



Spartanburg Area Transportation Study

SPATS Policy Committee Minutes

February 13, 2023

Present:

Bob Walker
Pat Watson
Glenn Greer, II
Jerome Rice
Whit Kennedy

Jessica Coker
Manning Lynch
Julian Hankinson
Woody Willard

John Throckmorton
Phillip Stone
Scott Messenger
Patrick Kay

1. Welcome, Introductions & Approval of Minutes (November 14th, 2022)

Manning Lynch (First Vice-Chair) called the meeting to order. Chair Henderson-Myers was not in attendance due to the death of her husband.

Mr. Lynch requested a motion to approve the minutes of the November 14th, 2022 meeting as shared with members prior to the meeting through the shared file materials. Mr. Throckmorton moved and Mr. Willard seconded the motion. The minutes will now be made available online on the SPATS website.

2. SPATS Policy Committee Member Elections

Jessica Coker moved to nominate Manning Lynch as Chair, Jerome Rice as First Vice-Chair, and Rosalyn Henderson-Myers as Second Vice-Chair, seconded by Bob Walker.

3. SCDOT Transportation Alternatives Program Updates

Ms. Amy Blinson, Transportation Alternatives Program Manager, SCDOT, offered updates on the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). Ms. Blinson is from the new Office of Local Government Services, formed about a year ago. This office also houses the C-fund program and the Local Public Agency program that assists MPOs who want to apply to be approved to manage a SCDOT funded project themselves.

The new transportation legislation, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), recently generated billions of dollars in discretionary grant opportunities. SCDOT has established a strategic plan to apply for these funds. This plan includes applying for projects which are aligned with their 10-Year Plan, focusing on interstates, pavements, rural road safety, and bridges. <https://www.scdot.org/projects/ten-year-plan.aspx> SCDOT cannot assist local entities with their own grants, although they have shared a list of suggested on-call consultants. Local entities will coordinate with SCDOT ahead of the application process if the discretionary grant project they are applying for connects to the state highway system.

IIJA has funded the TAP through 2026. FHWA sends money to the states in two ways: 1) state program for rural areas (about \$9 million) 2) TMA programs for the TMA areas above 200,000 in population (about \$6.2 million between the 6 TMAs). Local governments not inside a TMA program would apply directly to SCDOT.

The population “pots” have changed from two 1) populations up to 50,000 and 2) populations 50,000 up to 200,000) to three - 1) rural up to 5,000 population (most amount

allocated of the three pots), 2) 5,000 to 50,000 population and 3) 50,000 to 200,000 population (includes SPATS). The states are allowed to determine project location and impact in high need areas. High need areas defined by SCDOT follows the Dept. of Revenue approach, dividing the counties into five economic development tiers based on unemployment and per capita income. Tiers 3 and 4 are those with the highest unemployment rate and the lowest per capita income. SCDOT will be more inclined to choose the projects that are focused on safety, align with their 10-Year Plan, and those that implement Complete Streets policies. Eligible applicants have not changed (local governments, school districts, public land agencies, tribal governments, MPOs serving populations 200,000 or less, non-profits, and any local or regional entity that is responsible for transportation oversight, including COGs). Eligible projects still include pedestrian facility, bicycle facility, streetscape (sans landscaping only), and safe routes to school projects.

There is no cap of \$400,000 as before, and the minimum request is \$500,000. The match requirement is still 20% of the project with an 80% reimbursement. The funds have to be obligated within 4 years of approval (“shovel-ready”) or they lapse and are returned to FHWA. SCDOT could “forward” the funds to those phases.

Phasing a project has always been and will still be encouraged, especially with those requiring property acquisition.

SCDOT holds 2 competitive rounds a year with request for letters of intent/pre-application. Scoring criteria includes safety, feasibility, planning and connectivity, previous TAP performance, and public involvement. Projects scored a “C” or better are eligible and the projects will be awarded highest scores first until all funding is given out. Those chosen will be asked to submit a full application. SCDOT can now assist with match. The process includes public input.

A TAP workshop for interested parties will be held March 27, 2023 to kickoff the application round with projects to be awarded in September. This information is in a comprehensive guide on the SCDOT website at:

<https://www.scdot.org/projects/community-transportation-alternatives.aspx>

4. US Census Bureau and MPO Boundary Updates

A Census Bureau video explaining the definition of urban area was shown. Before 2020, urban area was defined as population density at the block level at least 2,500 people in area. In 2020, urban area is defined as housing density at the block level at least 2,000 housing units or 5,000 people. The change was due to data being able to be collected between censuses, not every 10 years.

Mr. Walden, SCDOT Regional Planner, provided a high-level overview of the newly released US Census Bureau urban areas. The housing density determines if an area is considered urban. The population after the urban area is revealed determines if a study area is either a Metropolitan Planning Organization (50,000 population or more) or a Transportation Management Area (200,000 population or more). Areas outside of these boundaries and considered rural will be coordinating with a Council of Governments (in our area’s case, the Appalachian Council of Governments). Mr. Walden reviewed maps of the Upstate, the SPATS urban area, and the Inman area showing the 2020 urban area as well as study area boundaries. The urban area has considerably contracted from 2010 to 2020 mostly due to the new housing density criteria.

SPATS will work with SCDOT and FHWA over the course of the next year to redefine and confirm the SPATS study area boundary based on a 20-year projected growth rate, so as to

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include areas believed to become urban within the next 20 years. The funding allocation rate is not determined by the study area boundary but by the urban area. Spartanburg continues to grow toward the Greenville County line and the Census has determined Inman as their own urban area separate from the Spartanburg urban area, although Inman is still included in the SPATS study area boundary except for a small area that it is suggested should be brought into the study area boundary (due to the fact that it has become urban since the last Census, falling into the 20-year projected growth rate category).

Mr. Willard requested to discuss pulling in the Woodruff area into the SPATS study area boundary given the many growth and development announcements in the last 6 months and the growth that is expected down there and the SC 101 Corridor. If the SPATS study area should include what will become urban in 20 years, it needs to be a part of SPATS, not GPATS or the Mauldin area. The boundary between SPATS and GPATS has some of Spartanburg County. It was suggested to push this line to the Spartanburg County line because GPATS does not fund any projects in this area although they are in our county. Mr. Walden explained that once SPATS includes any part of the GPATS TMA into their study area boundary, SPATS would function like a TMA as far as the submission of additional federal required documents, but receive no additional allocation funding. SPATS and GPATS could agree to redraw the line to the county line. Ms. Coker expressed agreement.

Currently, the SPATS study area population is 196,943. The next Census, SPATS most likely will grow to the TMA status of 200,000 or more population.

Mr. Walden explained that if we took part of the existing GPATS TMA, staff would be required to take on the responsibilities of a TMA and function as a TMA without the additional allocation of a TMA. The Rock Hill area is an example of an MPO that took part of the Charlotte urban area after the 2010 Census even though was not a TMA in preparation for the future growth. They have functioned as a TMA over the last 10 years and now been designated as a TMA this census.

Mr. Willard asked if the urban area boundaries could be changed. Mr. Walden explained the Census determines these not FHWA/SCDOT and that SPATS and SCDOT can work together to propose a change to the SPATS study area boundary, not the urban area. Some area in Greer is considered rural still, and it would take the two urban areas coming together more for that to change. We will have to discuss how Greer fits into this scenario. Most likely this area will be urban in 20 years.

Mr. Willard, Ms. Coker and Glenn Greer II expressed an interest in exploring the appeal process to include Woodruff and Greer as this is the fastest growing area in our county. Glenn Greer II commented that if the Greenville urban area is already in the Greer area and now there is a Mauldin-Simpsonville urban area, what keeps them from incorporating the Mauldin-Simpsonville area towards Woodruff and the Greenville urban area over towards Spartanburg County further rather than having the Spartanburg urban area push back. Mr. Lynch expressed his concern that in this scenario, the SPATS funding decreases while the GPATS area funding increases. The gaps are not filled unless you move the lines.

Dr. Stone mentioned that the way Greer grows has been a question all his life. Mr. Kay led off a short discussion on Woodruff not being in SPATS. It was determined last census that Woodruff would not be projected to be urban in 20 years. He was surprised that Pacolet is considered high-growth and not Woodruff. Mr. Walden mentioned that maybe Woodruff felt at the time of the 2010 Census that they would be better served with funding from the COG.

There will be a series of meetings over the course of this year. Mr. Walden needs rough boundaries by the Fall. Ms. Coker reiterated staff and partners study bringing Woodruff into the study area boundary and pulling the SPATS area to the county line for SCDOT and FHWA approval. Unless the urban area (based on housing density) expands in the 2030 Census and this area has over 200,000 in population, SPATS will not become a TMA.

The major funding comes directly from the FHWA to the TMAs. The SCDOT allocates the funding to the MPOs and COGs; it is not directly from FHWA.

Mr. Lynch asked staff to verify the appeal process and areas to study for adjustments to the SPATS boundary. Mr. Walden will work with Ms. Bollinger to set up meetings to further discuss the Census urban area and the MPO study area boundary and any changes discussed here.

5. **Reidville Road Corridor Feasibility Report Updates**

Mr. Walden gave an overview of the Reidville Road Corridor Feasibility Study timeline (moved up in agenda). The Planning (PL) phase for studying the feasibility of SC 290 to SC 146 for potential widening, access management, intersection improvements, bicycle and pedestrian facilities to satisfy Complete Streets requirements, etc. with the report recommendations of improvements, anticipated schedule and costs. He continues to be in negotiations with the consultant, expected to be completed by the end of this month. He expects to schedule a kickoff meeting in April after a signed contract and notice to proceed. SPATS staff, Reidville community and other stakeholders will be at the table. The consultant will most likely break the corridor up into phases. He expects the report to be completed in 10-12 months. He will bring a further update and schedule based on the notice to proceed for the June Policy Committee meeting.

6. **SCDOT PRE-CONSTRUCTION Updates - Guideshare Projects**

Kit Scott, SCDOT Program Manager, presented the SPATS Guideshare Projects' Status Report as shared with members prior to the meeting through the virtual link materials, including upcoming projects, projects in design, projects in construction, and projects completed.

UPCOMING PROJECTS:

SC 85 and I-585/Hearon Circle Intersection Improvement : Stantec is working through a small purchase contract to evaluate alternatives. Expected beginning schedule for each phase: Preliminary Engineering (PE) FY22, ROW Obligation FY28, and Construction Obligation FY30.

SC 9 and Shoally Creek Rd./4th Street Intersection Improvement:

Awaiting consultant QA responses on right of way plans. ROW obligation to begin Spring 2023. Construction obligation anticipated Spring 2024.

<https://scdot.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=6e174e11f954473e85af3b22df0c7a0f&folderid=4e17c266ce0948f09afdf3b21f429b15>

SC 9 and Parris Bridge Road Intersection Improvement/SC 9 and Sloane Garden Road Intersection Improvement: Awaiting PE obligation. Design using a consultant from Road On Call Contract. PE for Parris Bridge Road increased to \$1M and Sloane Garden Road to \$600K using right-sizing guidelines.

Wadsworth Trail Phase 5: Utility investigation small purchase order complete. Most utilities located on the east side, so SCDOT is evaluating constructing the path on the west side. They are evaluating scope with current funding but do not believe it is enough at this

time. Ms. Coker asked Ms. Scott the amount they anticipated needing. Ms. Scott believes they need double the funding that is available now due to Right-of-Way costs. \$150,000 is currently programmed for ROW. There are 47-50 properties to acquire Right-of-Way from and therefore, Right-of-Way costs are anticipated to increase to at least \$700,000-\$1.8 million.

Ms. Coker said that we need to scrap this project, give PAL their money back and reallocate the funds to a project that would serve that area, and be less costly and more impactful, specifically a turn lane on Anderson Mill Road at the SC 296 (Reidville Road) intersection. She mentioned her desire to make a motion as a body to direct staff to look into that and come back to the Committee with recommendations to make that happen. She stated further that she does not think \$5 million dollars or more would serve the community with a footpath along that road. That road is seeing dramatic development and that intersection is really horrible. If we were to spend less than a million dollars or maybe even around a million dollars on a turn lane alone would dramatically improve that intersection.

Julian Hankinson stated that we need to look at the whole area associated with growth there-we have seen from the census discussions this morning how the growth is moving that way. A lot of the residential growth out there is fueled by all the development along SC 101 and SC 290. He believes we need to see how Anderson Mill Road is almost completely built out with subdivisions-and the trail would connect Woodridge, Londonderry, Hawk Creek, and everything else to the Shoals on the Tyger River. We have spent \$28 million on a shared path along the road to Glendale Shoals. I think the people on the Westside need a similar investment in being able to do this type of activity, being able to get out and walk down to the Shoals. I'd like to see more information about exactly what the population density is in this area and get an understanding of cost-benefit here. Certainly we can find some money to fix the intersection at SC 296 and Anderson Mill Road-no problem. Ms. Coker agreed and said it is on the list in 2030 but if we could move that project up to right now, it would be a worthy project.

Mr. Lynch restated Ms. Coker's request for staff to study this and come back and be prepared to talk about what the alternatives would be at the next meeting in June and what we can do for the trail. Ms. Coker agreed. He agrees with Mr. Hankinson that there are a lot of people that would benefit but it seems out of kilter to spend \$5 million on a sidewalk. Ms. Coker agreed, especially when other agencies have really impactful projects that could use funding elsewhere. Is it correct that we would give PAL their money back since they have contributed to this project?

Sherry Dull reviewed the total funding available for the project: \$1 million in Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding, \$1 million in SPATS Guideshare, \$500,000 in county match through the Parks and Recreation Infrastructure Fund.

Ms. Scott restated she believes it is at \$2.5 million and we are looking at a minimum of \$3.5 million to \$4.5 million, and that is with the minimum amount of utilities, moving overhead power, because putting construction equipment under power lines is not allowed. Mr. Hankinson added that the road itself could use some improvement with as much traffic that is on it now. It might be the same situation as Country Club Road. Mr. Lynch added maybe it should be designed like Country Club Road and many agreed, with Ms. Coker adding but just not take so long.

Mr. Lynch restated the motion, for staff to look at Wadsworth Trail and study this and bring back alternatives for the next meeting, seconded by Dr. Stone.

Lyman Livability Connections-Phase III: Construction will start late summer/early fall. Letting date is June 2023. SCDOT is finishing up ROW certification currently.

SC 215 (Blackstock Rd.) and SC 296 (Reidville Rd.) Intersection Improvement : In PE Phase. Surveying completed this month and they are now kicking off preliminary design.

SC 296 (Reidville Rd) and Anderson Mill Intersection Improvement: Small purchase to look at traffic alternatives through AECOM. SCDOT has seen a draft of these alternatives, but that is not the final deliverable. The deliverables should be complete by the end of this month. Then Ms. Scott suggested that we have a special meeting to show the alternatives and would like to include Ms. Coker because she represents that area and other interested members from the Policy Committee to get their opinion on the alternatives.

PROJECTS UNDER CONSTRUCTION:

Lyman Traffic Triangle: Improve access management traffic operations at three main intersections: US 29/Pine Ridge Road, SC 358 (Holly Springs Road)/Pine Ridge Road, and US 29/SC 129/SC 358 (Holly Springs Rd.)/SC 292. Awarded to Eagles Construction Company last week. Anticipated completion: June 30, 2024. Preconstruction meeting will most likely be late March and start construction late Spring. [Lyman Traffic Triangle Project Link in SCDOT Project Viewer](#)

Mr. Walker continued to report citizen requests for extending the project scope to over the bridge. Mr. Greer believes the operational changes will help the traffic flow at the intersection with the current funding, knowing there is insufficient funds to improve the bridge issue.

Country Club Road Corridor Improvements: Move utilities first, then construction begin again. Current completion May 2025. Mr. Willard mentioned new potholes need to be addressed and the blocking of the Pine St. Intersection, although the repaving is appreciated. Ms. Scott will have Joseph Fowler address. <https://scdot.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=b0797125b41b4c6e931d576595c1205b&folderid=0875c7bba78e45c0b1c7c5fab49fd747>

1. SCDOT PRE-CONSTRUCTION Updates -NONGUIDESHARE Projects

Ms. Scott presented the SPATS NONGUIDESHARE Projects' Status Report as shared with members prior to the meeting through the virtual link materials, including upcoming projects, projects in design, projects in construction, and projects completed.

Detailed updates and the corresponding SCDOT Project Viewer link include:

I-85 and SC 290 Diverging Diamond Interchange: Construction began June 2022. Parapet wall removed on the bridge and deck demolition started. Earthwork underway. Drainage has been installed. Anticipated completion June 2024. See link below for project updates.

<https://scdot-environmental-project-site-scdot.hub.arcgis.com/pages/i-85-at-sc-290-east-main-street-interchange-in-spartanburg-county>

This bridge will be closed for one weekend towards the end of the project. We will get a reminder before this happens. Website page has updates on the work to be done for the next month.

Mr. Kay alerted that the left lane work is underway in front of Sealed Air before you get to the I-85 bridge. Ms. Scott explained that is the earthwork removing the subgrade down in preparation for repavement. Mr. Greer also added he sees drainage work.

Mary Black Rail Trail Extension - is complete and was open to the public over the holidays.

SC 85 Bridges over Howard Street and Southern RR and SC 85 Northbound over Lawson's Fork Creek: Replace bridges over S-42-995 (Buffington Rd.)/Norfolk Southern RR and S-2 (Howard St.) between Hearon Circle and New Cut Road as well as the bridge on SC 85 Northbound over Lawson's Fork Creek. Work began June 2021. Anticipated completion is September 2023.

SC 85 over Howard St. (S 2): 65% complete. Concrete cylinder piles have been driver recently. Anticipated completion June 2023.

SC 85 NB over Lawson Fork Creek: 99% complete-awaiting ideal paving conditions.

SC 85 Bridges over Norfolk Southern RR and Buffington Rd. (S 995): 75% complete. Southbound bridge deck poured. Remaining MSE walls are beginning to be built.

I-85 Reconstruction and Widening Mile Marker 77-98 : Reconstruct I-85 from MM 77 (SC 85) - MM 80 (Gossett Rd) and widen I-85 from four to six lanes (one additional travel lane in each direction) from MM 80 (Gossett Rd) to MM 98 (Broad River) for an approximately 21 miles. 85.52% complete. Expected completion September 2024.

I-85 Reconstruction and Widening Mile Marker 98-106 : 99.9% complete. Expected completion June 2023.

Appalachian COG projects:

US 176 (Main St.) and SC 357 (Depot St./Holly Springs Road): Construction complete. Punch list and change order work is still required.

N. Randolph Ave. Sidewalk: Project was let September 2021. Construction is complete.

Please see Project Status Report spreadsheet and the SCDOT Project Viewer for project status updates between SPATS meetings:

<https://www.scdot.org/business/projectviewer.aspx>

2. Other Business and Adjourn

There being no other business, Mr. Lynch requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Throckmorton moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Willard.

Next meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 12, 2023, 10 am in Conference Room 6 (downstairs).