

**FLORENCE AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY (FLATS)**  
**STUDY TEAM MEETING MINUTES**  
**JUNE 6, 2014**  
**Approved**

**Members Present:**

Michelle Shepherd  
Phillip Lookadoo  
David Burgess  
Bill Jordan  
Michael Bethea  
Levonnie Powell  
Chuck MacNeil  
James Askins  
Dyan Cohen  
Kevin Sheppard

Chuck Pope  
Doug Reimold

**Staff Present**

Debi Matthews  
Renee Proctor

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Debi presented each item of business on the agenda to the committee.

The first item of business was to review the minutes from the August 9, 2013 meeting. Doug made a motion to approve and Michael seconded. Vote carried unanimously.

The second item of business was the FY2015 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The FLATS MPO receives federal funds from the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration annually to develop transportation plans and programs. The UPWP outlines the transportation related planning activities and identifies a program of work elements for the FLATS MPO staff. These funds are used for staff hours and consulting assistance. The total allocation for FY2015 is \$299,172. 80% is federally funded (\$250,588) and 20% local match requirement is funded by Florence County (\$48,584). The 10-day public comment period for the FY2015 UPWP was held from May 20th through May 30th with no comments being received. Dyan made a motion to approve and Levonnie seconded. Vote carried unanimously.

The third item of business was the FY2014-2019 TIP financial sheet. The funding amounts for the 1<sup>st</sup> section of the financial sheet (Guideshare Projects). The S. Cashua project is to be allocated \$4,300,000 for ROW in FY2014 and \$7,400,000 for Construction in FY2015. The FLATS annual guideshare allocations are anticipated to be \$2,487,000 for FY2014 and \$3,107,000 for FY2015-2019. The FLATS MPO has a carryover available of \$4,432,000 to begin FY2014. SCDOT advancements are added in FY2014 and FY2015 to make these fiscal years balance. It is anticipated that the FLATS MPO will have approximately \$977,000 in FY2017 to allocate towards another project.

Kevin advised there may be some changes to this section of the financial sheet. He is going to make the necessary changes and have it for Debi prior to the Policy Committee meeting. Michelle stated that there may also be a change to the ROW amount for the Cashua project.

The second section of the TIP financial sheet was presented (Transportation Alternatives Program). The South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) approved the Francis Marion University Highway SC 327 project for the FY2013 grant. This project has been added to this section as required.

The third section of the TIP financial sheet presented was the Capital Sales Tax Projects.

A total of \$271,675,000 is being allocated for the construction of these projects in FY2014:

- US 378 Project - \$112,278,000;
- US 76 Project - \$23,706,000;
- TV Road Project - \$23,706,000;
- Pamplico Hwy. Project - \$111,985,000;
- US 301 Bypass or Alligator Rd. Project - \$23,436,000 allocated for right-of-way in FY2014 and \$45,490,000 allocated for construction in FY2018.

The fourth section presented was Federal Transit Administration. This section lists the amount of FY2014 funds applied for by the Public Transportation Agencies within the FLATS area:

- Pee Dee Regional Transportation Authority has applied for
  - \$210,000 for Capital and \$905,000 for Operations through the FTA 5307 Program;
- Florence County Senior Citizens Association has applied for
  - \$23,000 for Operations through the FTA 5310 Program;
- Florence County Disabilities and Special Needs Board has applied for
  - \$46,000 for Capital through the FTA 5310 Program;
- Darlington County Council on Aging has applied for
  - \$48,000 for Capital through the FTA 5310 Program.

The fifth section presented was the Projects Exempt from Guidesshare. The SCDOT has provided projects within the FLATS and Pee Dee area that funding has been allocated towards through the National Highway Performance Program and the Surface Transportation Program for fiscal years 2014 through 2019. The 10-day public comment period for the TIP was held from May 20<sup>th</sup> through May 30<sup>th</sup> with no comments being received. Renee made a motion to accept the document contingent on Kevin's changes and Phillip seconded. Vote carried unanimously.

The fourth item of business was to present a new application received for the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) for the FY2014 Grant. The funds from this program are not allocated to the FLATS MPO. This is a statewide competitive grant. The specifics of the project are as follows:

- To provide pedestrian access to Lucy T. Davis and Moore Middle School for children living in the Vintage Place, Meadows, Quail Pointe and Kenswood Subdivisions off of Hoffmeyer Rd.;
- The application includes letters of support from the City of Florence and the SCDOT District 5 Engineering Administrator;
- The SCDOT will be the Administrator for the project;
- The total cost of the project is \$193,314.00;
- The applicant is requesting \$154,651.00 from the TAP Grant;
- Florence School District One will be responsible for the local match of \$38,663.00;
- The SCDOT Enhancement Department has done a preliminary review of the application and concurs that it does meet the requirements for a TAP project.

Debi advised that the TAP applications are not required to be approved by the Policy Committee prior to forwarding to the SCDOT for consideration since the TAP grant is a Statewide Competitive grant. However, the Policy Committee has asked that she present all applications to them before forwarding to the SCDOT. Debi asked for a motion for the Policy Committee to forward this application to the SCDOT for consideration for the FY2014 grant and include this project in the FLATS TIP if approved. A motion was made by Phillip and Michael seconded. Vote carried unanimously.

The fifth item of business was an update on the SAFETEA-LU and Map-21 Enhancement projects.

- Transportation Enhancement Program (SAFETEA-LU):
  - Red Doe Plantation Restoration Project: (FY2008)
    - January 13, 2014 - The South Carolina Department Of Transportation (SCDOT) issued the approval for Florence County to award the Construction Contract to Midwest Maintenance;
    - February 17, 2014 - Florence County issued a Notice to Proceed to Midwest Maintenance;
    - Anticipated Completion Date is the end of June or first of July, 2014.
  - No Name Creek Trail: (FY2010)
    - The City of Florence has submitted a new scope of work request for this project to the SCDOT;
    - A new scope of work map was included in the Study Team's packet;
    - Mr. Chuck Pope, The City of Florence presented new work scope as follows:

The City of Florence has submitted a new scope of work for the No Name Creek Trail. Chuck stated that the original request was for asphaltting a section of the trail between Hobby Lobby, Lowes and behind Super Walmart to Beltline. There was a final plat but no easement on the original deed. At that time it was one large parcel. There were some issues that delayed Walmart's construction such as a storm water lawsuit and it sat there for a long time. Eventually it was overturned and they were able to begin construction. During the construction process, Walmart subdivided the property into out parcels, and within that subdivision of the main parcel, they also included a fifty foot easement on the back side of the property and a ten foot easement on the north side of the property that was never in a written easement but was in the final plat of the subdivision of the properties. Walmart decided they did not want to do anything extra than what they had already done. The City also was made aware that in the engineering and design to make the trail accessible, the asphalt would have to be ten feet wide and the clearing and grubbing would have to take even more space than that. They had meetings with the neighborhoods and trail folks and found they were not interested in losing more canopy trees along the branch area. In addition, there was going to have to be a lot of cutting for the changes in the grade associated with the asphalt trail. Hobby Lobby was also not interested in changing the grades of the property to make the asphalt trail. In talking with SCDOT prior to Academy Sports acquiring the old Pepsi property, the City looked at asphaltting that section to connect to the original rail trail, but when Academy Sports built they came right to the property line and did not leave much room because of the retention pond. The City determined that to have an asphalt connector to tie into the sidewalk that Academy Sports did and ties into the City's boardwalk; it would be a positive for pedestrian and bicyclists. Also, the City is thinking about going all the way down Woody Jones Blvd. but the funds are not there yet. However, there is funding for the City in

the second capital sales tax for corridor improvements on Woody Jones Blvd and they anticipate within those improvements to include an asphalt connector trail that will link down to the Veteran's Park. They have just selected the engineering firm to do the design for those \$20M worth of street and road improvements so Woody Jones should be coming on line soon after that design.

- Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) (MAP-21):
  - Francis Marion University Highway SC 327
    - Engineering is projected to be completed by the end of this month;
    - SCDOT to prepare bid package in November, 2014;
    - Bid phase of one month to begin in December, 2014;
    - Contract Award & Scheduling to begin in January, 2015;
    - Anticipated construction date of February, 2015.

The sixth item of business was SCDOT updates. Michelle stated that the No-Name Creek will Let in June 2015. It could be pulled forward. The FMU project has a November Letting this year. A design review will be June 16<sup>th</sup> on site. South Cashua widening is in the ROW acquisition. It will be Let in September 2015. The sales tax project US 378, sections 1 & 2 were Let in November, sections 3 & 4 in May, section 5 will Let in August and everything is on schedule at this time. US 76 and TV Rd will Let in January and February.

Kevin stated that FLATS will be receiving an increase in the annual guideshare allocation beginning in FY2015. This is a result of a change in the Guideshare formula, which will increase the FLATS balance. The urbanized area became much more percentage wise as opposed to rural population, so essentially the COG's are taking a hit and losing guideshare money and also square footage. The 20% resurfacing and intersection improvement requirement has been eliminated as of last week. However, MPOs and COGs can still continue to do these type projects because the cost of widening projects takes up so many years of the guideshare funds as we've seen with S. Cashua. FLATS needs to begin determining projects to populate the TIP for fiscal years 2015-2019. Kevin will make corrections to show us what we will be able to afford after the Cashua widening. We will probably only have about \$1M or so. At the last Study Team meeting, two options were decided upon regarding intersection improvement and resurfacing projects to present to the Policy Committee for the 20% resurfacing requirement. These options could be a start to populating these fiscal years. Phillip stated that one of the potential projects in option two (to add a right truck lane on E. Palmetto Street onto Church) is part of the second capitol sales tax. Debi said that there is a \$1M cost to completely fix the intersection adequately. Michael said that FLATS could do a standalone right turn lane like we have listed in the Intersection Improvement list. This would be a help, but if a left turn lane is wanted, it would cost much more. Kevin advised that any intersection improvement project chosen would have to be in the LRTP.

The seventh item of business was updates from Pee Dee Regional Transportation Authority (PDRTA) and the Pee Dee Council of Governments (PDCOG). Chuck with PDRTA stated that they are dealing with the next fiscal year funds. They are trying to secure funding for local matches. The City of Florence has increased their funding and was part of the solution last year. Chuck is

trying to be creative in finding new solutions to supplement the funding. This year has provided 70% less service but the number of riders has increased.

Levonne with PDCOG stated that the Pee Dee Regional Transportation Advisory Committee have spent a lot of time discussing the 20% requirement projects. SCDOT ranked them and their Board decided to go with all of them. They had nine intersection improvement and resurfacing projects totaling almost \$16M over five years. Levonne stated that the Board has not yet been notified of the elimination of the 20% requirement but thinks they will want to go ahead with the nine projects because they do not have enough money to do a major project.

Debi stated that she had contacted several of the MPO's, per Commissioner Wooten's request, to see what they thought about the 20% requirement. The majority of the smaller MPO's are already doing just intersection projects because of lack of funds where some of the TMA's could do a larger project. Levonne asked Kevin if he knew if the COG's were doing the same in choosing the smaller projects. Kevin concurred and stated that even though it is no longer a requirement the SCDOT would still like to see the smaller projects go forward.

The eighth item of business was the FLATS annual newsletter. Debi mentioned that these are distributed to different venues for the public to view. This year the FLATS GIS department was highlighted because of all they do for FLATS in transportation planning.

Under other discussion, John Walsh, SCDOT Deputy of Engineering, was a member of the Non-Voting Policy Committee but has retired and has been succeeded by Ron Patton, SCDOT Chief Engineer for Location and Design. Michelle stated that their new Deputy Secretary is Christy Hall.

Debi also shared that in the Study Team member packets was the Florence, SC 2014 Official Visitors Guide & Map magazine. This was put together by the Florence Convention and Visitor's Bureau. The FLATS GIS department actually made the first two maps in the front.

There being no further discussion, a motion was made by Phillip to adjourn and Dyan seconded. The vote carried unanimously.