

**FLORENCE AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY (FLATS)
POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 10, 2013
APPROVED**

Voting Members Present:

Senator Hugh Leatherman
Councilman Glynn Willis
Sherwin Welch
Mayor Stephen Wukela
Commissioner Mike Wooten
Councilman James Schofield
Councilman Waymon Mumford

Study Team Members Present:

Chris Gossett, SCDOT
Kevin Sheppard, SCDOT
Michael Bethea, SCDOT
David Gray, SCDOT
Phillip Lookadoo
Levonne Powell

Non-Voting Members Present:

Chuck MacNeil
Jay Graham Mr.
Rusty Smith
Dennis Townsend

Staff Present:

Debi Matthews
Renee Proctor

Guest Speakers:

None

Senator Leatherman called the meeting to order.

The first item of business on the agenda was to approve the minutes from the February 25, 2013 meeting. Councilman Willis made a motion to approve and Commissioner Wooten made a second motion. Vote carried unanimously.

The second item of business was the FY2014 – 2019 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) financial sheet.

- Guideshare Project: (S. Cashua Drive)
 - FY2014 - \$4,300,000 allocated for Right-of-Way (ROW) and \$4,000,000 for Construction;
 - FY2015 - \$4,400,000 allocated for Construction;
 - Advancement Payback line item added with an annual payback of approx. \$1.6M to begin in FY2016 for the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) advancement;
 - \$0 balance through FY2019.

- Example of 20% Guideshare Allocation Section provided by the SCDOT Planning Department. No action required on this section. Discussion was later in the meeting.
- Transportation Alternatives Program Section Added – No Projects To Report
- Capital Sales Tax Projects:
 - US 51 Pamlico Highway:
 - FY2014 - \$111,985,000 allocated for construction
 - 301 Bypass/S-107 (Alligator Road):
 - FY2014 - \$10,000,000 allocated for ROW;
 - FY2015 - \$45,500,000 allocated for Construction.
- Federal Transit Administration:
 - The Pee Dee Regional Transportation Authority (PDRTA) FY2013 Allocations were presented and approved at the February 25, 2013 Policy Committee meeting. This update has one amendment for the 5307 Program:
 - Initially \$195,000 was allocated for Capital. Per the March 21, 2013 STIP Revision #41, this figure changed to \$485,000.
- Additional FY2013 Amendments:
 - Florence Senior Citizens Association:
 - (5310 Program) \$10,000 - Operations;
 - Florence County Disabilities and Special Needs (DSN) Board:
 - (5310 Program) \$45,000 - Capital;
 - Darlington County Council on Aging:
 - (5310 Program) \$45,000 - Capital;
 - (5317 Program) \$26,000 - Operations.

No comments were received during the 10-day public comment period from May 17th through May 27th. Study Team Recommends Approval.

Senator Leatherman asked Commissioner Wooten to explain the 20% allocation section in the TIP. Commissioner Wooten asked Mr. Townsend with the local Department of Transportation (DOT) to answer because this decision was made by the Commission prior to him being on the Highway Commission. Mr. Townsend briefly explained the Commission's Policy and Senator Leatherman expressed his concern that SCDOT was taking 20% of the Florence Area Transportation Study (FLATS) funding and telling us how it must be used. He suggested to Commissioner Wooten that he continue to relay his feelings to the Commission. Commissioner Wooten concurred.

Councilman Mumford asked if we have the money for the TV Road widening. Senator Leatherman stated that we were waiting on the Corp of Engineers. Mr. Gossett with the SCDOT gave an update on the estimated monies at this time. Mr. Gossett stated that the SCDOT projection is that they will have the funds for the TV Road project and others but will not know for sure until the bids come in.

Councilman Schofield reported that we have collected \$111M from the penny tax towards the \$148M and there are six more quarters to go. It should come in between \$142M and \$144M. There is also \$7.953M in interest accrued.

Commissioner Wooten stated that these projects must be bid in the order as on the ballot. If there is a problem with one, it holds up all others.

Mayor Wukela asked if there was not enough money to complete the list, what would happen with those that were not funded. Mr. Wooten replied that those projects could be placed back on the ballot if there was a renewal for the penny sales tax.

Councilman Schofield stated that his understanding is if there is a shortage of funding for the next project on the ballot and it has been bid, SCDOT would have to come back to County Council. Mr. Wooten agreed and Senator Leatherman stated that it would be up to the people to decide.

Commissioner Wooten stated that there is a movement right now for SC to take over the permitting program from the Corp which would then be the responsibility of the Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC). It would only require a letter from the Governor to the Corp of Engineers. This would significantly speed up the permitting process. Commissioner Wooten continued that they were going through a change of command the middle of this month where they will be getting a new Colonel so they've got to start the training process anew. Colonel Chamberlin is being transferred to the Pentagon. They will have to start that relationship building with the new Colonel.

With no further discussion on the TIP, a motion and a second was received. The vote carried unanimously.

Ms. Matthews presented the third item of business which was the project list for the 20% Guideshare Allocation Requirement. She presented the committee with the proposed list of projects and a map of their locations.

- Potential resurfacing and intersection projects attached (Blue Paper) and map of locations (White Paper):
 - The SCDOT Highway Commission adopted a policy in August, 2012, requiring Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Council of Governments (COGs) to utilize 20% of their guideshare allocations for resurfacing of federally eligible state-owned roads or for intersection improvement projects.
 - The SCDOT Planning Department is responsible for preparing the allocation guidelines and presenting them to the MPOs and COGs.

- The resurfacing projects must be on the National Highway System resurfacing list. Resurfacing projects are ineligible if not included on this list. These projects can be chosen in any order;
- Any intersection improvement project chosen must be in the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) before funds can be allocated towards it. The projects listed are prioritized by ACT 114 by the SCDOT, and need to be chosen in this order unless FLATS can justify why a lower ranked project should be done first. Other intersection projects within the FLATS Study Area Boundary can be ranked by ACT 114 and added to this list.

Senator Leatherman wanted to know how long it would take us to accomplish the projects at the top of the list. Ms. Matthews asked Mr. Sheppard with the SCDOT to please explain. Mr. Sheppard explained that they have added the section to the TIP so MPOs can see what their requirement is for each fiscal year. He called their attention to the section on the TIP to explain. The FY2013 figure was derived from taking the guideshare allocation minus the debt service so that the 20% is less for the MPO. What the SCDOT is looking at is a three year average at any given time that needs to be accomplished in the FLATS area. So right now we are in FY2013, what the SCDOT is looking for is an average totaling the \$317,000, \$318,000 and \$319,000 for FY2013-2015 within those three years. By looking at the list Ms. Matthews provided, if the committee chooses to do the first resurfacing project which is the 76 connector, the proposed cost estimate is \$330,000. As you see that would eclipse your FY2013 requirement because it is more than the \$317,000. He continued to show the fields on the spreadsheet that the figures would go in. Mr. Sheppard also explained to make things more complicated; the Highway Commission has done a rolling average. FY2013-2015 would have a rolling average. Once we move into FY2014, then that average covers FY2014-2016, then we move into FY2015 it covers FY2015-2017. It's a moving target. For instance, if you were to choose the \$330,000 and the first intersection project which is \$750,000 that is well over a million dollars so FLATS will have satisfied the 20% resurfacing requirement that the Commission has asked you to satisfy.

Senator Leatherman asked where the money comes from and Mr. Sheppard stated that it comes from our Guideshares. The latitude for resurfacing is that you can choose any on the list. However, the intersection projects must be chosen in order because of Act 114. Ms. Matthews has also sent Mr. Sheppard two more projects that are in the Long Range Transportation Plan that will need to be ranked also. The locations are Palmetto and Cheves and safety and access management improvements at the Five Points intersection. Senator Leatherman feels that we should be able to spend our 20% of on streets that we choose instead of on National Highway System (NHS) routes or US roads.

Mr. Sheppard said that along with the FY2014-2019 TIP that the committee just approved, between now and August the SCDOT will take this information back to the Commission in September when the new Statewide Transportation Improvement

Program (STIP) becomes effective at the end of the federal fiscal year, (September 30th). So beginning October 1st the new STIP at the DOT will show FY2014-2019 and what the SCDOT wants to do is populate those fields as to what FLATS identifies as their priority. The SCDOT will be focusing on a three year average so if the Policy Committee does not do anything in FY2013, you're ok, but if you put it all in FY2014 then you're good through FY2015 or possibly into FY2016.

Senator Leatherman responded to Commissioner Wooten that he has a lot of concerns about this new Policy. Commissioner Wooten stated that he believes with the shortfall of funds the Commission was looking at opportunities to help meet the federal match. The Commission thought they'd give the MPOs the opportunity to assist by taking what the Feds allocated to them and putting it towards the federal match. This would allow the DOT to get as much money into the highway system as possible under the revenue stream that they had at the time. Commissioner Wooten stated that he will bring this up at the Commission's next week.

Ms. Matthews presented the fourth item of business which was the FY2014 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

The UPWP provides the annual details regarding the FLATS MPO staff's planning activities and identifies a program of work for reimbursement under annual planning grants received under the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs.

- FY2014 Planning Funds total is \$158,584 (\$126,867 Federal & \$31,717 County Local Match)

The 10-day public comment period was held from May 17th through May 27th with no comments being received. On May 31st, staff received comments from the FHWA requesting more detailed information regarding the previous and anticipated planning activities. These updates will not affect the concept of the document and no additional public comment period will be necessary. The updated document must be completed by June 30th.

Study Team recommends approval contingent upon staff updating the document as advised by the FHWA. Mr. Welch made a motion and Mayor Wukela seconded. The vote carried unanimously.

Ms. Matthews presented the fifth item of business which was updates to the Public Participation Process.

The Public Participation Process (PPP) is a guideline for the FLATS MPO to ensure opportunities for the public to express their views on transportation issues and to become active participants in the decision-making process. Updates to the PPP were previously approved June, 2011.

- Current Updates:

- Added MAP-21 Information as Applicable
- Updated Study Area Boundary Map

No public comments were received on document during the 45-day public comment period of April 12th through May 27th. Study Team Recommends Approval. Mayor Wukela made a motion and Mr. Welch seconded. The vote carried unanimously.

The sixth item of business, Ms. Matthews gave the Enhancement Projects Update.

- **Lucas Street Gateway** - Project is 50% complete. The City of Florence anticipates completion by mid May.
- **Red Doe Plantation** - The revised scope for the project has been approved by SCDOT. The County is working with the architect to revise the drawings in accordance with the revised scope. The revised drawings and bid documents will be sent to SCDOT for approval by the end of May.
- **NoName Creek Trail** - The SCDOT requires an easement for trail sections on the Wal-Mart property in order to move forward with this project. The City of Florence is attempting to obtain this document for SCDOT.
- **Francis Marion University Improvements to Highway 327** - Application will be reviewed by SCDOT Commission in July.

The seventh item of business was SCDOT Updates by Mr. Gossett. The S. Cashua project is in the right-of-way acquisition process. He has had a lot of discussion with the business owners on S. Cashua about impacts. The SCDOT has looked at some of the recommendations the business owners have come up with and to meet all the design criteria and carry the amount of traffic through there, the SCDOT recommends we stay with the scope of the project that was approved at the last Policy Committee meeting.

The Capital Sales Tax projects, Highway378, US76 and TV Road are ready to go as soon as the Corp of Engineers approves the mitigation and permits. As soon as they get the permits SCDOT will hold a special letting for these projects. From the time they get a permit, it will be six weeks until they receive bids on the projects.

The eighth item were updates from the County Transportation Committee (CTC) and PDRTA. Mr. Welch gave an update for the CTC:

- Mr. Welch stated that they are trying to stretch the money just as far as they can to help the County. The needs are far greater than the money.

Next Mr. MacNeil with PDRTA gave an update:

- PDRTA is in the final stages of downsizing. They have eliminated 70% of their service. He continues to work with the communities for additional funding to sustain their current level of fixed route services. There is clearly a demand for this service. They are exceeding a quarter of a million trips per year. About 45% of those riding are accessing jobs and 20% accessing educational opportunities. The next few weeks of the budgeting cycle will tell where they are going the next fiscal year.

Senator Leatherman inquired about the buildings on the Florence PDRTA property. He asked if renting or leasing the current buildings would help their money situation and Mr. MacNeil agreed that it would. Mr. MacNeil also stated that they are in the process of reducing the size of their fleet from 105 to about 40. He stated that they are currently following the lead of the federal government on how to properly proceed on the sale of properties.

Mayor Wukela stated that the City has increased their funding to PDRTA by about 75% which was due to a deduction of travel reimbursement to the City Council Members.

The ninth item was a response to questions asked by the Committee at the February meeting.

Q: What kind of landscaping Interchange Projects are allowed under the new Federal Highway Transportation Bill, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century, (MAP-21) Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)?

A: Exclusive Landscaping Interchange Projects are no longer allowed under the MAP-21 TAP. In addition, no other programs currently will allow exclusive interchange landscaping improvements.

Q: Can the FLATS Policy Committee decide which Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) applications received will be presented to SCDOT?

A: Yes. As applications are approved by SCDOT, they are ranked with other applications received throughout the State. SCDOT approved projects must be listed in the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP).

Ms. Matthews presented the tenth item of business which was the fifth edition of the FLATS Newsletter. She explained that this is another outlet that the MPO uses to reach the public and inform them of what we do. This newsletter will be placed on the FLATS webpage and at various locations throughout the County for the public.

The final item on the agenda was public comments: There were none.

There being no further business, the committee made a motion for the meeting to adjourn.