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Prepared for:



Prepared by:



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MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

Prepared for:



Prepared by:



**MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN
THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION,
THE SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION,
AND THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE**

**REGARDING THE I-526 AND LONG POINT ROAD INTERCHANGE IMPROVEMENT
PROJECT IN CHARLESTON COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA**

WHEREAS, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), proposes to improve the I-526 and Long Point Road Interchange in Charleston County; and

WHEREAS, the Area of Potential Effect (APE) for the entire project, extends 1.5 miles along Long Point Road from the South Carolina Ports Authority Wando Welch Terminal to Egypt Road and 2.17 miles along I-526 between the marshes of Horlbeck and Rathall Creeks (see attachment), and

WHEREAS, The Snowden Historic District, an African American freedman community established in 1865, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) but it lies outside of the proposed project footprint and will therefore not be adversely affected by the proposed improvements, and

WHEREAS, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has determined that proposed Long Point Road Improvement Project in Charleston County, South Carolina, will have an adverse effect upon Archaeological Site 38CH2683, a property determined eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, and

WHEREAS, the FHWA and the SCDOT has consulted with the South Carolina (State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. Sec. 470f) and its implementing regulations (36 CFR Part 800) to resolve adverse effects, and

WHEREAS, the SCDOT has consulted with the Catawba Nation, Muscogee (Creek) Nation, and Eastern Shawnee in accordance with our consultation agreements about the undertaking's anticipated impacts on historic properties, as required by 36 CFR § 800.6, and received no requests to participate in the undertaking, and

WHEREAS, the SCDOT has consulted with the Snowden Community Civic Association (SCCA) and the African American Settlement Community Historic Commission (AASCHC), for which Archaeological Site 38CH2683 has cultural and historical significance, and has invited SCCA and AASCHC to review and contribute to the MOA; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with 36 CFR § 800.6(a)(1), the FHWA has notified the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) of its adverse effect determination providing the specified documentation, and the ACHP has chosen not to participate, and

NOW, THEREFORE, the FHWA, the SCDOT, and the South Carolina SHPO agree that the undertaking will be implemented according to the following stipulations in order to take into account the effects of the undertaking on Archaeological Site 38CH2683.

I. STIPULATIONS

The FHWA and the SCDOT will ensure that the following stipulations are implemented:

- A. SCDOT's archaeological consultant, or staff, will develop a treatment plan for data recovery investigations at Archaeological Site 38CH2683. The treatment plan will include a description of the project's research design and sampling strategy. The treatment plan will be submitted to the South Carolina SHPO for review and approval prior to any fieldwork. The South Carolina SHPO will make a reasonable effort to review the treatment plan(s) no later than thirty days after receipt. All archaeological and historical investigation will be carried out by professionals who meet Secretary of the Interior's qualifications.
- B. All plans and reports developed for the treatment of Archaeological Site 38CH2683 shall incorporate guidance from the Secretary of the Interior's "Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Documentation" (48 FR 44734-37) and the President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation publication, Treatment of Archaeological Properties (ACHP 1980). In addition, these materials will be consistent with South Carolina Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Investigations (2013).
- C. At least one on-site (or virtual) meeting between the SCDOT, the FHWA, and the South Carolina SHPO will take place during field investigations in order to discuss any necessary revisions to the original scope of work. Any revisions made to the original scope of work will be attached to the approved treatment plan and this agreement.
- D. A draft technical report of data recovery investigations will be submitted to the South Carolina SHPO for review and approval within twelve (12) months from the last day of fieldwork. The draft technical report will be consistent with the standards outlined in South Carolina Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Investigations (2013). The South Carolina SHPO reserves the right to submit the draft technical report to qualified professional archaeologists for the purpose of peer review.
- E. Within three (3) months of the draft report approval, SCDOT will provide one bound copy and one Portable Document Format (PDF) for the SHPO and two bound copies and one PDF copy of the final technical report for the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology (SCIAA). The PDF file will be developed according to the specifications and requirements of the SHPO. A separate digital abstract from the report (in Word or html format) will also be provided to the SHPO. The abstract file can be provided on the same CD as the PDF file.
- F. The SCDOT will ensure that all artifacts recovered during archaeological investigations are stabilized and processed for curation at the SCIAA. SCDOT will notify the SHPO when artifacts have been given over to SCIAA for curation.
- G. The SCDOT shall develop a public education component related to the data recovery investigations at Archaeological Site 38CH2683. The SCDOT shall submit a plan for

the public education component to the South Carolina SHPO within six months of completing data recovery investigations at Archaeological Site 38CH2683. The SCDOT shall implement plan for developing public materials within two years of completing data recovery investigations at Archaeological Site 38CH2683.

II. Duration

This MOA shall be null and void if its terms are not carried out within five (5) years from the date of its execution, unless the signatories agree in writing to an extension for carrying out its terms.

III. Late Discoveries

If unanticipated cultural materials (e.g., large, intact artifacts or animal bones; large soils stains or patterns of soil stains; buried brick or stone structures; clusters of brick or stone) or human skeletal remains are discovered during construction activities, then the Resident Construction Engineer shall be immediately notified and all work in the vicinity of the discovered materials shall cease until an evaluation can be made by the SCDOT archaeologist in consultation with the South Carolina SHPO.

IV. Monitoring and Reporting

Each year following the execution of this MOA until it expires or is terminated, the SCDOT shall provide all parties to this MOA a summary report detailing work carried out pursuant to its terms. Such report shall include any scheduling changes proposed, any problems encountered, and any disputes and objections received in FHWA's and SCDOT's efforts to carry out the terms of this MOA.

V. Dispute Resolution

The FHWA, the SCDOT, and the South Carolina SHPO will attempt to resolve any disagreement arising from the implementation of the MOA. This will include any disputes that arise concerning the contents of the report(s), including but not limited to its merit as a cultural resource management document.

In the event that the terms of this agreement cannot be carried out, the FHWA and SCDOT will submit a new (or amended) MOA to the South Carolina SHPO, and the ACHP for review. If consultation to prepare a new MOA or amendments proves unproductive, the FHWA will seek ACHP comment in accordance with 36 CFR § 800.6(b)(2).

VI. Amendment and Modification

Any signatory to this MOA may request that it be amended or modified at any time, whereupon the parties will consult with each other to consider such amendment or modification.

VII. Termination

If any signatory to this MOA determines that its terms will not or cannot be carried out, that party shall immediately consult with the other parties to attempt to develop and amendment per Stipulation VI, above. If within (30) days an amendment cannot be reached, any signatory may terminate the MOA upon written notification to the other signatories.

Once the MOA is terminated, and prior to work continuing on the undertaking, the FHWA and the SCDOT must either (a) execute an MOA pursuant to 36 CFR § 800.6, or (b) request comments from the ACHP under 36 CFR § 800.7. The FHWA and the SCDOT will notify the signatories as to the course of action it will pursue.

EXECUTION of this Memorandum of Agreement by the Federal Highway Administration, the South Carolina Department of Transportation, and the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office and implementation of its terms, is evidence that the FHWA has taken into account the effects of the undertaking on Archaeological Sites 38CH2683 in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. Sec. 470f) and its implementing regulations (36 CFR Part 800).

SIGNATORIES:

Federal Highway Administration

By: J. Shane Belcher Date: 1/5/2023

South Carolina Department of Transportation

By: Chad Garg Date: 1/5/2023

South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office

By: Elizabeth M. Jones Date: 1/5/2023

From: [Belcher, Jeffrey \(FHWA\)](mailto:Belcher.Jeffrey@FHWA)
To: e106@achp.gov
Cc: [Martin, Tracy](mailto:Martin.Tracy); [Kelly, David P.](mailto:Kelly.David.P.); EJohnson@scdah.sc.gov; [Saint-Surin, Sandra \(FHWA\)](mailto:Saint-Surin.Sandra)
Subject: FHWA-SC: MOA Filing for the I-526/Long Point Road Interchange Improvements, Charleston County, South Carolina
Date: Thursday, January 5, 2023 3:32:05 PM
Attachments: [Approved MOA Long Point Road Interchange Charleston Co SC 1-5-2023.pdf](#)
[FHWA Notice of Adverse Effect I-526 Long Point Road Interchange, Charleston County, South Carolina.pdf](#)
[Notice Follow Up I-526 Long Point Road Interchange 12-8-22.pdf](#)

Pursuant to 36 CFR 800.6(b)(1)(iv), FHWA is filing the executed Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for the proposed *I-526/Long Point Road Interchange Improvements* in Charleston County, South Carolina. The MOA outlines mitigation for impacts to a National Register archaeological site. A historic resource survey was previously sent to your office with the Adverse Effect notification on November 16, 2022. No response was received from the ACHP and a follow-up notice was sent on December 8, 2022 (attached). Based on no response from the ACHP, the filing of this Agreement with your office completes the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. We thank you for your speedy response on this undertaking. Please address any questions you have concerning this project to Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov

J. Shane Belcher

Lead Environmental Specialist

Federal Highway Administration

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270

Columbia, SC 29201

Phone: 803-253-3187



The content of this e-mail is confidential and intended for the recipient specified in the message only



LETTER OF INTENT

Prepared for:



Prepared by:



Recipient Agencies
Berkeley County South Carolina
Charleston Chamber of Commerce
Charleston Regional Development Alliance
City of Charleston
City of Hanahan
City of North Charleston
Coastal Conservation League
Eastern Shanwee Cultural Preservation Department
Federal Aviation Administration
Mount Pleasant Chamber of Commerce
National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration
South Carolina Chamber of Commerce
South Carolina Department of Archives and History
South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control
South Carolina Department of Transportation
South Carolina House of Representatives
South Carolina State Senate
South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
The Muscogee Nation
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
U.S. Department of Transportation
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

July 26, 2022

Subject: Environmental Assessment of the Proposed Interstate 526 (I-526) and Long Point Road Interchange Improvements in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, Project ID: P041314

To Whom It May Concern:

The South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), proposes to make improvements to the Interstate 526 (I-526) /Long Point Road interchange in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina (see Figure 1). The project will be financed utilizing Federal funds as documented in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Right-of-Way acquisition for this project is scheduled to begin in 2023 and construction is tentatively scheduled to begin in 2024.

The I-526/Long Point Road interchange provides access to homes, businesses, schools, parks, restaurants, commercial, and industrial facilities along Long Point Road. The interchange provides access to the SC Port's Wando Welch Terminal which serves as a hub for the distribution of freight from the Port throughout the southeast United States.

The purpose of the proposed project is to improve the operations of the I-526/Long Point Road interchange and I-526 mainline and reduce operational conflicts between port-related and local traffic. The need for the project is demonstrated by the growing automobile and truck traffic on I-526 and Long Point Road, the existing interchange deficiencies, and operational conflicts between cars and trucks on Long Point Road and I-526.

The project need was identified during the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor (LCC) EAST Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study that concluded in July 2022. The PEL determined improvements at the I-526/Long Point Road interchange could be made with independent utility prior to the planned widening of I-526. During the PEL, agency coordination included specific discussions about the I-526/Long Point Road interchange and planning level concepts for potential improvements. The public was also given the opportunity to provide comments and feedback on four conceptual designs for improvements to the I-526/Long Point Road interchange during public information meetings in the Summer and Fall of 2021.

Preliminary environmental and engineering studies and analyses for the proposed project have been initiated and are currently in progress, but the significance of effects on the environment are currently not known. Therefore, SCDOT and FHWA will complete an Environmental Assessment (EA).

The range of alternatives identified for evaluation includes multiple "Build" alternatives and a "No Build" alternative. The alternatives are being evaluated on their ability to meet the purpose and need of the project along with specific considerations for cost, constructability, natural resources, and community and built environments. A brief description of each alternative is provided in the project factsheet included with this letter.

Agencies and the public will have the opportunity to comment on the project throughout the EA. Early interagency coordination for the project was conducted in May 2022 as part of the SCDOT Agency Coordination Effort (ACE) Meeting, where SCDOT provided an overview of the need and tentative schedule for the agency milestones associated with the project. Agencies were given

the opportunity to discuss resource specific concerns and ask project specific questions. After the meeting SCDOT provide a copy of the meeting minutes and presentation to the attending and invited agencies.

In an effort to maintain frequent and meaningful agency coordination during the EA, SCDOT plans to provide an update for the project at the August 2022 SCDOT ACE Meeting. Topics to be covered include updates on the project purpose and need, an overview of the range of alternatives, the alternatives screening process, and draft agency coordination milestones.

To engage the public, SCDOT will host a public information meeting on August 2, 2022, at the R.L. Jones Center in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina. The public will be given the opportunity to provide comments on the need for the project, the project purpose, and range of alternatives to be evaluated in the EA.

This letter is to solicit comments and initiate interagency coordination to identify areas of concern associated with the proposed project. To ensure that all potential impacts of the proposed project are evaluated, SCDOT requests that you respond in writing within 30 days of your receipt of this letter concerning any adverse effects of the project relating to the interest of your agency.

Additionally, the EA will be conducted in accordance with FHWA regulations and requirements, including all applicable federal, state, and local governmental laws and regulations. In accordance with 23 USC 139 (Section 139 process) a draft of the applicable agency milestones for the federal permitting dashboard are included with this letter for your review.

Comments should be addressed to Will McGoldrick and can be sent by email to McGoldriWR@scdot.org or mailed to:

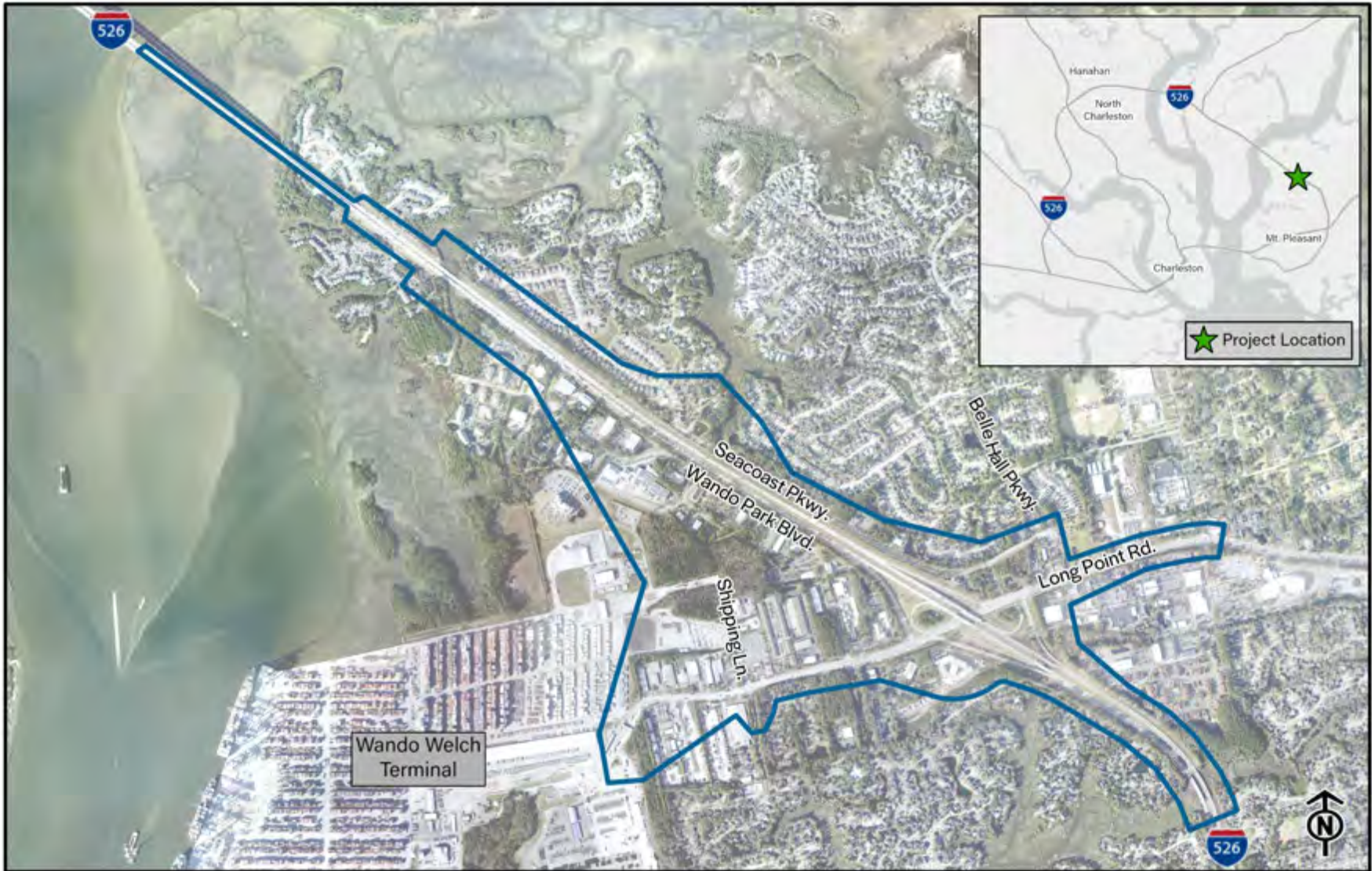
Will McGoldrick, Associate DBIA
Environmental Manager-Alternative Delivery
South Carolina Department of Transportation
Post Office Box 191
Columbia, South Carolina 29202-0191

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Will McGoldrick". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a thin horizontal line.

ec: Joy Riley, SCDOT
Shane Belcher, FHWA

Figure 1: Study Area



I-526 @ Long Point Road Interchange Improvements

Public Information Meeting

Official comment period July 26 - September 1, 2022

Meeting Purpose

- Explain how YOUR input in the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor (LCC) EAST study was used to accelerate this project
- Ask for your input on the draft purpose and need and the potential improvements
- Outline the next steps in the project development process
- Gather information on historic or cultural resources and other potential impacts

Tuesday, August 2, 2022, 5-7 PM
 R. L. Jones Center
 391 Egypt Road, Mount Pleasant, SC



Take our survey by September 1!
www.526LCCLongPoint.com

Project Overview

In 2022, the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) completed a Planning & Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study for I-526 LCC EAST, from Virginia Avenue in North Charleston to US 17 in Mount Pleasant. The PEL study identified existing and projected transportation issues within the corridor through analysis and public and stakeholder engagement. The results of the study established a vision to guide future transportation decision-making in the corridor. After the needs were better understood, potential improvements were identified. One such improvement is the I-526 @ Long Point Road Interchange Improvements project. Carrying forward the analysis and public input, the I-526 @ Long Point Road Interchange project is now going through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, a federal review of the natural and human environment.

Draft Project Purpose

The purpose of the proposed project is to **improve the operations** of the I-526/Long Point Road interchange and I-526 mainline and **reduce operational conflicts between port-related and local traffic.**



Draft Project Goals

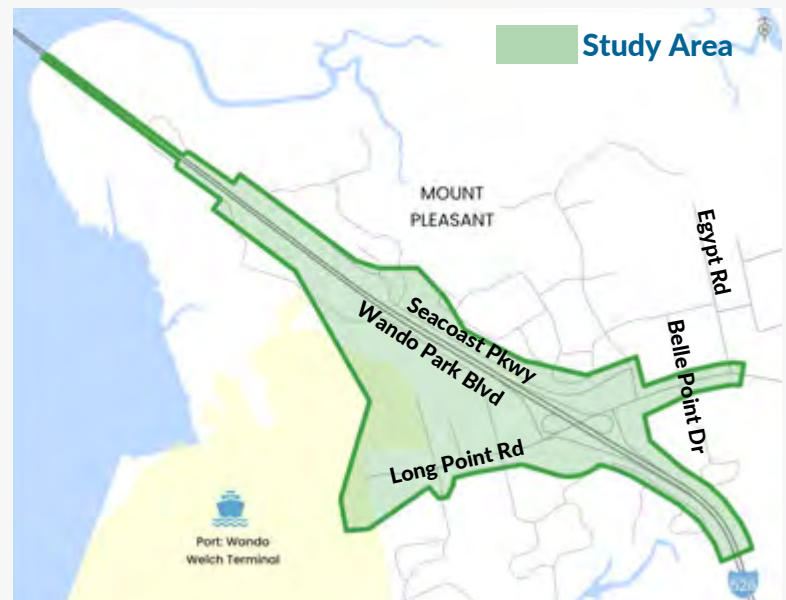
The following goals were identified in the I-526 LCC EAST PEL and have been refined based on your input and the purpose of the interchange improvements project.



Compatibility: Align with local land use plans and projects



Multimodal: Enhance movement through the corridor including other modes such as carpool, transit, walk, or bike

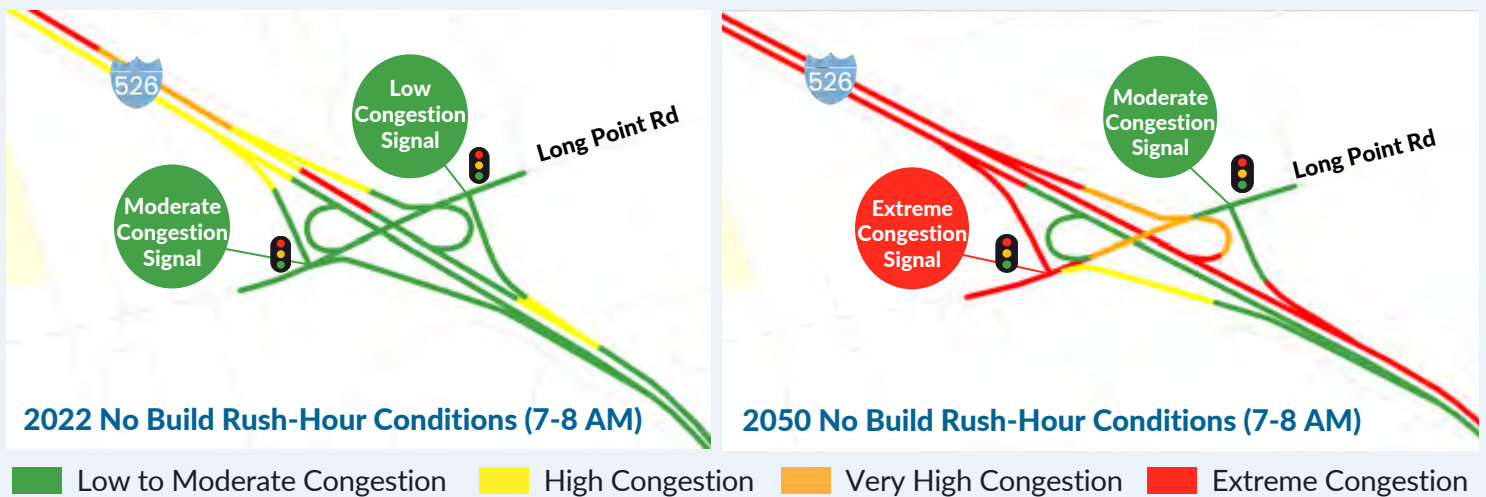


Why is this project needed?

The I-526/Long Point Road interchange provides access to homes, businesses, schools, parks, restaurants, and commercial and industrial facilities along Long Point Road. The interchange provides access to SC Port's Wando Welch Terminal which serves as a hub for the distribution of freight from the Port throughout the southeast United States. The need for the project is demonstrated by the growing automobile and truck traffic on I-526 and Long Point Road, the existing interchange deficiencies, and the operational conflicts between cars and trucks on Long Point Road and I-526.

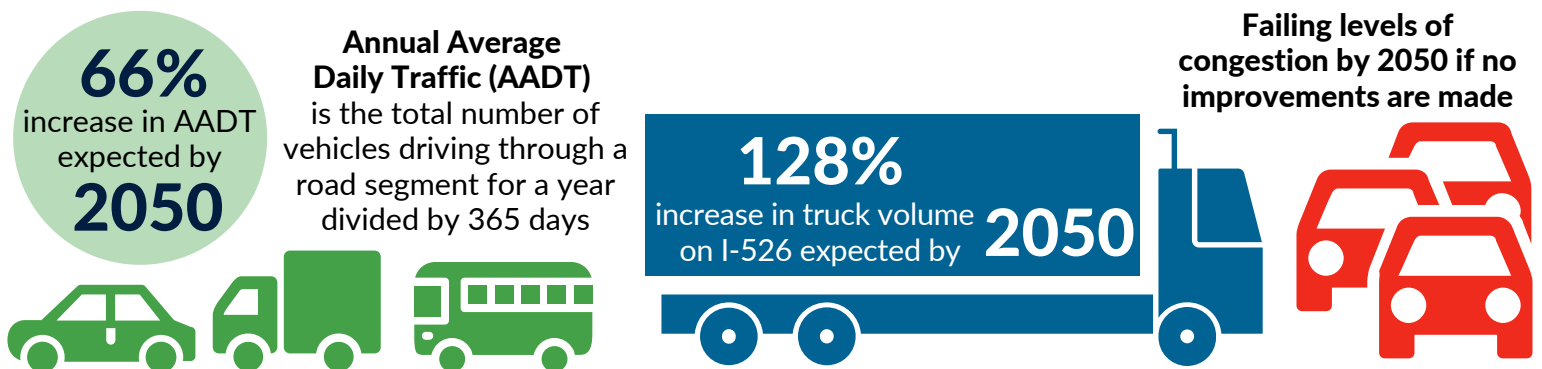
What may traffic be like if no improvements are made?

Traffic is expected to increase and result in an extreme level of congestion (think bumper-to-bumper traffic) throughout much of the interchange by 2050, if no improvements are made.



What does the data say about the need?

The data confirms concerns about growing congestion at the interchange. Why? The average daily number of vehicles driving through the interchange is expected to grow 66% by 2050. While all types of vehicles are expected to increase, the number of trucks on I-526 bound for the interchange will likely grow at a faster rate - increasing the percentage of vehicles using the corridor that are trucks. 13,000 more truck trips per day are anticipated on I-526 west of the Long Point Road interchange by 2050. The existing interchange is not designed to handle this volume of vehicles, especially with this mix of heavy-duty trucks.



What are the potential improvement options?

Alternatives are conceptual and may change

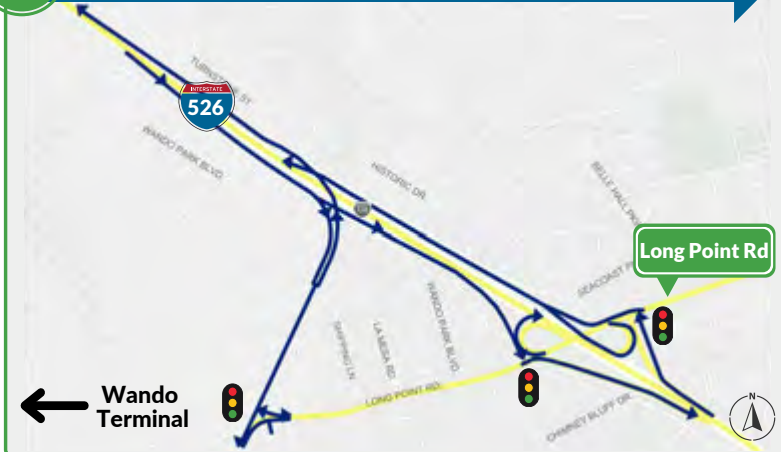
1 Alternative 1: Improved Existing Ramps



Alternative 1 would improve the existing ramps. A larger version of the existing interchange, it would address concerns by constructing larger loop ramps to allow for increased speeds to improve merging onto I-526 for all vehicles and be compatible with the planned widening of I-526. Improvements to the eastbound off-ramp would also be made.

Based on initial traffic studies, the ability of **Alternative 1** to meet the purpose and need of improving operations and reducing conflicts between port-related and local traffic shows additional studies are required.

2 Alternative 2: New Port Access Ramps with Improved Existing Ramps



Alternative 2 would provide new access to Long Point Road for port-related traffic along with improving the existing ramps. Collector-Distributor (CD) roads would be used to help separate port-related and local traffic. This alternative is compatible with the planned widening of I-526.

Based on initial traffic studies, the ability of **Alternative 2** to meet the purpose and need of improving operations and reducing conflicts between port-related and local traffic shows favorable results.

3 Alternative 3: Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI)

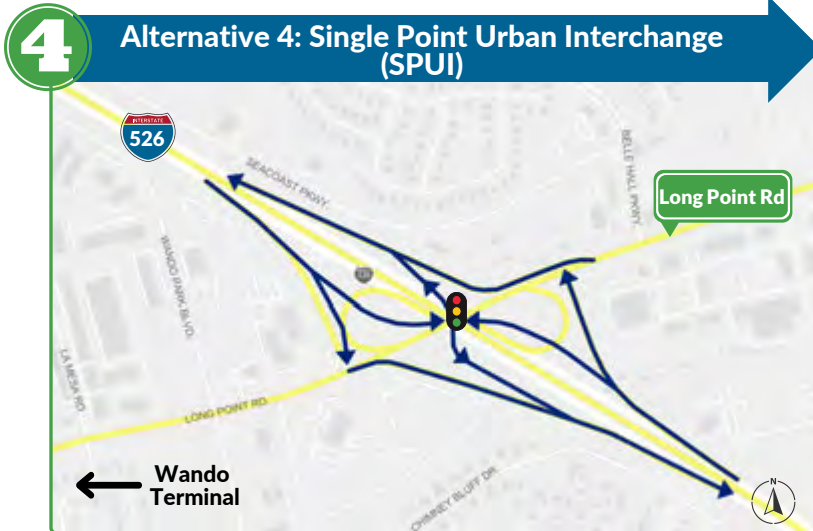


Alternative 3 would replace the existing interchange with a Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI). A DDI would remove left turns across oncoming lanes of traffic at each of the intersections within the interchange. This is done by shifting vehicles passing through to the left-hand side of the road. This alternative is compatible with the planned widening of I-526.

Based on initial traffic studies, the ability of **Alternative 3** to meet the purpose and need of improving operations and reducing conflicts between port-related and local traffic shows additional studies are required.

What are the potential improvement options?

Alternatives are conceptual and may change



Alternative 4 would replace the existing interchange with a Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI). The SPUI would create a single signalized intersection underneath I-526. This would allow the elimination of the two existing signals. This alternative is compatible with the planned widening of I-526.

Based on initial traffic studies, Alternative 4 does not appear to meet the purpose and need of improving operations and reducing conflicts between port-related and local traffic.



Alternative 5 would replace the existing loop ramp to westbound I-526 with a flyover ramp. All other ramps would remain in their same location. The flyover ramp would require a realignment of a segment of Seacoast Parkway. This alternative would require additional work to be compatible with the planned widening of I-526.

Based on initial traffic studies, Alternative 5 does not appear to meet the purpose and need of improving operations and reducing conflicts between port-related and local traffic.



Alternative 6 would provide new access to Long Point Road for port-related traffic along with a Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI). Collector-Distributor roads would be used to help separate port-related and local traffic. This alternative is compatible with the planned widening of I-526.

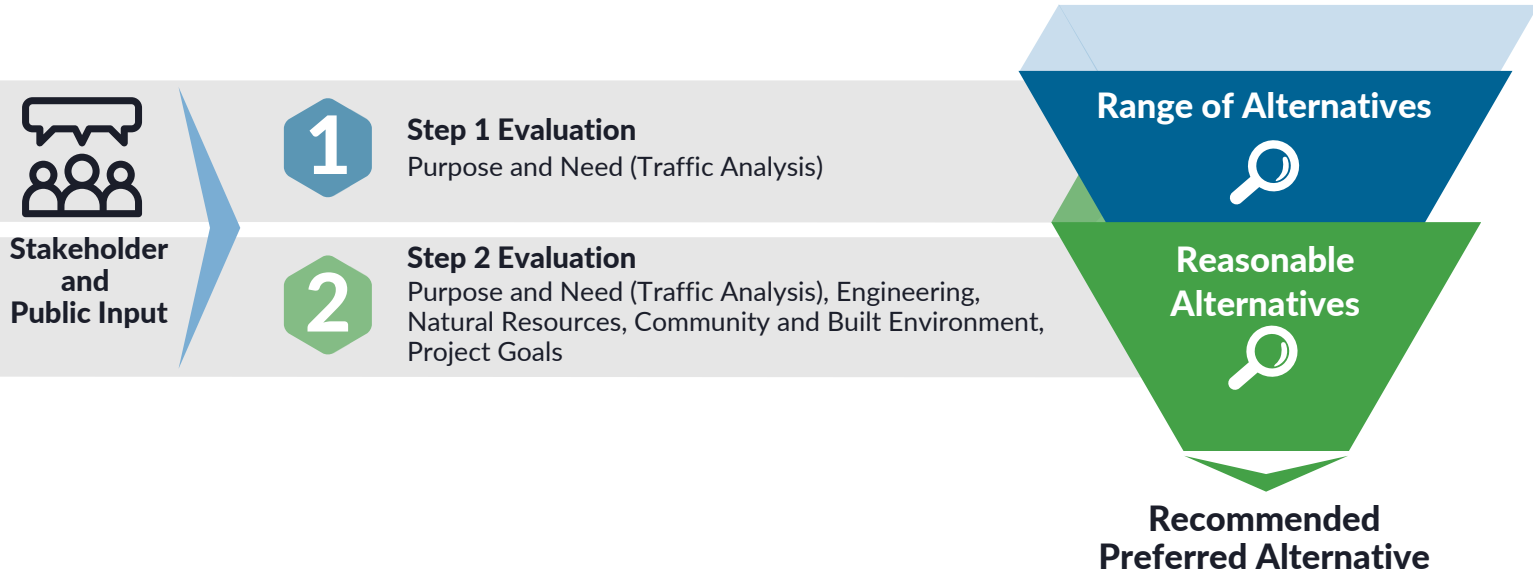
Based on initial traffic studies, the ability of Alternative 6 to meet the purpose and need of improving operations and reducing conflicts between port-related and local traffic shows favorable results.

How do the potential improvement options compare?

Alternative	Potential to meet purpose and need
Alternative 1: Improved Existing Ramps	Probable
Alternative 2: New Port Access Ramps with Improved Existing Ramps	Yes
Alternative 3: Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI)	Probable
Alternative 4: Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI)	No
Alternative 5: Flyover	No
Alternative 6: New Port Access Ramps with Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI)	Yes

How are the potential improvements evaluated?

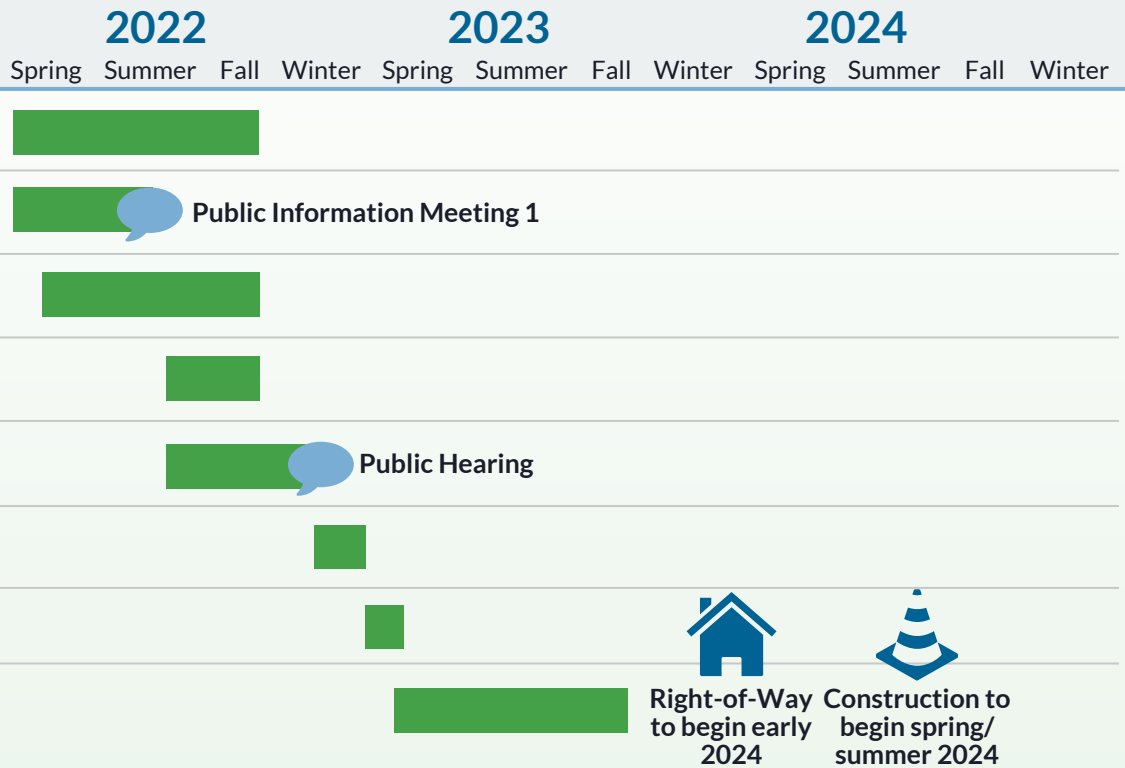
The team will evaluate the alternatives through a two-step process to identify the recommended preferred alternative. Greater detail in analysis will come with each level of evaluation. At the same time, the total number of alternatives will go down as those that are lowest performing are eliminated.



What happens next?

Initial technical studies have begun on land use, natural resources, cultural and historical resources, hazardous materials, baseline noise measurements, and traffic modeling for existing conditions. After this public information meeting, the project team will evaluate all comments and refine these alternatives. The recommended preferred alternative will be presented at the public hearing in late 2022/early 2023.

Schedule as of July 2022
and may change



When will I hear about right-of-way and noise?



The official right-of-way (ROW) acquisition process does not typically start until the federal environmental review process (NEPA) is completed, and the Federal Highway Administration issues a decision. If a build alternative is selected, meaning something new would need to be constructed, SCDOT would develop final ROW plans and acquisition activities would begin.



Noise analysis is currently underway for the project, but the results will not be ready until the public hearing anticipated to be held in late 2022/early 2023. If noise mitigation, such as noise barriers, is determined to be reasonable and feasible, potential beneficiaries would receive additional information.

Learn More: www.526LCCLongPoint.com/FAQS



I-526 @ Long Point Road Interchange Improvements

An I-526 Lowcountry Corridor EAST Project

Public Information Meeting

Engagement Guide

Official Comment Period
July 26 - September 1, 2022

How to Participate

Project Website

www.526LCCLongPoint.com

Live, July 26, 2022

The Public Information Meeting webpage contains all the materials you would see at the in-person meeting. Material disponible en ingles y español.

A mailed copy of the public information meeting handout may be requested by calling 803.737.1346 or emailing info@526LowcountryCorridor.com.

In-person Public Meetings

Tuesday, August 2, 2022 5-7 PM

R. L. Jones Center

391 Egypt Road, Mount Pleasant, SC

Spanish translation services available.

Traductor estará disponible.

How to Comment

Meaningful input is our number one priority. Below are the ways to make your voice heard in the official project records. Comment by September 1, 2022!

Project Website & Survey

www.526LCCLongPoint.com

Fill out our survey and/or a comment form on the project website.

Project Email

info@526LowcountryCorridor.com

In-person

At the Public Information Meeting

Paper comment forms will be available for you to use there or take with you to mail later.

Mail

Joy Riley, PE, PMP, CPM, DBIA
SC Department of Transportation
Post Office Box 191
955 Park Street
Columbia, SC 29202-0191

All formal comments received during the comment period will be evaluated and included in the project record. All information provided will be published and subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act.



We want to hear from you!



SCDOT Project Manager
Joy Riley, PE, DBIA, PMP, CPM

info@526LowcountryCorridor.com

803.737.1346

  @526Corridor

Title VI compliance: SCDOT complies with all requirements set forth by Federal regulations issued by the U.S. Department of Transportation under the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended. Any persons who believe that he or she has been discriminated against because of race, color, religion, sex, age, handicap or disability, or nation origin under a program receiving federal aid has the right to file a complaint with SCDOT. The complaint shall be filed with the Title VI Program Compliance Coordinator, at the Office of Business Development & Special programs, 955 Park Street, Suite 117, Columbia, SC 29202 or at 803.737.5095. The complaint should be submitted no later than 180 days after the date of the alleged act of discrimination. It should outline as completely as possible the facts and circumstances of the incident and should be signed by the person making the complaint.



AGENCY MILESTONES

Milestone	Date
Section 106 Review	
Consultation initiated with SHPO/THPO	August 31, 2022
Section 106 consultation concluded	January 13, 2023
Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, Section 305 Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Consultation	
NOAA Initially Contacted Regarding EFH Consultation	August 31, 2022
NOAA Receives the Complete EFH Assessment to Initiate EFH Consultation	September 30, 2022
NOAA Issues a Response to the EFH Consultation Request	January 13, 2023
Endangered Species Act Consultation (NOAA-NMFS)	
Request for ESA Consultation Received	August 31, 2022
Conclusion of ESA Consultation	October 31, 2022
Endangered Species Act Consultation (DOI-FWS)	
Request for ESA Consultation Received	August 31, 2022
Conclusion of ESA Consultation	October 31, 2022

From: [Belcher, Jeffery - FHWA](#)
To: [McGoldrick, Will](#); [Long, Chad C.](#)
Cc: [Saint-Surin, Sandra \(FHWA\)](#)
Subject: RE: I-526 and Long Point Road Interchange Improvements Environmental Assessment Letter of Intent
Date: Tuesday, July 26, 2022 12:02:25 PM

***** This is an EXTERNAL email. Please do not click on a link or open any attachments unless you are confident it is from a trusted source. *****

I'll get this set up on our dashboard. Since I have to log in any estimated relocations, I plan on just using worst case scenario in terms of numbers to start off with. I can always modify it later.

J. Shane Belcher

*Lead Environmental Specialist
Federal Highway Administration
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270
Columbia, SC 29201
Phone: 803-253-3187*

The content of this e-mail is confidential and intended for the recipient specified in the message only

From: McGoldrick, Will <McGoldriWR@scdot.org>
Sent: Tuesday, July 26, 2022 11:38 AM
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Subject: I-526 and Long Point Road Interchange Improvements Environmental Assessment Letter of Intent

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Department of Transportation (DOT). Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear All,

Please find attached a Letter of Intent notifying that SCDOT, in coordination with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), will be initiating an Environmental Assessment for the above referenced project. Please read through the information and provide comments or responses if desired. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me.

Respectfully,

Will McGoldrick, Assoc. DBIA | Program Manager
Environmental Services Office
SCDOT
955 Park St Rm 506
Columbia SC 29202-0191
(o) 803-737-1326



AGENCY CORRESPONDENCE

Prepared for:



Prepared by:





U.S. EPA

From: Singh-White, Alya <Singh-White.Alya@epa.gov>

Sent: Thursday, September 1, 2022 8:18 AM

To: McGoldrick, Will <McGoldriWR@scdot.org>

Cc: Dean, Kenneth <Dean.William-Kenneth@epa.gov>; Buskey, Traci P. <Buskey.Traci@epa.gov>

Subject: EPA Comments on the Letter of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Assessment for the I-526 / Long Point Road Interchange Improvements

***** This is an EXTERNAL email. Please do not click on a link or open any attachments unless you are confident it is from a trusted source. *****

Mr. Will McGoldrick, Associate DBIA
Environmental Manager-Alternative Delivery
South Carolina Department of Transportation
Post Office Box 191
Columbia, South Carolina 29202-0191

Re: EPA Comments on the Letter of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the I-526 / Long Point Road Interchange Improvements in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina; Project ID P041314,

Dear Mr. McGoldrick,

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the referenced document in accordance with Section 309 of the Clean Air Act and Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). According to the letter, dated July 26, 2022, the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway

Administration, intends to prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the I-526 / Long Point Road Interchange Improvements in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina;. The Long Point Road interchange provides access to residential, commercial, industrial, and recreational properties as well as to South Carolina Ports Authority's largest container terminal, Wando Welch Terminal. The purpose of the proposed project is to improve the operations of the Long Point Road interchange and I-526 mainline and reduce operational conflicts between port-related and local traffic.

According to the letter, six potential build alternatives will be further evaluated and refined by SCDOT to identify a recommended preferred alternative for the project. The six potential build alternatives are as follows:

- Alternative 1 - Improve existing interchange by constructing larger loop ramps
- Alternative 2 - New port access ramps and improvement to existing ramps
- Alternative 3 - Replace the existing interchange with a Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI)
- Alternative 4 - Replace the existing interchange with a Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI)
- Alternative 5 - Replace the existing loop ramp to westbound I-526 with a flyover ramp and realign a segment of Seacoast Parkway
- Alternative 6 - New port access ramps with a DDI

Based on the EPA's review of available information, the following comments are provided for your consideration.

1. Social Impacts and Environmental Justice (EJ): Based on a review of the EPA's NEPAAssist tool (<https://www.epa.gov/nepa/nepassist>), the proposed project may impact residential and commercial properties located along Long Point Road and I-526. The interchange improvements could result in property acquisitions, residential and business relocations, increased noise and roadway vibration, construction detours, travel pattern disruptions, and altered entryways.

According to the EPA's EJSCREEN tool (<https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper>), the minority population ranges from 5% to 24% within a one-mile radius of the proposed project and is highest in Census block groups 450190046141 and 450190046122, located east of the Long Point Road interchange. Low-income populations are present throughout the project area, ranging from 3% to 16%. There is also a historic African-American community located east of I-526 on Long Point Road, the Snowden community.

In accordance with Executive Order 12898, Federal actions must address EJ in minority and low-income populations. The EPA recommends conducting a complete EJ analysis in order to identify minority and low-income populations within the project area, assess the potential impacts of the project, and determine whether such impacts are disproportionately high and adverse to these populations. Efforts should be made to meaningfully engage potentially affected populations with EJ concerns early and throughout the NEPA process. To address potential barriers to meaningful engagement, consider using adaptive and innovative approaches to both public outreach and participation to meet the needs of the local community and businesses (i.e., engage local community leaders in project planning, share project information at community events/meetings, virtual meetings, social media, local paper and TV listservs).

2. Water Quality: There are three waterbodies within the project area: Hobcaw Creek, tributary to Hobcaw Creek, and tributary to Rathall Creek. The proposed project may impact water quality and quantity due to increased stormwater runoff and the function of existing stormwater management systems may decrease in terms of flood management and stormwater treatment.

Additionally, filling-in or encroaching upon floodplains, floodways, and/or storage areas may affect water conveyance, storage, and quality. The EPA recommends evaluating current and existing stormwater management systems along the roadway for their effectiveness. Proper stormwater conveyance, containment, and treatment will be required in accordance with state and federal regulations and guidelines. Best management practices should be implemented during construction, including the installation and regular maintenance of erosion control structures.

3. Clean Water Act Section 404: Consistent with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA), the project should avoid and minimize, to the maximum extent practicable, the placement of dredged or fill material into jurisdictional waters. Any discharge of dredged or fill material into jurisdictional waters will require a permit or authorization from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE). Wetland or stream losses allowed under a CWA Section 404 permit should be mitigated by the applicant. This mitigation may be designed and implemented by the applicant or procured by the purchase of wetland and/or stream mitigation credits from a COE approved mitigation bank.
4. Air Quality and Climate Change: The proposed project area is located in Charleston County, South Carolina, which has not been designated as non-attainment or maintenance for any of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). The EPA recommends the use of diesel controls, cleaner fuel, and cleaner construction practices for on-road and off-road equipment used for transportation, soil movement, and other project activities. Implement strategies and technologies that reduce unnecessary idling, including auxiliary power units, the use of electric equipment, and strict enforcement of idling limits. Consider the use of clean diesel through add-on control technologies such as diesel particulate filters and diesel oxidation catalysts, repowers, or newer, cleaner equipment. The EPA also recommends quantification of greenhouse gas emissions resulting from construction and operation of the proposed project and analysis of resulting impacts due to climate change be included in the EA.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and provide scoping comments on the proposed project. Upon completion of your draft EA, please submit an electronic copy of the document to the EPA for review. If you have any questions regarding the EPA's comments, please contact me by phone at 404-562-9339 or via email at Singh-White.Alya@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

Alya Singh-White

Biologist | NEPA Project Manager

U.S. EPA Region 4

Office of the Regional Administrator

Strategic Programs Office | NEPA Section

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USFWS

August 30, 2022

Mr. Mark Caldwell
c/o Ms. Melanie Olds
South Carolina Ecological Services
176 Croghan Spur Road - Suite 200
Charleston, SC 29407

**RE Section 7 Informal Consultation for the Proposed I-526 Interchange
Improvements at Long Point Road located in Charleston County, South
Carolina; SCDOT PIN P041314**

Dear Ms. Olds:

On behalf of the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), please accept this request for concurrence of effects under informal consultation per Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. In support of your review, please find attached a complete Biological Evaluation documenting relevant species, habitats, possible construction activities and effects determinations for applicable species.

If you have any questions or comments, please reach out to me. I am available by phone at 803-737-1326 or by email at mcgoldriwr@scdot.org. I can facilitate discussions via webinars or in person if needed. Thank you for your time and effort.

Sincerely,



Will McGoldrick
Alternative Delivery Environmental Mgr

WRM/wm
enclosures
Biological Evaluation

ec: Chad Long, SCDOT
Shane Belcher, FHWA
Christy Shumate, Three Oaks

File: Env/Design-Build





United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

176 Croghan Spur Road, Suite 200
Charleston, South Carolina 29407



September 21, 2022

Mr. Will McGoldrick, Alternative Delivery Environmental Manager
South Carolina Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 191
Columbia, South Carolina 29202-0191

Re: Biological Evaluation, I-526 Long Point Road, Charleston County, South Carolina
FWS Log No. 2022-0080540

Dear Mr. McGoldrick:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has reviewed your August 30, 2022, correspondence regarding the Biological Evaluation (BE) for the proposed improvements to the I-526 and Long Point Road interchange in Charleston County, South Carolina. The South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) is seeking our review of the BE in accordance with requirements set forth under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1536 (c)) (ESA).

In August 2022, SCDOT submitted the BE and requested the Service's concurrence on SCDOT's determination of impacts to federally protected flora and fauna that may be present in the project corridor. Table 8-1 of the BE listed thirteen federally threatened or endangered species known to occur in Charleston County. Upon evaluation of the project, SCDOT determined that there would be no effect to eight of these species due to the lack of suitable habitat. Therefore, no further coordination is required for these eight species.

The SCDOT determined the Long Point Road project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect the remaining five species; northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*)(NLEB), American wood stork (*Mycteria americana*), eastern black rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis jamaicensis*), red knot (*Calidris canutus rufa*), and piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*). This conclusion was based on the presence of suitable habitat in or near the project area. The Service concurs with these determinations. No designated critical habitat for federally protected species occurs within the project area.

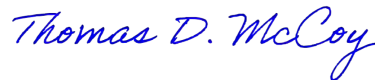
Please note that on March 23, 2022, the Service published a proposal to reclassify the NLEB as endangered under the Endangered Species Act. The U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia has ordered the Service to complete a new final listing determination for the NLEB by November 2022 (Case 1:15-cv-00477, March 1, 2021). The NLEB is currently listed as threatened but faces extinction due to the range-wide impacts of white-nose syndrome, a deadly fungal disease affecting cave-dwelling bats across the continent. The proposed reclassification, if finalized, would remove the current 4(d) rule for the NLEB, as these rules may be applied only

to threatened species. Depending on the type of effects a project has on NLEB, the change in the species' status may trigger the need to re-initiate consultation for any actions that are not completed and for which the Federal action agency retains discretion once the new listing determination becomes effective (anticipated to occur by December 30, 2022). If your project may result in incidental take of NLEB after the new listing goes into effect this will first need to be addressed in an updated consultation that includes an Incidental Take Statement. If your project may require re-initiation of consultation, please contact our office for additional guidance.

As always, due to obligations under the ESA, the potential impacts of this project must be reconsidered if: (1) new information reveals impacts of this identified action may affect any listed species or critical habitat in a manner not previously considered; (2) this action is subsequently modified in a manner, which was not considered in this assessment; or (3) a new species is listed or critical habitat is designated that may be affected by the identified action.

If you have any questions, please contact the Service's project manager, Mr. Mark Caldwell at mark_caldwell@fws.gov or (843) 300-0426, and reference FWS Log No. 2022-0080540.

Sincerely,



Thomas D. McCoy
Field Supervisor

TDM/MAC



SCDHEC-OCRM

Chandler, Russell

From: McGoldrick, Will <McGoldriWR@scdot.org>
Sent: Tuesday, January 31, 2023 8:10 AM
To: Chandler, Russell; Wade Biltoft
Cc: Belvin, Michael L.; Beebe, Cole D
Subject: RE: OCRM Request to Have a Critical Area Line Established - HPP-XXDF-8CGP5

Great. Thank you.

-WM

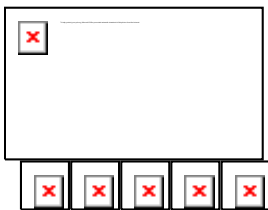
From: Chandler, Russell <chandlert@cdmsmith.com>
Sent: Monday, January 30, 2023 4:01 PM
To: McGoldrick, Will <McGoldriWR@scdot.org>; Wade Biltoft <wade.biltoft@threeoaksengineering.com>
Cc: Belvin, Michael L. <belvinml@cdmsmith.com>; Beebe, Cole D <beebeed@cdmsmith.com>
Subject: FW: OCRM Request to Have a Critical Area Line Established - HPP-XXDF-8CGP5

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For your records

Russell Chandler

Environmental Planner
CDM Smith
1441 Main Street, Suite 1000, Columbia, SC 29201
(cell) 803.360.5197, (office) 803.758.4562
Connect with me on [LinkedIn](#)
cdmsmith.com



From: Jaynes, Bradley J. <JaynesBJ@dhec.sc.gov>
Sent: Monday, January 30, 2023 3:53 PM
To: Chandler, Russell <chandlert@cdmsmith.com>
Subject: Re: OCRM Request to Have a Critical Area Line Established - HPP-XXDF-8CGP5

Please see attached.

Brad Jaynes

Critical Area Project Manager

Ocean and Coastal Resource Management

S.C. Dept. of Health & Environmental Control

1362 McMillan Avenue, Suite 400

Charleston, SC 29405

Office: 843-953-0236

jaynesbj@dhec.sc.gov

Connect: www.scdhec.gov [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#)



From: Chandler, Russell <chandlert@cdmsmith.com>
Sent: Monday, January 30, 2023 3:08 PM
To: Jaynes, Bradley J. <JaynesBJ@dhec.sc.gov>
Cc: McGoldrick, Will <McGoldriWR@scdot.org>; Wade Biltoft <wade.biltoft@threoaksengineering.com>
Subject: RE: OCRM Request to Have a Critical Area Line Established - HPP-XXDF-8CGP5

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Brad,
We've revised the plat based on the flags you placed on site. I tried sending via email but even with the reduced PDF the file size was too large and got kicked back. I've updated the request through the ePermitting portal and uploaded the revised plat.

Russell Chandler

Environmental Planner
CDM Smith
1441 Main Street, Suite 1000, Columbia, SC 29201
(cell) 803.360.5197, (office) 803.758.4562
Connect with me on [LinkedIn](#)
cdmsmith.com



From: Jaynes, Bradley J. <JaynesBJ@dhec.sc.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 4, 2023 3:17 PM
To: Chandler, Russell <chandlert@cdmsmith.com>
Subject: Re: OCRM Request to Have a Critical Area Line Established - HPP-XXDF-8CGP5

I was able to get back out to the area of this property adjacent to Turnstone Street (where there is easy access to the area I wanted to make an adjustment).

I added 9 pin flags to the Turnstone Street side and 6 pin flags to the other side of the Interstate. This area corresponds to lines B67 to B71 on Sheet 3 of 6 in the plats.

Please make this one adjustment and submit the revised Sheet 3 plat at your convenience, and I can certify the line.

Thank you,

Brad Jaynes

Critical Area Project Manager

Ocean and Coastal Resource Management

S.C. Dept. of Health & Environmental Control

1362 McMillan Avenue, Suite 400

Charleston, SC 29405

Office: 843-953-0236

jaynesbj@dhec.sc.gov

Connect: www.scdhec.gov [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#)



From: Chandler, Russell <chandlert@cdmsmith.com>

Sent: Tuesday, January 3, 2023 2:56 PM

To: Jaynes, Bradley J. <JaynesBJ@dhec.sc.gov>

Cc: McGoldrick, Will <McGoldriWR@scdot.org>; Wade Biltoft <wade.biltoft@threeoaksengineering.com>

Subject: RE: OCRM Request to Have a Critical Area Line Established - HPP-XXDF-8CGP5

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Great! Thank you! Let us know once you've had a chance to get back out and we will get to work with the surveyors to update the plat.

Russell Chandler

Environmental Planner

CDM Smith

1441 Main Street, Suite 1000, Columbia, SC 29201

(cell) 803.360.5197, (office) 803.758.4562

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cdmsmith.com

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From: Jaynes, Bradley J. <JaynesBJ@dhec.sc.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 3, 2023 2:50 PM
To: Chandler, Russell <chandlert@cdmsmith.com>
Subject: Re: OCRM Request to Have a Critical Area Line Established - HPP-XXDF-8CGP5

Russell,

I had a chance to review the area off Wando Park Boulevard (which was accurately marked), but I didn't get back to that B68-70 area. I can probably get by there in the next few days, and I'll flag the area in question. It's an easily-accessible area, and it shouldn't take long.

Thank you for following up,

Brad Jaynes

Critical Area Project Manager

Ocean and Coastal Resource Management

S.C. Dept. of Health & Environmental Control

1362 McMillan Avenue, Suite 400

Charleston, SC 29405

Office: 843-953-0236

jaynesbj@dhec.sc.gov

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From: Chandler, Russell <chandlert@cdmsmith.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 3, 2023 2:46 PM
To: Jaynes, Bradley J. <JaynesBJ@dhec.sc.gov>

Cc: McGoldrick, Will <McGoldriWR@scdot.org>; Wade Biltoft <wade.biltoft@threeoaksengineering.com>

Subject: RE: OCRM Request to Have a Critical Area Line Established - HPP-XXDF-8CGP5

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Hi Brad,

Thanks for the update. Are you asking us to revise the lines B68-B70?

If so, please provide some guidance on how the line needs to be updated and we will get our folks in the field to make the changes. Or, if you are willing to hang new flags where you think the line should be established we can have our surveyors pick up those new points and update the plat.

Russell Chandler

Environmental Planner

CDM Smith

1441 Main Street, Suite 1000, Columbia, SC 29201

(cell) 803.360.5197, (office) 803.758.4562

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cdmsmith.com

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From: Jaynes, Bradley J. <JaynesBJ@dhec.sc.gov>

Sent: Wednesday, December 28, 2022 11:48 AM

To: Chandler, Russell <chandlert@cdmsmith.com>

Subject: OCRM Request to Have a Critical Area Line Established - HPP-XXDF-8CGP5

I visited a large portion of the I-526 and Long Point Road Critical Area Line request area just before the holidays.

The only area I saw that looked inaccurate, based on the growth of saline wetland indicator species, was on the southern portion of Sheet 3 in the plats. I believe it corresponds to Lines B68 and B70 on the plat. It looks like those areas are being mowed, so that could have easily disguised the growth to which I am referring.

I also did not get a chance to review the area across from Lines B71 through B90, but I should be able to get that done this week. I will confirm the area mentioned above while out there and update you after my visit.

Brad Jaynes

Critical Area Project Manager

Ocean and Coastal Resource Management

S.C. Dept. of Health & Environmental Control

1362 McMillan Avenue, Suite 400

Charleston, SC 29405

Office: 843-953-0236

jaynesbj@dhec.sc.gov

Connect: www.scdhec.gov [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#)





NOAA Fisheries



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southeast Regional Office
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/region/southeast>

February 2, 2023

F/SER47:CC/pw

(Sent via Electronic Mail)

Will McGoldrick
South Carolina Department of Transportation
Environmental Services Office
955 Park Street
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Mr. McGoldrick:

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) reviewed *Essential Fish Habitat Assessment 526 Long Point Road Interchange* dated December 2022 and submitted February 2, 2023, prepared on behalf of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) and FHWA propose improvements to the 526 Long Point Road Interchange in Charleston County. The FHWA and SCDOT have determined the proposed action may adversely affect essential fish habitat (EFH). As the nation's federal trustee for the conservation and management of marine, estuarine, and anadromous fishery resources, the NMFS provides the following comments and recommendations pursuant to authorities of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act and the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act).

The proposed action is a design-build project. Adverse effects to EFH are not expected currently due to the best management practices and erosion control measures SCDOT commits to employ. Should the design build process propose adverse effects to EFH, SCDOT has identified potential on-site EFH mitigation, and FHWA and SCDOT have committed to continue to coordinate with the NMFS as project plans further develop.

The EFH Assessment describes the proposed action, documents existing EFH conditions within the project area, and provides an analysis of the potential impacts to EFH from the proposed action. The proposed action involves approximately two miles of improvements along I-526 one mile north and south of the Long Point Road interchange. The project area extends from the Wando River to Hobcaw Creek and their associated wetlands. The EFH Assessment commits to implementing SCDOT and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers best management practices and erosion control measures.

The EFH Assessment was comprehensive and complete. In addition to reviewing multiple versions of the document, NMFS participated in several meetings of the interagency coordination team. The high level of engagement on this project between the SCDOT, FHWA, and NMFS allowed the EFH Assessment to address fully concerns raised during initial meetings. While the proposed action will not currently result in adverse impacts to EFH, the NMFS looks forward to continued participation in development of the mitigation plan if conditions change. Therefore, based on the information provided and the commitments from FHWA and SCDOT to



seek to develop appropriate compensatory mitigation if needed, the NMFS has no EFH conservation recommendations at this time for the proposed improvements to the 526 Long Point Road Interchange.

The NMFS appreciates the opportunity to provide these comments and thanks the FHWA and SCDOT for their efforts in incorporating avoidance and minimization strategies and early engagement on the project. Please direct related correspondence to the attention of Cindy Cooksey at our Charleston Area Office. She may be reached at (843) 481-0496 or by e-mail at Cynthia.Cooksey@noaa.gov.

Sincerely,

/for

Virginia M. Fay
Assistant Regional Administrator
Habitat Conservation Division

cc: SCDOT, McGoldriWR@scdot.org
FHWA, Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov
FHWA, sandra.saintsurin@dot.gov
F/SER47, Cynthia.Cooksey@noaa.gov

From: [McGoldrick, Will](#)
To: [Cynthia Cooksey - NOAA Federal](#)
Subject: EFH LPR
Attachments: [LPR NMFS EFH Assessment 2022-2-2 WM.pdf](#)

See attached per disucssion

Respectfully,

Will McGoldrick, Assoc. DBIA | Program Manager
Environmental Services Office
SCDOT
955 Park St Rm 506
Columbia SC 29202-0191
(o) 803-737-1326

Chandler, Russell

From: McGoldrick, Will <McGoldriWR@scdot.org>
Sent: Monday, December 19, 2022 8:46 AM
To: Chandler, Russell; Wade Biltoft
Subject: FW: EFH Assessment Review for Long Point Rd

RC and Wade,
See below. Let's talk about how to address.

-WM

From: Cynthia Cooksey - NOAA Federal <cynthia.cooksey@noaa.gov>
Sent: Thursday, December 15, 2022 10:51 AM
To: McGoldrick, Will <McGoldriWR@scdot.org>
Cc: pace.wilber@noaa.gov; Belcher, Jeffery - FHWA <Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov>; Saint-Surin, Sandra (FHWA) <sandra.saintsurin@dot.gov>
Subject: Re: EFH Assessment Review for Long Point Rd

*** This is an EXTERNAL email. Please do not click on a link or open any attachments unless you are confident it is from a trusted source. ***

Good Morning Will,
Overall, the EFH Assessment looked really good. I appreciated the inclusion of section 5.5 and continue to believe that this would be an ideal component of a mitigation plan for the project. Section 6.0 summarized maximum potential impacts from the project although, as noted in section 4.0, the recommended preferred alternative is not anticipated to have any EFH impacts. My only concern with the assessment is the lack of a mitigation plan. Given that you are investigating removal of the berm and the preferred alternative would not have EFH impacts, your intent is obvious, but there is not a written commitment to mitigate adverse impacts to EFH if they were to occur. A sentence or two committing to mitigate for any adverse impacts, if they were to occur, should be adequate given the other information already provided in the assessment.
Cindy

Cindy Cooksey (she/her/hers)
Fishery Biologist

NOAA
National Marine Fisheries Service
Southeast Regional Office - Habitat Conservation Division
331 Fort Johnson Road
Charleston, SC 29412
Google Voice: (843) 481-0496
E-Mail: cynthia.cooksey@noaa.gov

On Thu, Dec 8, 2022 at 9:31 AM McGoldrick, Will <McGoldriWR@scdot.org> wrote:

Cindy,

We are closing in on our document production and review for FHWA. I wanted to follow up with you and/or Pace about the EFH review that was submitted on 10/21/22. Just wanted to see if comments would be forthcoming. Thanks.

Respectfully,

Will McGoldrick, Assoc. DBIA | Program Manager

Environmental Services Office

SCDOT

955 Park St Rm 506

Columbia SC 29202-0191

(o) 803-737-1326

From: [Pace Wilber - NOAA Federal](#)
To: [McGoldrick, Will](#)
Cc: [Cynthia Cooksey - NOAA Federal](#)
Subject: Re: I-526 Long Point Road Interchange EFH Assessment
Date: Monday, October 24, 2022 10:03:00 AM

*** This is an EXTERNAL email. Please do not click on a link or open any attachments unless you are confident it is from a trusted source. ***

Thanks Will. We will review.

On Fri, Oct 21, 2022 at 12:09 PM McGoldrick, Will <McGoldriWR@scdot.org> wrote:

Cindy,

Please find attached an EFH assessment for review and approval as per Magnuson-Stevens. We appreciate your early coordination efforts and hope this meets criteria for completeness. If you'd like to meet to discuss comments, we are more than willing to do so. Let me or Shane know if you have any questions.

Respectfully,

Will McGoldrick, Assoc. DBIA
Design Build Environmental Coordinator
SCDOT
955 Park St Rm 506
Columbia SC 29202
(o) 803-737-1326

--

Pace Wilber, Ph.D.
South Atlantic and Caribbean Branch Chief
Habitat Conservation Division
NOAA Fisheries Service
331 Ft Johnson Road

Charleston, SC 29412

843-592-3024 (NOAA Google Voice)

Pace.Wilber@noaa.gov

October 21, 2022

Ms. Cynthia Cooksey
NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service
Southeast Regional Office
Habitat Conservation Division
219 Fort Johnson Road
Charleston, SC 29412

**RE Essential Fish Habitat Assessment and Consultation Request for I-526 at
Long Point Road Interchange, Charleston County, South Carolina; SCDOT
PIN P041314**

Dear Ms. Cooksey:

The South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) on behalf of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is submitting an Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Assessment for review and concurrence from your office.

The submittal contains pertinent project information describing the purpose and need, project scope, and estimated potential impacts to EFH. This information is being provided directly to you for your review and comment. Please contact me or Shane Belcher with any questions or comments.

Sincerely,



Will McGoldrick
Design-Build Environmental Coordinator

WRM/wm

enclosures

EFH Assessment

ec: Shane Belcher, FHWA
Pace Wilbur, NOAA Fisheries
Chad Long, SCDOT
Joy Riley, SCDOT
Mark Lester, CDM Smith
Russell Chandler, CDM Smith
Wade Biltoft, Three Oaks

File: Env/Design-Build





BCDCOG



BERKELEY-CHARLESTON-DORCHESTER
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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September 1, 2022

Will McGoldrick, Associate DBIA
Environmental Services Office
South Carolina Department of Transportation
955 Park St., Rm 506
Columbia, SC 29202

Mr. McGoldrick,

The Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments (BCDCOG) appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on SCDOT's proposed *I-526 & Long Point Road Interchange Improvement* project. In response to the notice of intent to initiate an Environmental Assessment on the referenced project and the project's open public comment period (07/26/22 – 9/1/22), staff provides the attached resources and feedback for your consideration.

If you require additional information on any of the comments and/or materials provided, please do not hesitate to contact me at sarahc@bcdkog.com or 843-529-2585.

Regards,

Sarah Cox
Sr. Transportation Planner, BCDCOG

Enclosures

PLANNING, PARTNERSHIP & PROSPERITY

5790 CASPER PADGETT WAY • NORTH CHARLESTON, SC 29406 • TEL 843.529.0400

Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments (BCDCOG) staff appreciates the opportunity to provide comment/feedback on the I-526 & Long Point Rd Interchange Improvement project. Please consider the following as the project initiates the NEPA (EA) process and advances design.

The adopted *CHATS 2040 Long-Range Transportation Plan* (LRTP) supports and encourages a Complete Streets approach in the planning, design, operation and maintenance of the region's transportation network. Roadway improvements should provide for a safe, accessible and well-connected network that balances the needs of all users, including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, emergency vehicles and freight carriers, and promote a more livable community for people of all ages and abilities. The CHATS LRTP is also supplemented by a number of more detailed regional studies and plans that support the area's transportation vision across all modes, and inform its investment priorities to deliver a well-balanced multimodal transportation network for visitors, businesses and residents alike.

A. Congestion Management Process –

- The *CHATS Congestion Management Process* (CMP) identifies the I-526 East corridor as one of the area's major congested corridors operating at a poor to failing level of service (LOS) and recommends a range of corridor strategies for consideration to address congestion and reliability issues. Corridor strategies include enhanced operations such as improved traffic detection/response, ramp metering, traffic signal prioritization, and other technology-based improvements, and bus-on-shoulder/high-capacity transit operation.

B. Transit –

- The *BCD Regional Transit Framework Plan* (RTFP) establishes a vision and provides a blueprint for how the region develops a true multimodal transit rich network. The plan identifies a network of High-Capacity Transit (HCT) priority corridors that serve a wide-range of trip needs, connects the region, enhances the quality of life, and supports economic growth and development. Seven (7) promising corridors were identified as a result of the analysis, for further study/development and targeted transit investment to implement the RTFP. Of the seven corridors, two are within SCDOT's interstate system right-of-way: I-26 and I-526. These two corridors are recommended for Express Bus in dedicated lanes, HOV lanes, or bus-on-shoulder operation.

Consider: Improvement to the I-526 & Long Point Rd interchange should consider future Bus on Shoulder or Express Bus in dedicated lanes on I-526 in its design, to not preclude possible future implementation along mainline I-526 as the I-526 East LLC project is developed.

- Park & Ride facilities are an integral part of a well-balanced transportation system offering local commuter traffic and visitors, options to transition from single occupancy vehicles to higher capacity alternative transportation uses, including carpool, vanpool and transit options especially along roadways that have high traffic volumes and serve/connect major population and job centers. The *BCD Regional Park & Ride Study* identifies critical existing park & ride locations that need improvement as well as future lot locations that support the region's long term transportation vision. Recommended high-capacity transit corridors identified in the *BCD Regional Transit Framework Plan* (which include the I-526 corridor) as well as ridership data were instrumental in identifying park & ride locations with the highest likelihood for success.

Consider: Consider preserving excess right-of-way from potential land acquisition associated with the I-526 & Long Point Rd improvement project for future Park & Ride facility for carpool, vanpool and transit use.

C. Pedestrian and Bicycle –

- *WalkBike BCD* is the region's pedestrian and bicycle master plan which identifies regional active transportation priorities as well as provides action-oriented guidance for improving walkability and bikeability in local communities. Developed with input from member jurisdictions, advocacy groups, and state and federal partners, the plan identifies a regional network of on- and off-street walkways, bikeways, and trails designed for all users regardless of age and ability. The plan identifies a major regional pedestrian/bicycle corridor along Long Point Road and I-526 with local connections to community destinations, commercial/retail and residential uses.
- The Town of Mount Pleasant's *Mount Pleasant Way Master Plan*, identifies a proposed network of connected multi-use paths and sidewalks intended for non-motorized users that will provide safe infrastructure for alternative modes of travel for recreational and commuting purposes. The planned network supports greater community connectivity by linking key facilities such as recreational facilities, parks, schools, neighborhood, commercial and retail areas, etc. The Town's preferred path network provides access and connection to residents and business located to the west of I-526 (in the vicinity of the Long Point interchange) primarily along Wando Park Blvd and Long Point Road. The design of the I-526 interchange at Long Point Rd and its ability to safely accommodate pedestrian and bicycle movements is critical to connecting this section of the Mount Pleasant Way trail system and the adjacent businesses and neighborhoods, to the larger network.

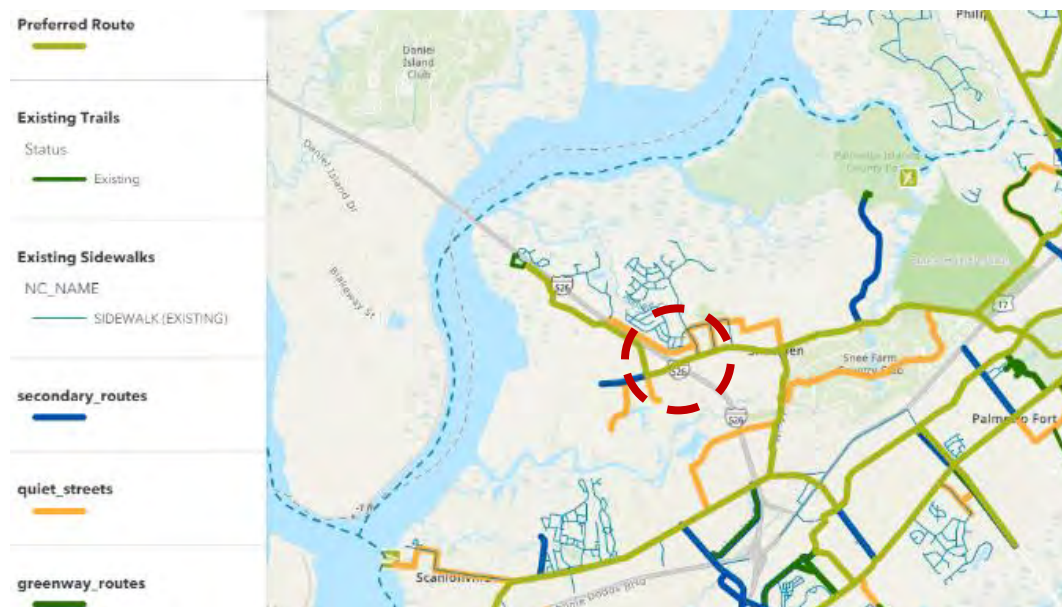


Figure 1: Mount Pleasant Way Preferred/Recommended Trail Network

Consider: Inclusion of safe and accessible pedestrian and bicycle facilities into the interchange improvement design which enhances the multimodal movement through the interchange. Alternatives should consider the level of comfort offered to people walking and bicycling along Long Point Rd as well as users' ability to navigate through the interchange safely. If multimodal needs are not thoughtfully integrated into the analysis of alternatives, improvement to the interchange may miss delivering on the local and regional priority of greater community connectivity and removing barriers to equitable access and use of the transportation system. Resources such as the *NCHRP Research Report 948 (2021)* provides guidance for pedestrian and bicyclist safety at various interchange and intersection alternatives.

Recommend elevating "multimodal" from a project goal to a need, to ensure the regional and local priority for improved multimodal options are captured. Suggested "Need & Purpose" statement - "The purposes of the proposed project are to improve the safety and operations of the I-526/Long Point Road interchange and I-526 mainline, and reduce operational conflicts between port-related traffic, local automobile traffic, and local walking and bicycling traffic."

D. Alternatives

For the interchange alternatives developed and presented:

Consider:

- The main focus of all build alternatives presented looks at improving operations of traffic movements primarily to and from the freeway. However, traffic operations of surface-street intersections immediately adjacent to the interchange need to be closely evaluated and potential approved as well.
- The right-in and right-out concept at the intersection of Belle Hall Parkway and Long Point Road may eliminate existing conflict points but it does not appear to mitigate all unsafe traffic movements. Besides existing issues of traffic queueing, traffic weaving, and traffic blocking at this specific location, absence of dedicated westbound right-turn lane and close-proximity of westbound on-ramp entrance may still contribute to extremely poor traffic dynamics.
- Alternative 1A: Access to eastbound on-ramp should be barrier-separated to prevent any eastbound off-ramp traffic headed back on the freeway (unless otherwise it interferes with traffic safety and/or passage of emergency vehicles). The barrier can also potentially allow for unrestricted movement of freeway-destined vehicles from Long Point Road.
- Alternative 2: Restricting port-access ramps exclusively to port-destined trucks may be perceived as infeasible but some mechanism should be put in place to prevent them from ordinarily using Long Point Road interchange. The interchange should ideally cater to local truck and general traffic only. Are the proposed interchange improvements even necessary if the port-access ramps are built?
- Alternative 2: Evaluating ramp metering to a new variation of this alternative.
- Include a more detailed crash analysis for this location. Consider "freeway exit speed limits" within alternatives if crash data show speed-related crashes at off-ramps.
- Evaluating new port access ramps with through-about ("hamburger") intersections as a new alternative.
- Consider evaluating half-diamond with roundabouts as an alternative (see I-405/NE 132 St Interchange Project as an example).

Resource Links:

1. [CHATS 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan \(LRTP\), 2019](#)
2. [CHATS Congestion Management Process \(CMP\), 2019](#)
3. [BCD Regional Transit Framework Plan, 2018](#)
4. [BCD Regional Park & Ride Study, 2018](#)
5. [WalkBike BCD: Regional Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan, 2017](#)
6. [Mount Pleasant Way Master Plan, 2021](#)



SHPO

CHAR
33837
AE



South Carolina
Department of Transportation

October 11, 2022

Ms. Elizabeth Johnson
Director, Historical Services, D-SHPO
State Historic Preservation Office
SC Department of Archives & History
8301 Parklane Road
Columbia, SC 29223

RE: Intensive Cultural Resources Survey of the I-526 and Long Point Road Interchange Improvements Project, Charleston County, South Carolina.

Dear Ms. Johnson:

Please find attached a copy of the above referenced report that describes cultural resources investigations conducted for proposed improvements to the Interstate 526 and S-10-97 (Long Point Road) interchange in **Charleston County**, South Carolina.

The South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) has proposed improvements to the Interstate 526 and S-10-97 (Long Point Road) interchange. The improvements address deficiencies and concerns identified during the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor (LCC) East Planning and Environmental Linkage Study. These deficiencies include congestion during peak traffic hours, insufficient ramp capacity, inadequate ramp design for high truck volumes, and traffic weaving conditions. The project area, serving as the archaeological area of potential effect (APE), extends 1.5 miles along Long Point Road from the South Carolina Ports Authority Wando Welch Terminal to Egypt Road and 2.17 miles along I-526 between the marshes of Horlbeck and Rathall Creeks. A 300 foot buffer was added to the archaeological APE serving as the architectural APE.

Two previously recorded aboveground resources (SHPO Site Nos. 2046 and 7802) as well as the previously recorded Snowden Historic District are present within the architectural APE. SHPO Site No. 2046 is a circa 1947 residence and is recommended **not eligible** for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). SHPO Site No. 7802, Long Point School, is recommended **eligible** as a contributing resource to the Snowden Historic District. However, the resource was actually relocated to outside of the architectural APE in October 2021. The Snowden Historic District, an African American freedman community established in 1865, is **eligible** for the NRHP but it lies outside of the proposed project footprint. The project will have **no adverse effect** on the Snowden Historic District.

Four new aboveground resources were identified within the architectural APE (SHPO Site Nos 2046.01, 7818, 8532, and 8533.01). SHPO Site No. 2046.01 is a circa 1947 outbuilding associated with the previously recorded residence. SHPO Site Nos. 7818 and 8532 are 1947 and 1971 bungalows, respectively. SHPO Site No. 8553.01 is Egypt Road, which is part of the Snowden Infrastructure Network (SHPO Site No. 8553). All of the newly recorded aboveground resources are recommended **not eligible** for the NRHP.

Fifteen previously recorded archaeological sites are present within the APE. All of the sites have either been previously found to be **not eligible** or currently recommended **not eligible** for the



NRHP. One previously recorded site, 38CH1647, is no longer extant due to residential development. Data recovery investigations mitigated the site prior to the development.

Two new archaeological sites were identified within the project area. Site 38CH2682 is a small low density site containing Early to Middle Woodland, and 20th century components. The site was recommended **not eligible** for the NRHP. Site 38CH2683 contains a Pre-Contact ceramic and shell scatter, significant 18th and 19th century artifacts associated with an African American slave settlement, and the remains of the early- to mid-20th century African American Long Point School. Site 38CH2683 is recommended **eligible** for the NRHP for its association with South Carolina's Gullah Geechee cultural and Segregation-era schools.

The project will have no effect on any of the newly recorded resources - SHPO Site Nos. 2046.01, 7818, 8532, and 8533.01, and archaeological site 38CH2682. The proposed changes will have an **adverse effect** on the archaeological site 38CH2683. An MOA should be developed for the site in coordination with the SHPO, the SCDOT, the FHWA, and all other relevant stakeholders. The MOA should outline a mitigation strategy for site 38CH2683, including archaeological data recovery investigations and public information components, taking into consideration the research design as well as the results for a 2022 College of Charleston archaeological investigation taking place at the time of this survey.

Per the terms of the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement executed on October 6, 2017, the Department is providing this information on behalf of the Federal Highway Administration. It is requested that you review the enclosed material, and, if appropriate, indicate your concurrence in the Department's findings. Please respond within 30 days if you have any objections or if you have need of additional information.

Sincerely,



Tracy Martin
RPG 4 NEPA Coordinator/Archaeologist

TAM:tam
Enclosures: Cultural resources survey report

I ~~(do not)~~ concur in the above determination.

Signed:  Date: 11/10/2022

ec: Shane Belcher, FHWA
LeeAnne Wendt, Muscogee (Creek) Nation
Brett Barnes, Eastern Shawnee

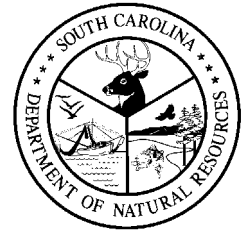
cc: Wenonah G. Haire, Catawba Nation
Keith Derting, SCIAA



SCDNR

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

PO Box 12559
Charleston, SC 29422
843.953.9003 Office
843.953.9399 Fax
JamisonM@dnr.sc.gov



Robert H. Boyles
Director
Lorianne Riggan
Director, Office of
Environmental Programs

September 2, 2022

Mr. Will Goldrick, Associate DBIA
Environmental Manager-Alternative Delivery
South Carolina Department of Transportation
Post Office Box 191
Columbia, SC 29202-0191

Re: Environmental Assessment of the Proposed Interstate 526 (I-526) and Long Point Road Interchange Improvements in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, Project ID: P041314

Dear Mr. Goldrick:

The SCDNR understands that the South Carolina Departments of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have started the project development, environmental and engineering studies for the proposed Long Point Road Interchange Improvements in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, and are soliciting input from participating agencies concerning the potential social, economic, and environmental benefits and impacts of the proposed project. The stated purpose of the proposed project is to improve the operations of the I-526/Long Point Road interchange and I-526 mainline and reduce operational conflicts between port-related and local traffic. The need for the project is demonstrated by the growing automobile and truck traffic on I-526 and Long Point Road, the existing interchange deficiencies, and operational conflicts between cars and trucks on Long Point Road and I-526.

As an agency mandated to protect and conserve the natural resources of this state. The proposed project has the potential to impact important coastal wetlands and other natural resources; thus, the SCDNR is interested in participating in an environmental review process that affords the highest level of environmental protection possible.

The project study area includes heavily impacted areas as well as important coastal habitats including freshwater wetlands, 1% annual flood plains (Figure 1), and intertidal marsh. These areas provide valuable habitat for fish and wildlife and are essential in maintaining water quality in adjoining water bodies.

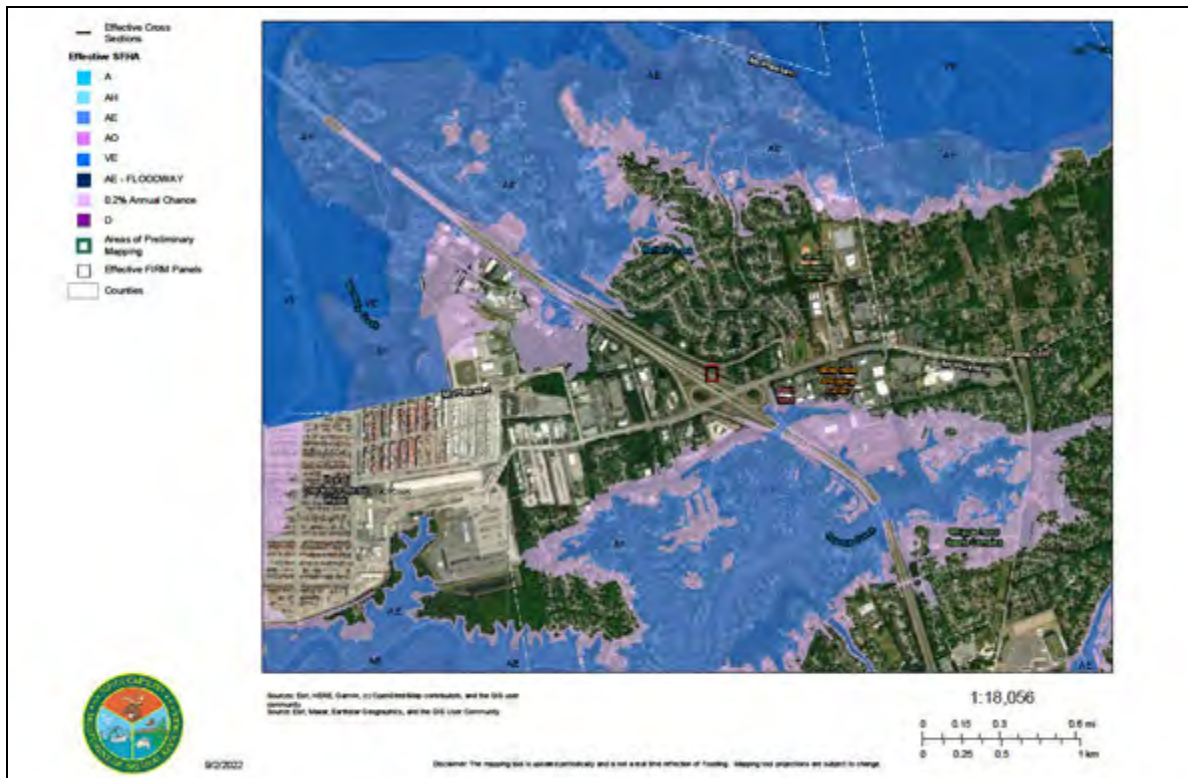


Figure 1: Flood Inundation Map, <https://scfloodimpact.com/>

According to SCDNR data, there are currently no records of threatened and endangered species or species of conservation concern in the project area. Please keep in mind that this information is derived from existing databases, and do not assume that it is complete. Areas not yet inventoried by SCDNR biologists may contain significant species or communities.

The selection of alternatives to be considered in the NEPA review of this project should be based on a clear and justifiable project purpose and need, with careful consideration given to avoiding and minimizing impacts to important natural resources. Both the direct and indirect impacts of each alternative should be fully evaluated. In most cases, construction on new alignment represents the most environmentally damaging alternative in meeting project objectives and should be considered only after all other options are exhausted. It is important to consider all possible alternatives prior to designing for new roadway construction.

The SCDNR recognizes the difficulty in balancing transportation needs with environmental protection, especially in the high growth, coastal areas. The SCDNR appreciates the opportunity to provide input in the early stages of this project and will be available for future input. If you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact me at JamisonM@dnr.sc.gov or 843.953.9003.

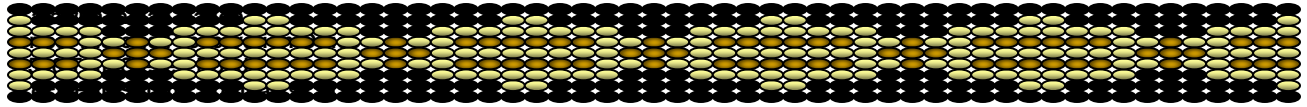
Sincerely,

Maggi Jamison

Maggi Jamison
Coastal Environmental Coordinator



Catawba Nation



Office 803-328-2427

November 14, 2022

Attention: Tracy Martin
SCDOT
P.O. Box 191
Columbia, SC 29202

Re. THPO #	TCNS #	Project Description
2023-66-2		Intensive Cultural Resources Survey of the I-526 and Long Point Road Interchange Improvements Project, Charleston Co., SC

Dear Mr. Martin,

The Catawba have no immediate concerns with regard to traditional cultural properties, sacred sites or Native American archaeological sites within the boundaries of the proposed project areas. **However, the Catawba are to be notified if Native American artifacts and / or human remains are located during the ground disturbance phase of this project.**

If you have questions please contact Caitlin Rogers at 803-328-2427 ext. 226, or e-mail Caitlin.Rogers@catawba.com.

Sincerely,

Wenonah G. Haire
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer



Eastern Shawnee Tribe



**EASTERN SHAWNEE
CULTURAL PRESERVATION DEPARTMENT**

70500 East 128 Road, Wyandotte, OK 74370

November 21, 2022

SCDOT

955 Park Street

Columbia, SC 29202

RE: PIN 413141 I-526, Charleston County, South Carolina

Dear Ms. Martin,

The Eastern Shawnee Tribe has received your letter regarding the above referenced project(s) within Charleston County, South Carolina. The Eastern Shawnee Tribe is committed to protecting sites important to Tribal Heritage, Culture and Religion. Furthermore, the Tribe is particularly concerned with historical sites that may contain but not limited to the burial(s) of human remains and associated funerary objects.

As described in your correspondence, and upon research of our database(s) and files, we find our people occupied these areas historically and/or prehistorically. However, the project proposes **NO Adverse Effect** or endangerment to known sites of interest to the Eastern Shawnee Tribe. Please continue project as planned. However, should this project inadvertently discover an archeological site or object(s) we request that you immediately contact the Eastern Shawnee Tribe, as well as the appropriate state agencies (within 24 hours). We also ask that all ground disturbing activity stop until the Tribe and State agencies are consulted. Please note that any future changes to this project will require additional consultation.

In accordance with the NHPA of 1966 (16 U.S.C. § 470-470w-6), federally funded, licensed, or permitted undertakings that are subject to the Section 106 review process must determine effects to significant historic properties. As clarified in Section 101(d)(6)(A-B), historic properties may have religious and/or cultural significance to Indian Tribes. Section 106 of NHPA requires Federal agencies to consider the effects of their actions on all significant historic properties (36 CFR Part 800) as does the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (43 U.S.C. § 4321-4347 and 40 CFR § 1501.7(a)). This letter evidences NHPA and NEPA historic properties compliance pertaining to consultation with this Tribe regarding the referenced proposed projects.

Thank you, for contacting the Eastern Shawnee Tribe, we appreciate your cooperation. Should you have any further questions or comments please contact our Office.

Sincerely,

Paul Barton, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO)

Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma

(918) 666-5151 Ext:1833

THPO@estoo.net



AGENCY MEETINGS

Prepared for:



Prepared by:



AGENDA

Essential Fish Habitat – I-526/Long Point Road Interchange Improvements

Date: August 15, 2022

Time: 1pm – 2pm

Location/Call in Details: Microsoft Teams Conference Call

Attendees: Will McGoldrick (SCDOT), Cynthia Cooksey (NOAA Fisheries), Russell Chandler (CDM Smith), Wade Biltoft (Three Oaks Engineering)

Discussion Topics and Meeting Notes:

1. Overview of August ACE Meeting materials
2. SCDOT EFH short form vs. full EFH Assessment
 - a. Safer bet to go with an assessment document rather than the short form due to incomplete design and uncertainty
 - i. The EFH Assessment document only needs to be 'as complicated as the project itself.'
 - ii. A simplified EFH assessment report (approximately 10-15 pages) would be most appropriate for this project
3. Cindy will be out for a temporary assignment for 2-3 months
 - a. Uncertain about total duration and when she will return
 - b. May need to have FHWA coordinate with Pace Wilbur (NOAA Fisheries) to ensure assessment is reviewed within required timelines and to meet project schedule
4. Freshwater wetlands adjacent to EFH
 - a. Not regulated officially and do not require mitigation but have influence on adjacent EFH quality
 - b. Include discussion about any freshwater wetlands immediately adjacent to EFH in assessment as areas of secondary impacts
 - c. Connectivity improvements to EFH-adjacent palustrine emergent wetland habitat could be proposed as mitigation for EFH impacts
 - i. No guarantee this would be adequate but would warrant serious consideration
5. SCDOT is investigating removal or partial removal of dam/berm between existing I-526 EB ramp and Chimney Bluff Drive

- a. Hydraulic analysis to be completed
- b. Potential limitations because berm/dam is outside existing and proposed SCDOT ROW
- c. SCDOT will continue to investigate viability of this potential mitigation opportunity



AGENCY COORDINATION EFFORT MEETING MATERIALS

Prepared for:



Prepared by:



MEETING MINUTES

SCDOT ACE Meeting – May 2022

Date: May 12, 2022
Time: 10:00 – 11:15 AM
Location: SCDOT HQ and Microsoft Teams

Prepared by: Siobhan Gordon – SCDOT, Russell Chandler – CDM Smith

Attendees (In Person):

Siobhan Gordon, SCDOT
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT
Sean Connolly, SCDOT
David Kelly, SCDOT
Becca Sheppard, SCDOT
Sean McCall, SCDOT
Siubhan Mure-Bruce, SCDOT
Mark Lester, PE, CDM Smith
Jenny Humphries AICP, CDM Smith
Michael Belvin, CDM Smith
Russell Chandler, CDM Smith

Attendees (On the Phone):

Joy Riley, PE, PMP, CPM, DBIA, SCDOT
Tracy Martin, SCDOT
Alya Singh-White, EPA
Shane Belcher, FHWA
Cindy Cooksey, NOAA Fisheries
Mark Caldwell, USFWS
Melanie Olds, USFWS
Steve Brumagin, USACE
Jeremy Kinney, USACE
Ivan Fannin, USACE
Christopher Stout, OCRM
Greg Mixon, SCDNR
Logan Ress, SCDHEC
Karen Hadley, CDM Smith
Gina Murphy, CDM Smith

Old Business

I-26 Widening MM 125 – 137

- Exclusion netting vs. moratorium associated with bats
 - Tri-colored bats main species of concern
 - Four culverts with known bat presence
 - ~150-200 bats total
 - Previously discussed a moratorium for two of the four culverts
 - SCDNR recently proposed to utilize exclusionary devices instead
 - *Would exclusion devices take the place of the moratorium? Or would the moratorium still be required?*
 - USFWS defers to SCDNR at this time since the species are not federally listed.
 - *USFWS has a new bat lead – Lindsey Troutman.*
 - SCDNR and SCDOT to coordinate on follow up call**

Project Presentations

Long Point Road Interchange Improvements

Will McGoldrick (*SCDOT*) introduced the project and requested agency feedback or information on potential “red flags” as the project moves forward.

Mark Lester (*CDM Smith*) introduced the project team and presented project information outlined below:

I-526 PEL Review and Connection to Long Point Road Interchange Improvements

- I-526 EAST PEL process is wrapping up
 - Long Point Road interchange improvements will be the first project associated with the PEL

- Summary from last ACE meeting (July 2021) – *focused on I-526 EAST PEL*
 - PEL study area and milestones
 - Draft P&N for PEL
 - Alternative concepts
 - Alternatives analysis process
 - Alternatives and supplemental options carried forward into NEPA
 - *Long Point Road interchange was discussed as a supplemental option*

- I-526 LCC EAST PEL Study area – from Virginia Ave to US 17 in Mt. Pleasant
 - About 10 miles long and mostly elevated.
 - Two major bridges over navigable water – Cooper and Wando Rivers
 - 5 major interchanges – including Long Point Road Interchange

- Alternatives Recommended to be carried forward into NEPA.
 - Additional alternative (3A) added based on public input.
 - *Alternative 3A – symmetrical at the bridge crossings and narrow widening along I-526.*

- Summary of PEL Study and NEPA process
 - Project is currently bridging the gap from PEL into NEPA.
 - Still finalizing the data on operations of this interchange in PEL
 - In a “pre-NEPA” phase

- PEL P&N – improve travel time reliability and reduce congestion.
 - *Long Point P&N is very similar.*

Long Point Road Interchange Improvements

- Long Point Road Interchange Study Area
 - 2 miles on I-526
 - 1.5 miles on Long Point Road.
 - Existing interchange is a partial cloverleaf.
 - Three waterbody crossings
 - *Hobcaw Creek, Trib. to Hobcaw Creek, Trib. to Rathall Creek*
 - *SC Ports Authority Wando Welch Terminal located in the western limits*

- Why are improvements needed?
 - Traffic congestion on I-526
 - Population and economic growth
 - *Port growth – running at a record pace*
 - Interchange deficiencies contribute to operational issues on I-526
 - Public comment and concerns during I-526 PEL were focused on this section of the project area

- Existing Deficiencies
 - Inadequate shoulder widths
 - Insufficient acceleration and deceleration ramp lengths
 - Tight curved ramps
 - *All deficiencies present challenges for truck traffic coming from the port which*

- 2017 Level of Service maps
 - Shows bottleneck at Long Point interchange
 - *EB/WB traffic in AM*
 - *EB in PM*
 - Merge point at the WB loop causing drop in LOS

- 2050 LOS maps
 - LOS F in its entirety in the AM and almost completely in the PM

- Need for Additional Lane Capacity on existing interchange ramps
 - Three left turn lanes on the eastbound off ramp
 - *Three lanes exiting I-526 need somewhere to go, so this needs to be looked at further.*
 - Also need another lane along Long Point Road to accommodate three left turns
 - *Will only be looked at if necessary to improve I-526*
 - Westbound entrance ramp needs to be 2 lanes
 - I-526 crosses over Long Point Road, so want to keep existing bridge in place (constraint)

- Conceptual interchange designs as presented to the public in Fall 2021
 - Keep existing configuration (partial cloverleaf)
 - *But make improvements*
 - New ramps to separate truck traffic from general traveling public
 - *Two different tie-in locations, so two separate options.*
 - Diverging diamond

- PEL PIM #2 public comment summary
 - 45% area concerned with traffic
 - 23% specifically suggested separating truck traffic from the general traveling public

- Proposed Project Purpose for Long Point Interchange
 - Reduce congestion
 - Improve travel time
 - Improve I-526 operations

- Schedule is extremely aggressive as part of the SCDOT Alternative Delivery program

Discussion and Feedback

- Greg Mixon (SCDNR) – For interchange options 1 and 4, would an additional project be needed in the future to move the trucks?
 - Joy Riley (SCDOT) – Option 1 will probably not truly fix the problem. Traffic analysis will probably still show congestion. Option 4 would require a lot of work along Long Point Rd which will increase the impact to adjacent development. Early analysis is pointing towards one of the options that separate the port traffic. Residents have a huge concern about truck operations and capacity throughout the entire day.
 - Mark Lester (CDM Smith) – I-526 will back up past the Wando Bridge in the middle of the day if there are delays at the port gates. DDI design – the cross over will need to occur outside of the bridge footprint to avoid impacts to the I-526 overpass which will push impacts further down the road. Provided explanation of how DDI interchanges work.
 - Joy Riley (SCDOT) – We are working on assessing alternatives and analyze traffic. These options will change as alternatives are developed, so different alternatives may presented in a few month.

- Will McGoldrick (SCDOT) – Are there cultural concerns that we should be aware of?
 - SHPO is not on the call, but Becca and David will look into it. Becca said there were extensive studies when I-526 was built.

- Ivan Fannin (USACE) – Was a JD done for I-526 EAST PEL?
 - Will McGoldrick (SCDOT) – No, the studies were done during PEL, but no submitted. A JD for this project will be submitted during NEPA (July 2022), but permit will be on the DB contractor.
 - *Requested USACE to look for adjacent or overlapping JDs within the area.***

- Alya Singh-White (EPA) – Is there a need for additional ROW?
 - Will McGoldrick (SCDOT) – Yes. New ROW will be needed, but the extent of that is unknown at this time. Relocations are possible.

- Alya Singh-White (EPA) – Are there Environmental Justice concerns?
 - Michael Belvin (CDM Smith) – The west side of Long Point Rd is the Snowden community (known African American Community), so we will be looking into it further.
 - Mark Lester (CDM Smith)– Will keep any design as compact and contained as possible.
 - Will McGoldrick (SCDOT) – All other areas are newer developed areas

- Alya Singh-White (EPA) – How many river crossings?
 - Russell Chandler (CDM Smith) – Three waterbodies – Trib to Rathall Creek, Hobcaw Creek, Trib to Hobcaw Creek. This project does not cross the Wando River.

- Cindy Cooksey (NOAA Fisheries) – No comments at this time. Need more information to dig into details.
 - Russell Chandler (CDM Smith) – What is the level of analysis needed for EFH? Most waterbody crossings are EFH but are expected to be “tie in” areas where the project footprint should be minimal. Is the SCDOT shortform a reasonable approach?
 - Cindy Cooksey (NOAA Fisheries) – Cannot say one way or another at this point since project is still so high level and early in the process. Level of analysis should be commensurate with the project.

- Mark Caldwell (USFWS) – No comments at this time.

- Greg Mixon (SCDNR) – Initial question was addressed. Maggie Jamison will be the POC for this project but was unable to attend this meeting.

- Sean Connolly (SCDOT) – One thing we will need to consider is: what does the mitigation plan look like? Push towards banks. Are we keeping it in house? If so,

may need to solicit for credits. Point Farms MB that just came on has already been taken over by Charleston County.

- Cindy Cooksey (NOAA Fisheries) – Daniel Island MB is getting closer to ready.
- Chris Stout (OCRM) – No comments at this time. Sarah will be CA project manager.
- Logan Ress (SCDHEC) – No comments at this time. Will have to check impairments, but Watershed Atlas should show those.

Assigned To	Action Item	Due Date
SCDOT, SCDNR	Follow up call regarding I-26 widening – bats	TBD
USACE	Review for adjacent or overlapping JDs within the area	TBD
SCDOT/CDM Smith	Submit JD/CA plat in July	July 2022
SCDOT	provide information to CDM Smith on previous studies along 526 around Long Point Rd	5/27/2022



*Long Point Road Interchange
Improvements
Agency Coordination Meeting #1
May 12, 2022*

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions and Meeting Objective
2. I-526 LCC EAST PEL Overview
3. Long Point Road Interchange
4. Need for the Long Point Road Interchange Project
5. Schedule
6. Agency Feedback

Introductions

- Joy Riley, PE, PMP, CPM, DBIA – SCDOT Project Manager
- Will McGoldrick – SCDOT Environmental

- Mark Lester, PE, PMP – Project Manager
- Jenny Humphreys, AICP
- Michael Belvin
- Russell Chandler



Meeting Objectives

- Introduce the Long Point Road Interchange Project
- Receive agency input and feedback



I-526 LCC EAST Planning and Environmental Linkages Connection

The last time we met, we reviewed:

- PEL Study Area and PEL Milestones
- Draft Purpose and Need
- Concepts Developed
- Alternatives Analysis Process
- Alternatives Carried Forward
 - No-build, 5 mainline build alternatives (Alternatives 1, 2, 4, 5 &7)
- Supplemental Options Carried Forward into NEPA
 - Interchange Improvements at Long Point Road
 - TSMO Options



I-526 LCC EAST PEL Study Area

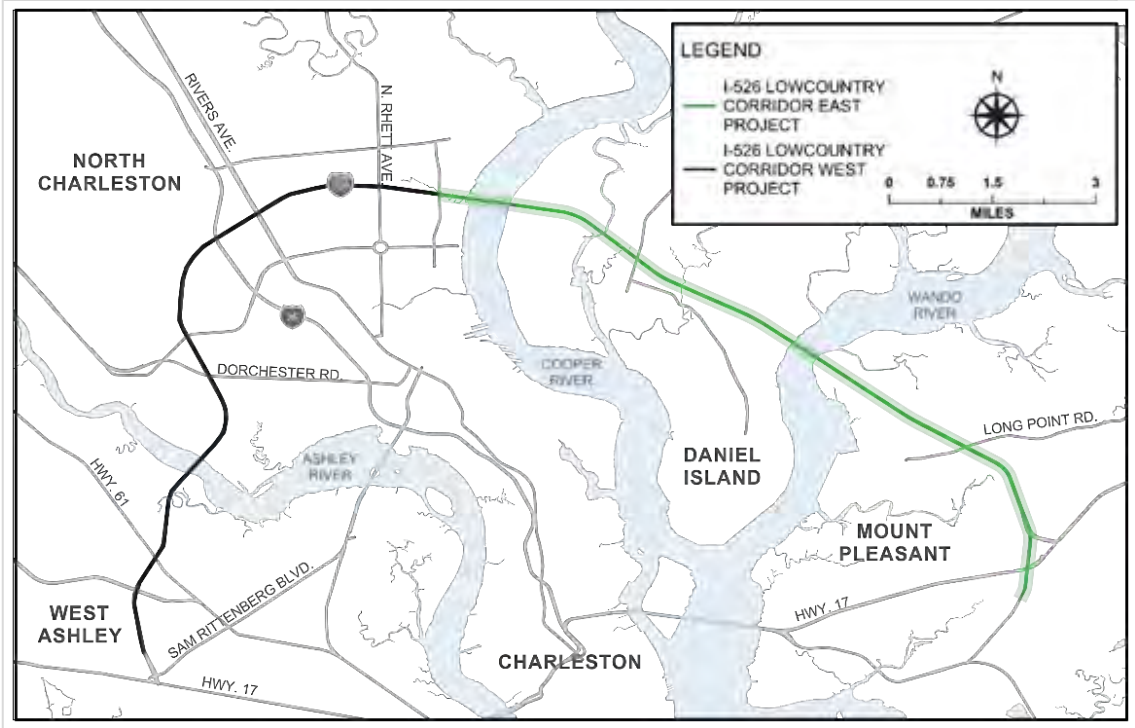
Virginia Avenue to US 17

10 
total miles

5 
miles elevated structure

5 
interchanges

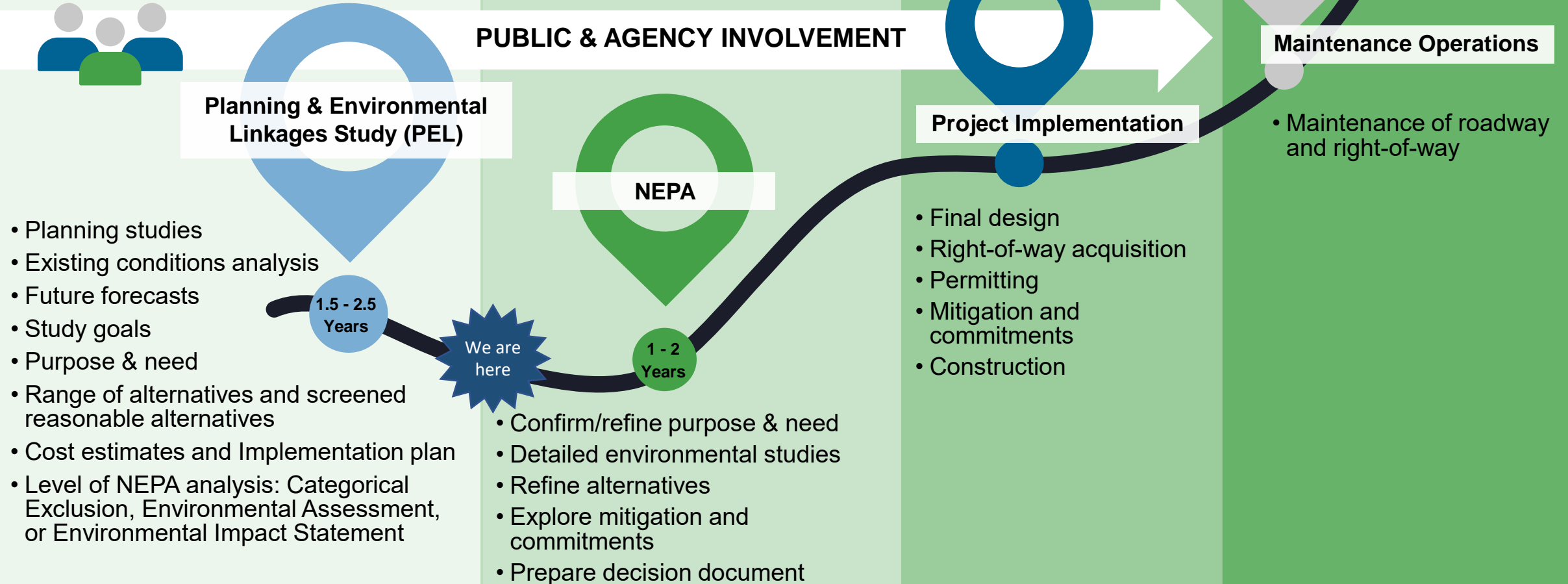
2 
major bridges over navigational channels
–Don Holt Bridge & Wando River Bridges



Alternatives Recommended to be Carried Forward to NEPA

- TSMO strategies
- No-build alternative
- Six mainline build alternatives
 - Alt. 3A was added following PIMs
- Additional considerations for Long Point Road Interchange

PEL & NEPA Process



PEL Purpose and Need

The purpose for transportation improvements along this corridor is to improve travel time reliability & reduce congestion along I-526 from Virginia Avenue in North Charleston to US 17 in Mount Pleasant.

Identified Needs

Mobility



Traffic congestion from high traffic volumes & limited capacity



Over Capacity Roadways



Unreliable Travel Times



Congestion-Related Crashes

Roadway Deficiencies



Shoulder Widths



On & Off Ramp Lengths



Tightly Curved Ramps



Long Point Road Interchange Improvements

Long Point Road Interchange Study Area

- 2 miles along I-526
- 1.5 miles along Long Point Road
- Existing interchange: Partial cloverleaf
- 3 waterbody crossings
 - Trib. to Rathall Creek
 - Trib. to Hobcaw Creek
 - Hobcaw Creek
- SCPA Wando Welch Terminal



Why are improvements needed?

- Traffic related congestion on I-526
- Population and economic growth
 - Residential and Commercial expansions, Port growth
- Interchange deficiencies
- Public comment and concerns

Long Point Road Interchange Deficiencies

The existing interchange ramps have geometric deficiencies that do not accommodate existing and future traffic volumes and contribute to inadequate mobility and travel times.

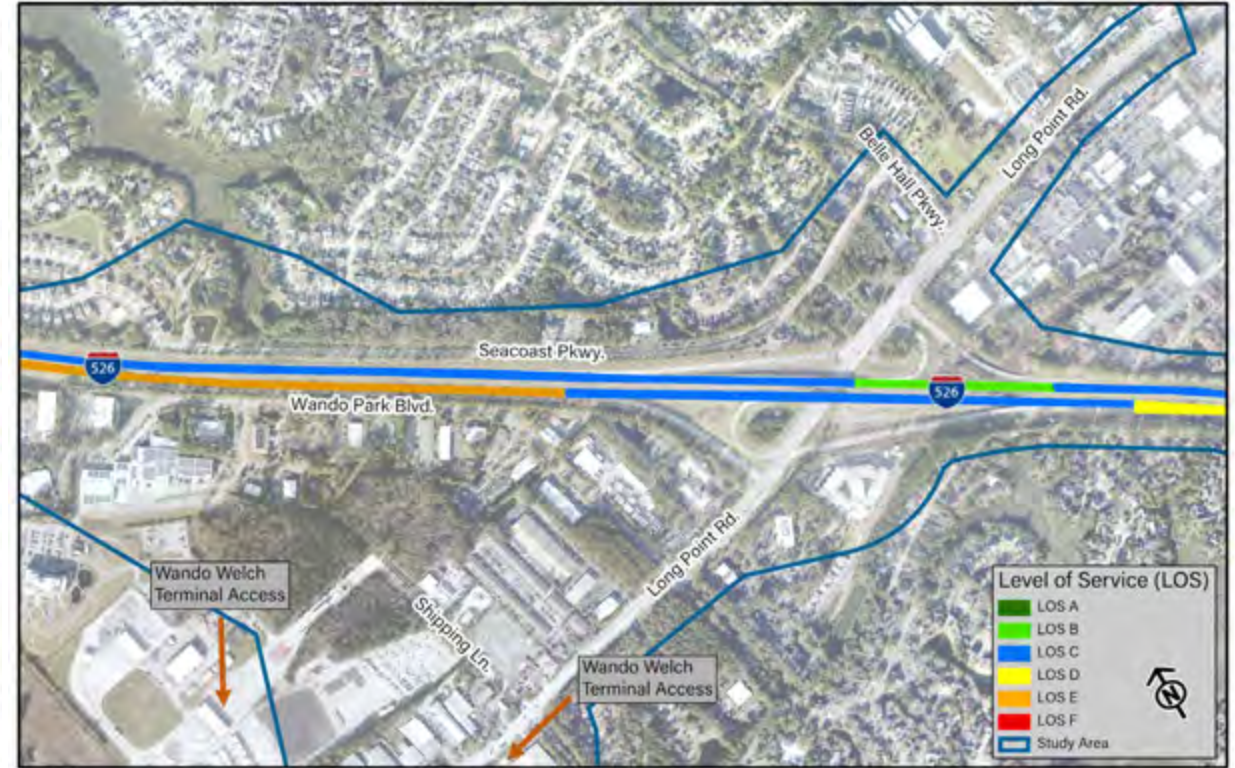
- Inadequate shoulder widths
- Insufficient acceleration/deceleration ramp lengths
- Tightly curved ramps

2017 Level of Service

AM Peak Hour



PM Peak Hour

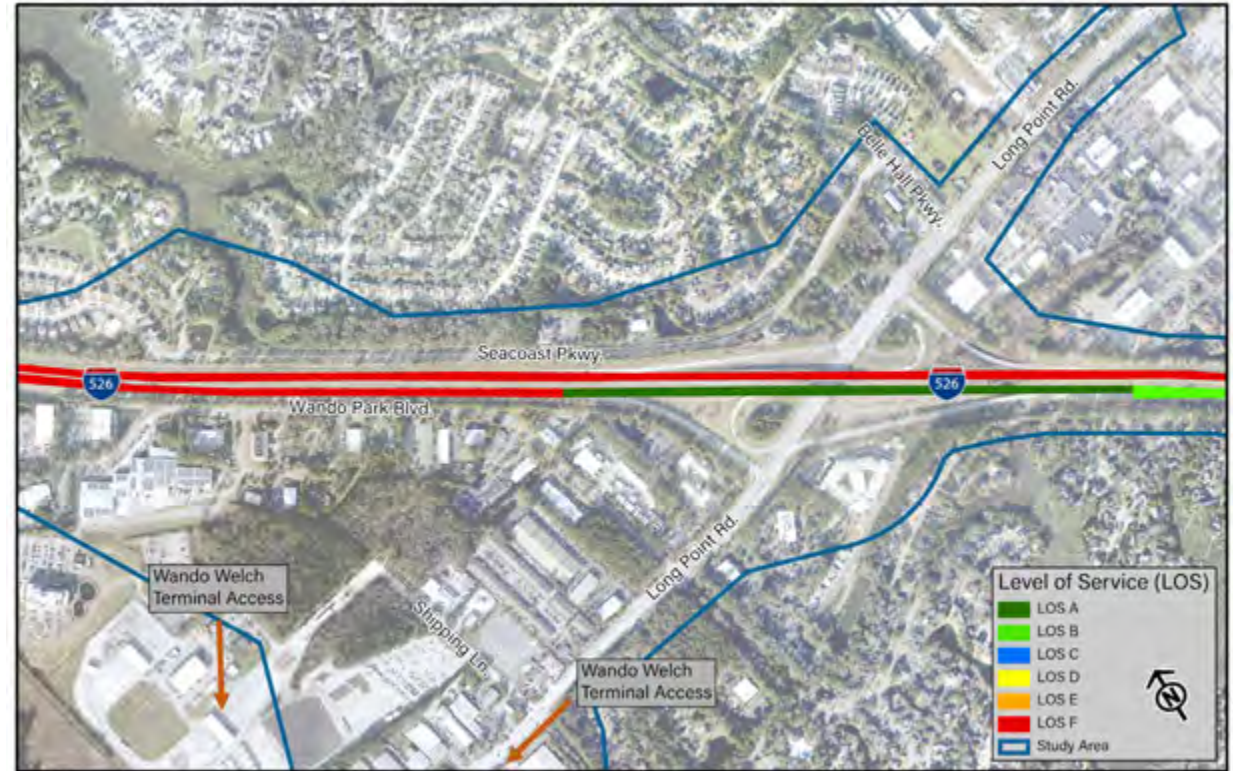


2050 Level of Service

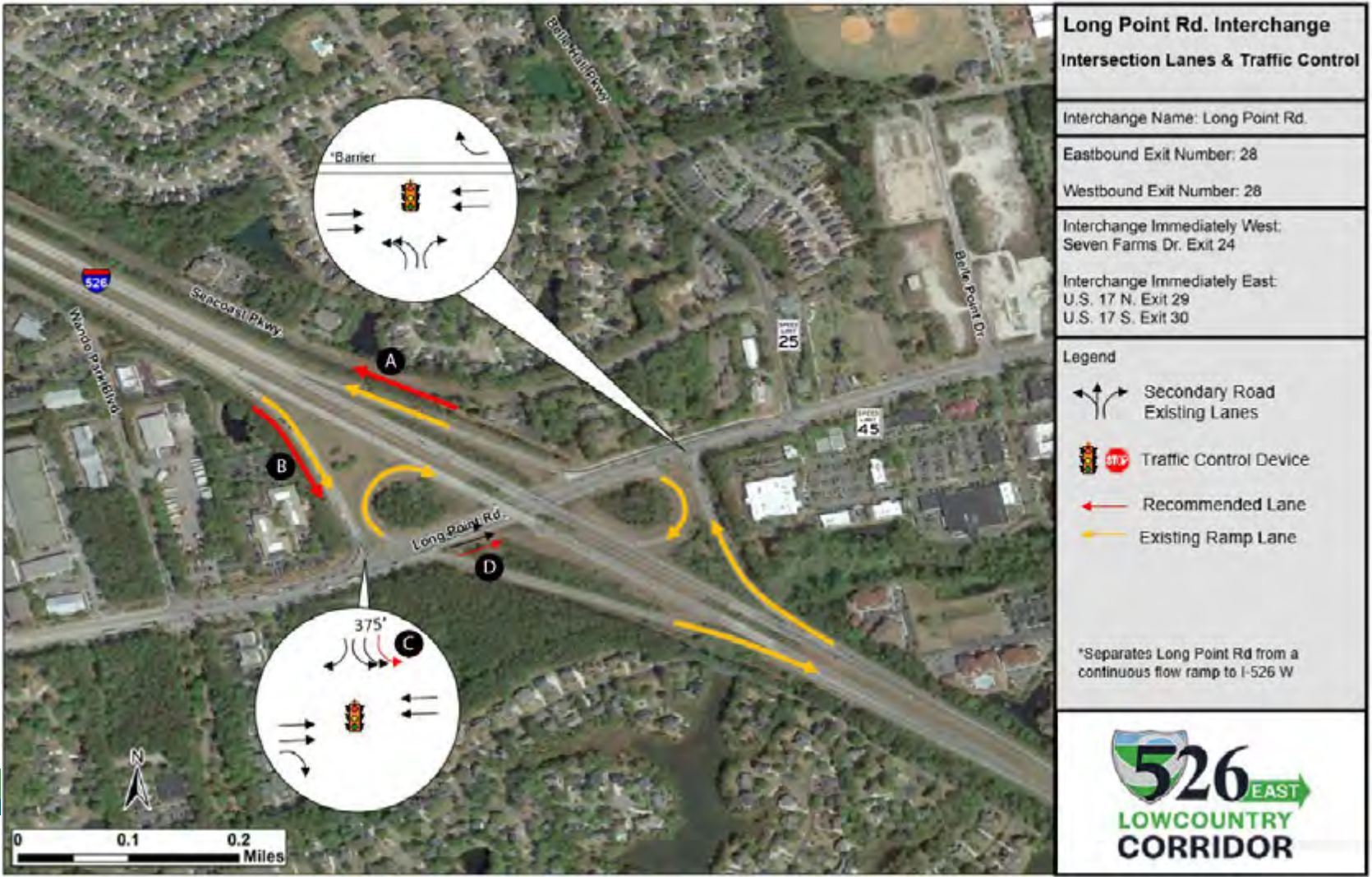
AM Peak Hour



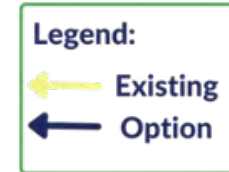
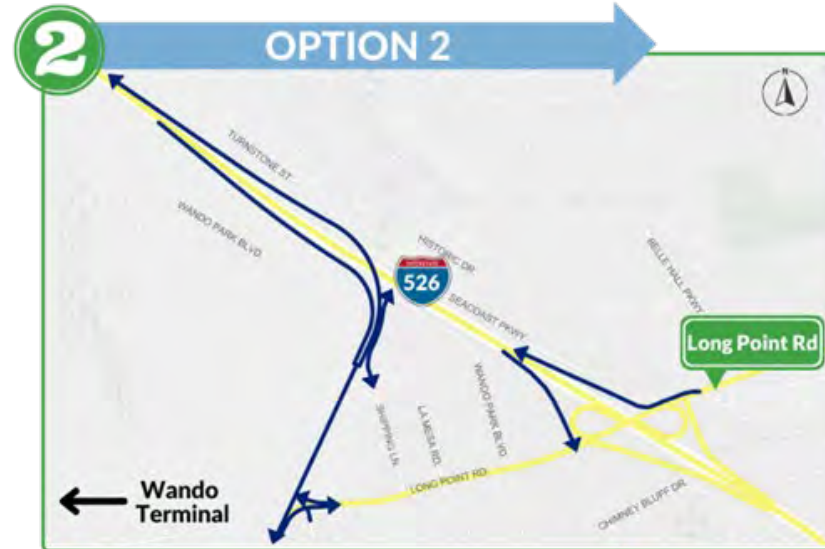
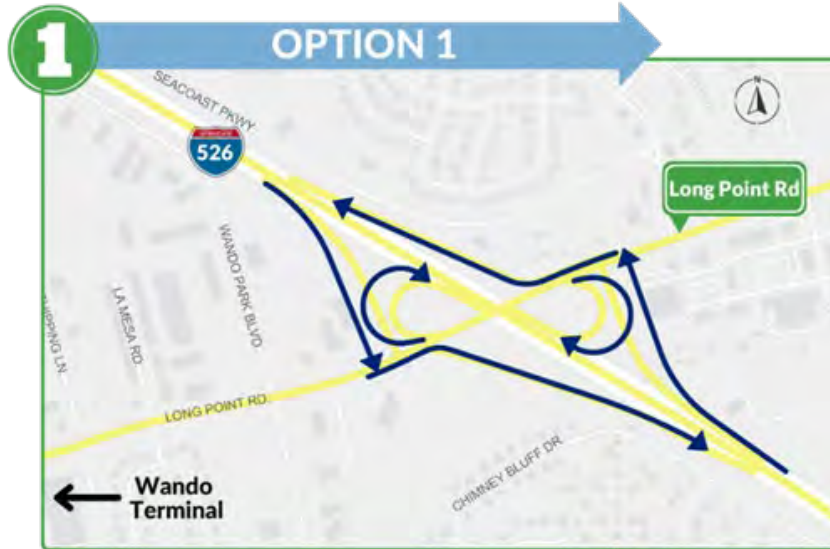
PM Peak Hour



Need for Additional Interchange Lane Capacity



Preliminary Interchange Concepts



PEL PIM #2 Public Input



Top comments and concerns:

45%
Concerned with **Traffic**, including **Truck Traffic**



23%
Support **Separate Truck Access** to the Wando Port





22%
Concerned with **Safety**



20%
Concerned with **Neighborhood Impacts**



-  I-526 E PEL Public Comments
-  Specifically Support Separate Truck Access

Proposed Project Purpose

Improve the I-526/Long Point Road interchange to:

- Reduce congestion
- Improve travel time
- Improve operations on the I-526 corridor between the Wando River and Hobcaw Creek



Project and NEPA Schedule

Proposed Project Schedule

Project Kick-Off	April 2022
Alternatives Development	May 2022 - June 2022
NEPA Documentation and Studies	May 2022 - February 2023
Traffic Analysis and Interchange Report	June 2022 - March 2023
NEPA Findings Finalized	March 2023
Interchange Report Approval	April 2023
SCDOT D/B Procurement	April 2023 - January 2024
Construction Begins	January 2024

Proposed NEPA Schedule

Long Point Road Interchange Improvements – Proposed NEPA Schedule												
	2022 Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	2023 Jan	Feb	Mar
Project Kick-Off												
ACE Meeting #1	★											
Alternatives Development and Analysis												
Section 106 consultation												
Jurisdictional Determination Critical Area Plat												
Section 7 consultation												
Public Info Meeting												
ACE Meeting #2												
Draft EA submitted to FHWA												
Public Hearing												
EA Findings submitted to FHWA												
FHWA issues NEPA Findings												

Agency Feedback

- Questions about the project?
- Specific resources of concern?



Long Point Road Interchange Study Area





Open Discussion

PROJECT SUMMARY

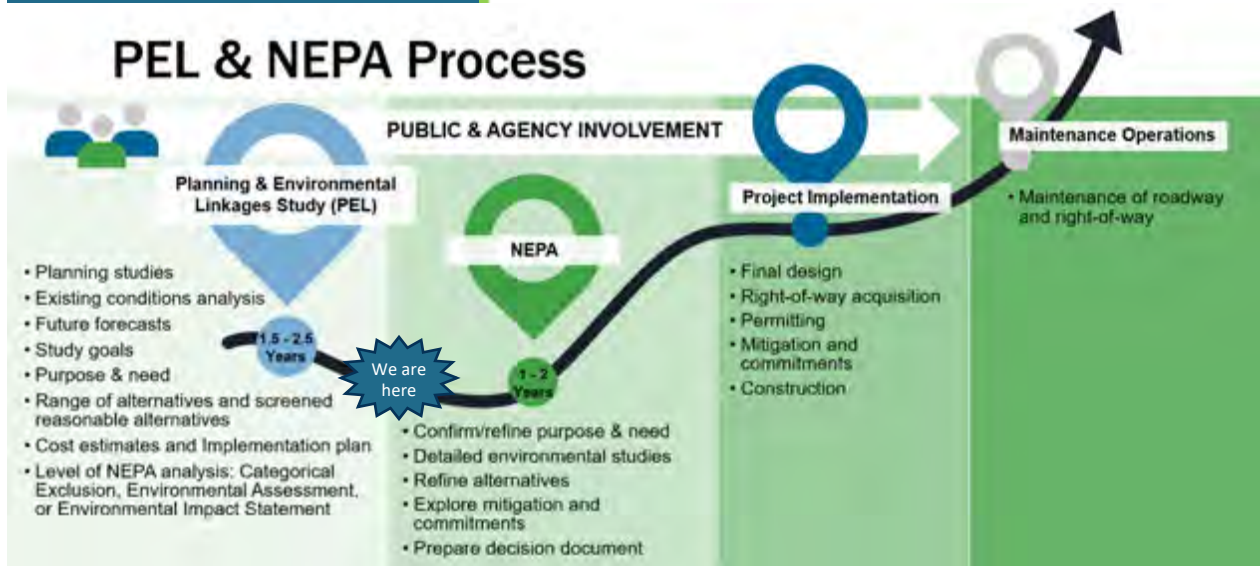
The need for the I-526 and Long Point Road interchange improvements was identified in the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor (LCC) EAST Planning and Environmental Linkage (PEL) study. The project has independent utility and would support the planned I-526 LCC EAST improvements outlined in the PEL.



WHAT IS THE PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT LINKAGES?

Study recommendations will include early action improvements that may identify phasing program options for the implementation of recommended actions.

The PEL program was developed by FHWA to assist the transportation decisionmakers by encouraging the incorporation of key elements that include environmental resources, community, and economic goals early in project planning and development phases. Linking planning and NEPA is an integral part of the PEL process.



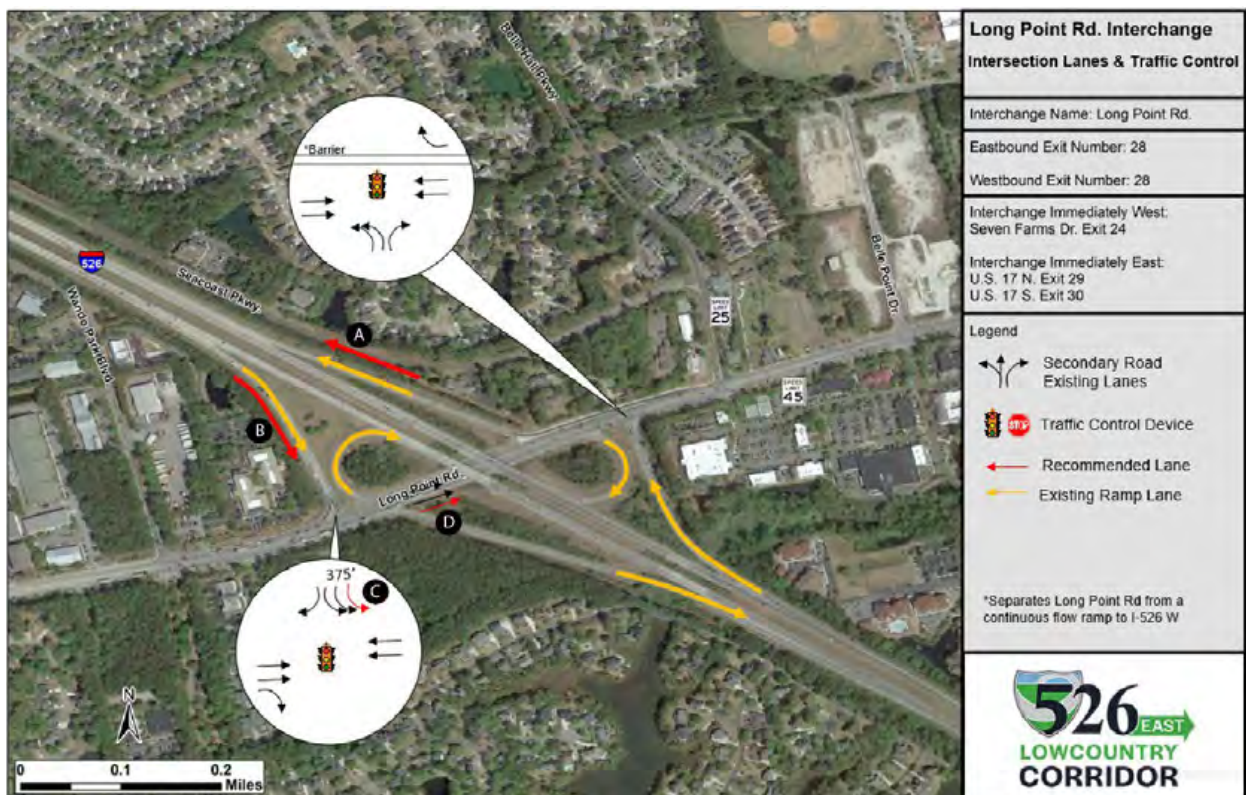
HOW WAS THE LONG POINT ROAD INTERCHANGE EVALUATED IN THE PEL STUDY?

Several concepts for the proposed improvements of the Long Point Road interchange were developed as part of the PEL. The PEL study does not imply FHWA has approved operational acceptance of any of the concepts developed.

The traffic and alternatives analysis completed for the PEL recommended the following modifications to accommodate future traffic demands at the I-526 and Long Point Road Interchange:

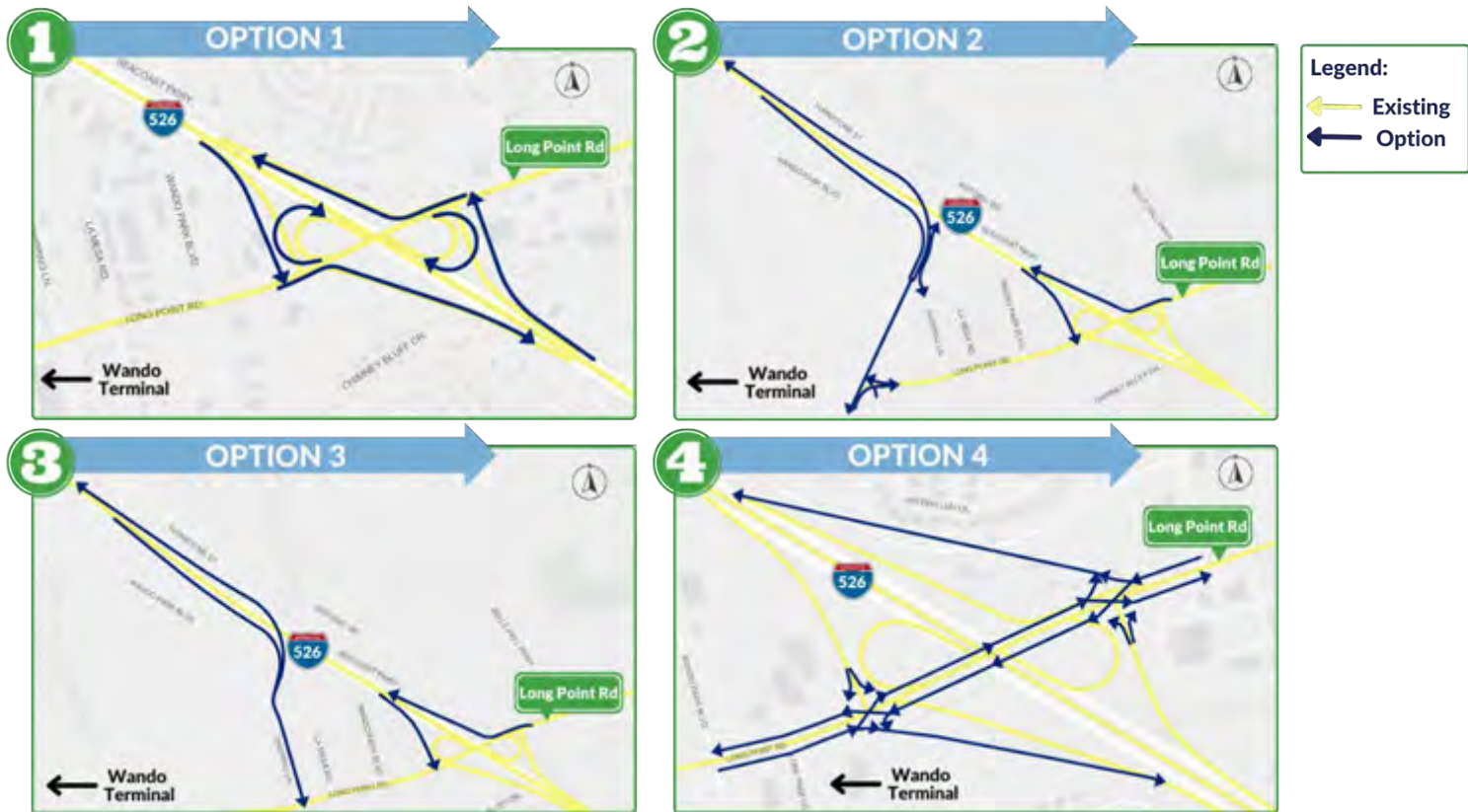
- An additional lane along the I-526 westbound on-ramp from Long Point Road (A).
- An additional lane along the I-526 eastbound off-ramp to Long Point Road (B).
- An additional 375' left-turn lane along the I-526 eastbound off-ramp approach of the intersection of Long Point Road & I-526 eastbound off-ramp (C).
- An additional northeast through lane along Long Point Road beginning as a receiving lane for the left turns from the I-526 eastbound off-ramp and continuing towards the intersection with the I-526 westbound on-ramp (D).

The PEL recommends a detailed traffic analysis be completed as part of the NEPA process for the proposed improvements to the Long Point Road interchange.



Conceptual Designs from the PEL

- Option 1 – Improved Partial Cloverleaf
- Option 2 – New interchange providing access to the Wando Welch Port Terminal main gate
- Option 3 – New interchange providing T intersection access to Shipping Lane
- Option 4 – Diverging Diamond



HAS THE PEL BEEN FINALIZED?

Not yet. The PEL is being revised based on public comments and feedback from SCDOT and FWHA.

WHAT IS THE EXPECTED LEVEL OF NEPA?

The PEL recommends an Environmental Assessment (EA) be completed for the project.

The need for an EA has been confirmed based on preliminary project scoping.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

- Confirm Purpose and Need
- Complete Detailed Traffic Analysis
- Determine Range of Alternatives
- Complete Additional Environmental Studies

Long Point Road Interchange Improvements – Proposed NEPA Schedule

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
Project Kick-Off											
Alternatives Development & Analysis											
Section 106 consultation											
Jurisdictional Determination Critical Area Plat											
Section 7 consultation											
Public Info Meeting											
Draft EA submitted to FHWA											
Public Hearing											
EA Findings submitted to FHWA											
FHWA issues EA Findings											

Proposed Project Purpose

The purpose of the proposed project is to improve the I-526 and Long Point Road interchange to reduce congestion, improve travel time, and improve operations on the I-526 corridor located between the Wando River and Hobcaw Creek.

Proposed Project Need

The analysis for the PEL determined the current I-526 and Long Point Road interchange does not have the capacity to accommodate future growth and provide acceptable traffic operations.

Improving the Long Point Road interchange would help satisfy the roadway deficiency portion of the PEL study's purpose and need while also improving operations that will improve performance on the I-526 mainline.

The public also repeatedly expressed concerns about the Long Point Road interchange and port related traffic.

The need for the project is based on:

- Population and economic growth along the I-526 EAST corridor
- Economic growth and planned development along Long Point Road
- Traffic-related congestion on I-526 and Long Point Road
- Long Point Road interchange deficiencies

Ongoing Studies

- Traffic analysis
- Cultural & Historical resources surveys
- Biological surveys
- Wetland delineations
- Essential Fish Habitat determinations

ACE Meeting Minutes

August 11, 2022

Attendees

In Person

Siobhan Gordon, SCDOT
Sean Connolly, SCDOT
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT
Craig Winn, SCDOT
Russell Chandler, CDM Smith
Michael Belvin, CDM Smith
Gio Cosentino, CDM Smith
Sean McCall, SCDOT
Grayson Murray, SCDOT
Ed Frierson, SCDOT
Adam Humphries, SCDOT
Megan Groves, SCDOT
Travis Cooper, SCDOT
Alex Bennett, SCDOT
Chad Long, SCDOT
Chris Beckham, SCDOT
Bill Jurgelski, SCDOT

On the Phone

Mark Caldwell, USFWS
Martin Bridges, USCG
Katie Abare, Stantec
Joshua Adams, Stantec
Kristin Knight-Meng, KCI
Ashley Baumann, KCI
Alya Singh-White, EPA
Sandra Saint Surin, FHWA
Sarah Reed, OCRM
Caitlan Bell, TOE
Mark Mohr, TOE
Cindy Cooksey, NOAA
Greg Mixon, SCDNR
Heather Robbins, R & D
Mark Lester, CDM Smith
Phil Leaser, KCI
Eric Burgess, KCI
Jared Medlin, KCI
Wade Biltoft, TOE
Shane Belcher, FHWA
Chuck Hightower, SCDHEC
Jenny Humphreys, CDM Smith
Ivan Fannin, USACE
Jeremy Kinney, USACE
David Kelly, SCDOT
Maggie Jamison, SCDNR

Old Business – none discussed

Project Presentations and Discussions

I-26 Widening mm125-137, Calhoun and Lexington Counties

Marcus (Stantec) provided project overview and background. At previous ACE meetings using exclusionary devices in culverts for the proposed tricolor bat was discussed. Anticipate submitting Bat Exclusionary Plan to SCDNR and USFWS for review in the next few weeks. Exclusionary devices will be installed in September (picture shown of devices). Culverts will be replaced in a phased approach as traffic will need to be maintained. Concrete roughening was also proposed and will be implemented. Looking to use a roughness scale of 7-8 (scale shown during discussion) along the ceiling and the very top corners of the culvert. Weep holes were proposed as well, but there are structural concerns.

Joshua (Stantec) expressed the concern about bats actually using weep holes since they are not dark. Location of weep holes are proposed at the ends of the culvert which will have too much light, noise and disturbance.

Marcus – Fabrication of the culverts with non-PVC lined weep holes are also a concern. Culverts will be built off site. PVC will have to be in place when the concrete is poured and then the PVC will need to be removed. Once the PVC is removed, it becomes a structurally weak point which would be a maintenance concern. Other option is drilling a weep hole after fabrication, but there is the risk of hitting rebar with the drill.

Greg (SCDNR) – recommendations came from the bat biologist, so coordination with Jennifer is needed before SCDNR will comment on the removal of weep holes. Also want Jennifer to look at the roughness chart. Will need to schedule a meeting to follow up with the bat discussion.

Mark (USFWS) – Proposed rule for Tricolor is under review. Posting is coming, but unsure of timeframe. When it is listed, it will affect the NEPA process and consultation will need to occur.

Jeremy (USACE) – How does USACE determine affects to the bat?

Mark (USFWS) – HQ will have to provide guidance and documents update until we get a key.

Marcus – exclusionary plan is being developed to try to get ahead of the listing.

Mark (USFWS) – exclusion of bats does not constitute a take. Do not see any big biological concern with our current plan at this time. Tricolor bat will not have a 4d rule when listed, but a Programmatic Agreement (PA) with FHWA will likely be developed. Biological Opinion (BO) can take quite a few months to develop though.

Siobhan (SCDOT) – Will include USFWS in the Bat Exclusion Plan review and the upcoming bat discussion.

Chad (SCDOT) – Are there any additional studies or preparations we can do at this time?

Marcus and Joshua – We aren't sure at this time if the bats are using the culverts in the non-hibernating season, but one step we can take is to do studies in the summer. We imagine that USFWS will want more data when they are listed. SCDNR identified these bats initially in the winter of 2021/2022.

Marcus provided a permitting update. ROW plans should be finalized later this month. Permit submittal in late Sept/early October. Showed impacts broken down by watersheds and HUC. Congaree Basin has mitigation covered, but we are still working on the mitigation plan for the N. Fork Edisto.

Sean (SCDOT) – the winner of the solicitation for S. Fork Edisto (which covers the N. Fork) is behind schedule. May need to propose outside of service area mitigation with demonstration of in kind with adjacent HUC. Impacts in the N. Fork basin are a few miles from the secondary service area of Mill Creek MB and Norfolk Southern MB. PRM is not practicable for 0.08 acres and 239 LF of impact.

Jeremy (USACE) – As long as 50% restoration and preservation is met, then the bank within closer proximity would be preferable. Coordinate with USACE mitigation staff early on to ensure that the out of service area requirements are met. For Public Notice (PN), a full mitigation plan is not necessary – just state that we are going to an approved bank.

Sean – This project is a high priority to Sec Hall and the motoring public.

ACTION ITEMS – Submit Bat Plan to USFWS and SCDNR then schedule a discussion between all parties. Coordinate with USACE mitigation staff.

I-95 Widening and Improvements (mm0-8), Jasper County

Craig (SCDOT) introduced the project with a brief overview. Starts in GA and ends 1 mile north of exit 8. Replaces all mainline bridges and John Smith Rd bridge as well as interchange improvements at exit 5 and 8 (IMR will be needed for this exit). Adding a new travel lane in each direction.

Gio (CDM Smith) – Purpose and Need introduced. Mainline alternative is to increase from 4-6 lanes. Existing median is large enough to widen to the inside and minimize the impacts. Interchange alternatives will be evaluated by meeting the purpose and need, minimize impacts, as well as operational and constructability factors.

Exit 5 – does not meet current design standards.

John Smith Rd bridge – design exceptions would be needed if this bridge is not replaced.

Options – replace on alignment, replace to SE on a 30% skew, or replace SE on a 20% skew.

Exit 8 – proposed to be modified to accommodate future traffic volume increases. Options – 6 lane diverging diamond (DDI), 4 lane DDI (maintain existing bridge), Loop ramp.

NEPA Document – Non-Programmatic CE is anticipated. CR field work has been complete and technical reports are being drafted – no findings.

Mark (TOE) – T&E species being evaluated. Atlantic and Shortnose sturgeon are known to occur in the Savannah River. Have coordinated with NOAA and SCDNR to get preliminary information. Have identified anticipated construction actions that will impact the species and which standard conservation

measure can be incorporated into design and construction. Follow up meeting on Aug 15 to discuss further.

Mark (USFWS) – is the meeting with refuges or about T&E?

Mark (TOE) – there are two meetings - the first is with refuge and the second is sturgeon specific.

A second meeting with USFWS and SCDNR will be scheduled.

Mark (TOE) – Tricolor and Northern Long Eared Bats – bat biologists are taking a harder look at the potential impacts in anticipation of the listing changes.

Maggie (SCDNR) – Can Rafinesque’s big-eared bats be included? Will coordinate with Jennifer to provide more information about habitat for this species.

Mark (TOE) – All bats seen or noted will be included in the documentation.

Mark (TOE) – Wetland and Stream – delineations have been completed. Any previous JDs have been incorporated into the delineations. 235 acres 7400 LF present within the project area. JD will be held until closer to ROW plans to insure the project area matches. This pushes the JD submittal to March of 2023.

USACE – include acreage for the streams along with the linear feet.

Gio – went over project schedule.

I-526 @ Long Point Road Interchange Improvements, Charleston County

Will (SCDOT) provided a brief project overview and background. PIM was held last week on Aug 2.

Mark (CDM Smith) introduced the project team. Project is moving rapidly. PEL study has been complete and signed. LOI was sent on July 26. Traffic studies (high level) are complete and additional studies will be done to narrow alternatives. Environmental field studies are complete and reports are being prepared.

Draft P&N – PEL effort and PI showed the high level of concern with truck traffic. Improve operations and reduce operational conflicts. Interchanges are deficient – ramps do not meet today’s standards and it is difficult for trucks to get up to speed when entering the interstate.

Traffic – overview of the volume and predicted growth. 66% increase in AADT expected by 2050, but the growth of truck traffic is anticipated to be 128% due to port growth. Displayed a comparison of the current LOS for 2022 and the “no build” LOS for 2050 during morning and evening peak hours.

Alternatives –

1) Improve existing ramps – same interchange types, but improve ramps to bring to today’s standards. Needs additional studies – borderline with improved performance.

- 2) New Port Access ramps and improved existing ramps – new ramps would provide a more direct route to the port (mainly for trucks, but would not be exclusive).
 - 3) Diverging diamond interchange – would allow more cars to move through the interchange in less time with a smaller footprint. Needs additional studies – borderline with improved performance.
 - 4) Single Point interchange – does not improve traffic and meet P&N.
 - 5) Flyover for more direct access to port – does not improve traffic and meet P&N.
 - 6) Add additional ramps to serve port traffic in combination with DDI interchange modification.
- 1,2,3 and 6 will be advanced with additional studies on 1 and 3. 4 and 5 will not move forward.
- Next steps – additional traffic studies, progress alternative screening process, identify/narrow reasonable alternatives, development of an EA.

Michael (CDM Smith) – Alternative Screening Process

Step 1 (currently here) – traffic analysis – does the alternate provide improvements to traffic operations? There is so much congestion that there are varying shades of red (LOS F), so further analysis is needed.

Step 2 – P&N, project goals, Engineering, Natural resources, Community and built environment.

Questions from agencies – none at this time

Russell (CDM Smith) – presented the Agency Milestone Schedule – Are timelines feasible and has everything been covered?

Will (SCDOT) – SHPO and NMFS are not currently on the call, so will need to follow up with them.

Russell – no effect is expected for NMFS section 7 species.

Will – USFWS Consultation request submitted on Aug 31 to USFWS. Is end of Oct reasonable to work through consultation?

Mark (USFWS) – area is so developed that there are not many species concerns, so do not anticipate delays in consultation.

Shane (FHWA) – no effect would not require submittal

Mark (USFWS) – potential for wood stork due to proximity to wetlands.

Russell – some potential for affect, but do not anticipate any adverse effects at this point.

Sean – Defining WOUS is being pushed to late Nov 2023 and EPA will be the lead in defining, but supreme court may be the first to define it in the Spring/Summer 2023 after a hearing in Oct 2022. Is this accurate?

Alya (EPA) – Have not heard many updates lately, but will check on the status.

Will – JD has been submitted and Ivan is reviewing it. Would like to schedule a site visit. After ACE meeting adjourned, team scheduled site visit for August 17 with a backup dates of August 19, 29 and 30.

Other Business – none discussed

Next Meeting – scheduled for September 8th, 2022



526 **EXIT 28**
LONG POINT ROAD
INTERCHANGE
LOWCOUNTRY CORRIDOR

*Long Point Road Interchange
Improvements
Agency Coordination Meeting #2
August 11, 2022*

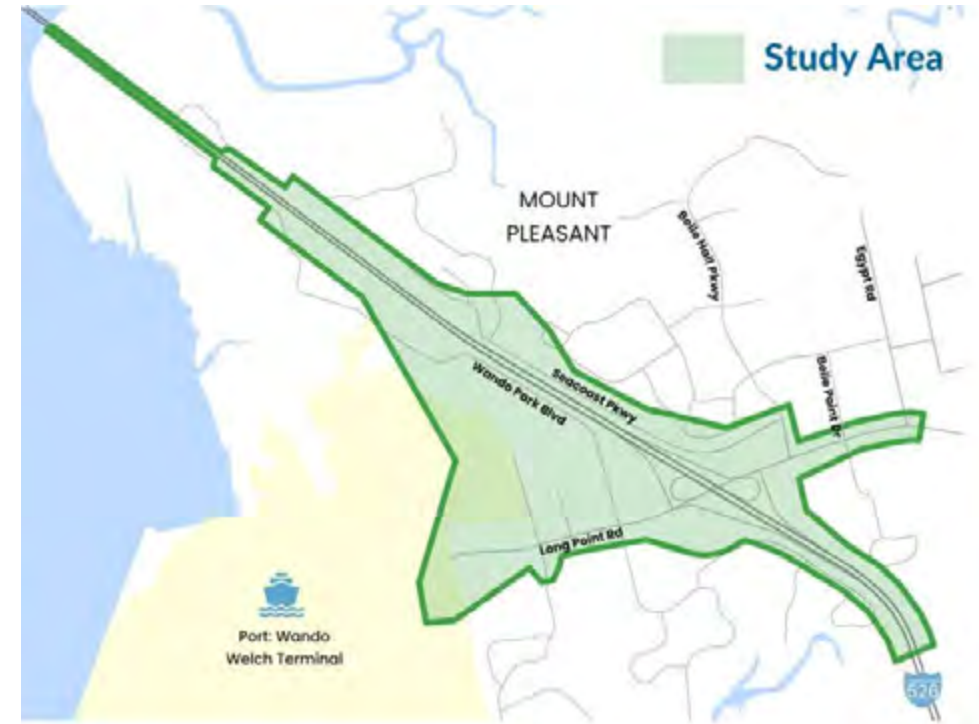
Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions and Meeting Objectives
2. Overview of the LPR proposed project
3. Long Point Road Interchange Updates
4. Agency Feedback



Introductions

- Will McGoldrick – SCDOT Environmental
- Mark Lester, PE, PMP – Project Manager
- Jenny Humphreys, AICP
- Michael Belvin
- Russell Chandler



What happened since we last met?

- I-526 LCC EAST PEL completed and signed (July 19, 2022)
- Refinements to Purpose statement
- Letter of Intent sent out (July 26, 2022)
- Initial traffic studies complete, and detailed analysis are in progress
- Range of Alternatives have been developed
- Environmental field studies complete, and reports are being prepared
- Public Information Meeting on August 2, 2022

Draft Purpose & Need

Project Purpose

- **Improve the operations** of the I-526 and Long Point Road Interchange and the I-526 mainline
- **Reduce operational conflicts** between port-related and local traffic

Project Need



Interchange deficiencies



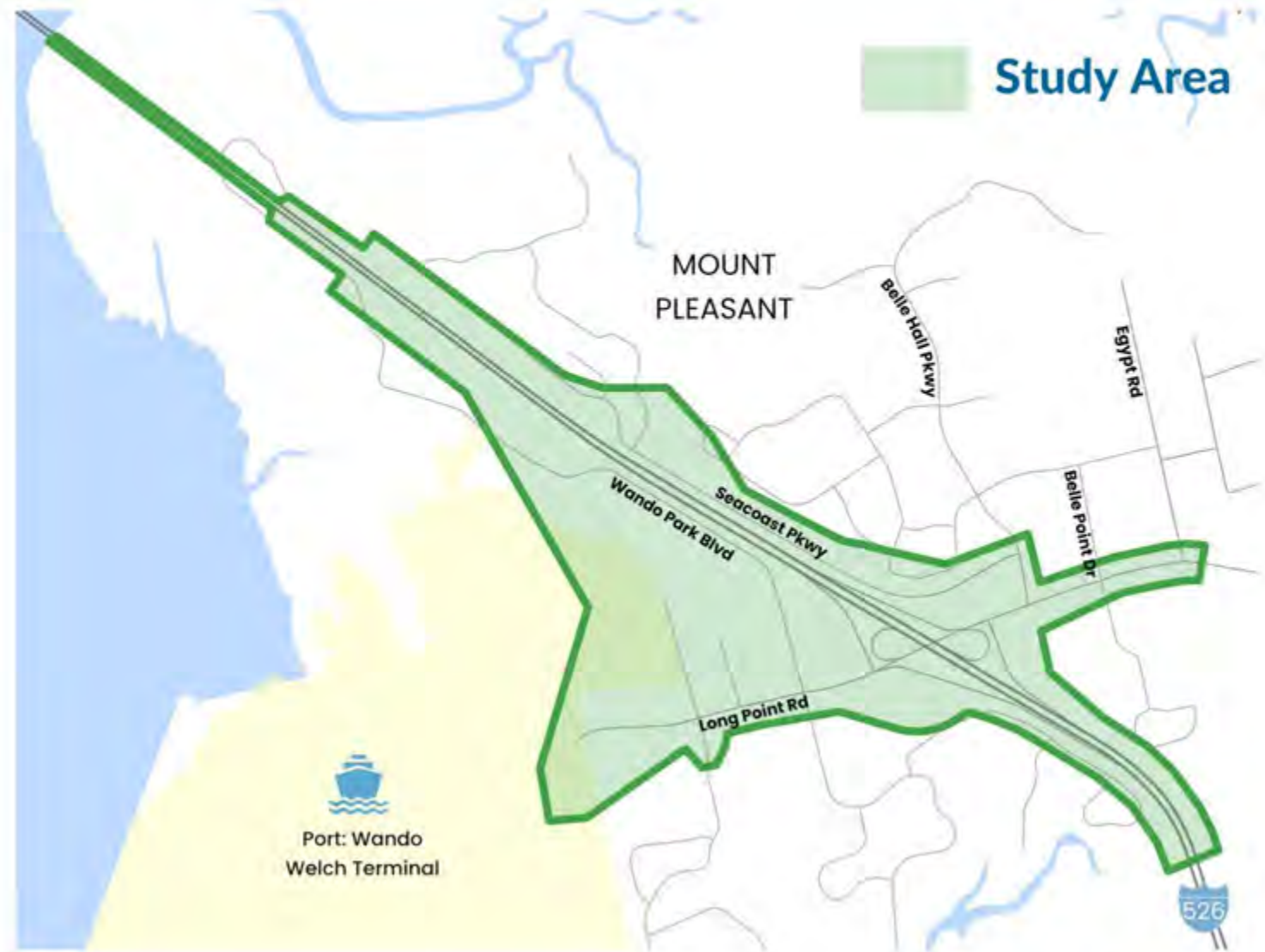
Traffic-related congestion on I-526 and within the interchange



Population & economic growth



Public comment & concerns



Anticipated Traffic Growth

How do we anticipate today's traffic changing in 2050?

We may see **13,000 more truck trips** per day traveling on I-526 west of the Long Point Road interchange by 2050. While 14% of all vehicles on I-526 at the Wando River in 2022 are trucks, it is anticipated that number **would grow to 19%** in 2050. Meanwhile, the percentage of vehicles that are trucks would stay consistent at Hungry Neck Boulevard.

66%
 increase in
 AADT
 expected by
2050

Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)
 is the total traffic volume passing a point or segment of a highway facility in both directions for a year divided by 365 days



I-526 @ THE WANDO RIVER



Annual Average Daily Trucks
 2022: 10,500 trucks or 14%
 2050: 24,000 trucks or 19%



Annual Average Daily Automobiles
 2022: 64,700 automobiles or 86%
 2050: 100,900 automobiles or 81%

MOUNT PLEASANT

Currently, up to 12,000 truck trips occur at this interchange daily.

128%
 increase in truck volume on I-526 expected by 2050

Currently, up to 6,000 to 7,000 truck trips occur on Long Point Road daily.

Port: Wando Welch Terminal

I-526 @ HUNGRY NECK BOULEVARD



Annual Average Daily Trucks
 2022: 2,500 trucks or 4%
 2050: 3,900 trucks or 4%

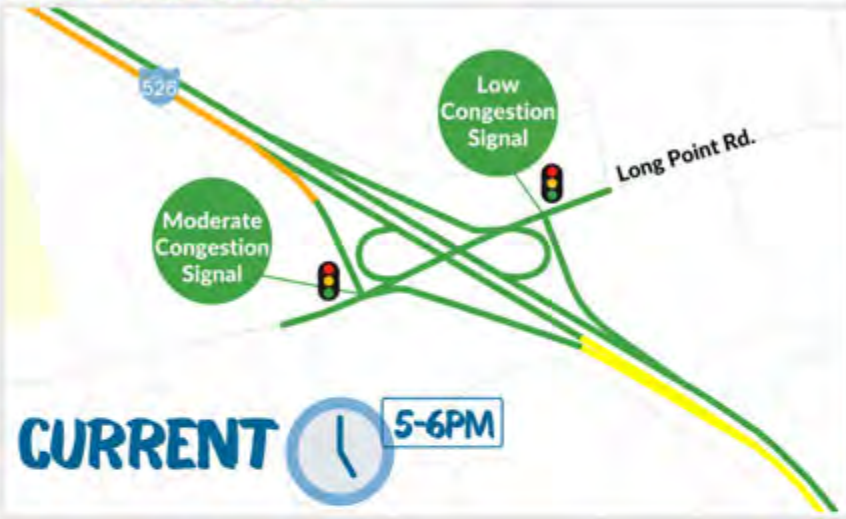
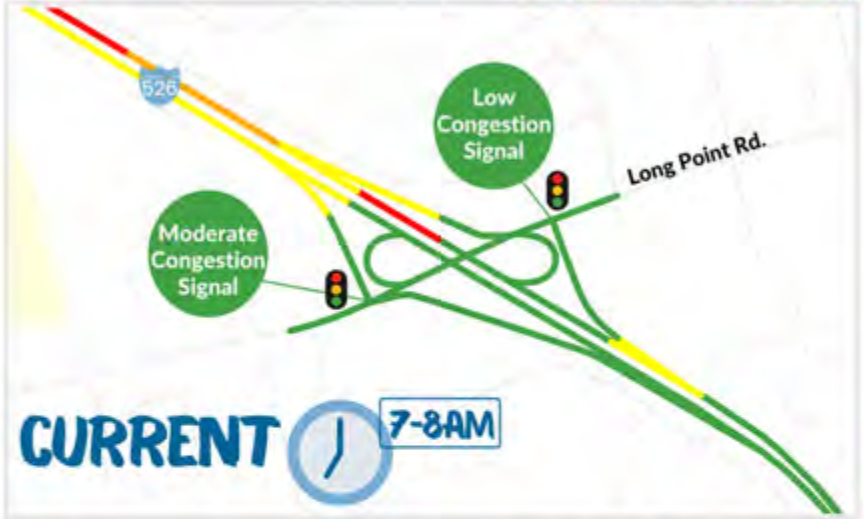


Annual Average Daily Automobiles
 2022: 59,400 automobiles or 96%
 2050: 92,600 automobiles or 96%

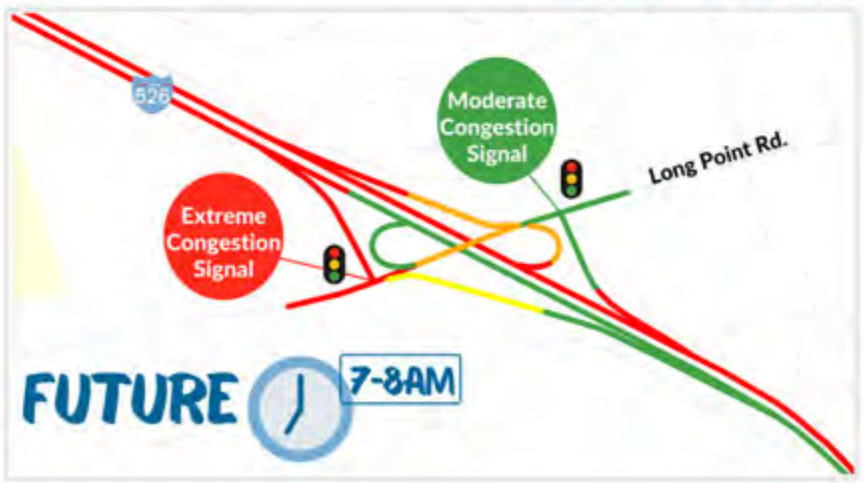
Hungry Neck Blvd

What may traffic be like if no improvements are made?

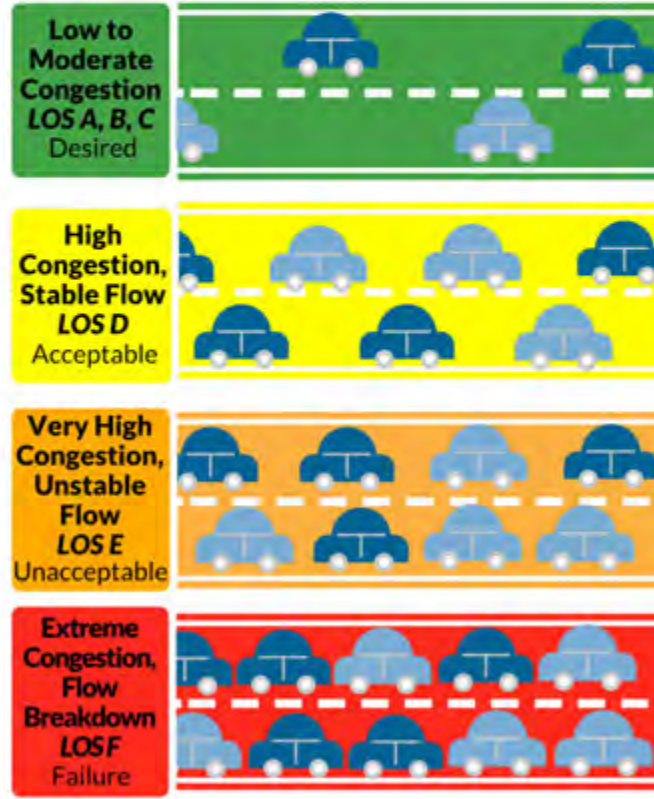
2022 "No Build" Conditions



2050 "No Build" Conditions



Level of Service (LOS) is used to measure traffic operations and congestion. It is estimated differently for freeways, intersections, local roads, and ramps. LOS is measured on a scale of A (low congestion) to F (extreme congestion) as illustrated below.



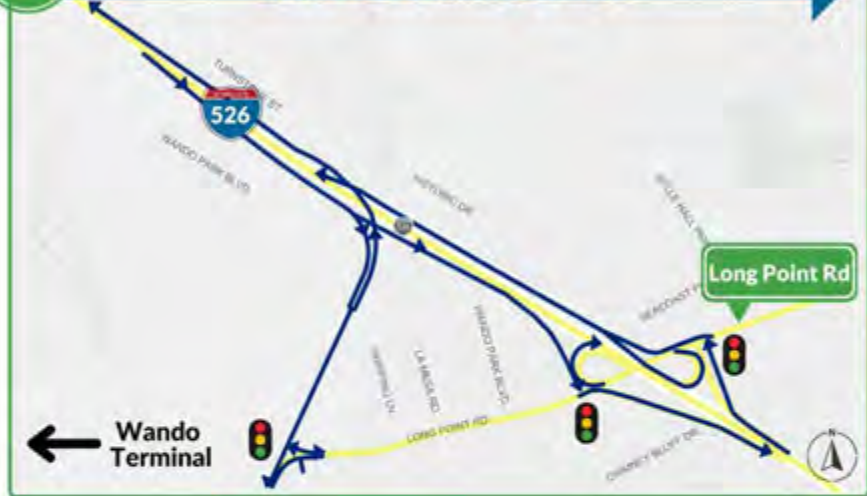
Range of Alternatives

1 Alternative 1: Improved Existing Ramps



Based on initial traffic studies, the ability of Alternative 1 to meet the purpose and need of improving operations and reducing conflicts between port-related and local traffic shows **additional studies are required.**

2 Alternative 2: New Port Access Ramps with Improved Existing Ramps



Based on initial traffic studies, the ability of Alternative 2 to meet the purpose and need of improving operations and reducing conflicts between port-related and local traffic shows **favorable results.**

3 Alternative 3: Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI)



Based on initial traffic studies, the ability of Alternative 3 to meet the purpose and need of improving operations and reducing conflicts between port-related and local traffic shows **additional studies are required.**

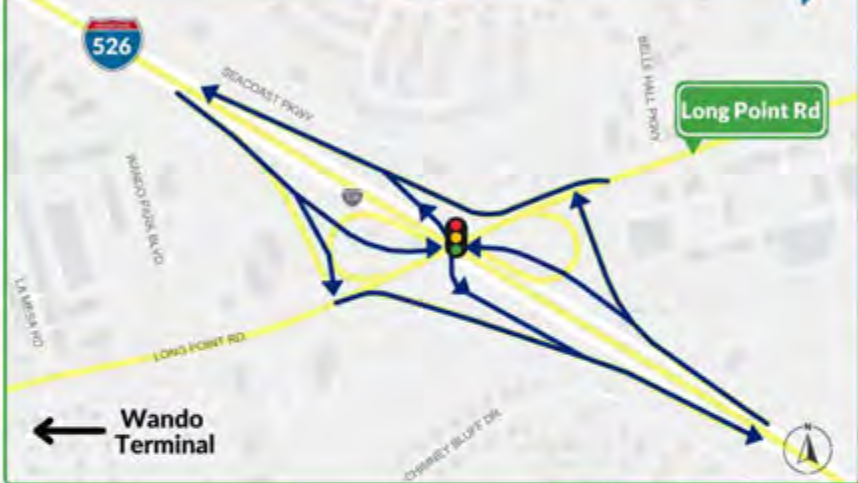
Legend:

-  Existing
-  Option

Alternatives are conceptual and subject to change

Range of Alternatives

4 Alternative 4: Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI)



Based on initial traffic studies, Alternative 4 **does not appear to meet the purpose and need of improving operations and reducing conflicts between port-related and local traffic.**

5 Alternative 5: Flyover



Based on initial traffic studies, Alternative 5 **does not appear to meet the purpose and need of improving operations and reducing conflicts between port-related and local traffic.**

6 Alternative 6: New Port Access Ramps with Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI)



Based on initial traffic studies, the ability of Alternative 6 to meet the purpose and need of improving operations and reducing conflicts between port-related and local traffic **shows favorable results.**

Legend:

- Existing
- Option
- Removal

Alternatives are conceptual and subject to change

How do the alternatives compare?

Alternative	Potential to meet purpose and need
Alternative 1: Improved Existing Ramps	Probable
Alternative 2: New Port Access Ramps with Improved Existing Ramps	Yes
Alternative 3: Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI)	Probable
Alternative 4: Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI)	No
Alternative 5: Flyover	No
Alternative 6: New Port Access Ramps with Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI)	Yes

Next Steps

- Completion of the Traffic Studies
- Initiate Screening Process
- Identification of the Reasonable Alternatives
- Impact Analysis for the Reasonable Alternatives
- Development of the Environmental Assessment

Screening Process

How are the alternatives (options) evaluated?



1

Step 1 Evaluation

Purpose and Need (Traffic Analysis)

2

Step 2 Evaluation

Purpose and Need (Traffic Analysis), Engineering,
Natural Resources, Community and Built Environment,
Project Goals

The team evaluates the alternatives through a **two-step process** to identify the **Recommended Preferred Alternative**. Greater detail in analysis comes with each level of evaluation. At the same time, the total number of alternatives will go down as those that are lowest performing are eliminated.

Range of Alternatives



Reasonable
Alternatives



Recommended
Preferred Alternative

Agency Feedback

- Questions about the alternatives? Screening process?
- Specific resources of concern?



Project and NEPA Schedule

Agency Milestone Schedule

Milestone	Date
Section 106 Review	
Consultation initiated with SHPO/THPO	August 31, 2022
Section 106 consultation concluded	January 13, 2023
Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, Section 305 Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Consultation	
NOAA Initially Contacted Regarding EFH Consultation	August 31, 2022
NOAA Receives the Complete EFH Assessment to Initiate EFH Consultation	September 30, 2022
NOAA Issues a Response to the EFH Consultation Request	January 13, 2023
Endangered Species Act Consultation (NOAA-NMFS)	
Request for ESA Consultation Received	August 31, 2022
Conclusion of ESA Consultation	October 31, 2022
Endangered Species Act Consultation (DOI-FWS)	
Request for ESA Consultation Received	August 31, 2022
Conclusion of ESA Consultation	October 31, 2022



Open Discussion



AGENCY MILESTONES

Milestone	Date
Section 106 Review	
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Section 106 consultation concluded	January 13, 2023
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Endangered Species Act Consultation (DOI-FWS)	
Request for ESA Consultation Received	August 31, 2022
Conclusion of ESA Consultation	October 31, 2022

ACE Meeting Purpose

- Ask for your input on the draft purpose and need and the potential improvements
- Discuss environmental resources and other potential impacts
- Outline the range of alternatives and screening process
- Discuss agency coordination milestones and schedule

Public Information Meeting

Tuesday, August 2, 2022, 5-7 PM
R. L. Jones Center

391 Egypt Road, Mount Pleasant, SC



Take our survey by September 1!

www.526LCCLongPoint.com

Official comment period July 26 - September 1, 2022

Project Overview

In 2022, the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) completed a Planning & Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study for I-526 LCC EAST, from Virginia Avenue in North Charleston to US 17 in Mount Pleasant. The PEL study identified existing and projected transportation issues within the corridor through analysis and public and stakeholder engagement. The results of the study established a vision to guide future transportation decision-making in the corridor. After the needs were better understood, potential improvements were identified. One such improvement is the I-526 @ Long Point Road Interchange Improvements project. Carrying forward the analysis and public input, the I-526 @ Long Point Road Interchange project is now going through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, a federal review of the natural and human environment.

Draft Project Purpose

The purpose of the proposed project is to **improve the operations** of the I-526/Long Point Road interchange and I-526 mainline and **reduce operational conflicts between port-related and local traffic**.



Draft Project Goals

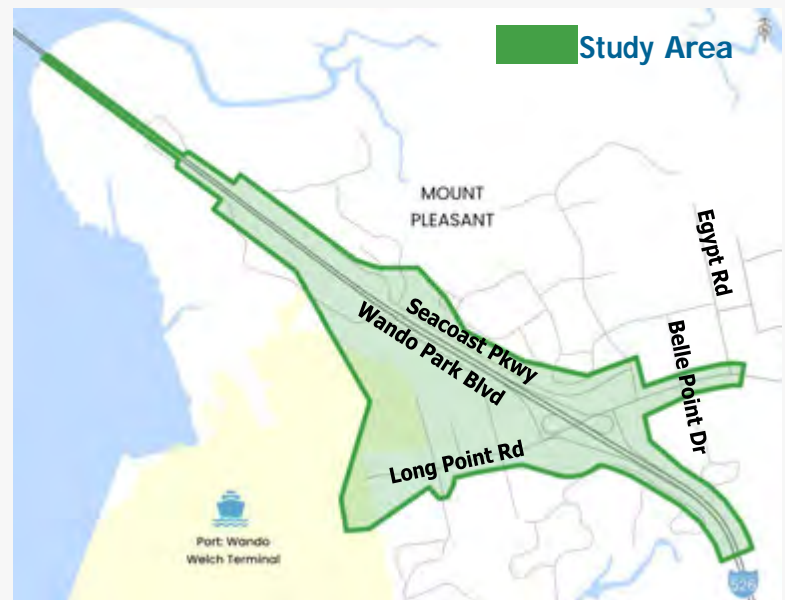
The following goals were identified in the I-526 LCC EAST PEL and have been refined based on your input and the purpose of the interchange improvements project.



Compatibility: Align with local land use plans and projects



Multimodal: Enhance movement through the corridor including other modes such as carpool, transit, walk, or bike

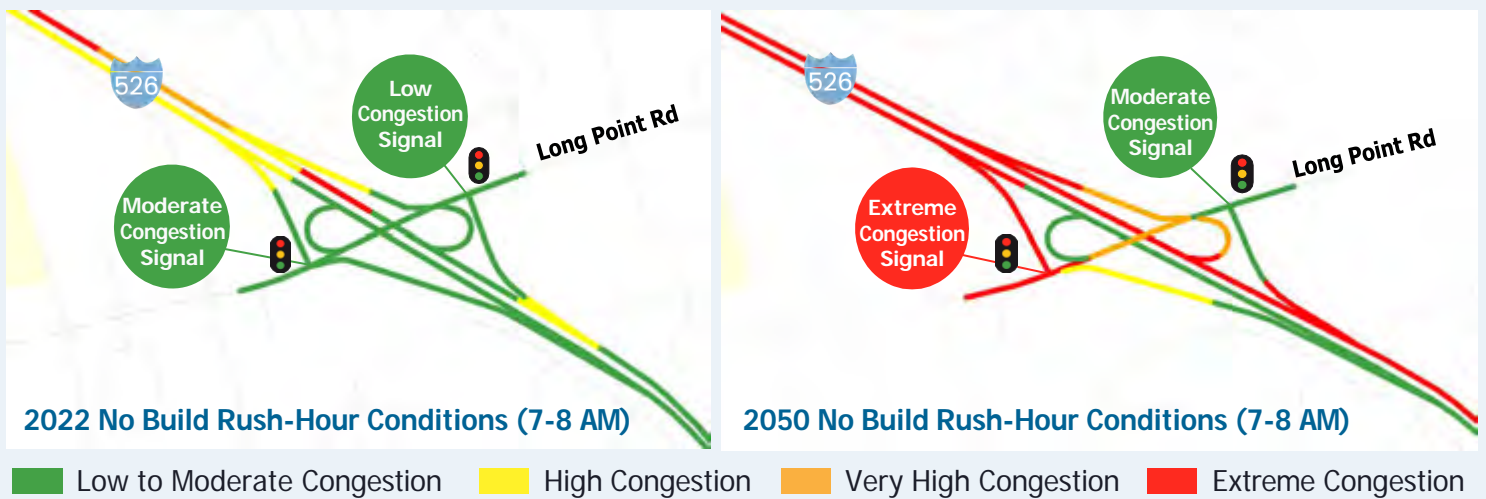


Why is this project needed?

The I-526/Long Point Road interchange provides access to homes, businesses, schools, parks, restaurants, and commercial and industrial facilities along Long Point Road. The interchange provides access to SC Port's Wando Welch Terminal which serves as a hub for the distribution of freight from the Port throughout the southeast United States. The need for the project is demonstrated by the growing automobile and truck traffic on I-526 and Long Point Road, the existing interchange deficiencies, and the operational conflicts between cars and trucks on Long Point Road and I-526.

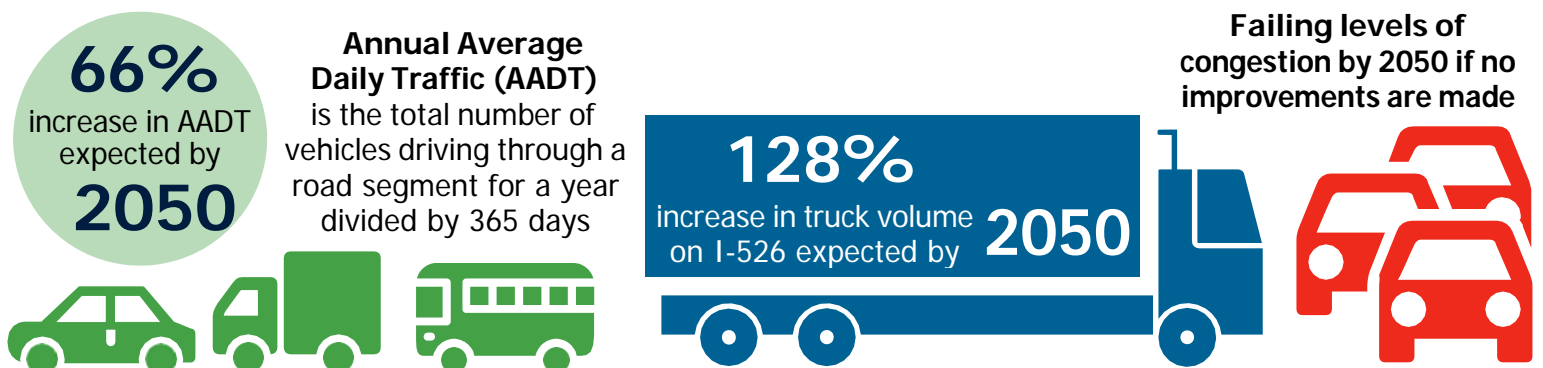
What may traffic be like if no improvements are made?

Traffic is expected to increase and result in an extreme level of congestion (think bumper-to-bumper traffic) throughout much of the interchange by 2050, if no improvements are made.



What does the data say about the need?

The data confirms concerns about growing congestion at the interchange. Why? The average daily number of vehicles driving through the interchange is expected to grow 66% by 2050. While all types of vehicles are expected to increase, the number of trucks on I-526 bound for the interchange will likely grow at a faster rate - increasing the percentage of vehicles using the corridor that are trucks. 13,000 more truck trips per day are anticipated on I-526 west of the Long Point Road interchange by 2050. The existing interchange is not designed to handle this volume of vehicles, especially with this mix of heavy-duty trucks.



What are the potential improvement options?

Alternatives are conceptual and may change



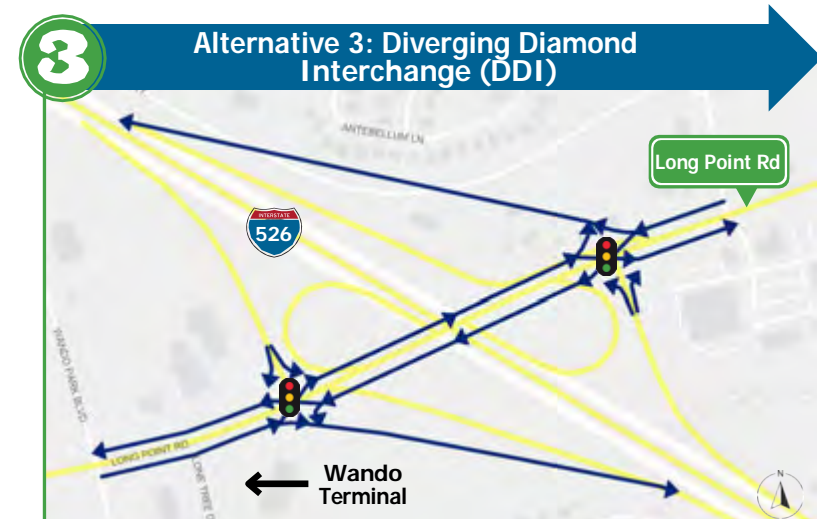
Alternative 1 would improve the existing ramps. A larger version of the existing interchange, it would address concerns by constructing larger loop ramps to allow for increased speeds to improve merging onto I-526 for all vehicles and be compatible with the planned widening of I-526. Improvements to the eastbound off-ramp would also be made.

Based on initial traffic studies, the ability of Alternative 1 to meet the purpose and need of improving operations and reducing conflicts between port-related and local traffic shows additional studies are required.



Alternative 2 would provide new access to Long Point Road for port-related traffic along with improving the existing ramps. Collector-Distributor (CD) roads would be used to help separate port-related and local traffic. This alternative is compatible with the planned widening of I-526.

Based on initial traffic studies, the ability of Alternative 2 to meet the purpose and need of improving operations and reducing conflicts between port-related and local traffic shows favorable results.

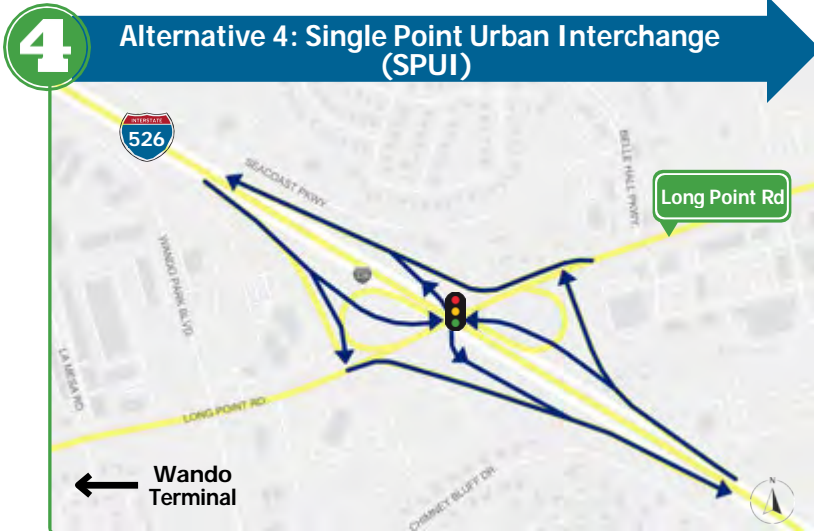


Alternative 3 would replace the existing interchange with a Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI). A DDI would remove left turns across oncoming lanes of traffic at each of the intersections within the interchange. This is done by shifting vehicles passing through to the left-hand side of the road. This alternative is compatible with the planned widening of I-526.

Based on initial traffic studies, the ability of Alternative 3 to meet the purpose and need of improving operations and reducing conflicts between port-related and local traffic shows additional studies are required.

What are the potential improvement options?

Alternatives are conceptual and may change



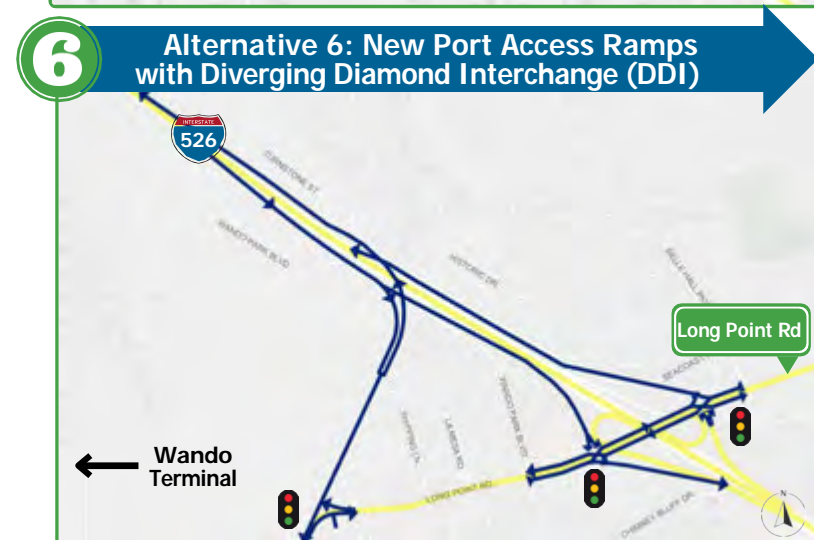
Alternative 4 would replace the existing interchange with a Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI). The SPUI would create a single signalized intersection underneath I-526. This would allow the elimination of the two existing signals. This alternative is compatible with the planned widening of I-526.

Based on initial traffic studies, Alternative 4 does not appear to meet the purpose and need of improving operations and reducing conflicts between port-related and local traffic.



Alternative 5 would replace the existing loop ramp to westbound I-526 with a flyover ramp. All other ramps would remain in their same location. The flyover ramp would require a realignment of a segment of Seacoast Parkway. This alternative would require additional work to be compatible with the planned widening of I-526.

Based on initial traffic studies, Alternative 5 does not appear to meet the purpose and need of improving operations and reducing conflicts between port-related and local traffic.



Alternative 6 would provide new access to Long Point Road for port-related traffic along with a Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI). Collector-Distributor roads would be used to help separate port-related and local traffic. This alternative is compatible with the planned widening of I-526.

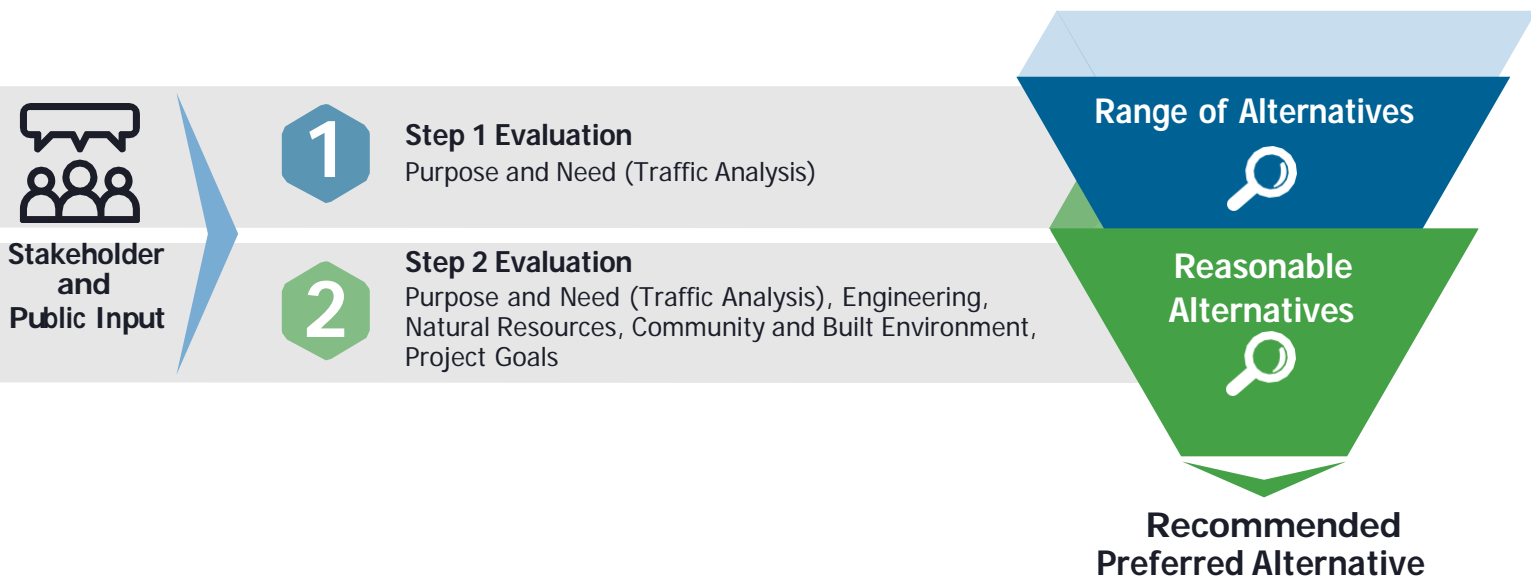
Based on initial traffic studies, the ability of Alternative 6 to meet the purpose and need of improving operations and reducing conflicts between port-related and local traffic shows favorable results.

How do the potential improvement options compare?

Alternative	Potential to meet purpose and need
Alternative 1: Improved Existing Ramps	Probable
Alternative 2: New Port Access Ramps with Improved Existing Ramps	Yes
Alternative 3: Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI)	Probable
Alternative 4: Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI)	No
Alternative 5: Flyover	No
Alternative 6: New Port Access Ramps with Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI)	Yes

How are the potential improvements evaluated?

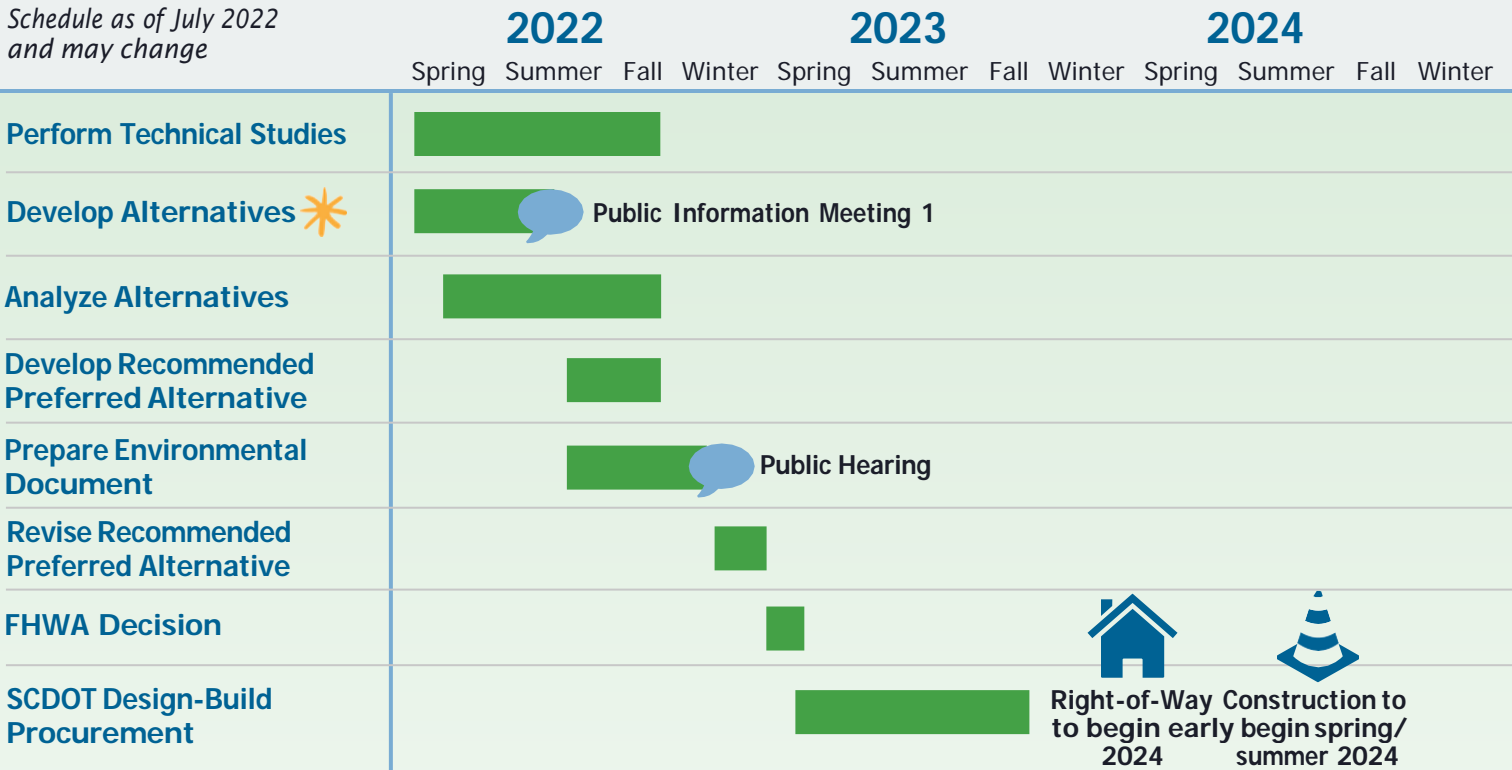
The team will evaluate the alternatives through a two-step process to identify the recommended preferred alternative. Greater detail in analysis will come with each level of evaluation. At the same time, the total number of alternatives will go down as those that are lowest performing are eliminated.



What happens next?

Initial technical studies have begun on land use, natural resources, cultural and historical resources, hazardous materials, baseline noise measurements, and traffic modeling for existing conditions. After this public information meeting, the project team will evaluate all comments and refine these alternatives. The recommended preferred alternative will be presented at the public hearing in late 2022/early 2023.

Schedule as of July 2022
and may change



When will I hear about right-of-way and noise?



The official right-of-way (ROW) acquisition process does not typically start until the federal environmental review process (NEPA) is completed, and the Federal Highway Administration issues a decision. If a build alternative is selected, meaning something new would need to be constructed, SCDOT would develop final ROW plans and acquisition activities would begin.



Noise analysis is currently underway for the project, but the results will not be ready until the public hearing anticipated to be held in late 2022/early 2023. If noise mitigation, such as noise barriers, is determined to be reasonable and feasible, potential beneficiaries would receive additional information.

Learn More: www.526LCCLongPoint.com/FAQS

How to Participate

Project Website

www.526LCCLongPoint.com

Live, July 26, 2022

The Public Information Meeting webpage contains all the materials you would see at the in-person meeting. Material disponible en ingles y español.

A mailed copy of the public information meeting handout may be requested by calling 803.737.1346 or emailing info@526LowcountryCorridor.com.

How to Comment

Meaningful input is our number one priority. Below are the ways to make your voice heard in the official project records. Comment by September 1, 2022!

Project Website & Survey

www.526LCCLongPoint.com

Fill out our survey and/or a comment form on the project website.

In-person

At the Public Information Meeting

Paper comment forms will be available for you to use there or take with you to mail later.

In-person Public Meetings

Tuesday, August 2, 2022 5-7 PM

R. L. Jones Center

391 Egypt Road, Mount Pleasant, SC

Spanish translation services available.

Traductor estará disponible.

Official Comment Period

July 26 - September 1, 2022

Project Email

info@526LowcountryCorridor.com

Mail

Joy Riley, PE, PMP, CPM, DBIA
SC Department of Transportation
Post Office Box 191
955 Park Street
Columbia, SC 29202-0191

All formal comments received during the comment period will be evaluated and included in the project record. All information provided will be published and subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act.



We want to hear from you!



SCDOT Project Manager
Joy Riley, PE, DBIA, PMP, CPM

info@526LowcountryCorridor.com

803.737.1346

  @526Corridor

Title VI compliance: SCDOT complies with all requirements set forth by Federal regulations issued by the U.S. Department of Transportation under the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended. Any persons who believe that he or she has been discriminated against because of race, color, religion, sex, age, handicap or disability, or nation origin under a program receiving federal aid has the right to file a complaint with SCDOT. The complaint shall be filed with the Title VI Program Compliance Coordinator, at the Office of Business Development & Special programs, 955 Park Street, Suite 117, Columbia, SC 29202 or at 803.737.5095. The complaint should be submitted no later than 180 days after the date of the alleged act of discrimination. It should outline as completely as possible the facts and circumstances of the incident and should be signed by the person making the complaint.