

**FLORENCE AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY (FLATS)
STUDY TEAM MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 5, 2015
APPROVED**

Members Present:

Brian Dix
Phillip Lookadoo
Michael Bethea
Rodney S. Tucker
Kevin Sheppard
Levonne Powell
Chuck MacNeil
Jessica Johns
Rebecca Breland

Drew Chaplin
Doug Reimold

Staff Present

Debi Matthews
Renee Proctor
Jay Graham

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

Debi introduced Brian Dix, Rebecca Breland and Jessica Johns with SCDOT. Brian has replaced Chris Gossett and Rebecca and Jessica have replaced Michelle Shepherd and Tony Edwards.

The first item of business was Policy Committee Member Successors. The voting members are as follows: Representative Phillip Lowe has replaced Chris Crawford, Council Chairman Roger Poston has replaced Councilman James Schofield and City Council member Teresa Myers Ervin has replaced Glynn Willis. The non-voting members are as follows: Dennis Townsend with SCDOT has retired and Kyle Berry succeeds him as the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) District 5 Engineering Administrator. The Study Team members are as follows: Brian Dix with SCDOT replaced Chris Gossett and Jessica Hekter with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has replaced Shane Belcher.

The second item of business was to review the minutes from the June 6, 2014 meeting. Debi asked for a motion. Levonne Powell made a motion to approve and Phillip Lookadoo seconded. Vote carried unanimously.

The third item of business was the Bylaws update. Some SCDOT titles have recently changed. John Walsh, the Deputy Secretary of Engineering for SCDOT has retired and Ron Patton, Chief Engineer for Location & Design for SCDOT has replaced him on the non-voting Policy Committee. Jessica Hekter's title has been added, which is Planning, Air Quality & Right-of-Way Programs Manager and Kevin Sheppard's title has been corrected to Regional Planning Engineer for the Study Team. Debi asked for a motion to recommend an approval to the amendments to the Policy Committee. Michael Bethea made a motion and Phillip Lookadoo seconded. Vote carried unanimously.

The fourth item of business was the FY2016 and FY2017 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). This document was an annual document but is now a two year document per the FHWA. This document details all of the work that staff completed in the previous fiscal year and also the work schedule for the next two fiscal years. FLATS will be allocated \$176,142 for FY2016 plus a carryover of \$202,895 for a total of \$379,307. We will not know FY2017 funding until February of

2016. Upon notification from the SCDOT of this amount the UPWP will be updated brought back before the Study Team. A 10-day public comment period was held for this document with no comments received. Debi asked for a motion to recommend approval of this document to the Policy Committee. Drew Chaplin made a motion and Michael Bethea seconded. Vote carried unanimously.

The fifth item was information regarding a Guideshare reduction due to Emma's Law that was passed in 2014. Kevin Sheppard explained this to the committee. Kevin stated that FHWA had a requirement to minimize DUI reoccurrences. The law required habitual offenders to get an interlock system on their cars. Our legislature chose not to follow the requirement to the letter. They put in a caveat for all people that had fleet vehicles that would allow you to operate the vehicle even though you were a habitual offender. The FHWA reacted by taking 2.5% of all National Highway System (NHS) and Surface Transportation Program (STP) funding and moved it over to safety. As a result the pie had to be reduced by this amount which was a reduction to all Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Council of Governments (COGs). The previous Guideshare allocation amount for the Florence Area Transportation Study (FLATS) was \$3.107M. This was reduced to \$3.035M to begin in FY2015 through FY2019. This happened last year but SCDOT has just learned that the most recent budget has complied with the interlock requirement so hopefully the FY2016 amount will go back to the \$3.107M. If that is the case the TIP will be amended and brought back to the committee.

The sixth item of business was the FY2014-FY2019 TIP financial sheet. The S. Cashua project is to be allocated \$10.5M for construction in FY2016. The FLATS annual guideshare allocation is anticipated to be \$3,035,000 for FY2015-FY2019. It looks like there will be \$336,000 in FY2018 to apply towards another project. FLATS will probably have another project to bring before the committee at the next meeting. SCDOT likes to see a three year window of projects in the TIP per Kevin Sheppard. Debi stated that Senator Leatherman mentioned Bentree Lane/Holly Circle at our recent meeting with him for the next project. Bentree Lane has been reclassified and is now eligible for federal funding. Bentree Lane is currently a city road. Per Michael Bethea, if the SCDOT takes over the maintenance on Bentree Lane after it is widened, the District Engineering Administrator and traffic engineer would work together to identify other roads to give up (for the city to maintain). An agreement will be required between the city and the SCDOT. Kevin stated that assuming that the guideshares go back up to \$3.1M, he has computed the borrowing and payback and in FY2018 you are looking at possibly having \$553,000 available and in FY2019 \$2.829M available. Kevin suggested that Senator Leatherman needs to be made aware that it is going to cost a whole lot more than \$2.8M for the Bentree Lane/Holly Circle project. The last estimate from Michelle Shepherd with the SCDOT in 2012 was for a three lane road of \$5.5M. Kevin added that he would not recommend just a three lane road because you are not increasing capacity and Michael Bethea agreed. Brian Dix stated that it would be very expensive especially with curb and gutter and that the earlier they could start preliminary engineering (PE) the better. It will be several years and probably FY2020 or FY2021 for construction with all of the constraints that they now have. It takes four to five years for permitting and the development process.

The second section of the TIP financial sheet was the Transportation Alternatives Program. This is a statewide competitive grant. Projects are approved by the SCDOT and are not required to be voted on by the FLATS Policy Committee prior to sending to the SCDOT for consideration. However, when a project is approved by the SCDOT within the FLATS area, it is required to be shown in the TIP. Florence School District One was approved by the SCDOT for the FY2014 grant and has been added to the TIP. Florence County applied for the Williamson Road Pedestrian and

Mobility Impaired Pathway for FY2015. This project was approved by the SCDOT and has also been added to the TIP.

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

- US 378 (East Myrtle Beach Hwy) - \$18,342M allocated for construction in FY2015;
- SC 51 (Pamplico Hwy) - \$60,214M allocated for construction in FY2015 and \$51,771M for construction in FY2016.

The fourth section of the TIP presented was Federal Transit Administration. This section lists the amount of FY2015 urban funds applied for by the Public Transportation Agencies within the FLATS area:

- Pee Dee Regional Transportation Authority has been allocated
 - \$599,000 for Capital and \$1,129M for Operations through the FTA 5307 Program;
- Florence County Senior Citizens Association has been allocated
 - \$120,000 for Operations through the FTA 5310 Program;
- Florence County Disabilities and Special Needs Board has been allocated
 - \$56,000 for Capital through the FTA 5310 Program;
- Darlington County Council on Aging has been allocated
 - \$56,000 for Capital through the FTA 5310 Program.

The fifth section of the TIP presented was the Projects Exempt from Guideshare. This section is for information only. These projects are paid for through the Highway Improvement Safety Program (HISP), the National Highway Performance Program (NHPP) and the Surface Transportation Program (STP). As new projects within the FLATS and Pee Dee area are added, the SCDOT provides staff with the information to include in the TIP. The projects highlighted have been added since the last TIP update. The 10-day public comment period for the TIP was held with no comments being received. Debi asked for a motion to recommend approval of the amendments to the Policy Committee. Drew Chaplin made a motion to approve the document and Doug Reimold seconded. Vote carried unanimously.

The seventh item of business was the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) update. A consultant was hired in 2012 to write this document. Projects must be in this document before they can be put in the TIP. The five year update to this document is due by June 2017. We would like to procure a consultant to update this document. The funds will come from the UPWP funding. The original document consultant work was \$170,000 but we do not foresee that much of an expense with the update. Map 21 and performance measure requirements information need to be added and the projects need to be reviewed again to see if any needs to be omitted and if new ones need to be added. There should not be that many changes. Staff will work with the SCDOT to advertise for a Request for Proposal (RFP) and then it will come before the Study Team and Policy Committee. Phillip wanted to know what kind of a procurement process we used as far as RFP or Request for Qualifications (RFQ). Debi stated that for the initial document we advertised for both, but we have been advised by the FHWA that since it is just an update, a RFP is adequate. Kevin said that RFQs are good if you are doing something unusual or unheard of but just to do an update to a LRTP, a RFP is fine. You will get request from most of the major engineering companies so basically in a RFP you would just identify the qualifications you would in a RFQ. Phillip wanted to explore the process. He said that you have more flexibility in the RFQ in that when you submit the RFQ then you get the qualifications and then you give them the scope of work and then you talk about it and select based on that RFQ and negotiate a price. If

that doesn't work then you go to number two. Kevin stated that the RFP has the scope of work also. You select based on what they have submitted. It can also include qualifications. SCDOT can give you the boiler plate RFPs that they have used. The SCDOT wants FLATS to come up with a schedule by the end of the year for the steps in completing this. Debi asked for a motion to recommend approval to the Policy Committee to go forward with the RFP consultant process and to use the funds from the UPWP to pay for the consultant. Phillip Lookadoo made a motion and Jay Graham seconded. Vote carried unanimously.

The eighth item on the agenda was the Transportation Conformity State Implementation Plan (SIP) and Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). Debi explained that there have been amendments to the 2008 MOA agreement that was signed by the MOPs and a new signature is required by all of the MPOs. The requirements in this document must be followed if an area is classified in non-attainment for air quality. Currently FLATS is in attainment. DHEC does not know at this time what the new National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) numbers from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will be and how it will affect the MPOs. The basic amendments to the 2008 MOA are:

- The new MPO in the low country, the Low Country Area Transportation Study (LATS) has been added;
- In Section B.3, the MPO or designee shall be responsible for scheduling and coordinating meetings, preparing and transmitting agendas and ensuring that meeting notes are taken and distributed;
- Section B.9, Based upon comments received and in coordination with the MPO, the lead agency may schedule a meeting where consultation with all affected agencies concerned can be accomplished simultaneously for the resolution of comments and issues. Meeting agendas are the responsibility of the designated lead agency. All meeting agendas, notes and call logistics are the responsibility of the MPO or designee;
- Some typographical errors were corrected;
- Change of signatories and date of signing is required due to the amendments.

Debi asked for a motion to recommend approval to the Policy Committee to resign the new MOA. Drew Chaplin made a motion and Jay Graham seconded. Vote carried unanimously.

The ninth item of business was the FLATS Self-Certification Review. The MPO's are required to be reviewed for federal and state compliance every four years. The FLATS review was held on December 8, 2014. Representatives were the FHWA, the SCDOT and FLATS staff. Overall the Review Team (FHWA/SCDOT) determined the FLATS MPO process is being carried out in accordance with all applicable state and federal requirements. The Review Commendations were:

- The FLATS UPWP is often used as a model throughout the state for other small MPOs to reference. The Review Team commends the MPO for consistently providing a well detailed document that provides clear and thorough information other MPOs can reference.
- The Review Team commends FLATS for creating a user-friendly website and distributes an annual newsletter called the FLATS Press to keep the public informed about local transportation planning updates, projects and upcoming meetings.

The Review Team Recommendations were:

- Organizational/Committee Structure: The Review Team feels that there is a lack of diversity on the Policy Committee compared to the community we serve. They recommended that we explore options on forming a citizen advisory committee to

try and get more minority participation in the transportation planning process. This would be a non-voting committee that would meet prior to the Study Team. We will need more direction on this from the Policy Committee. We have until December 15, 2016 to act on this;

- Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Schedule for Completion. FLATS staff must prepare a schedule of completion for LRTP update for the SCDOT by December 31, 2015. Upon approval from the Policy Committee to hire a consultant to update this document, staff will provide this information to the SCDOT;
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The Review Team recommended staff combine the TIP Narrative and the TIP Financial Sheet as one document on the FLATS webpage for a better understanding of this process for the public. Staff has completed this item;
- Public Participation Plan (PPP). The Review Team recommended exploring more options on how to get more people involved in the transportation planning process, measure the effectiveness of it and include this information in the PPP. We have until July 31, 2016 to act on this;
- Title VI Liaison identification. Debi Matthews has been attending Title VI training and workshops and acting as the FLATS Title VI Liaison since taking over the FLATS MPO duties in 2011. The SCDOT requires in writing, notification of who the FLATS Title VI Liaison is. The SCDOT has been notified in writing that Debi Matthews will serve as the FLATS Title VI Liaison. Item completed.

Levonne Powell asked Kevin Sheppard if whoever the COG had doing Title VI, could they also be the one doing it for SCDOT? Kevin stated that he did not know why not. Debi provided a copy of the Self-Certification Review and comments to the committee in addition to the FLATS Action Plan that she submitted to the FHWA and SCDOT regarding the recommendations.

The tenth item of business was SCDOT updates by Brian Dix.

- South Cashua Project – Plans are wrapping up and it should be advertised for bids by the end of the year. Right of Way should also be coming to a close soon.

Transportation Alternative Projects:

- The No Name Creek Trail – Should be getting bids next Tuesday;
- Francis Marion University SC 327 Enhancement – Should be complete in the next couple of weeks;
- Lucy T. Davis Elementary and Moore Middle School Sidewalks – Preliminary Engineering is underway;
- Williamson Road Pedestrian Improvements – Should be getting the survey work in the next couple of months.

Florence County Forward Projects:

- Pine Needles Road Widening – is complete and open to traffic;
- US 378 Project – Construction is currently underway on all sections. Sections 1-4 are anticipated to be finished with construction in the Summer/Fall of 2016. Section 5 is anticipated to be completed in summer 2017;
- US 76 Widening – Construction is underway and is anticipated to be completed in the fall of 2016;
- TV Road Widening – Construction is currently underway and is anticipated to be completed by spring 2016;
- SC 51 Widening – Preliminary Engineering and Right of Way acquisition are currently underway. This is 24 miles of widening and is in 4 phases. Sections 1 and 2 should be

advertised for bids in the next couple of weeks. Sections 3 and 4 are anticipated to be let in spring of 2016;

- US 301 Bypass Extension/S-107 (Alligator Road) Widening – The SCDOT had a public meeting in January for their input. Preliminary Engineering is underway and right of way acquisition is anticipated to start in the FY2016/2017 time frame.

Brian stated at this time financially everything seems to be going fine. SC 51 will close the loop once they get the bids since it is about a 24 mile project.

The eleventh item of business was Transportation Agency Updates. Chuck MacNeil with PDRTA stated that they are in the middle of the budget cycle. They are not anticipating getting all of their funding requests but for the first time in four years the City of Florence is processing PDRTA's funding request ...the County and Darlington not so much. Lake City is okay and Marion is always a dilemma. They are still optimistic. Ridership continues to increase even though the service diminishes. The numbers in the Florence Transit System continue to grow every year.

Levonne Powell with the Pee Dee COG had nothing to report but asked Brian Dix if the Darlington to Dovesville project is still slated to be completed in November. Brian said yes and he would send her the specifics when he gets back to his office. Levonne also inquired about the resurfacing and intersection improvement projects. Brian said that they were trucking along. She also said that in transit projects there must be more small urban money available because everyone that asked for money got it. Darlington County DSN is the only one eligible that did not apply. Most of the rurals outside of Darlington and Florence were not scoring well so they found a way to add points to them. Darlington DSN is the only one that asked for rural funds so they are on the list to get funded and everyone else is an alternative.

Doug Reimold asked about the round-about in Hartsville in general. Brian said that he thought that was safety money but would take down Doug's email address to get back with him on questions from time to time.

Drew Chaplin asked with the recent accident at 5-points and talk about a round- about there, has there been any discussion or study done for improvement at that intersection? Phillip Lookadoo stated that the only issues that there have been there are congestion and levels of service which is how roads are rated with A being better and E the worst. Phillip said that there have only been two accidents in the last 5.5 years. There is a diagram in the LRTP for a round-about that contemplates other roads around it and ends Cherokee at Pineland. The plan shows it could be constructed within the right-of-way (ROW), but you could effectively lose the Save-Way, Rite-Aid and it may affect Pay Less Shoes and maybe Firestone. There have been a couple of safety analysis and it's not even in the top 20. Michael Bethea said that it would be very difficult to build and how would you control traffic while it is being built. Where do you detour to? Michael also added that they could not put in left turn phases because it would just bog the intersection down. If you have three or four left turn phases then through traffic is just going to get backed up and it already is. If you put them there, it will encourage more left turners and that will be worse. Michael said the round-about on Hoffmeyer Rd. is doing well. Single lanes work well but not multi-lanes.

The twelfth item of business was the FLATS newsletter. Debi presented the newsletter to the members, which contains information regarding the LRTP and the update that will soon begin. The newsletters are placed at different venues throughout the County for the public.

There being no further discussion, Debi asked for a motion to adjourn. Jay Graham made a motion and Levonne Powell seconded. Vote carried unanimously.