin Welch updated the committee for the CTC. CTC has committed \$4.5 million in funds for projects. Due to high prices coming down on oil, we are getting some of our money back for projects previously bid. One of the main projects is National Cemetery Road. This project will run approximately \$1.5 million to resurface.
- Phil Goff with the PDCOG updated the committee for the six counties in the Pee Dee. With not a lot of money being available statewide, the projects discussed at the previous Policy Committee meeting are still valid.

- In the next year or year and a half construction should begin on the bridge replacement on US 52 just north of the Darlington By-Pass at Black Creek. A total of approximately one mile on each side of the bridge including the NuCor intersection will be improved. This will be part of the permanent improvements for US 52. It will probably be 2- 3 years after that before the balance of that 5 mile segment of US 52 will be widened. Right-of-way is ongoing now and construction could start sometime next year.

Senator Leatherman asked if the 5 mile segment will be four lanes and how much will be left on 52 to be completed as four lanes?

Phil concurred the 5 mile segment will be four lanes and approximately another 12 miles to Society Hill is what will be left to complete as four lanes. They will be revisiting priorities for the balance of our six county region sometime in the next year and a half to see if the most important segment is the next piece of US52. The only commitment in their TIP is that 5 mile segment.

Senator Leatherman asked if the portion of US52 that crosses the NC state line is 2 lanes or 4. Phil said he thought it was 2 lanes.

- The other project they have funded in Florence County is from Kingsburg to the widened bridge just above Johnsonville. That is in right-of-way acquisition now and hopefully construction could start by the later part of next year. When complete it will be four lanes from Kingsburg/Hwy 378 all the way through Hemingway.

Senator Leatherman asked if they were putting twin bridges over the Pee Dee River. Phil advised it was not currently programmed for that. Sherwin Welch said they were putting in another bridge. They will use the old bridge and the new bridge as far as he is aware.

- Janice Baroody updated the committee for PDRTA.
  - On the urban side, they expect to top 100,000 boardings this year.
  - They have completed their bid process for their signage except for the last two parts. They've awarded contracts for the poles, seats and solar lighting. They still have the signs and installation be awarded. Hopefully this will be done by the end of the summer and should see some movement on getting the signage up this fall.
  - They are awaiting their award under Job Access and New Freedom federal funds that flow through SCDOT. They have applied for funding for the urbanized area for commuter runs especially between here and Marion and hitting the industrial area out near Johnson Controls. There are a tremendous number of people who work out there and need transportation.
  - They have been preliminarily awarded funds from SCDOT to begin a project in Marion that will facilitate the commuters that need to come from there into Florence. That will be a building project in Marion.

Senator Leatherman welcomed Commissioner Nuckles to the meeting.

- Michelle Shepherd with SCDOT updated the committee on the status of the Florence County forward projects based on the sales tax funds received to date, which is approximately \$59 million. The program is currently on track to complete 5 of the 6 priority projects by fall of 2015:
  - Pine Needles –The take-over contract has been awarded to CR Jackson and this project is still on track to be completed by the original anticipated completion date of fall, 2011.
  - Hwy 378 – right-of-way acquisition is currently underway for the first 2 sections and they anticipate beginning construction for these 2 sections by next summer.
  - US 76 – They have had to relax the LETTING schedule by about 6 months to allow time for the right-of-way to be acquired. They spoke to the County and the logic was in the interest of the overall program and the funding, so they have consulted the right-of-way services out to a consultant. To eliminate the need for having to put incentives and increase the potential for condemnations during right-of-way, they opted to give a little more cushion for the schedule. Hopefully that will result in some cost savings and get the work done.
  - TV Road – They have been able to trim 5 months off of that schedule. The same issue as with the US 76 project may apply, but they have allowed time if they consult out the right-of-way acquisition services. They've got enough time built in that they would be ok based on the schedule they have set. They anticipate having a public hearing this summer.
  - SC51 – Just had a public information meeting on May 4<sup>th</sup>, with 122 attendees. Surveys for sections 1 & 2 are completed and surveys for sections 3 & 4 are currently under way. This project is on track to begin right-of-way acquisition for section 1 next summer.

Sherwin Welch asked where sections 1 & 2 were. Ms. Shepherd advised it is from Claussen Road to Hyman Road.

- 301 By-Pass – This project is currently inactive and depending on funding availability. They show beginning construction in spring, 2017, so they would begin earlier than that for preliminary engineering.

Senator Leatherman asked Ms. Shepherd for SCDOT to continue looking at the 301 By-Pass project and try to determine where it would go and a proposed design layout if funding becomes available.

For FLATS projects, Ms. Shepherd continued:

- South Cashua – They are still proposing to do a 5 lane curb & gutter section, which would be 4 - 12' through lanes, a 15' paved median, 5' sidewalks and that would include 14' outside lanes for the bike/ped accommodations. They plan to extend this from Second Loop to Celebration. Then to address the

LOS issues at Knollwood, they propose to add two right turn lanes at that intersection and do some signal timing improvements. If they extend the widening to Knollwood, they are back where they started with the right-of-way issues. They feel confident the turn lanes and signal timing improvements will address the concerns at this intersection. Right now the LOS is acceptable. In the design year, the original growth rate was conservative, so even in the design year; it was showing congestion below what would be acceptable. On paper, it's really not a concern even in the design year, but they would recommend doing something there since they understand it is an issue at certain peak hours. Right now they only have preliminary engineering funds programmed for this project. They are working up a cost estimate now on what they are proposing.

Representative Crawford would like to see some diagrams on what SCDOT's plans would be from Second Loop to Celebration before they start having real discussions with the businesses in this area. Ms. Shepherd said they will get some before/after diagrams for the committee.

Councilman Williams has concerns about the traffic congestion from all of the apartment and condominium complexes on the right heading west just before Knollwood. He asked if a light could be put in this area. He also has concerns about the congestion entering Cashua from the apartment complex behind Creek Ratz on Jefferson Drive. Senator Leatherman asked Ms. Shepherd to do a traffic study for these two areas for Councilman Williams' concerns.

Scott mentioned that the S. Cashua project is based on the old LRTP prioritization, however it is not at the top of the prioritization in the new LRTP, so the Policy Committee has leeway to go ahead with this project since it is based on the past LRTP, or hold off on that project and look at the prioritization of the new LRTP. SCDOT can come back with a cost estimate for S. Cashua, and then we can see what it will do to our TIP and LRTP.

Senator Leatherman said we sure need to get the improvements done on S. Cashua from Second Loop.

The fourth item of business: Enhancement Projects update from Scott Park:

- Lucas Street Intersection Gateway – This project is in the design phase.
- Irby Street Gateway - This project is going through a Participatory Agreement between SCDOT and the City.
- Red Doe Plantation - The County is currently compiling a list of specifications to present to SCDOT on what it's going to take to complete this project.

The first item of new business on the agenda was to review the FY2011 UPWP (Unified Planning Work Program). Scott Park explained this is our annual planning

implementation plan. There is not much difference in the FY2011 UPWP from the FY2010 UPWP. This document goes over program administration, surveillance and all of the documentation we provide. We are requesting from the Federal Government a little over \$200,000 which is matched by the County by 20%. We'll need an action unless there are any questions or discussion about the document. The Study Team has recommended approval to the document.

Sherwin Welch made a motion to approve and Representative Crawford made a second motion. Vote carried unanimously.

The next item of new business was to review the FY2035 LRTP. Scott Park advised the committee that there needs to be a contingency because SCDOT needs to look at it and see how our strategy to prioritize the projects compare with ACT 114, which is the state standard, but feel free to approve it with that contingency if you so choose. Mike Rutowski, consultant with Kimley-Horn and Associates, made a presentation on the document.

Committee concerns and discussion on specific items within the document were as follows:

1. Senator Leatherman inquired as to how much study had been done on the PDRTA transportation hub on sites other than the Cheves/Dargan Street location. He noted that the Cheves/Dargan Street site is state property and utilizing this site would be taking up the parking area for DHEC Mental Health. He strongly advised that the State Budget and Control Board be addressed to see if they are willing to give up that property before we get tied down to a site that may not be available. Upon this evaluation, he requested a report back to the committee concerning this information for this site before the committee will approve a recommendation on a particular site in the LRTP.

Discussion:

- Ms. Baroody with PDRTA advised a company called URS evaluated six sights in the downtown area. URS is an international engineering firm that specializes in transportation project. The Cheves/Dargan Street site was highest in the ranking. Ms. Baroody also noted that a study was done on the 150 parking spaces in that existing lot, of which 75 or fewer are utilized on a regular basis. However, they are talking about putting a parking garage for the people who utilize DHEC and the mental health building. Ms. Baroody also noted that this site choice was preliminary. Even if the state were willing to give up that property, environmentally or a number of other reasons may arise eliminating this as a potential site. Ms. Baroody agreed to have Senator Leatherman's concern addressed regarding the site owned by the State Budget and Control Board and respond back to the committee.

- Mayor Wukela stated this proposed location is in very close proximity to the new Performing Arts Center under construction, the proposed new museum and St. Johns Church. This location for the transportation hub along with these adjacent uses could cause a high amount of congestion.
  - Councilman Williams also voiced his concern about the parking issues downtown with more development. The City does not have even the 20% match required to receive federal funds to increase the parking in this area.
  - Senator Leatherman's concern is having the recommendation of the Cheves/Dargan Street in the new LRTP with no other mention of the other sites. Senator Leatherman requested a presentation to the committee on what sites could be available and why the decision is for one site over another site before they could make a recommendation to be included in the LRTP.
2. In regards to the first proposal for the Five-Points intersection improvement, Representative Crawford asked if there would only be outbound traffic on Cherokee at Five-Points, where would the inbound traffic be directed?

Discussion:

- Mike Rutowski noted that it would be directed on existing connector streets with improvements. Mike noted this may not be the ideal scenario, but this has been the number one complaint in this region and looking at the context of a 25 year traffic we have to come up with some solution for this area. This intersection currently functions at a LOS E & F and this alternative would bring it to a LOS C. The other alternative would be a roundabout at this location. This would require the closure of inbound and outbound traffic on Cherokee and utilizing the Rainbow and Revell Drive connector streets to Palmetto. This alternative would bring this intersection's function to a LOS A. Improvements would have to be made to these connector streets in addition to signalized intersection improvements where they connect to Palmetto.

Representative Crawford made a motion that we adjourn debate on the LRTP until the next meeting. Councilman Anderson made a second motion. Vote carried unanimously.

Senator Leatherman again noted his concern and having no interest in recommending the Cheves/Dargan Street site for the PDRTA transportation hub without a presentation as to who made the decision for the location of this hub and what criteria was used. Mayor Wukela made a second motion to Senator Leatherman's concern. There was no objection from the committee.

The next item of business was the discussion of the 2010 Enhancement Funds. Scott Park explained that the 2010 Enhancement Funds are available and needed to know if the committee was ready to open up the application period for us to accept them. Upon receipt of any application, the proposed projects would be brought back before the committee for approval.

Representative Crawford asked if we could put criteria on what we would and would not approve for the use of these funds. From the LRTP public meetings, there is obviously a lot of input for more bike/ped facilities. Having talked to residents who spend a lot of time on the existing bike/ped facilities, one interest is how can we bridge across town to connect the current system.

Senator Leatherman addressed the committee for a motion to approve opening the application period for the 2010 Enhancement funds, with the note that any project will be brought back before the committee for approval. Sherwin Welch made a motion to approve. Councilman Anderson made a second motion.

Mayor Wukela asked if Representative Crawford's request had been met before voting. Senator Leatherman said the vote would include Representative Crawford's request or other projects that the committee may find worthwhile, but not limited to the connection of trails. There was no further discussion or objection.

Regarding other business, Scott Park advised the committee that we have had a recent proposal by SCDOT to quicken up the pace for some of their maintenance projects. Per FHWA, maintenance projects for the FLATS area must be included in the FLATS TIP before they can be included in the States TIP in order for funding to occur. These are non-capacity projects such as interstate maintenance, bridges and safety projects. We are asking that staff through an administrative correction to the TIP include these projects as we are advised of them then present them at the next FLATS meeting as information. There was a motion and a second to approve this request and no objection. The vote carried unanimously.

For the last item, Scott Park presented the committee information concerning air quality. It looks like over the next year that the FLATS area potentially could become a non-attainment area. We are waiting on the standards from EPA. This could mean a change in plans. In addition to a financially constrained plan, we will also have an air quality budget constrained plan running contiguously.

Senator Leatherman addressed the audience that the information regarding another one-cent sales tax mentioned in the LRTP presentation does not mean that this committee is approving another one. This committee cannot approve this; it would have to go back before the public for referendum. The public would make that decision as to whether or not they wanted it.

Representative Crawford mentioned that he understands that the Infrastructure Bank of which Senator Leatherman sits on the board has modified the criteria and we would not get the same deal on the next referendum as we got for the present one-cent referendum. Senator Leatherman concurred he was correct. The projects they are approving now are requiring a \$2 local match for every \$1 state match. The current referendum for Florence County is \$1 local match for every \$2 state match.

Senator Leatherman asked if there was any further business to come before the committee. There being none, the meeting was adjourned.