



Stakeholder Working Group

Meeting #5 minutes

Date: Wednesday, August 12 at 10:00 a.m.

Location: WebEx

Steering Committee Attendees

Name	Organization
George Freeman	CAGE
Danny Thrower	Berkeley County
Kathryn Basha	BCDCOG
Sarah Cox	BCDCOG
Councilman Herb Sass	Charleston County Council
Councilman Dickie Schweers	Charleston County Council
Katie Zimmerman	Charleston Moves
James Wilson	Charleston Water System
Don Benjamin	Charleston Water Systems
Jason Crowley	Coastal Conservation League
Garrett Nichols	Dominion Energy
Bryan Brooks	Mt. Pleasant Waterworks
Tim Henderson	SCDOT
Daniel Burton	SCDOT
Michael Fulmer	SCDOT
Jen Necker	SCDOT

Project Team Attendees

Name	Organization
Cal Oyer	Charleston County
Jim Armstrong	Charleston County
Richard Turner	Charleston County
Steve Thigpen	Charleston County
Devri Detoma	Charleston County
Brad Morrison	Town of Mt. Pleasant
Shannon Meder	HDR
David Kinard	HDR
Michael Darby	HDR
Samantha Dubay	HDR
Blair Wade	HDR



Theresa McClure	HDR
Robert Flagler	HDR
Rhett Reidenbach	Reveer Group
Jim Fisher	Stantec
Ed Givens	Fellowship Strategies

Agency Attendees

Name	Organization
Richard Darden	USACE

Below is a summary of the Stakeholder Working Group (SWG) Meeting #5 held virtually on Wednesday, August 12 at 10:00 a.m.

Welcome & Introductions

Theresa McClure opened the meeting, thanked attendees for participating, provided an overview of the WebEx program, announced the meeting was being recorded, introduced the project team and conducted roll call for attendees.

Cal Oyer welcomed the group, provided an overview of the topics for the meeting, reiterated the County's commitment to working with impacted communities and announced Alternative 1 was identified as the proposed alternative.

Highway 41 Corridor Improvements Project Presentation

View http://hwy41sc.com/assets/documents/Hwy-41_SWG_Meeting5_081220.pdf

Project Status Update

To start the meeting the project team played the proposed alternative informational video that would be available in the virtual public meeting. The video explained the project background, how the proposed alternative was identified and its features.

Shannon Meder provided an overview of the project need and anticipated growth along the Highway 41 corridor and along the Highway 17 corridor in 2045. Shannon explained that to address that growth the team had to consider the region's growth in this project and how to best minimize impacts to communities. Shannon explained the factors used in the alternatives screening process that identified the proposed alternative.

Proposed Alternative

Shannon Meder walked stakeholders through highlights of Alternative 1 that included improved traffic times, fewer noise impacts, lower cost, fewer impacts on Laurel Hill County Park and fewer wetlands impacts. Shannon explained the features of Alternative 1 including additional lanes along Highway 41 (two lanes in each direction with a center turn lane), multi-use paths on the west side of Highway 41, pedestrian crossings, intersection improvements and sidewalks along the east side of Highway 41.

Dunes West and Highway 41 Intersection Design

David Kinard explained the design options and features of the proposed continuous flow intersection design to attendees. David explained the continuous flow intersection proposed at the Dunes West and Highway 41 intersection and how traffic would operate through this design. David explained that the projected traffic volumes at this intersection would not allow for a traditional intersection based on the number of left-turns. A traffic visualization video was played for stakeholders showing how traffic would operate at this intersection.

Phillips Community Pedestrian Crosswalks

David Kinard provided an overview of the proposed crosswalks through the Phillips Community at Penders Boulevard and Bennett Charles Road and Parkers Island Road and Canyon Lane and the project's commitment to improving safety for pedestrians along the corridor.

Highway 17 and Highway 41 Intersection Design – Diverging Diamond Interchange

David Kinard explained the proposed diverging diamond interchange at the intersection of Highway 41 and Highway 17, how projected traffic volumes made it necessary and how traffic would operate in the proposed design.

The project team played three traffic visualization videos showing AM and PM peak traffic for the Highway 41 and Highway 17 intersection in 2045 and how traffic would operate in the proposed design.

David provided an overview of the safety concerns on making a left-turn onto Hamlin Road off Highway 17 and how the project team incorporated a dedicated-signalized U-turn at Old Georgetown Road to accommodate access to Hamlin Road. David also explained the additional changes in the proposed design at the intersection of Brickyard Parkway, Hamlin Road and Highway 17. A traffic visualization video was played to show AM and PM peak traffic operations at the Brickyard Parkway, Hamlin Road and Highway 17 intersections with the proposed design.

Interim Improvements

David Kinard provided an update on the construction schedule for the Interim Improvements. A traffic visualization video was played to show traffic operations for the proposed improvement at the intersection of Joe Rouse Road and Highway 41.

Community Mitigation

Shannon Meder discussed the efforts to minimize impacts to the communities along Highway 41, the mitigation committee that will be formed and the Community Mitigation Plan defining mitigation commitments to adjacent communities and the natural environment. Shannon explained the process of collecting input from local communities to develop the mitigation plan and next steps to working with the communities to further develop the plan. Shannon shared some of the strategies already included in the mitigation plan that included commitments to impacted property owners, assistance for heirs property owners, education programs, supporting community events, documenting cultural properties, developing community resources, expanding access to Horlbeck Creek, providing landscaped buffers, improved signage and improved access to churches in the community.

Schedule & Next Steps

Shannon Meder provided an overview of the project schedule and next steps including the evaluation process for public comments through the virtual public meeting, permitting and documentation steps for submittal to the US Army Corps of Engineers.

Questions & Answers, Open Discussion

Theresa McClure facilitated a Q&A session for stakeholders. Questions are listed below.

- George Freeman stated the CAGE organization and Seven Mile community are disappointed with the proposed alternative and expressed concerns about their level of involvement and the alternatives they provided to the project team not being considered.
 - Shannon Meder stated the project team has been incredibly active with outreach to the Phillips Community and Seven Mile in the past, and have additional outreach scheduled for the future. It

was noted that the project team has collected thousands of comments from all communities within the project area.

- Cal Oyer added that the project team had attempted to meet with Mr. Freeman and his organization prior to this meeting, and the team still wanted to do so.
- Katie Zimmerman asked what percentage of Black homeowners, residents and business owners will be impacted by Alternative 1 versus white residents, renters and business owners. Katie added she would very much like to know the actual percentages, especially for environmental justice.
 - Shannon Meder stated the project team did not have that information broken down into percentages and have not collected specific demographics on the project outside of what is currently available in reviewable data. Shannon added the team had numbers for the properties impacted within the communities and similar information that could be provided.
- Jason Crowley asked about the difference in wetlands impacts between Alternative 1 and Alternative 7a. Jason added 7a goes around the Phillips Community and is surprised that Alternative 1 is moving forward when a viable alternative was presented. Jason added to Katie Zimmerman's comment about environmental justice and stated this would further degrade and deteriorate a neighborhood that is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and asked what the Section 106 review process is going to be as part of NEPA.
 - Blair Wade stated Alternative 1 and Alternative 7a each had about five acres of tidal or critical area wetland impacts and 2.9 acres and 6.2 acres of freshwater impacts respectively. Blair added the freshwater impacts are located on Laurel Hill County Park and surrounding the communities impacted by 7a, which are protected under restrictive covenants. Blair stated the Section 106 review would be triggered when the permit application and environmental documents are submitted to the US Army Corps of Engineers. Blair added the project team has done a cultural resources study that will be distributed to the State Historic Preservation Office and anticipate a consultation on addressing impacts to the Phillips Community.
 - Shannon Meder stated the team is not proposing any displacements of people in the Phillips Community and the goal is to keep people in their homes and on their properties, and to work closely with them to lessen the impacts of some of the right of way acquisition at the frontage of properties.
- James Wilson asked what the planned improvements are for the Clements Ferry Road side of the 41 bridge.
 - David Kinard stated there is a tie-in with Clements Ferry Road, there would be re-striping to four lanes over the bridge and adding a bike & pedestrian path on the south side of the bridge and 600' of work to tie it all together on that side.
- Katie Zimmerman asked how many residences are impacted in Alternative 1 versus Alternative 7a
 - Blair Wade stated there are no residential or commercial relocations associated with the project, 213 parcels for Alternative 1 that would have right of way impacts and 164 for Alternative 7a and impacts to about 30 acres for Alternative 1 and 58 acres for Alternative 7a.
- Katie Zimmerman asked if an air quality study had been conducted to understand health impacts to Phillips Community residents.
 - Blair Wade stated part of the Community Characterization Report and Community Impact Assessment does include discussion of health impacts, but an air quality study has not been required for the project.
- Katie Zimmerman asked what would make the sidewalk and multi-use path enjoyable and encourage people to actually use them.
 - Theresa McClure asked Katie to clarify if the question was about making the multi-use path and sidewalks along 41 accessible and usable for pedestrians and bicyclists.
 - Shannon Meder stated these features were put in place to connect to both existing and planned bike & pedestrian facilities in the Town of Mount Pleasant and the team is proposing a landscape

buffering along both typical sections to help soften and provide shade and encourage people to use those facilities.

- Katie Zimmerman asked if the multi-use path is on the opposite side of the road from the county park.
 - Shannon Meder stated the multi-use path was on the west side of 41, opposite the park.
- Katie Zimmerman asked about progress on pedestrian access for the interim improvements.
 - Michael Darby stated the interim improvements project at Highway 41 and Highway 17 would maintain the current crosswalks that are there today and the crosswalk at Joe Rouse Road would also be maintained.
- Brian Brooks asked what the fall plans are for the interim improvements.
 - Michael Darby stated the plans would be intersection improvements at Highway 17 & Highway 41 and Joe Rouse Road & Highway 41.
- Brad Morrison suggested posting the interim improvements plans to the project website.
- Brian Brooks stated he had seen plans for interim improvements at Highway 17 & Highway 41 but had not seen plans for Joe Rouse Road & Highway 41.
 - Michael Darby stated the project team would share those plans.
- Jason Crowley stated the project looks to be benefitting the Cainhoy development and asked how Berkeley County of the City of Charleston directly paying for this.
 - David Kinard stated the traffic coming from Cainhoy Plantation is just a minor part of the traffic growth along Highway 41, most residents of that community would be more likely to use Clements Ferry Road to access I-526 and the majority of growth is coming without that specific development. David added there was coordination with Berkeley County for part of the project, but this project is funded by and voted on by Charleston County residents.
- Kathryn Basha asked if transit improvements outlined in the Mount Pleasant Transit Study been considered.
 - Michael Darby stated the study was reviewed and a memo of recommendations related to the project and transit had been prepared by the project team. Michael added the main focus for transit would be along Highway 17 to maintain current stops and the team looked at opportunities for transit stops along Highway 41.
- Katie Zimmerman asked if the project team had looked at the power easement running through Laurel Hill as a location for the multi-use path.
 - Michael Darby stated the project team has not examined the easement at this time for bike/ped accommodations.
- George Freeman stated the Seven Mile community views left turns off Highway 17 onto Highway 41 as the only problem with that intersection and they cannot understand how the solution is not an improvement with the traffic going into Park West and Dunes West. George added the traffic count they've examined show at least 27k daily trips along Bessemer Road and the traffic count for Highway 17 went down in 2019.
 - David Kinard stated he understood these concerns and the project team looked at several options and the traffic projections through 2045. David added the project team does want to sit down with the CAGE and Seven Mile community to discuss the options.
- George Freeman asked what would happen with the rest of Highway 17 based on the traffic projections of 90k people and average daily trips in the area and if the rest of 17 would not be effective.
 - David Kinard stated the 90k projection is between Long Point Road and Highway 41 specifically and is where the heaviest movement would be. David added the improvements to this area is specific to the Highway 41 capacity issue and how it impacts Highway 17 based on the referendum that was passed. David added the team has been able to identify a solution in an environmentally friendly manner, there are no relocations, no one will be forced to move, no businesses will be forced out and it is all being done in a contextually sensitive manner.

Cal Oyer thanked everyone for their participation and comments, stated the team would continue to reach out to make the project as least impactful as possible and encouraged any stakeholders to reach out to the project team with questions or comments.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:00 p.m.

Action Items

- Add plans for the interim improvements to the project website
- Share the transit study plans with stakeholders
- Share stakeholder presentation and videos