



526

LOWCOUNTRY CORRIDOR

*July 2021 Stakeholder Meeting
Joy Riley, PE, PMP, DBIA SCDOT*





Project Background

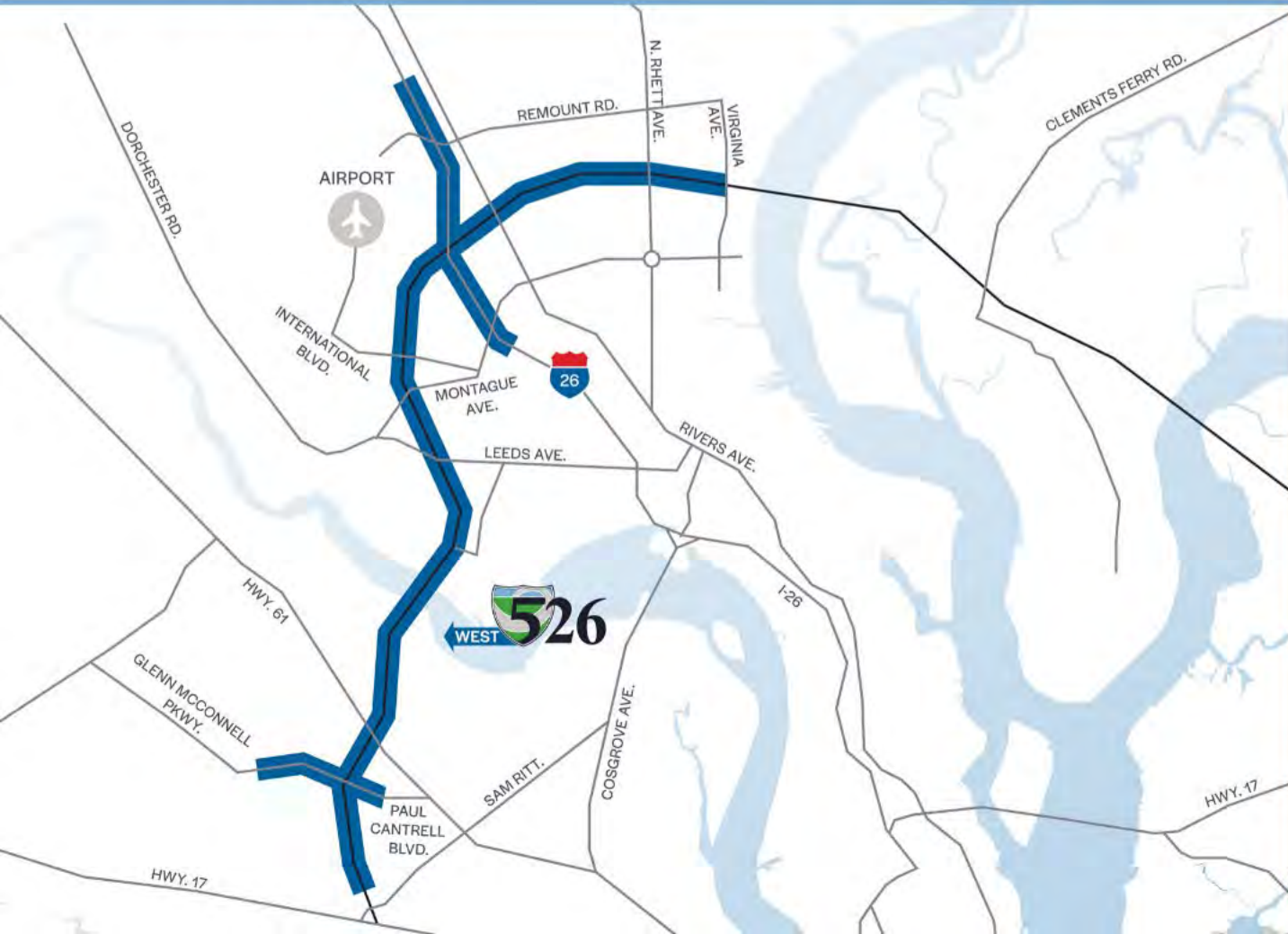
An Environmental Impact Statement



WEST 526 LOWCOUNTRY CORRIDOR



WEST PROJECT



I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST

Project Termini

**Virginia Avenue
North Charleston**



**Paul Cantrell Boulevard
West Ashley**

**526 LOWCOUNTRY
CORRIDOR**

SCDOT
South Carolina Department of Transportation

Project Purpose

What is the reason for this project?



Increase Capacity at the I-26/I-526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline

— thereby —

Improving Operations at the I-26/I-526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard

Project Need: Why?



I-526 is one of South Carolina's most congested interstate segments

Congestion

#2: 2035 CHATS LRTP

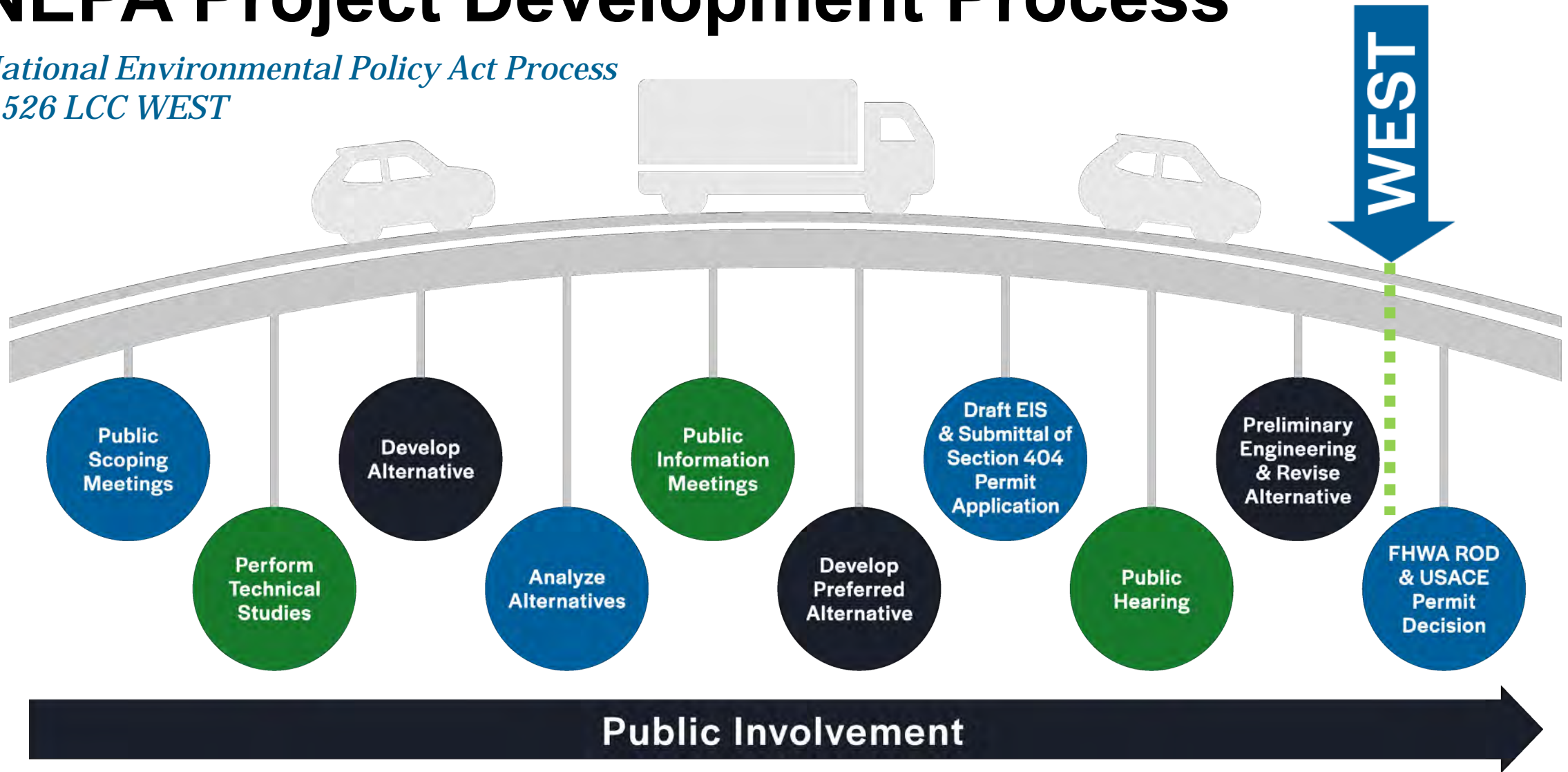
#6: SCDOT Interstate Capacity List

Top 20 most congested interstate segments (SCDOT 2014 Multimodal Transportation Plan)



NEPA Project Development Process

National Environmental Policy Act Process
I-526 LCC WEST





Public Hearing Engagement



Public Involvement Opportunities

For the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST Public Hearing 2020

In-Person
Appointments at
Community Office

On-Demand Verbal
Comments
on the Project Hotline

On-Demand Online
Public Hearing webpage

Meaningful
Input

Live Online
Verbal Comment Session

On-Demand Questions
Answered
on the Project Hotline & Email

Live Chat
Here During Set Times

In the Mail
Information Packets
mailed by request

Text
the Project Hotline

How did we inform the public?

- ✓ Paid, Geo-targeted Social Media
- ✓ Media Day
- ✓ Digital Display Ads
- ✓ Radio: Traditional & Streaming
- ✓ Flyer Boxes
- ✓ Newspaper Notices
- ✓ Physical Road Signs
- ✓ Email Blasts

Static & Digital Billboards



Postcards



Bus Inserts



Public Hearing Information

Public Hearing 2020

Project Website

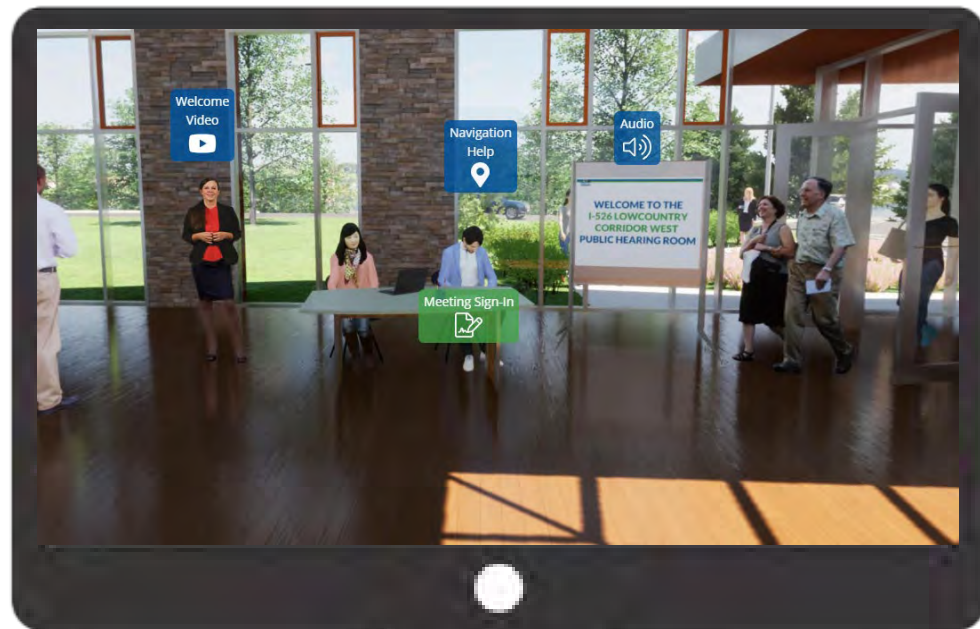
9,000+ Pageviews; 24 Live Chats

526LowcountryCorridor.com/WESTPH

Community Office

13 Visits for Public Hearing Appts.

5627 Rivers Avenue, Gas Lite Square



Official Public Hearing one-on-one appointments took place on:

Thurs., November 19 | 10 am - 7 pm

Sat., December 5 | 9 am - 4 pm

Tues., December 8 | 9 am - 6 pm

Wed., December 9 | 10 am - 7 pm

Live Virtual Comment Session

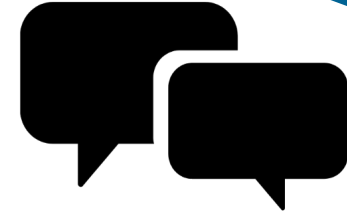
Tuesday, December 15, 2020 | 6:00 – 8:00 PM

40 Viewers



Comments Received

Public Hearing 2020



234 Total Comments

Official Comment Period:
November 4, 2020 – January 15, 2020

Project Website

104

Project Hotline

5

Live Virtual Comment Session

2

Email

51

Mail/Paper

48

(Includes EJ Surveys)

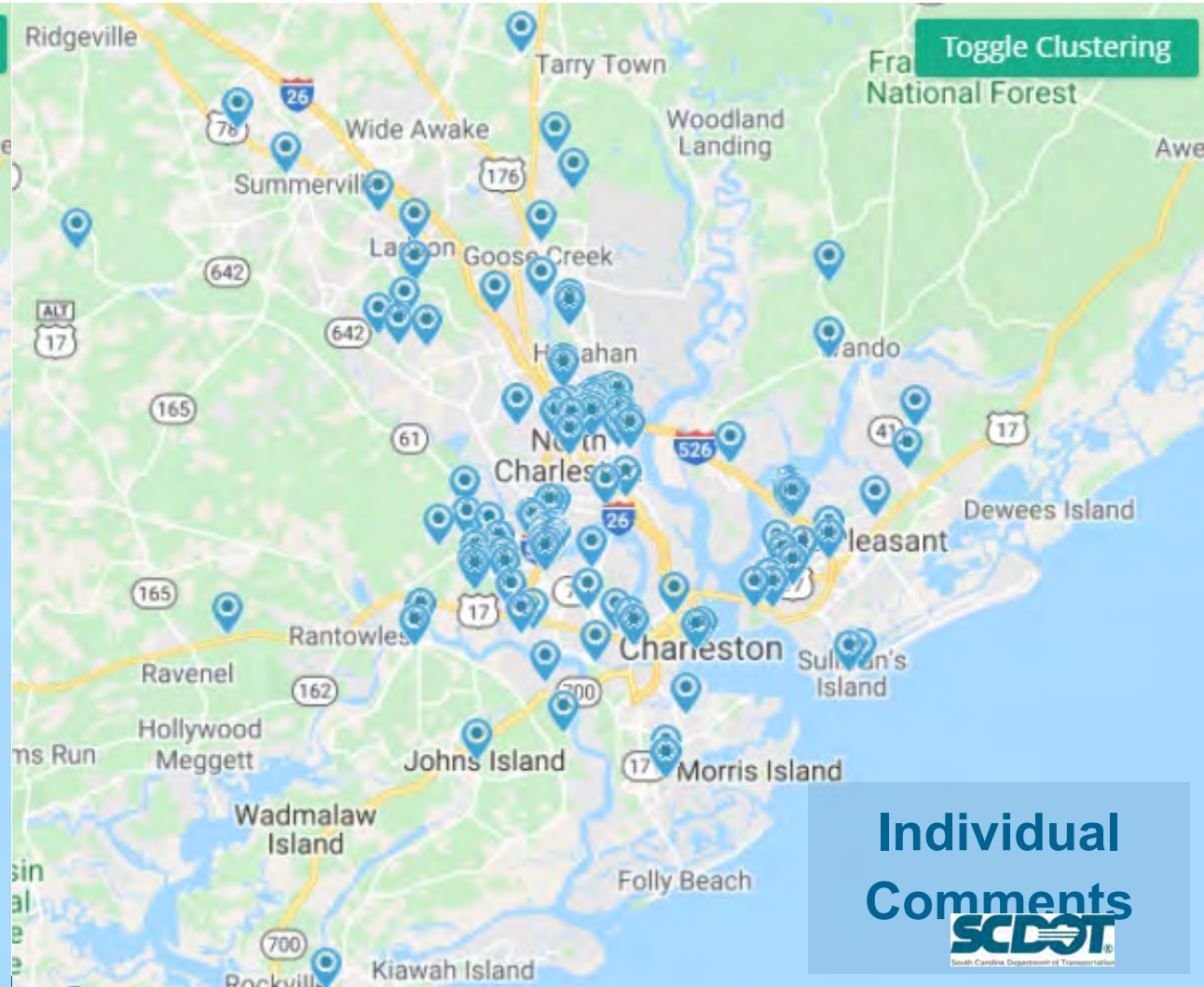
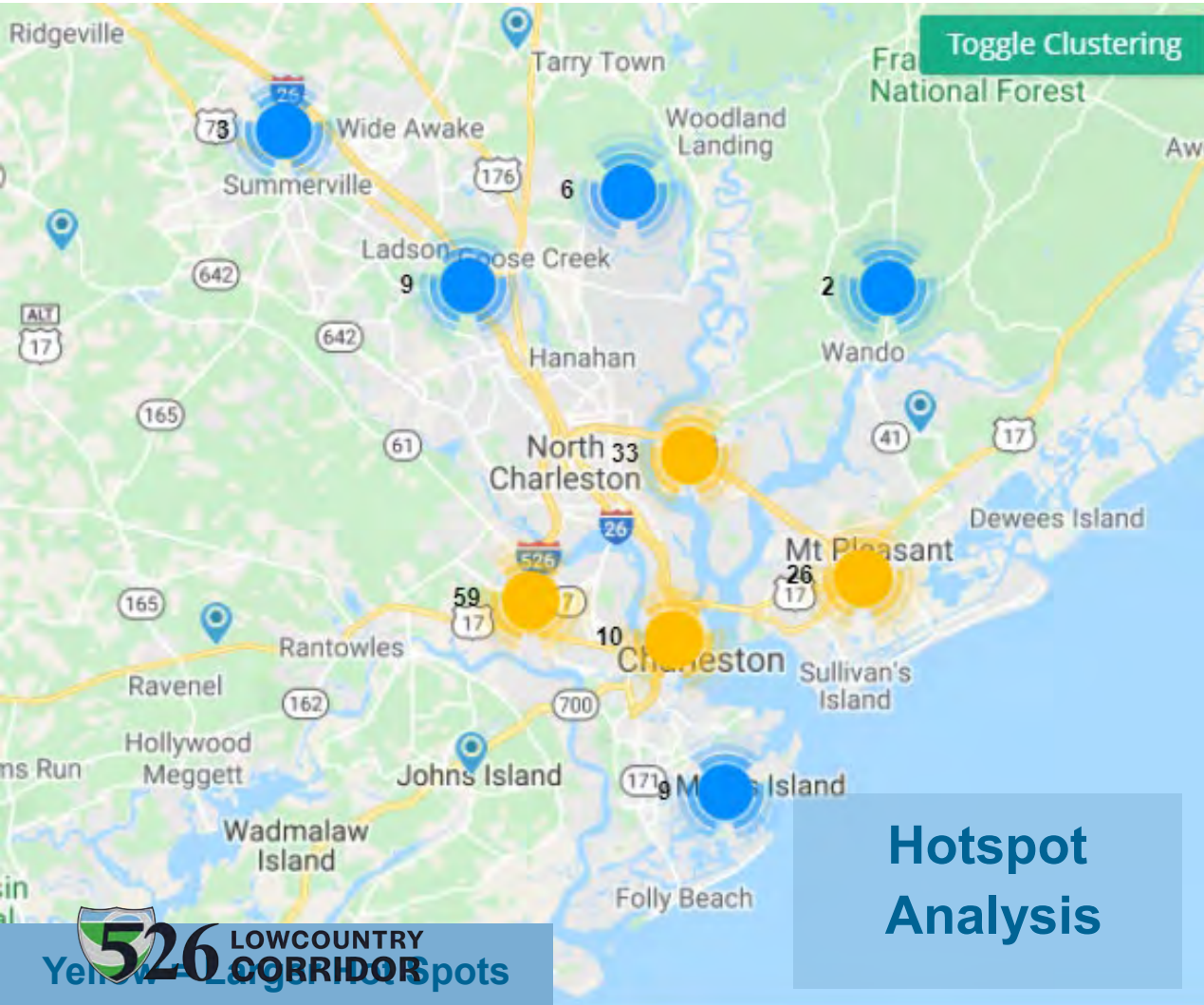
Live Chat

24

Public Hearing Comments Mapped

Public Hearing 2020

Note: Not all comments are shown within map extent; map focus is on the Study Area



What We Heard!

Public Hearing 2020

234 Total Comments
Note: Numbers below will not equal 100%

26%

Concerned with Right-of-Way



12%

Concerned with Interchanges



11%

In Favor of Transit/BRT



7%

Environmental Concerns



17%

Mention Noise Impacts



10%

In Favor of Bike/Ped Lanes



24%

Concerned with Affordable Housing/Community Mitigation



14%

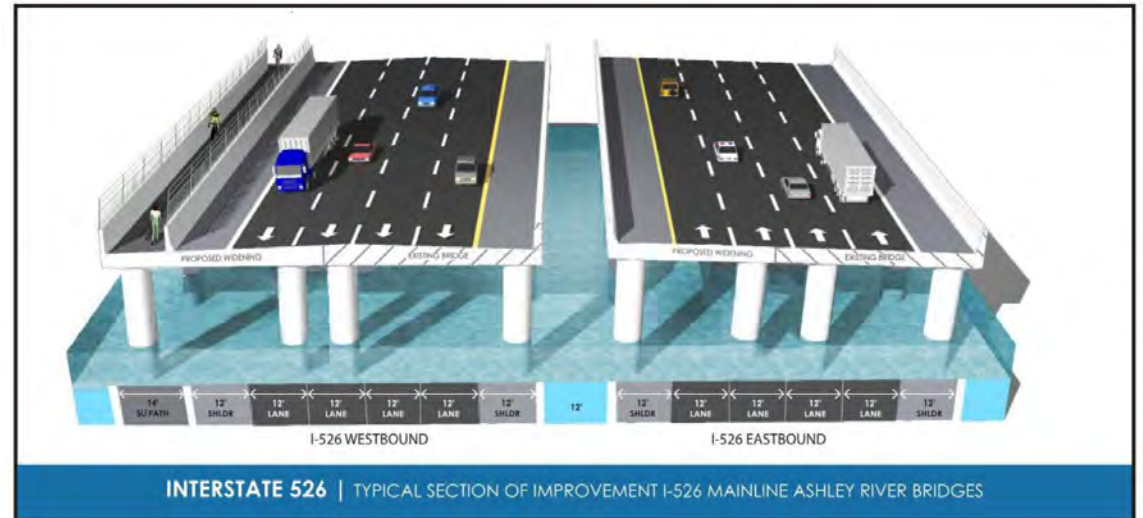
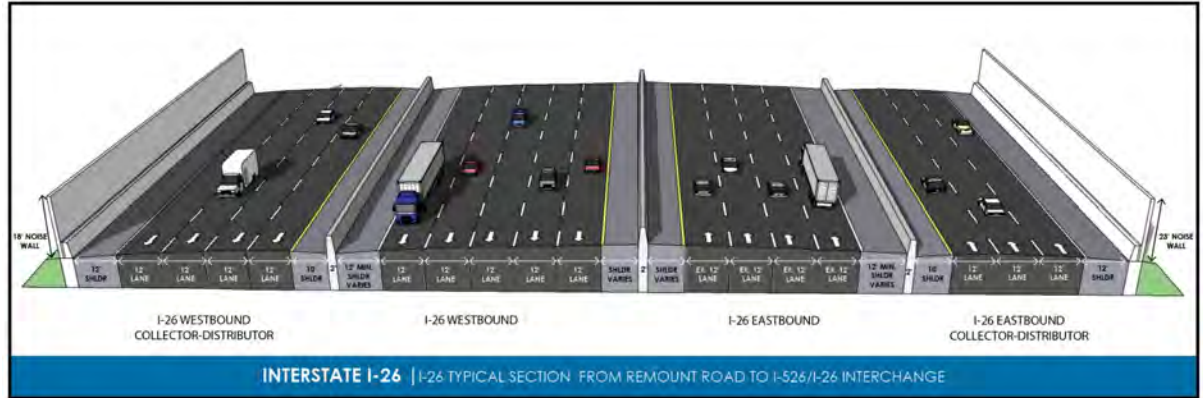
Supportive of the Project



41% of the noise comments were positive (Ashley Harbor)

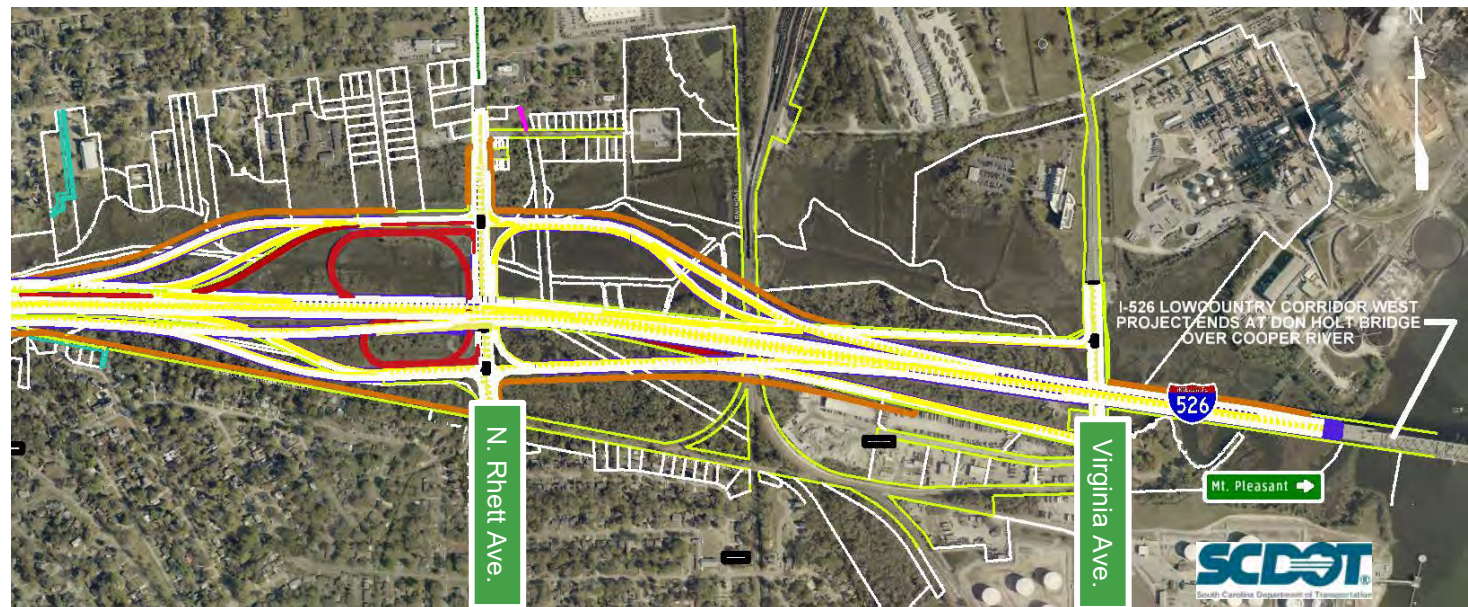
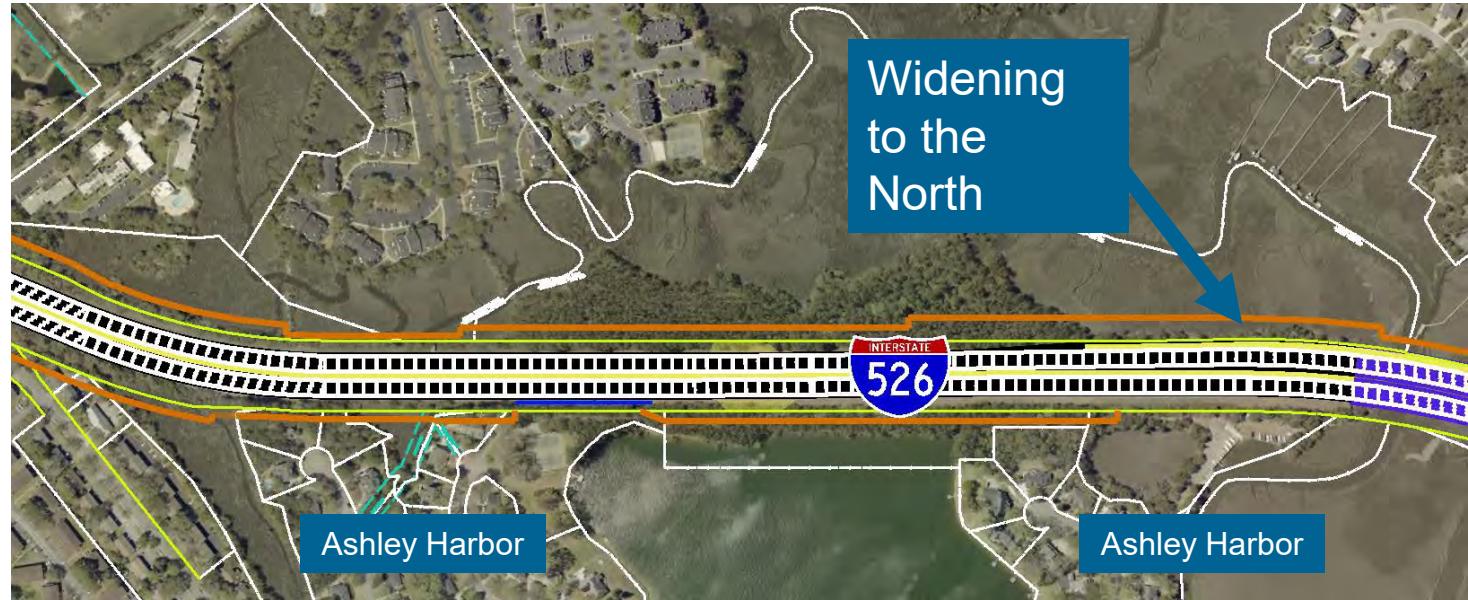
Design Improvements Based on Input Received!

- ✓ Added Community Barriers to the I-26 section at the edge of roadway shoulders to shield the surrounding neighborhoods from Interstate 26
- ✓ Widened the Westmoreland Bridge design to accommodate a shared use path along the bridge to align with local planning initiatives



Design Improvements Based on Input Received!

- ✓ Shifted roadway widening design to the north to reduce impacts to Ashley Harbor's community's walking path and boat ramp
- ✓ Redesigned the N. Rhett and Virginia Ave. ramps based on comments from the City of North Charleston and local industry





Environmental Justice Specific Outreach



2020 Environmental Justice Meetings



Pop-Up Events

- Goal: Participate in local community events to raise awareness of the project, make the Community Liaisons easily accessible, and provide community support during the public health crisis
- 8 events from 9/3/2020 – 12/18/2020



EJ Community Meetings

- Goal: Encourage feedback from EJ Communities on DRAFT EJ Community Mitigation Plan
- Three meetings in EJ neighborhoods from November 6–14, 2020
- 110 total participants



Hispanic/Latino Monthly Outreach Activities



Radio

**103.9 FM / 95.5 FM Charleston
¡Aquí estamos! Radio Show**

Every Wednesday at 12:00pm
(Charleston, We are here!)



Online

Facebook.com/charlestonaquiestamos

Weekly Facebook Live events

- Website walk-through
- Promotion of Community Office



Community

**Ferndale & Russelldale
Community Walks**

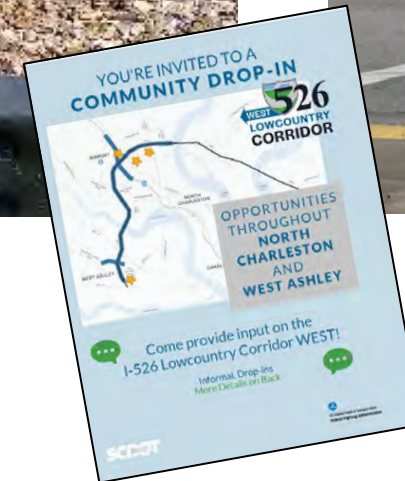
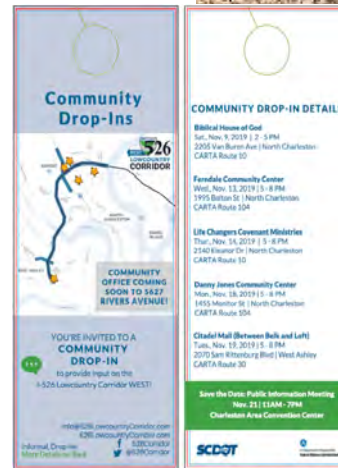
- 5 Bilingual teams of 4-7 individuals
- City of North Charleston Police Officers (6-8 per event)
- Bilingual project literature

Support at 3rd Community Drop-in

Attended service at Vida Nueva Church (November 22)

Additional Outreach Activities

- Door Hangers delivered Door-to-Door
- Postcards/Mailers
 - Hard copies of draft mitigation plan materials
- Yard Signs
- Informational Flyer Box Program



Additional Outreach Activities

- CAC & Community Liaison Door-to-Door Canvassing
- 1,109 EJ homes “touched”
- Interaction with 202 EJ residents

526 LOWCOUNTRY CORRIDOR *Walk-In or Make an Appointment!*

Community Office
5827 Rivers Avenue, Gas Lite Square (CARTA Route 10)

866.632.5262 | info@526LowcountryCorridor.com

YOUR Office for YOUR Community:

- ✓ Ferndale
- ✓ Highland Terrace
- ✓ Liberty Park
- ✓ Russelldale
- ✓ Surrounding areas

Visit **YOUR Community Office** for information about:

Relocation	Construction	Impacts
• Do I have to move?	• Schedule	• Schools and Churches
• Expenses	• View Plans	• Transportation Services
• Schedules		
• Right of Way	Renters, Homeowners, and Businesses	
	• Rights and Responsibilities	

For More Information:

Visit our Website: 526LowcountryCorridor.com | Call our Hotline: 843.258.1135 (866.632.5262 Toll Free) | Check Facebook: @526Corridor

To request special accommodations, contact 866.632.5262

526 LOWCOUNTRY CORRIDOR I-526 LCC WEST Outreach & Canvassing Log

Date of Contact _____ / _____ / 2021 Time _____

Name _____

Address _____
(Street, City, Zip)

Neighborhood Ferndale Liberty Park Highland Terrace Russelldale

Property Owner Renter House Apartment Town Home Mobile Home Heirs'

What is the resident's preferred method of contact?
Phone _____

Email Address _____

Would the resident like to receive project updates? (Circle one.) Yes No

If so, how? Mail Phone Call Text Message E-Mail

Topics Discussed/Comments

Invited resident to the Community Office

Informed resident of the FREE summer self-improvement/professional training courses

Informed resident of the Community History Preservation Project

Materials Left at this Address

FREE Summer Courses Flyer (Eng/Span)

Community Office Flyer (Eng/Span)

Community History Preservation Project Flyer (Eng/Span)

Other Items/Concerns _____

Resident was NOT home. Materials were left at the residence: (Specify location.) _____

Resident WAS home.

I spoke with the resident for _____ minutes. (Provide time estimate.)

Will the resident require childcare to attend the FREE summer courses? (Circle one.) Yes No

Will the resident require special accommodations or transportation to attend the FREE summer courses? (Circle one.) Yes No

NOTE: Information provided, including name and address of resident, will be published and is subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act.

Community Liaison _____

Sorry we missed you!

COULD THE I-526 LOWCOUNTRY CORRIDOR WEST PROJECT AFFECT YOU?

CALL or TEXT us: 843.258.1135

- or -

VISIT the I-526 LCC WEST Community Office:
5827 Rivers Avenue (Gas Lite Square)
to find out.
526LowcountryCorridor.com

We hope to see you soon!

526 LOWCOUNTRY CORRIDOR

WEST 526 LOWCOUNTRY CORRIDOR **COMMUNITY MITIGATION SURVEY**

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!
Please rate the following items by filling in the appropriate bubble associated with each potential mitigation item related to the replacement community center and community center programs.

	Strongly Undesired	Moderately Undesired	Neutral	Moderately Desired	Strongly Desired
Outdoor Pavilion (Shelter)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Accessible Playground	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Walking/Biking Trails	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community Garden	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Environmental Education Elements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Environmental Entrance sign/Landscaping	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public Art at the Parks/Community Center	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Park Signs with Name and Rules	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pathway Signs (i.e. directional or historical markers)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Neighborhood History Display	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Life Skills Classes (i.e. cooking, sewing)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial Literacy Class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Family Wellness Class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SENI Classes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health/Wellness Class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Senior/Student Mentorship	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Youth After School Program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Small Grants Library	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Arts & Crafts Class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Multi-cultural Events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Computer Lab	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Senior Walking for Fun	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parenting Class for single or new parents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health Support to Golf Class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Senior Chair Exercise Class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

WHAT ARE YOUR MITIGATION PREFERENCES?
Please circle one (1) answer for each of the following questions.

1. Which potential athletic amenity would be most valuable in your neighborhood?
 a. Basketball Court b. Volleyball Court
 c. Soccer Field

2. Which potential infrastructure improvements should be prioritized by the project team?
 a. Additional Streetlights b. Sidewalks with Curb and Gutter
 c. Crosswalks d. Stormwater Drainage
 e. Traffic Calming Measures

3. Where is the ideal location for replacement multi-family housing in your community?
 a. Within the Impacted Neighborhoods
 b. Nearby the Impacted Neighborhoods (within 1 mile)
 c. Outside of North Charleston city limits

WEST 526 LOWCOUNTRY CORRIDOR **Community Mitigation Plan Highlights**

Background
Every effort was made to avoid and minimize impacts to your community during the development of the project alternatives. However, because of the close proximity of many communities to the existing interstate, significant community impacts were unavoidable in all reasonable alternatives and would require community mitigation.

Community Mitigation Plan *Developed by identifying & considering the social needs & priorities of neighborhood residents*

Community Office
In November 2019, a Community Office was opened within walking distance of potentially impacted communities. Located in Gas Light Square at 5627 Rivers Avenue (CARTA Route 10), the Community Office is where you can meet one-on-one with the project team and connect with resource specialists such as right-of-way relocation experts.

Community Advisory Council (CAC)
A Community Advisory Council (CAC) was formed as a resident-lead group to facilitate meaningful engagement.

Survey
The CAC and residents of the potentially impacted neighborhoods completed a Social Needs Assessment (SNA) survey to provide an insight into the daily operations, needs, and desires of the community.

Your Input Matters! **NOW is the time to have your voice heard!**
Complete our survey & leave a comment by **January 15, 2021!**
www.526LowcountryCorridor.com

Make an appointment at our Community Office (5627 Rivers Avenue, Gas Light Square) for assistance
 info@526LowcountryCorridor.com 843.258.1135
 SCDOT Project Manager Joy Riley, PE, DBIA, PMP, CPM (Call or Text)
 526Corridor @526Corridor

Purpose
To facilitate full and fair participation by all potentially impacted EJ communities in the mitigation plan design

“Provide input on the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST project AND review the DRAFT EJ Community Mitigation Plan”

- ✓ 179 survey participants:
 - ✓ 115 mailed-in
 - ✓ 39 submitted by computer
 - ✓ 25 submitted by mobile device

A reminder from your I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST Community Advisory Council

Don't forget to submit your comments on the DRAFT Environmental Justice Community Mitigation plan by 1/15/21.

YOUR VOICE MATTERS, and the project team needs to hear from you on potential improvements within these communities:

- Ferndale
- Highland Terrace
- Liberty Park
- Russelldale
- And neighboring areas

Scan the image to the right with your smart phone's camera, or visit the website below to learn more about the DRAFT EJ Community Mitigation Plan, take the survey, and access the Public Hearing materials.



www.526LowcountryCorridor.com/West/Community-Commitments



Local Postal Customer



Community Infrastructure Enhancement Plan Survey

Purpose

Identify community infrastructure needs related to:

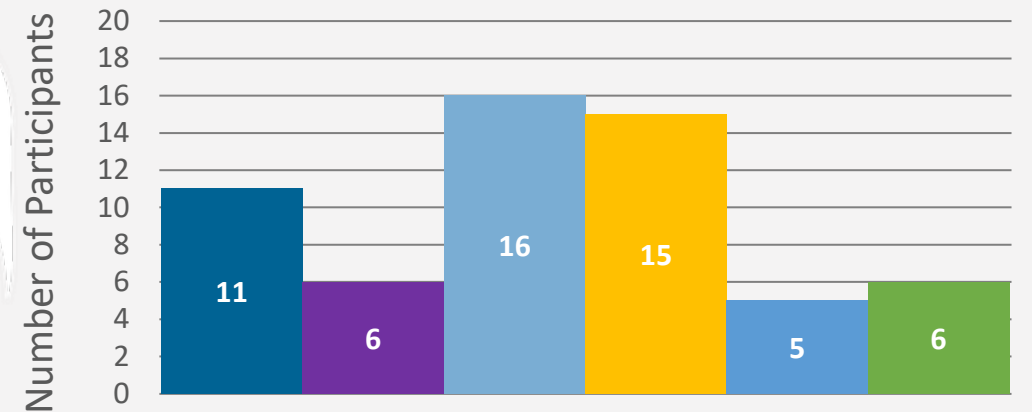
- Bicycle/Pedestrian Safety
- Landscaping and Aesthetics
- Pedestrian and Street Lighting
- Speeding Concerns
- Stormwater Management
 - Examples of Bus Shelters were also presented at the Open House on 3/6/2021

“Tell us about the improvements you would like to see in YOUR neighborhood!”

85 total survey participants:

- 49 paper submissions
- 9 computer submissions
- 27 mobile device submissions

89% of respondents live in EJ neighborhoods



■ Ferndale ■ Highland Terrace ■ Liberty Park
 ■ Russelldale ■ Joppa Way ■ Other

Community Office & CAC



Community Office

- On Rivers Avenue just north of Liberty Park & on transit route
- Full-time Office Manager & 4 Community Liaisons, 2 part-time Right-of-Way Specialists

Community Liaison Activities

- Partner with community service agencies to distribute project information
- Canvassing in impacted communities

Community Advisory Council – *has met 18 times from 09/2019 - 05/2021*

- EJ Community Mitigation Plan development
- Canvassing & yard signs
- Mitigation subcommittees
- Organization after the project



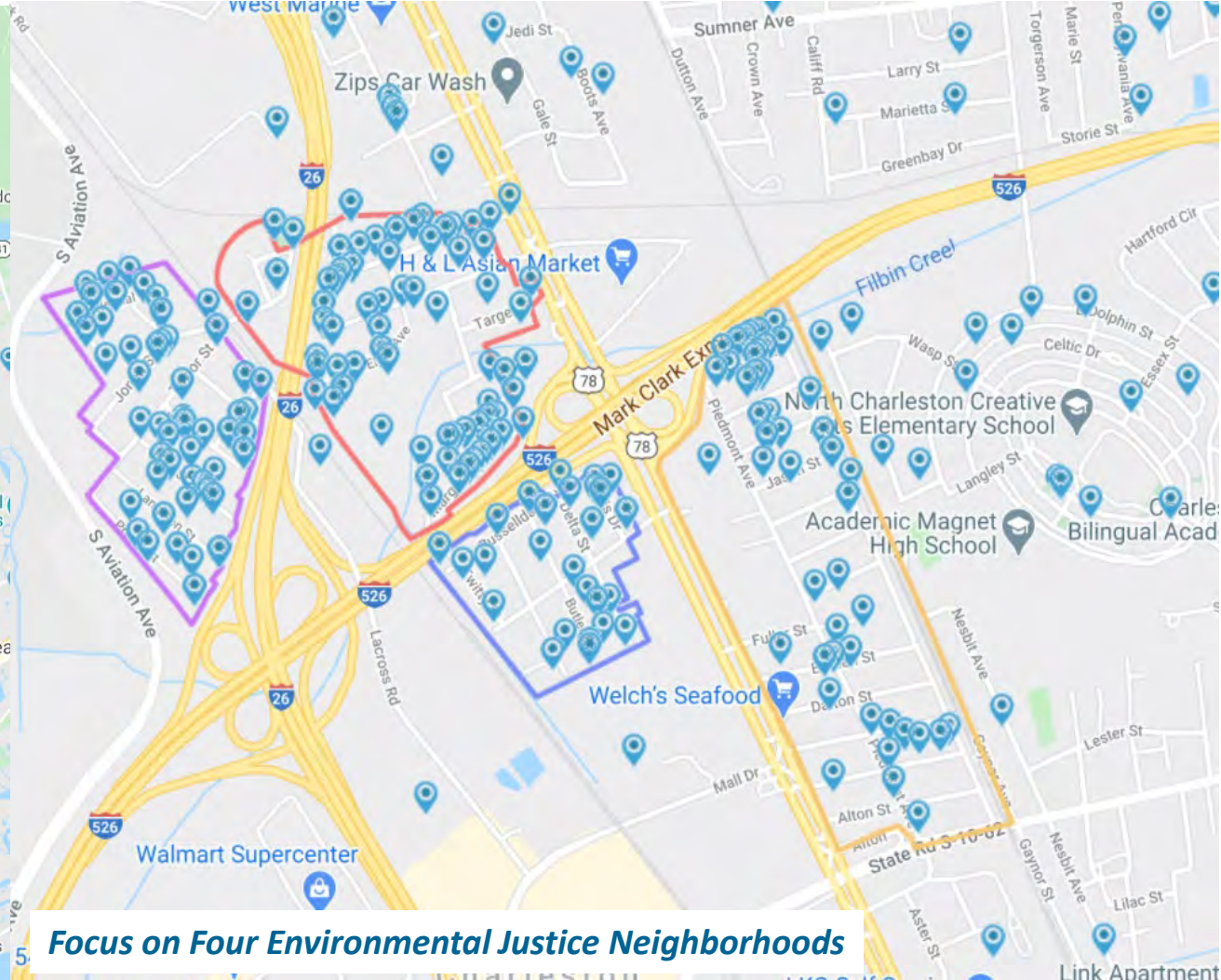
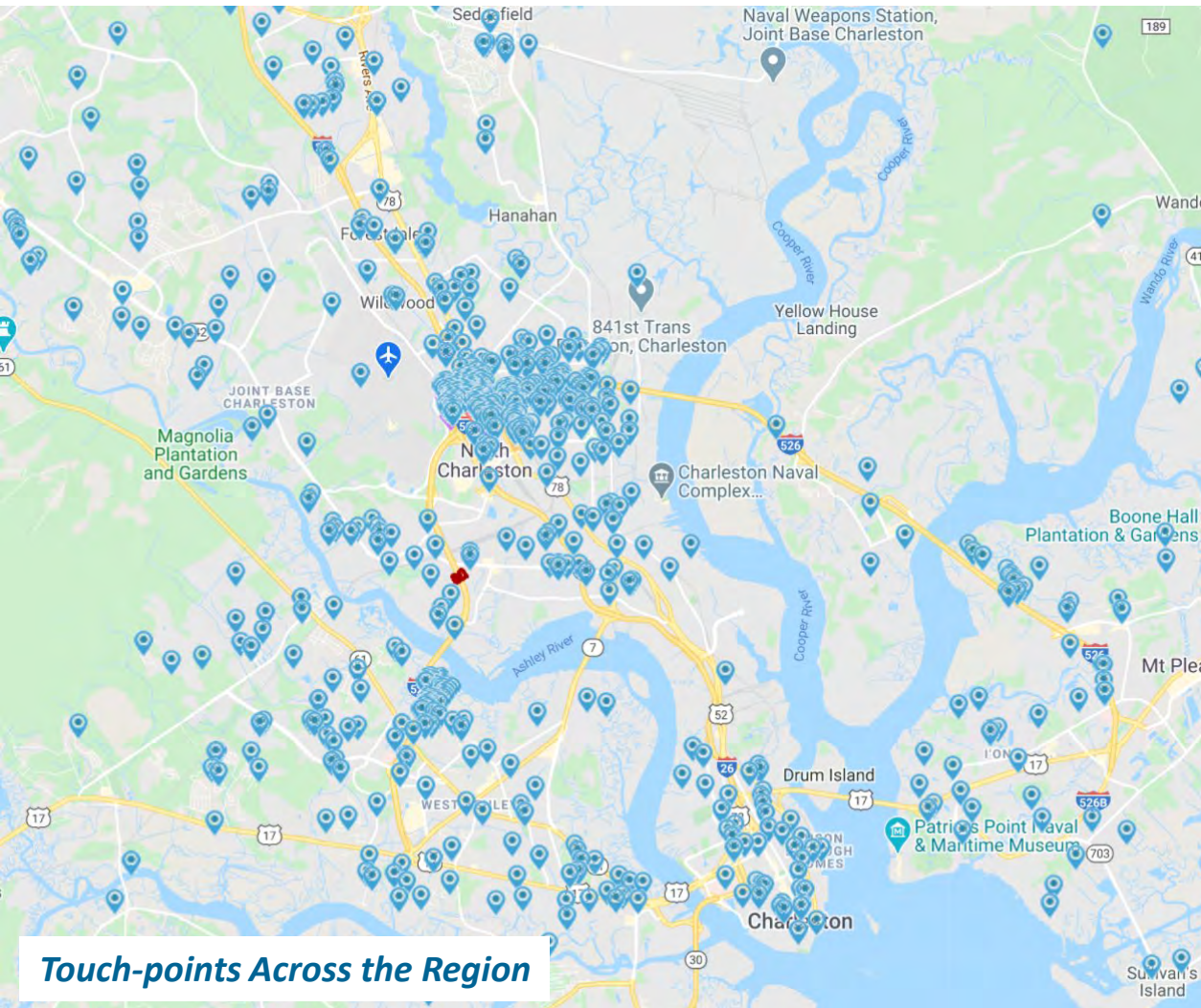
Public Engagement Touch-Points

Using Data-Driven Outreach Strategies



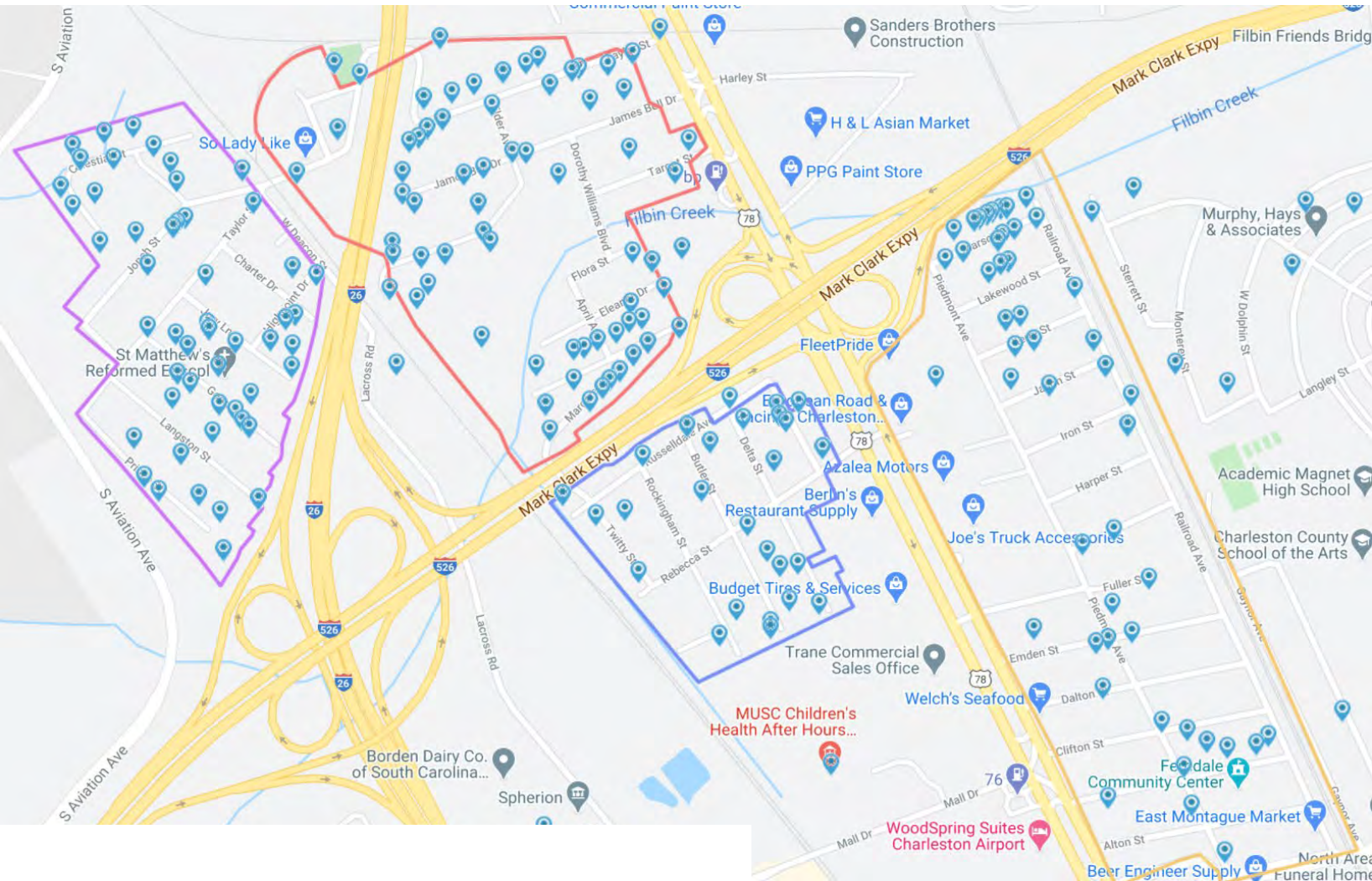
All Public Engagement Mapped

Fall 2019 – Winter 2021



Public Engagement Mapped

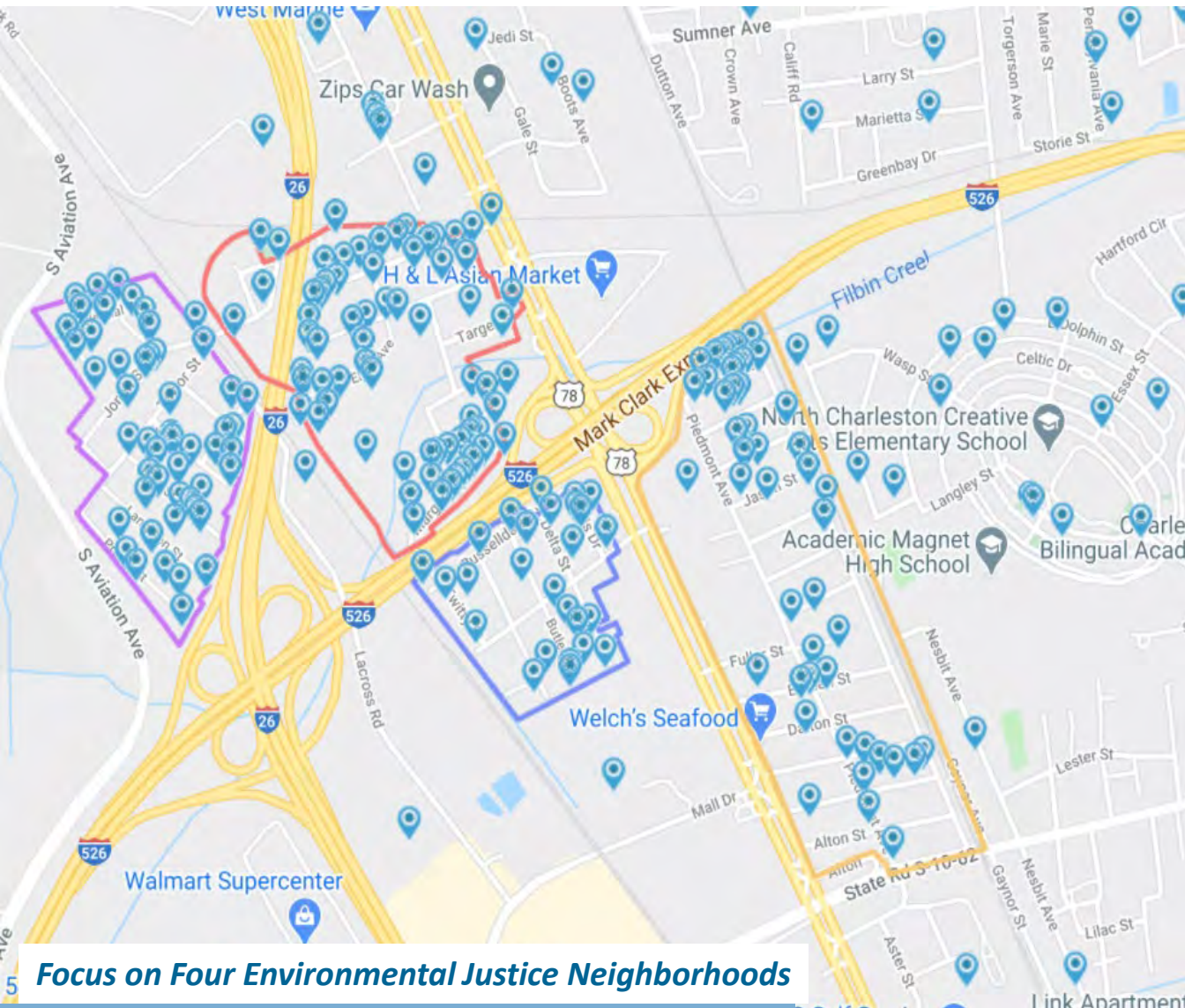
Fall 2019 – Winter 2021



Within each of the Environmental Justice Neighborhoods, the team has touched:

- Highland Terrace: 51 houses (28.5%)
- Liberty Park: 64 houses (38%)
- Russelldale: 27 houses (20%)
- Ferndale: 48 houses (17%)

Addressing Gaps



What has been happening?

- Canvassing neighborhoods that have fewer engagements & capturing contact information while canvassing (**1,190 homes have been reached through canvassing**)

Additional Team Recommendations:

- Place yard signs in neighborhoods with specific calls to action (with or without flyer boxes)
- Send mailers to let people know specific calls to actions
- Set a “meet a neighbor day” – CAC members are tasked with bringing 3 neighbors to meet the team
- Open office to community groups



Updated EJ Community Mitigation Components



Updated Community Initiatives

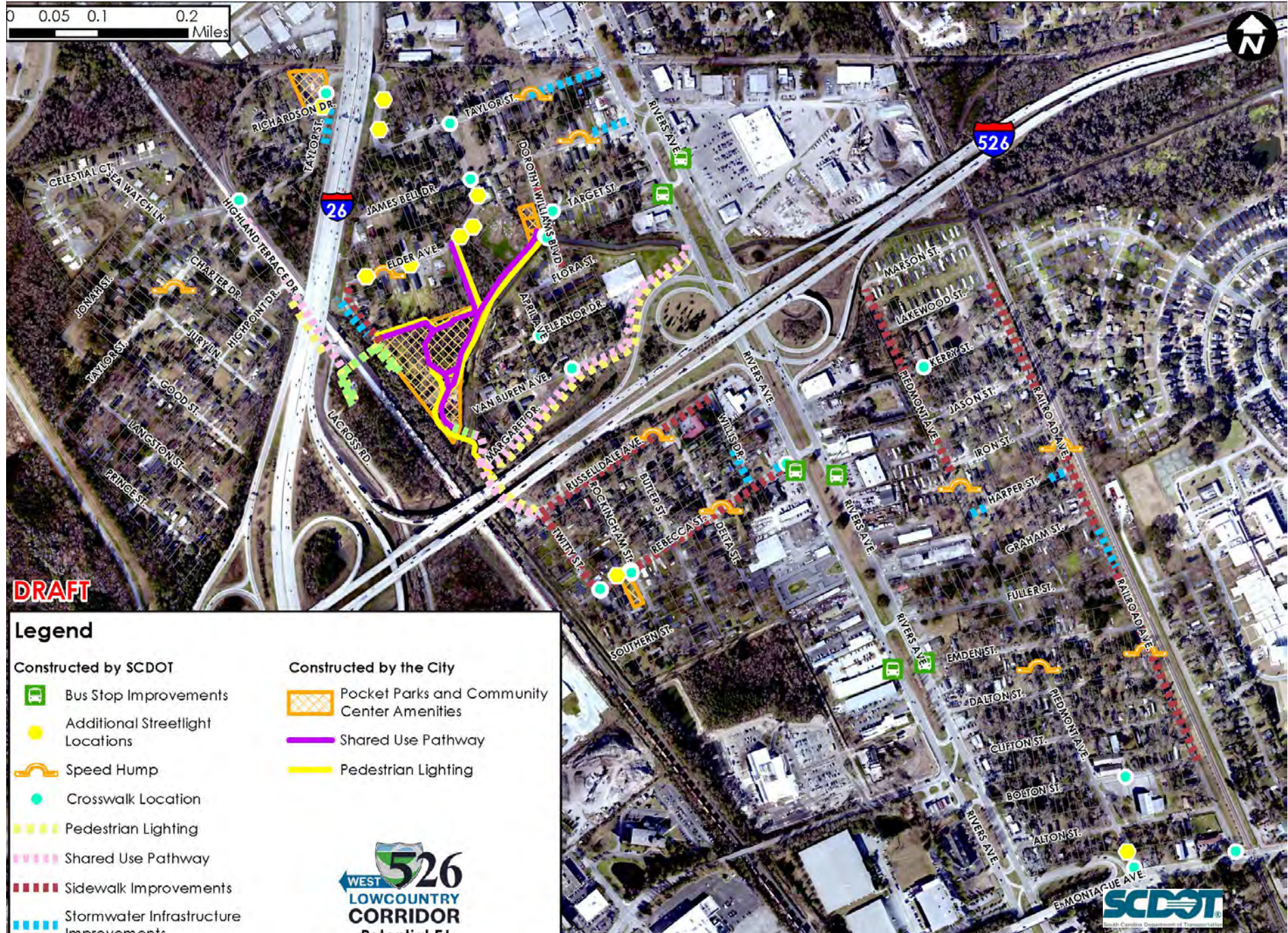


CIEP: Pedestrian Bridges

- Improved Highland Terrace & Joppa Way connectivity to replacement community center
- Small bridge over Filbin Creek for connectivity to Russelldale
- Located near existing footpaths across the railroad tracks to help prevent trespassing and provide safe crossing over the tracks
- Additional fencing may be required near the railroad tracks

CIEP: Summary of Potential Improvements

- Recommendations based on input received from the CIEP survey, EJ residents, and the CAC
- Potential improvements are preliminary & subject to change based on coordination with entities such as the Norfolk Southern Railroad & the City of North Charleston



Updated Community Initiatives

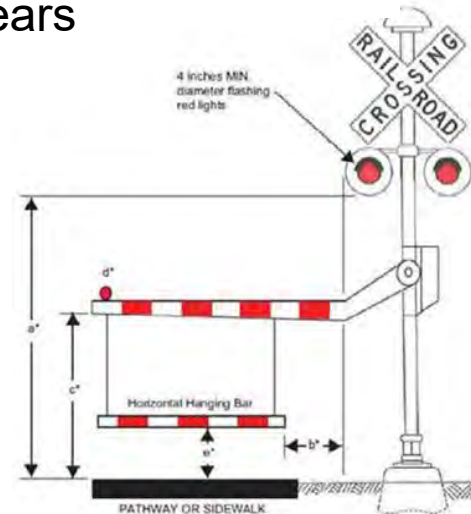
CIEP: Safer Railroad Crossing

Taylor Street at Jonah Street

- Primary route for Highland Terrace & Joppa Way residents to access Highland Terrace-Liberty Park pocket park
- Identified multiple times as a location needing pedestrian improvements in the CIEP survey
- CAC members noted safety concerns at the railroad crossing
- Rail traffic projected to increase in future years



Opportunity to install pedestrian protection measures such as a crossing gate and upgraded signing



Updated Community Initiatives

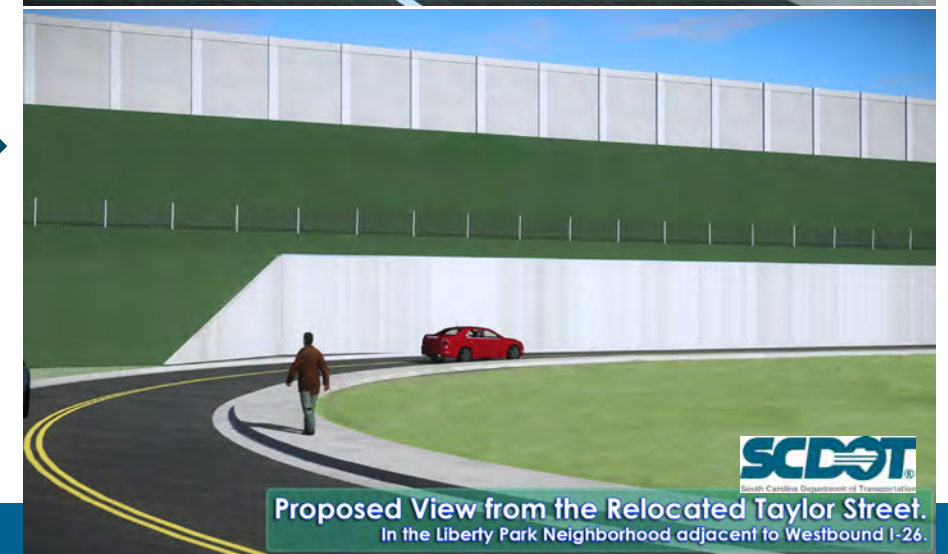
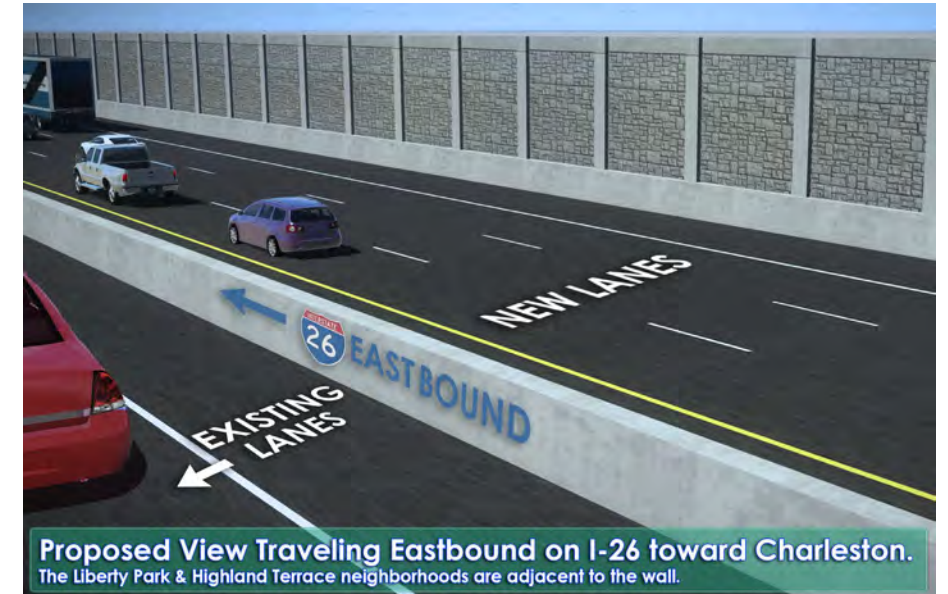
Community Resource Guide

Help sustain livability within affected EJ neighborhoods by increasing residents' access to local organizations, resources, and other information on the following topics:

- Food Insecurities
- Health & Wellness
- Home Repair
- Financial Assistance
- Minority-owned Businesses
- Referral agencies

Mitigation Barriers

- To be built on either side of the I-26 corridor from south of Remount Rd to the southern end of the Highland Terrace neighborhood
- Options for reducing noise along I-526 near the EJ neighborhoods include structure mounted barriers, improved pavement surfaces, and/or technology to reduce noise from bridge deck joints.



Updated Community Initiatives

College Scholarships & Internships

Expanded scholarship programs from \$50,000 to \$100,000 and increased transportation internship programs in order to provide these opportunities for a longer time period during the project development and implementation.

Job Training Programs

- Expanded job training programs to be offered during project development and construction to provide more opportunities to impacted residents
- Initiated job training programs this summer to offer CDL permit preparation classes, CDL Full License Program, and a high school professional development program for residents and student residing within the impacted communities.





Community History Preservation Program



About the CHPP



Focus Neighborhoods

Highland Terrace

Liberty Park

Ferndale

Russelldale



Purpose

Document the history of the focus neighborhoods through the collection of oral interviews, photographs, maps, and other historical documentation.



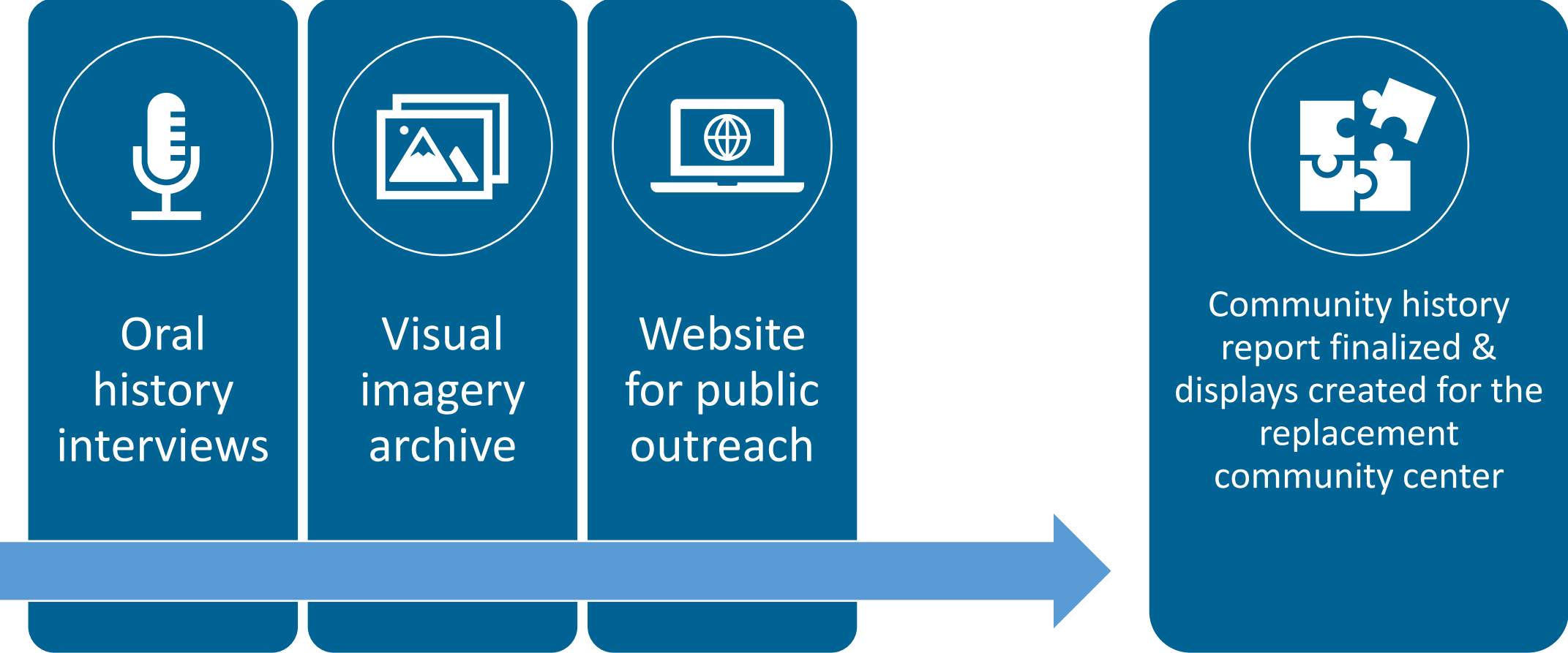
Goal

Final visual product will be integrated into the design of the centrally located replacement community center.

CHPP: Program Video



CHPP: The Process





EAST Updates

Planning & Environmental Linkages Study



I-526 LCC EAST Study Area

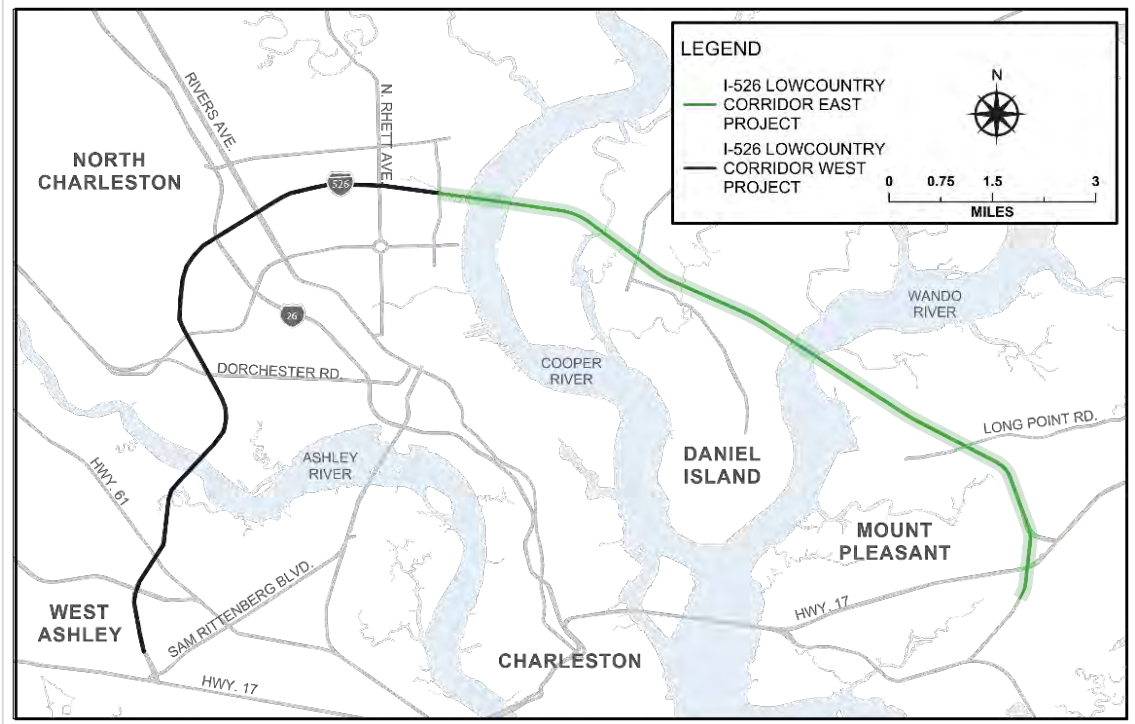
Virginia Avenue to US 17

10 
total miles

5 
miles elevated structure

5 
interchanges

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



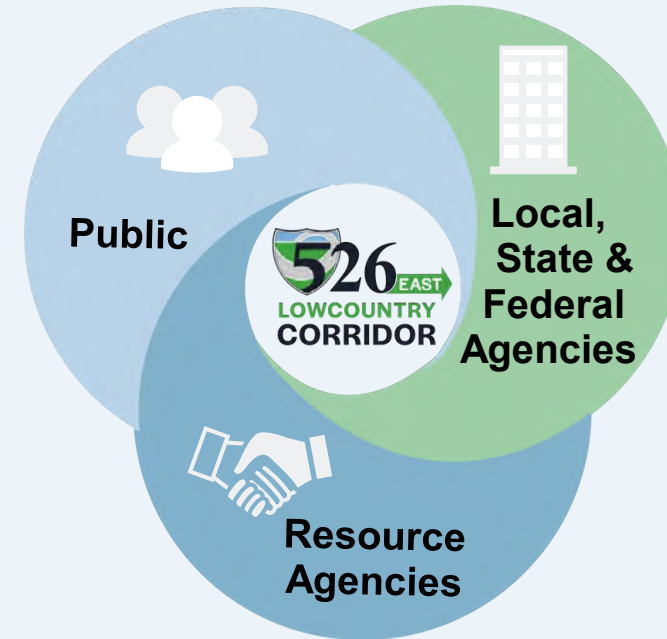
What is a PEL?

- 1 Tool for **creating efficiency** in transportation development
- 2 Considers **environment, community & economy**
- 3 **Collaborative & integrated** approach to decision-making

What are the Benefits of including a PEL Study in the project development process?



Who Participates?



PEL & NEPA Process



PUBLIC & AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

Planning & Environmental Linkages Study (PEL)

1.5 - 2.5 Years

- Planning studies
- Existing conditions analysis
- Future forecasts
- Study goals
- Purpose & need
- Range of alternatives and screened reasonable alternatives
- Cost estimates and Implementation plan
- Level of NEPA analysis: Categorical Exclusion, Environmental Assessment, or Environmental Impact Statement



NEPA

1 - 2 Years

- Confirm/refine purpose & need
- Detailed environmental studies & noise analysis
- Refine alternatives
- Explore mitigation and commitments
- Prepare decision document

Project Implementation

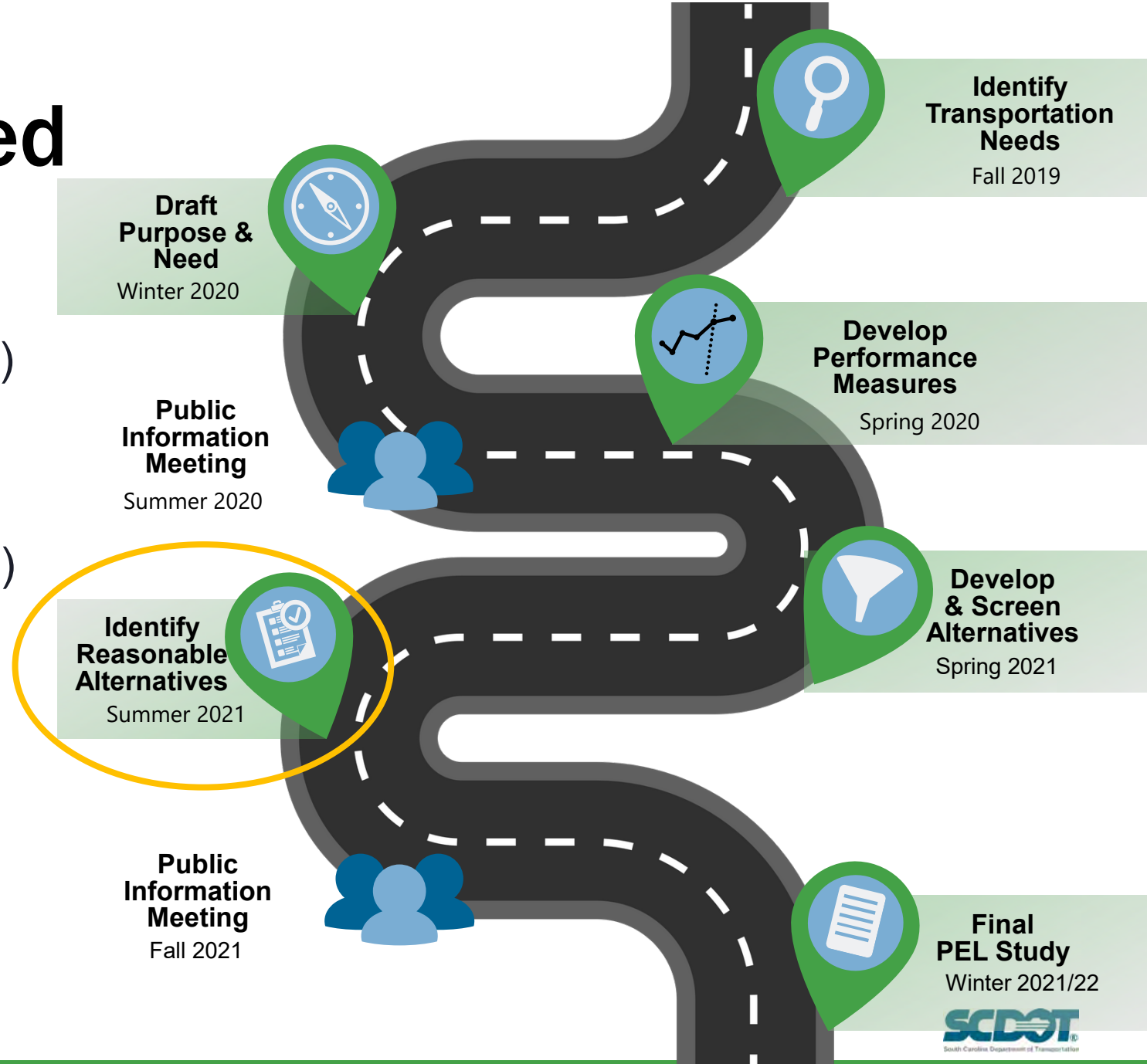
- Final design
- Right-of-way acquisition
- Permitting
- Mitigation and commitments
- Construction

Maintenance Operations

- Maintenance of roadway and right-of-way

PEL Study Completed Milestones

- PEL Initiation (FHWA Concurrence)
March 23, 2020
- MetroQuest Survey
May 14 - August 15, 2020
- Public Information Meeting (Online)
July 15 - August 15, 2020
- Purpose & Need (FHWA Concurrence)
February 18, 2021
- Concepts Development & Preliminary Screening
April/May 2021





Summary of Summer 2020 Public Engagement



Survey Input



Survey

Captured corridor usage, concerns & priorities for the corridor
May 14 – August 15, 2020



Survey Live:
May 14 - August 15, 2020

3,103
Responses

Most Travelers Experienced Congestion both AM & PM

Top multimodal improvements desired along the corridor:

42%   
Truck-only Lanes

 High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lanes or Carpool Lanes
18% OR
 High-Occupancy Toll (HOT) Lanes

Most people use the corridor daily for:

work, shopping, entertainment & recreation



Most people travel the corridor using their personal vehicle **85%**



Travelers are experiencing these top safety-related issues:

 Congestion **25%**  Truck Merging **22%**  Aggressive/Distracted Drivers **19%**  Speeding

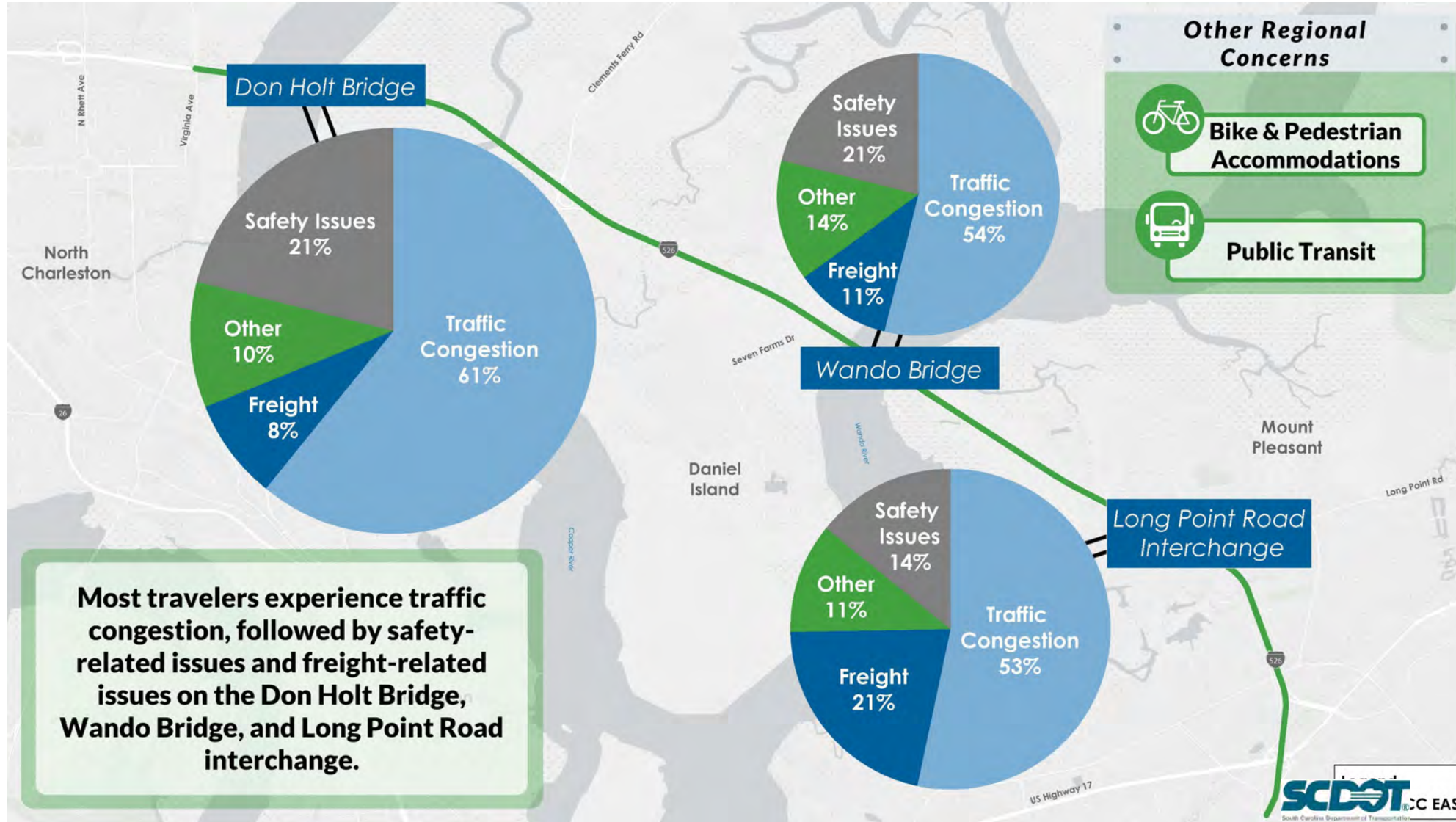
Survey Input Continued



Survey

Captured corridor usage, concerns & priorities for the corridor

May 14 – August 15, 2020



Public Information Meeting Input



Virtual Meeting

All materials available online

**July 15 –
August 15, 2020**

www.526lowcountrycorridor.com/vpim-east

**Meeting Live:
July 15 -
August 15, 2020**

526LowcountryCorridor.com

**84
Comments**

83 Online Comments
1 Emailed Comment

Top 5 Comments & Concerns:

21%

Concerned
with Noise
Impacts



13%

Concerned
with
Neighborhood
Impacts



10%

Wanted
Alternative
Truck/ Freight
Routes



6%

Wanted Trucks
in the Right
Lane/ Truck-
Only lanes



5%

Support
Widening





Concepts Development & Alternatives Analysis



Draft 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

Supplemental Project Goals


 Compatibility: Align with local land use plans & projects


 Demand: Accommodate increased numbers of vehicles

 Seismic: Any new roads or bridges should be designed to new earthquake standards

 Connectivity: Improve connections with local ports, railway facilities and transit

 Safety: Reduce traffic-related crashes

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

 Technology: Accommodate future transportation technologies such as vehicle technologies, system monitoring, driver information and traffic operations technologies

Initial Concept Development

- Intentionally broad
- Encompass all ideas and challenges using:
 - Existing and No Build conditions analyses
 - Stakeholder input
 - Public input
- Address purpose and need
- Address study goals

Preliminary Concepts

No-Build

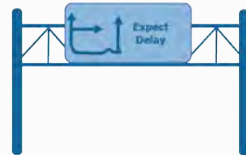


The No-Build Alternative

Transportation Systems Management & Operations (TSMO)



Managed Lanes



Operational Elements



Multimodal Improvements

Infrastructure Improvements



New Location Alignment



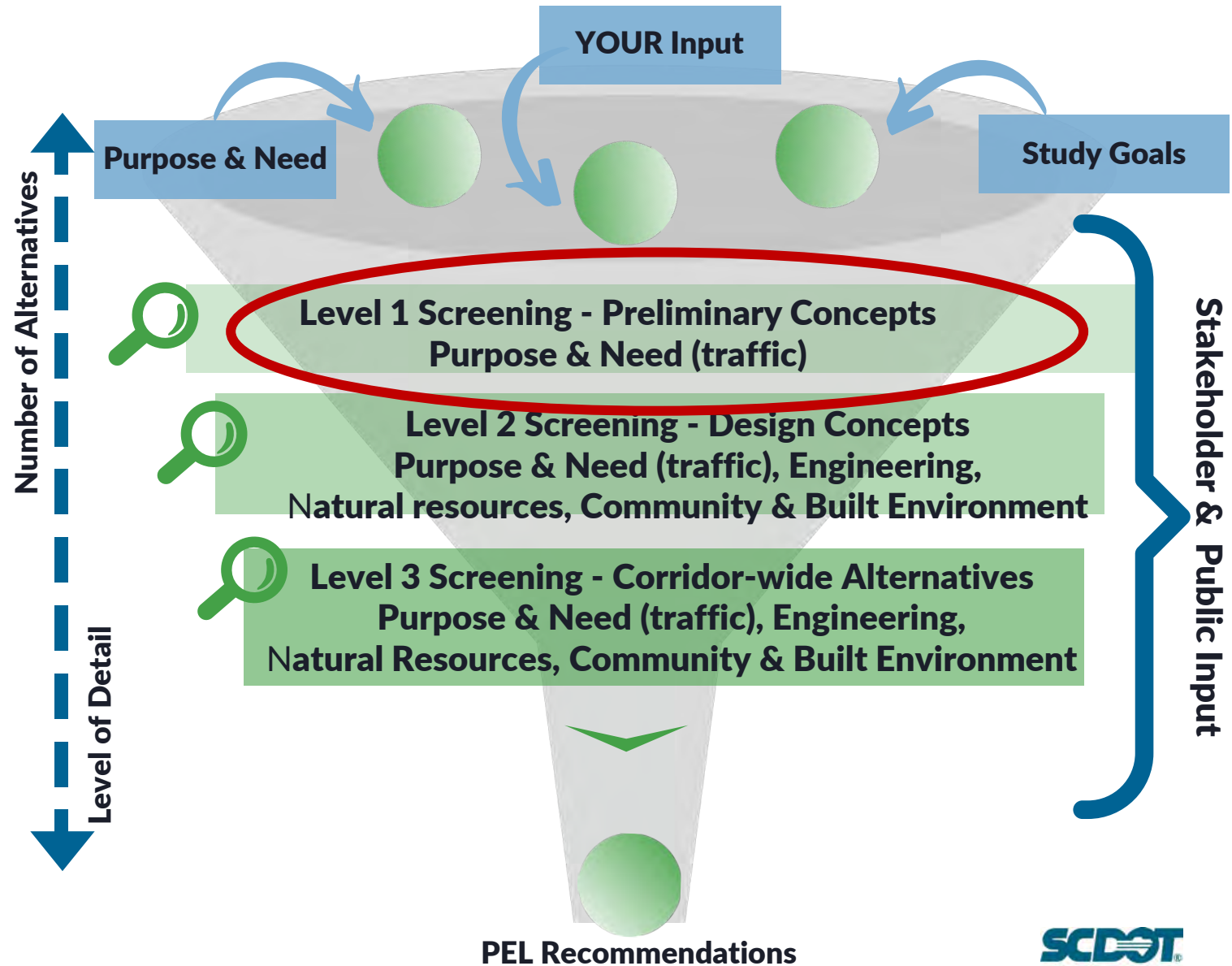
Mainline Improvements
1 or 2 additional lanes



Interchange Improvements

Level 1 Screening

- High-level
- Identify concepts that do not meet the purpose and need
- Improve congestion (Quantitative)
- Improve roadway deficiencies (Qualitative)



Level 1 Screening Criteria

- Improve congestion (Quantitative)
 - Performance Evaluation Methodology-CHATS Interim Regional TDM
 - Improved Level of Service and Volume to Capacity Ratio
 - Reduced Delay and Improved Travel Speed
- Improve roadway deficiencies (Qualitative)
 - Does the concept have the potential to meet SCDOT roadway design standards?

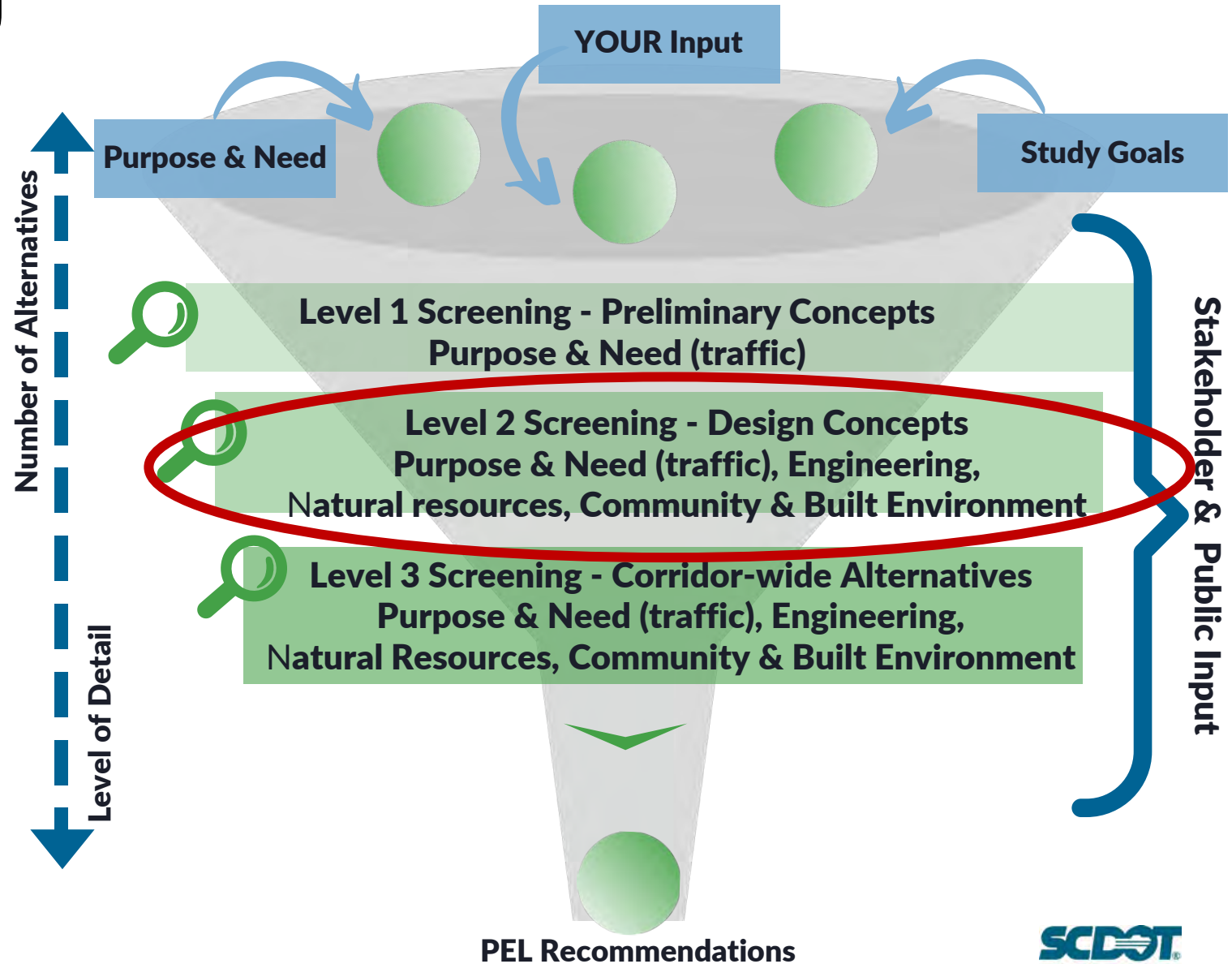


Level 1 Screening Results

- Concepts Carried Forward
 - No-Build
 - 2 additional lanes in each direction
- Supplemental Options Carried Forward
 - Interchange Improvements
 - Dedicated truck ramps to port (additional facility)
 - TSMO Concepts
- Eliminated
 - New location alignment route
 - 1 additional lane in each direction

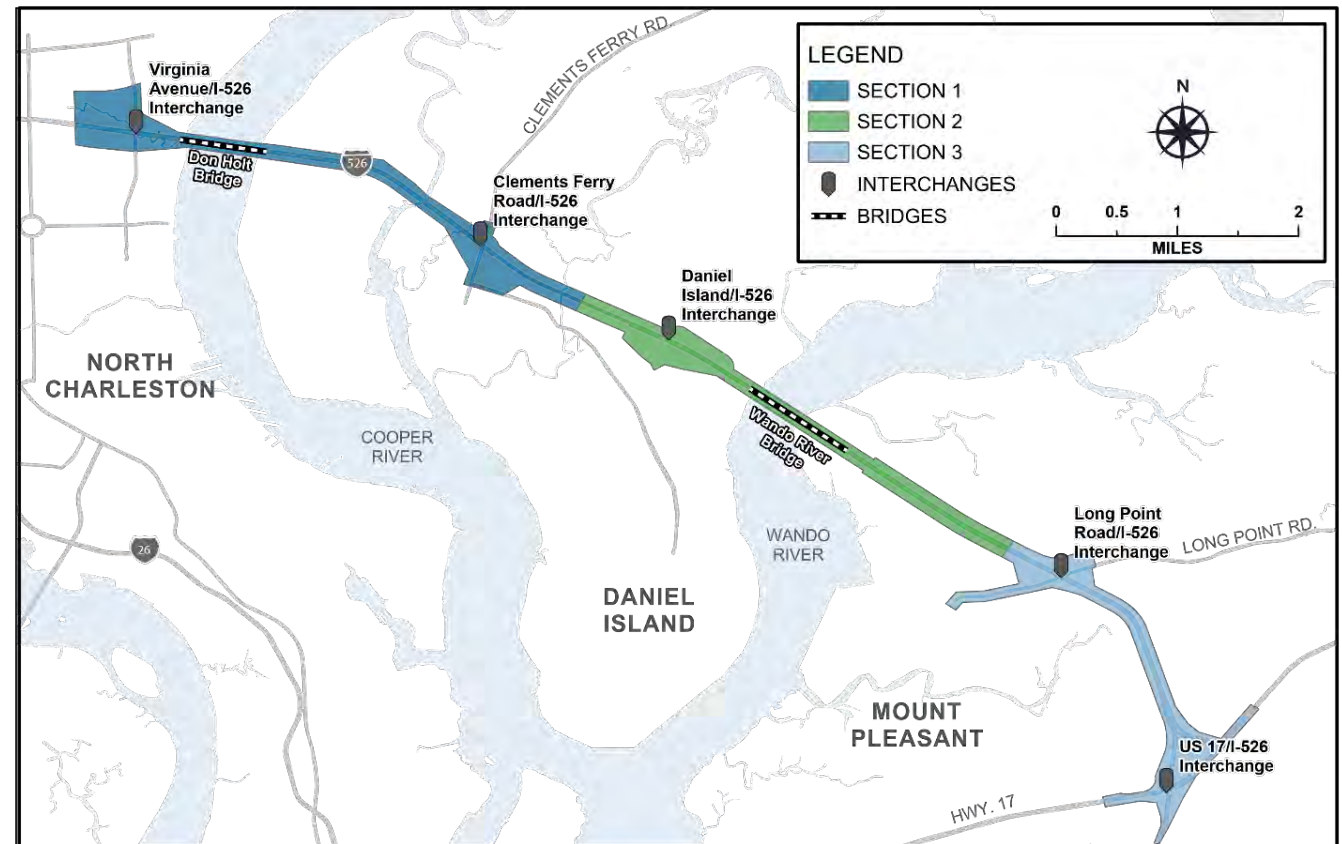
Level 2 Screening

- Evaluate conceptual design options against the No-Build
- Screening criteria:
 - Traffic performance (level of service)
 - Compatibility with local projects, seismic resiliency, ports & transit access, constructability
 - Natural resources (aquatic resources)
 - Community and built environment (relocations, parks, cultural sites)



Study Corridor Division

- Divide corridor into three sections
 - Based on engineering and environmental constraints
- Allows for localized design concepts to be evaluated



Conceptual Design Options

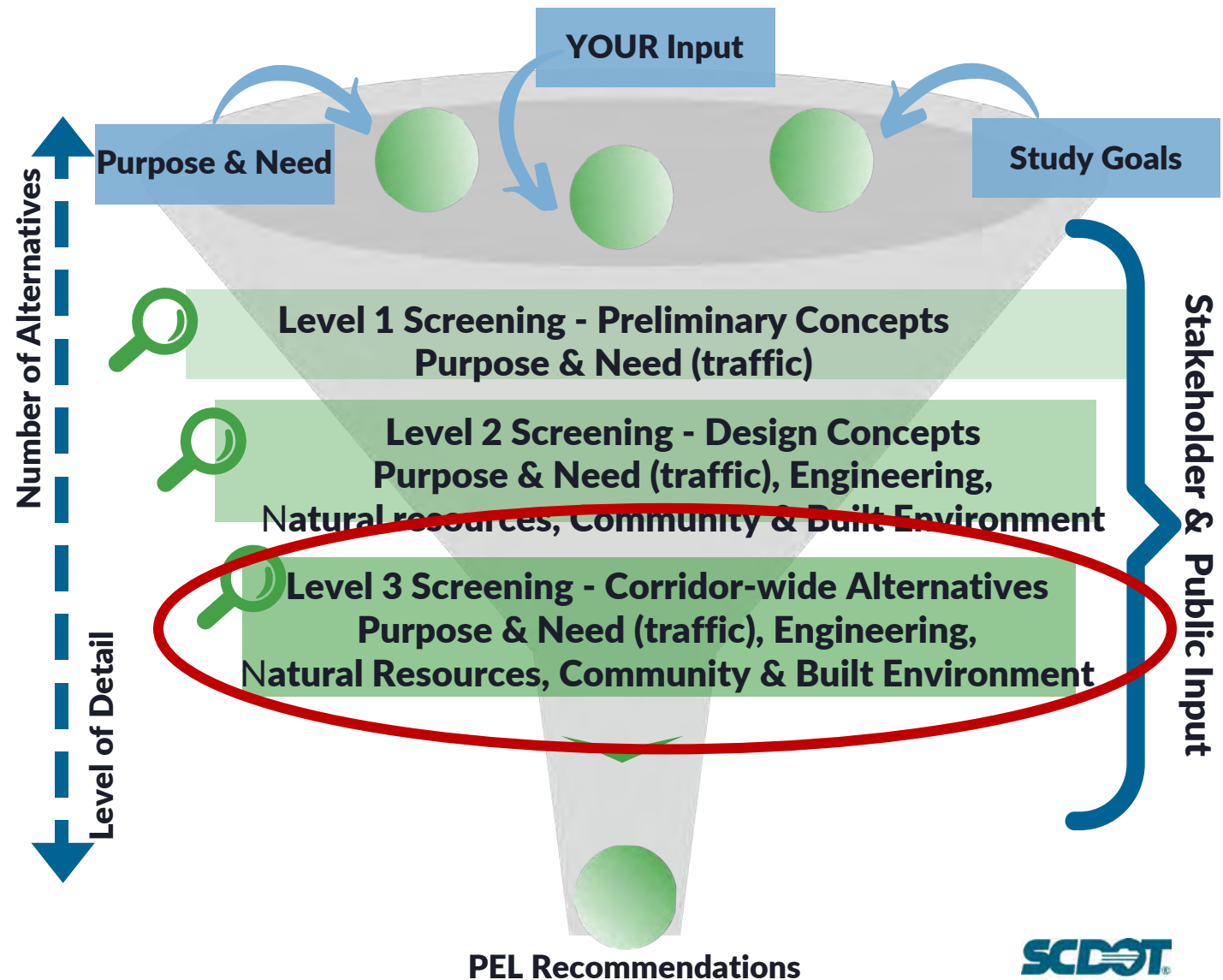
- Symmetrical – Add capacity symmetrically to each side of the existing alignment
- North – Add capacity to the north of the existing alignment
- South – Add capacity to the south of the existing alignment
- Retain – Retain the current bridge structure(s)
- Replace – Replace the current bridge structure(s)

Level 2 Screening Evaluation

- Conceptual Design Options eliminated for:
 - Failing to satisfy the purpose and need based on traffic performance (LOS F)
 - Significant impact(s) to natural or cultural resource(s)

Level 3 Screening

- Corridor-wide evaluation of conceptual alternatives
- Screening criteria:
 - Travel Time
 - Compatibility with local projects, seismic resiliency, ports & transit access, constructability
 - Natural resources (aquatic resources)
 - Community and built environment (relocations, parks, cultural sites)





PEL Study Next Steps and Milestones



PEL Study Next Steps

- FHWA coordination on concepts development and alternatives screening process
- Stakeholder and public input on reasonable alternatives
- Study recommendations – phasing, NEPA class of action, funding opportunities, unresolved issues
- FHWA coordination on PEL FHWA Questionnaire and PEL Study Report

PEL Study Upcoming Milestones

- Alternatives and Screening FHWA Concurrence – Summer 2021
- Stakeholder Meeting – October 2021
- Public Information Meeting – October 2021
- FHWA PEL Questionnaire – January 2022
- PEL Report – January 2022

Contact Information



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843.258.1135



Joy Riley, PE, PMP, DBIA
SCDOT
Project Manager



STAKEHOLDER MEETING

Date: October 7, 2021
Time: 10:00 am – 11:30 am

Location: Virtual Teams Meeting

Attendees:

Name	Affiliation
Elder James Johnson	National Action Network
Joyce Kirkland	Ashley Harbor Homeowners Association
Steve Kemp	SC Ports Authority
Kevin Shealy	Charleston City Council
Mike Hedgepath	Southeastern Freight Lines
Alexis Kiser	City of Hanahan
Bailey Vincett	Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce
Shane Belcher	FHWA
Betsy La Force	Coastal Conservation League
Brad Morrison	Town of Mount Pleasant
Elizabeth W. Heatley	Code Lynx
Mark Lester	CDM Smith
Amy Livingston	CDM Smith
Victoria Wornom	CDM Smith
Joy Riley	SCDOT
Will McGoldrick	SCDOT
Rick Day	Stantec
Emily Lawton	FHWA
Brent Jonas	CRDA
Mark Smith	SC State Representative
Jenny Brennan	SELC
Sandra Saint-Surin	FHWA
Jason Crowley	Coastal Conservation League
Katie Zimmerman	Charleston Moves
John Singleton	Racial Justice Network
Ron Mitchum	BCDCOG
Scott Barhight	Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce
Savannah Brennan	Charleston Moves

Meeting Objectives:

- *EAST Study Updates*

- Preview of materials for the upcoming Public Information Meetings
 - How public input has been used to inform the concepts development and screening process
 - Overview of the Reasonable Alternatives
 - Current & future traffic conditions
 - Next steps in the project development process
- *WEST Project Updates*
 - Overview of the Environmental Justice Community Mitigation Plan & associated outreach
 - Next steps in the project development process

Agenda:

1. Welcome
2. Presentation
 - a. I-526 LCC EAST Overview
 - b. What is a PEL?
 - c. PEL Study Milestones
 - d. Preview of Public Meeting Materials
 - i. Draft Purpose & Need
 - ii. What did we hear & how did we use the input?
 - iii. Expected traffic growth (2050)
 - iv. How and why do we measure Travel Time Reliability?
 - v. What types of concepts did we look at?
 - vi. Transportation Systems Management & Operations (TSMO)
 - vii. Reasonable Alternative Matrix
 - viii. Don Holt Bridge Features
 - ix. Wando Bridge Features
 - x. Next Steps
 - e. I-526 LCC WEST Schedule
 - f. Engagement and outreach to date – concentrated on the 4 environmental justice impacted communities
 - g. Community Office Engagement
 - h. Community Resource Info Sessions
 - i. Community Advisory Council
 - j. Proposed Community Mitigation Schedule
 - k. Community History Preservation Program
3. Wrap-up

Questions:

- a. What environmental studies have been done to date? (Elder Johnson)
 - i. Joy – During the PEL Study, we do limited environmental studies. We have only completed preliminary environmental studies/surveys. The next phase of work is the NEPA phase, and that is where we get into specific environmental studies,

such as air quality, noise, environmental justice, etc. We can get you information that has been done to date.

- b. How were alternative modes of transportation like freight barging and a regional ferry system modeled in the alternatives analysis? (Jason Crowley)
 - i. Joy – this information comes into play in the model. We have only done high-level traffic modeling to date. When we get into the next phase (NEPA), we take a more specific look. Working with the Port will be key.
 - ii. Follow-up - Is barging and a regional ferry system being consider as an alternative to widening? (Jason Crowley)
 1. Mark – We did get growth information from the Wando Welch and North Charleston Terminals and used it to calibrate our traffic models. We do not know what the Port incorporated into those growth numbers, but from where SCDOT sits, it is very difficult to dictate mode shifts.
 2. Joy – When you look at traffic analysis, port traffic contributes some, but eliminating port traffic would not solve the problem. These stand-alone alternatives would not solve the problem we are dealing with today.
 3. Clarification on question – are you looking at these as individual alternatives? (Jason Crowley)
 - a. Joy – I don't think we have at this point, but that is an excellent comment that we can go back and address likely in the next phase (NEPA).
 - iii. Beyond the freight barging conversation, I second the request to consider how a regional commuter ferry system could help address travel/traffic needs for this project into the future. (Betsy La Force)
- c. Do you have an idea as to which alternative is most viable at this point? (Mike Hedgepath)
 - i. Joy – That would be something we analyze in the next phase of work. We are just looking at a high level right now. We look at improvement and performance verses impacts and try to find a balance
- d. I understand the WestRock facility is for sale – how likely would it be that SCDOT would purchase part of this for the westbound bridge? Have you guys been in talks with WestRock? (Mike Hedgepath)
 - i. Joy – No, not yet. We would hesitate to do early acquisitions at the planning phase.

- e. Why are the environmental studies being done after this study? It seems like an afterthought. (John Singleton)
 - i. Joy - The planning studies are really looking at what is the problem and what are the feasible solutions for solving that problem. We then take the potential solutions and compare them through environmental studies to see which has the least impact during NEPA. There are 2 distinct projects: WEST and EAST. For the I-526 LCC WEST, we have a Draft EIS but for I-526 LCC EAST, we have not started the NEPA process.
 - f. I'd like to follow up on Mike's comment on the incident this AM – this is the second one we have had this week. It involved a commercial vehicle and a fatality. We keep getting hammered on not maintaining the capacity. When these incidents occur, we do not do a very good job clearing the incident before another occurs. As you move forward, consider putting a greater emphasis on the types of operational improvements you are making. Adding capacity is great, but not if incidences continually disrupt the daily traffic flow. (Ron Mitchum)
 - g. Why was ramp metering ruled out? (Ron Mitchum)
 - i. Joy – We looked at ramp metering. It really just pushes the problem to the cross streets. In order for it to work, we would have to implement it at a series of interchanges.
 - ii. Mark – It might not generate as much benefit, but that doesn't mean it should be discounted. We were discussing this this morning, and I think we would change the way we look at it/label it moving forward.
2. The section that you just covered sounds good (Section on WEST outreach), but it is totally contrary to what is happening in the community. This project is being shoved down their throats. The community that is being affected is African American. The community is being downgraded by two billion dollars. The mitigation plan was not developed with broad representation from the community and the CAC is not representative of the community. The project impacts the voting base, so they will not even be able to protect themselves. It has been in the strategic plan to circumvent the community. (John Singleton)
 - a. Joy – I appreciate that. The Secretary is definitely invested in hearing those concerns. She wants to truly understand what the issues are. She came back from the meeting she had with the Racial Justice Network and charged us to look at ways we can do our process while taking into consideration your concerns. The plan is not final yet. We want to sit down at the table with you and hear your concerns and incorporate those and mitigate those.
 3. Where is the final mitigation plan for the WEST section? I can't find it on your website. Also, how much is SCDOT allocating for mitigation overall and per initiative? Also, what enhancements are being provided to community members who are being relocated? (Savannah Brennan)

- a. The final proposed mitigation plan will be put up on the website today (link was provided). The national media coverage we have seen has brought a lot of people to the table, so we are continuing to work through the plan to see if there are final adjustments needed before it is submitted to FHWA. There could be a delay due to this. Our goal was to create affordable housing choices for the impacted communities through the right-of-way program. This is a two-pronged approach to offer housing within close proximity to the City of North Charleston. We would create 100 units of various sizes with a greenspace component and are actively purchasing single family lots within the impacted communities. We hope to have at least 20 lots. These are the minimum commitments, and we can go above and beyond depending on interest. Housing is a huge issue for this project. It is a win/win to create affordable housing.



LOWCOUNTRY CORRIDOR

October 2021 Stakeholder Meeting
Joy Riley, PE, PMP, DBIA SCDOT



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration





Project Background

Planning & Environmental Linkages Study


I-526 LCC EAST Study Area

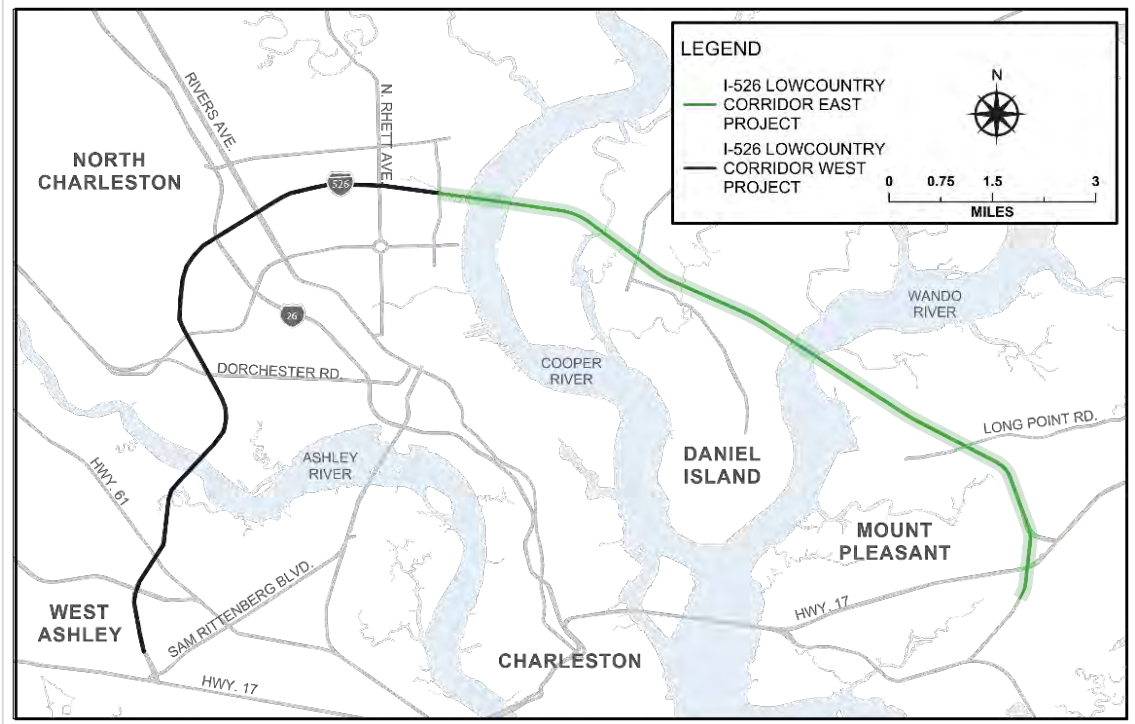
Virginia Avenue to US 17

10 
total miles

5 
miles elevated structure

5 
interchanges

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



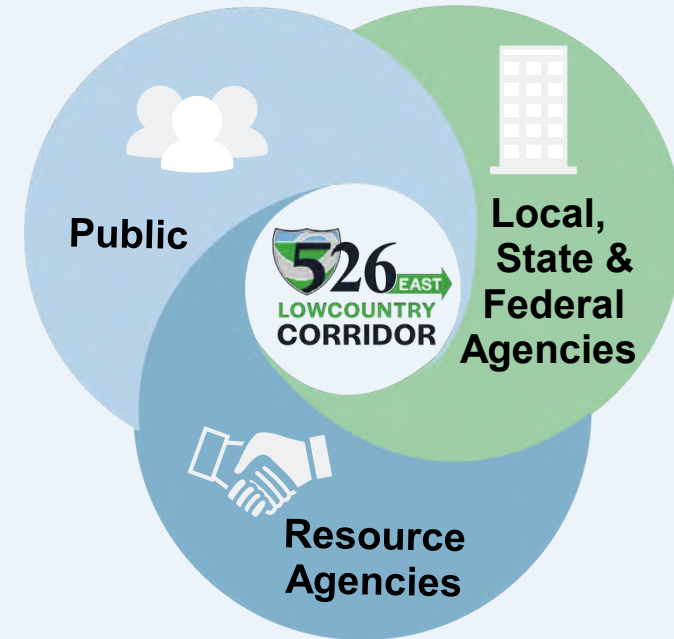
What is a PEL?

- 1 Tool for **creating efficiency** in transportation development
- 2 Considers **environment, community & economy**
- 3 **Collaborative & integrated** approach to decision-making

What are the Benefits of including a PEL Study in the project development process?

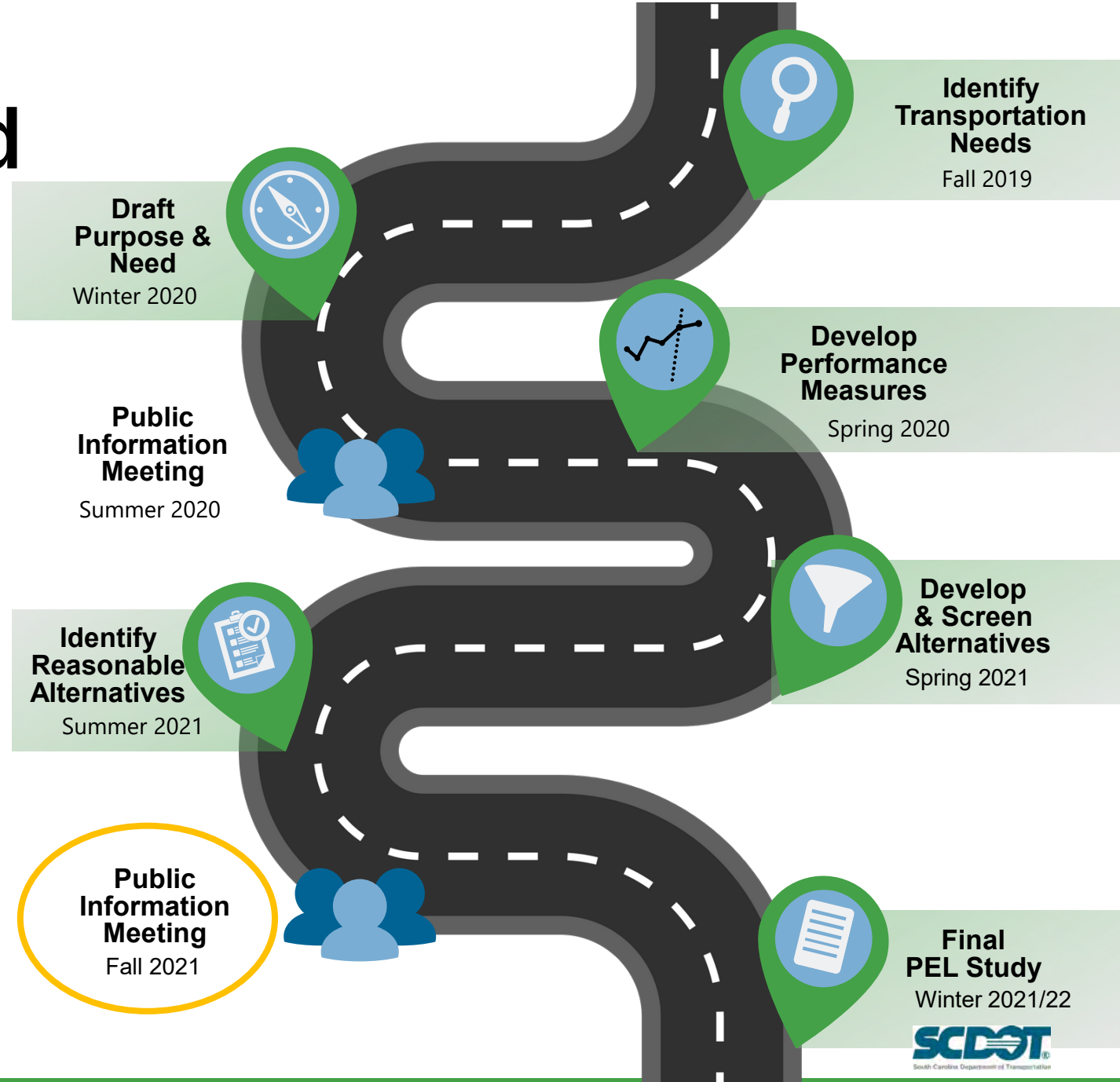


Who Participates?



PEL Study Completed Milestones

- PEL Initiation (FHWA Concurrence)
March 23, 2020
- MetroQuest Survey
May 14 - August 15, 2020
- Public Information Meeting (Online)
July 15 - August 15, 2020
- Purpose & Need (FHWA Concurrence)
February 18, 2021
- Concepts Development & Preliminary Screening
April/May 2021





Preview of Public Meeting Materials



Project Purpose

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.

Project Goals

- Compatibility:** Align with local land use plans & projects
- Demand:** Accommodate increased numbers of vehicles
- Seismic:** Design any new roads or bridges with new earthquake standards
- Connectivity:** Improve connections with local ports, railway facilities, and transit
- Safety:** Reduce traffic-related crashes
- Multimodal:** Enhance movement through the corridor including other modes such as carpool, transit, walk, or bike
- Technology:** Accommodate future transportation technologies for vehicles, system monitoring, driver information, and traffic operations

Identified Needs

Mobility

This is a busy corridor supporting a large number of people, goods, and services. The key issues are:



Traffic congestion from high traffic volumes & limited capacity



Over Capacity Roadways



Unreliable Travel Times



Congestion-Related Crashes

Roadway Deficiencies

The current roads, bridges and interchange ramps are not designed to handle the current or future traffic demands. The key issues are:



Shoulder Widths



On & Off Ramp Lengths



Tightly Curved Ramps

What did we hear & how did we use YOUR input?

What We Heard: Public Information Meeting #1

Meeting Live:
July 15 -
August 15, 2020

84 Comments
83 Online Comments
1 Emailed Comment

Top 5 Comments & Concerns:



How was YOUR Input Used?

- ▶ To validate the purpose & need for transportation improvements in the corridor.
- ▶ To refine project goals.
- ▶ To develop alternatives concepts.



Noise was the #1 concern of the community. When will noise be studied?

More refined designs are needed to conduct a proper noise study; the current designs are high-level concepts.

This is determined during the next phase in the environmental analysis associated with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Then, multiple types of noise reduction strategies can be explored.

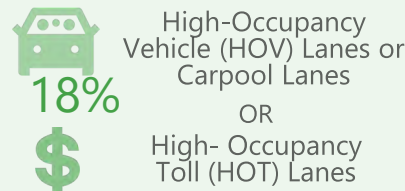
More information on the SCDOT noise policy can be found on the SCDOT environmental toolkit webpage

What We Heard: Public Survey

Survey Live:
May 14 -
August 15, 2020

Most Travelers Experienced Congestion both AM & PM

Top multimodal improvements desired along the corridor:



Most people use the corridor daily for:

work, shopping, entertainment & recreation



Most people travel the corridor using their personal vehicle **85%**



Travelers are experiencing these top safety-related issues:

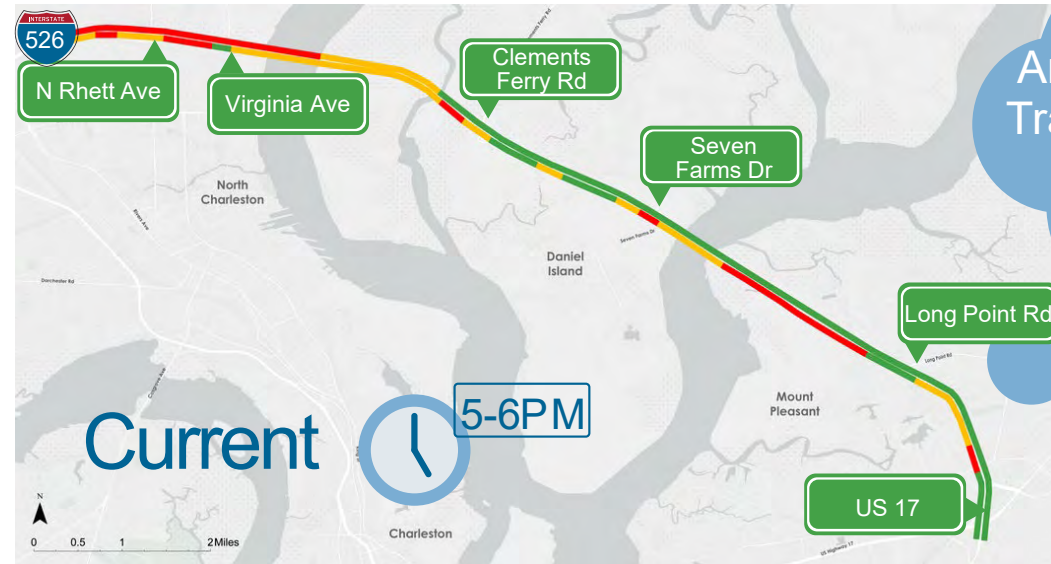
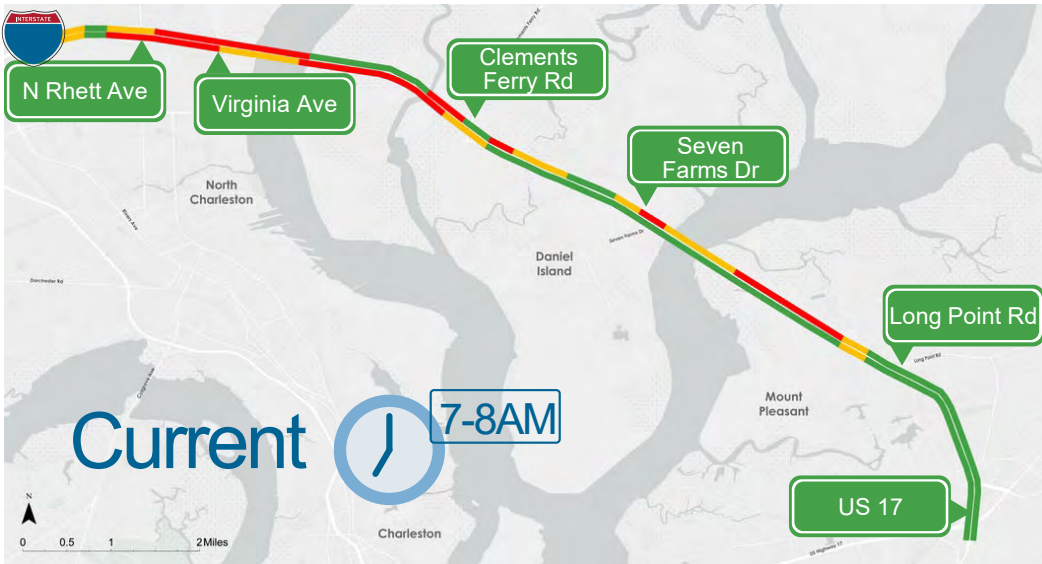


3,103 Responses

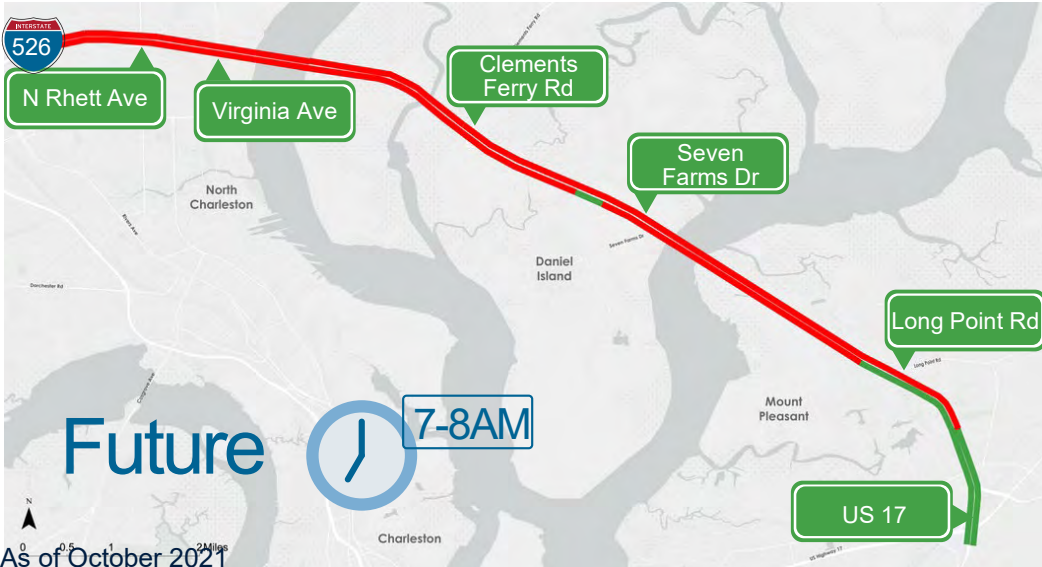
How much is traffic expected to grow by 2050?

2017 Level of Service (LOS) Conditions during Rush Hour

72% increase in Annual Average Daily Traffic & 68% increase in truck volumes expected in 2050



2050 LOS Projections with No Improvements during Rush Hour



- LOS A** Free Flow
- LOS B** Low Density Flow
- LOS C** Medium Density Flow
- LOS D** High Density Flow Stable
- LOS E** Unstable Flow Approaching Capacity
- LOS F** Flow Breakdown Volume Exceeds Capacity

How & why do we measure Travel Time Reliability?



Travel Time Index (TTI) =

$$\frac{\text{Time it takes to get somewhere}}{\text{How long it would take to get there if you could go the speed limit}}$$

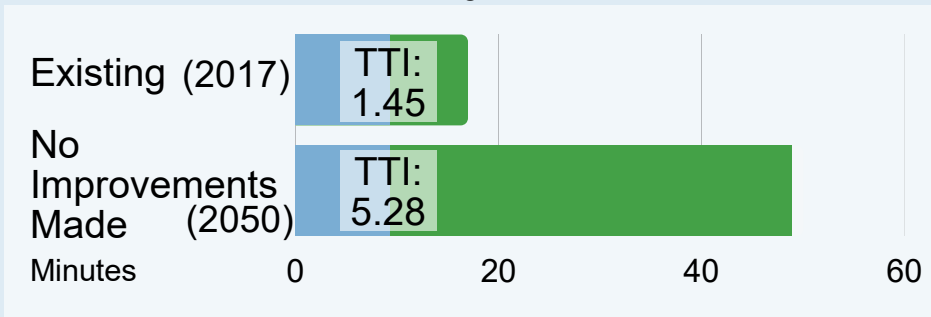


Why use this measure? If roads have a lot of traffic, even a slight disturbance can cause: Excessive Delays, have a Greater Impact, and Take longer to Recover than in a non-congested area.

The Travel Time Index represents the additional time required to drive a certain route during rush hour (as opposed to when there is no traffic)

What would this tell me? How long would it take to go from Virginia Avenue to US 17 in Mount Pleasant in 2050 when there is no traffic (blue) vs rush hour (green)

Eastbound - Going to Mount Pleasant



Middle of the Night



Rush Hour

These graphs explain the Travel Time Index. Blue represents how long it would take to drive the corridor if there were no traffic, like in the middle of the night (2050). Green represents the additional time it would take to travel the corridor during rush hour. **The green bars are substantially longer under the no improvement scenario - meaning it would take that much longer to drive the corridor during rush hour in 2050 if no improvements are made.**

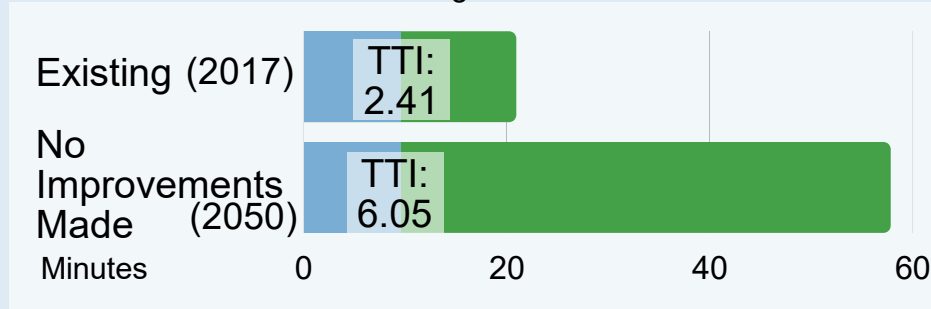
What does this mean?

If no improvements were made, travel times are expected to increase by 193% traveling Eastbound and 104% traveling Westbound in 2050.

What else could be done to reduce these times?

Learn more about Transportation Systems & Management Solutions in the next stations.

Westbound - Going to North Charleston





Stop & Pause for Questions

What types of concepts did we look at?

1 The "No Build" Alternative

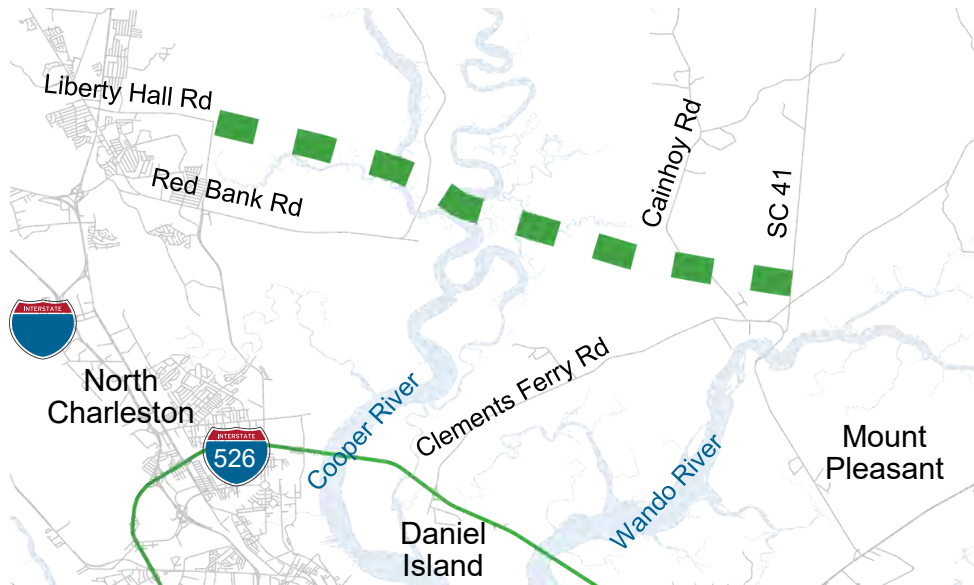
What would happen if no improvements were made?

Increased travel times and congestion. Additionally, as congestion increases, congestion-related crashes typically increase.

3 Parallel Routes

Why not build a new parallel road reduce traffic?

A new alternative route would only provide minimal improvements in congestion and travel speed. It also would not improve the roadway deficiencies of the existing I-526 corridor.



2 Transportation Systems Management & Operations (TSMO)

What other options could help extend the life of I-526 and/or prevent the need for us to build anything?

TSMO strategies are used to extend the life of a highway and avoid or delay the construction of new lanes. The existing infrastructure may not always support these options without additional construction. In this case, TSMO strategies alone would not provide the level of improvement needed. *Examples:*

👍 Accommodation of Connected & Autonomous Vehicles

👍 Park and Ride

👍 Variable Speed Limit

👍 Shoulder Lane Use

4 Adding Lanes

If we widen the existing road, how many lanes would we need in each direction? 1 lane in each direction would not improve congestion or travel time enough in 2050. Adding 2 lanes in each direction would improve both congestion and the roadway deficiencies on I-526.

+ 1



+ 2 ✓

Transportation Systems Management & Operations

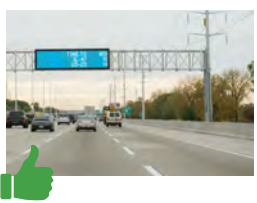


Which transportation system management & operations options were analyzed?

Proposed to be carried forward into NEPA



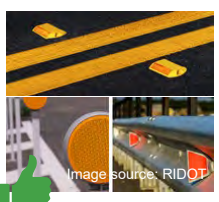
Shoulder Lane Use
i.e. "Bus" or "Car on Shoulder"
Shoulders are used as flexible travel lanes during rush hours



Traveler Information
Incident Management
Road Weather Management
Work Zone Management



Park and Ride
Provides parking for ride sharing and bus use



Enhance Lane Markings
Improves driver experience



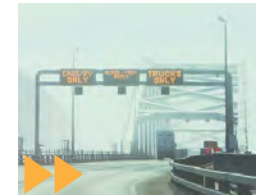
Variable Speed Limit
Speeds adjusted to optimize traffic flow



Accommodate Connected & Autonomous Vehicles
Uses technology to improve safety and operations

Not reasonable for this project

Why not? These managed lanes options (below) do not meet the Purpose & Need of the project without regional implementation. HOWEVER, any project constructed would be done in a manner not to preclude the implementation of a regional plan.



High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes
i.e. Carpool Lanes
High Occupancy Toll Lanes
Adds a lane for vehicles with more than 1 passenger or those willing to pay
Dedicated Truck Lanes



Congestion Pricing
Includes a toll that increases or decreases to control the number of vehicles



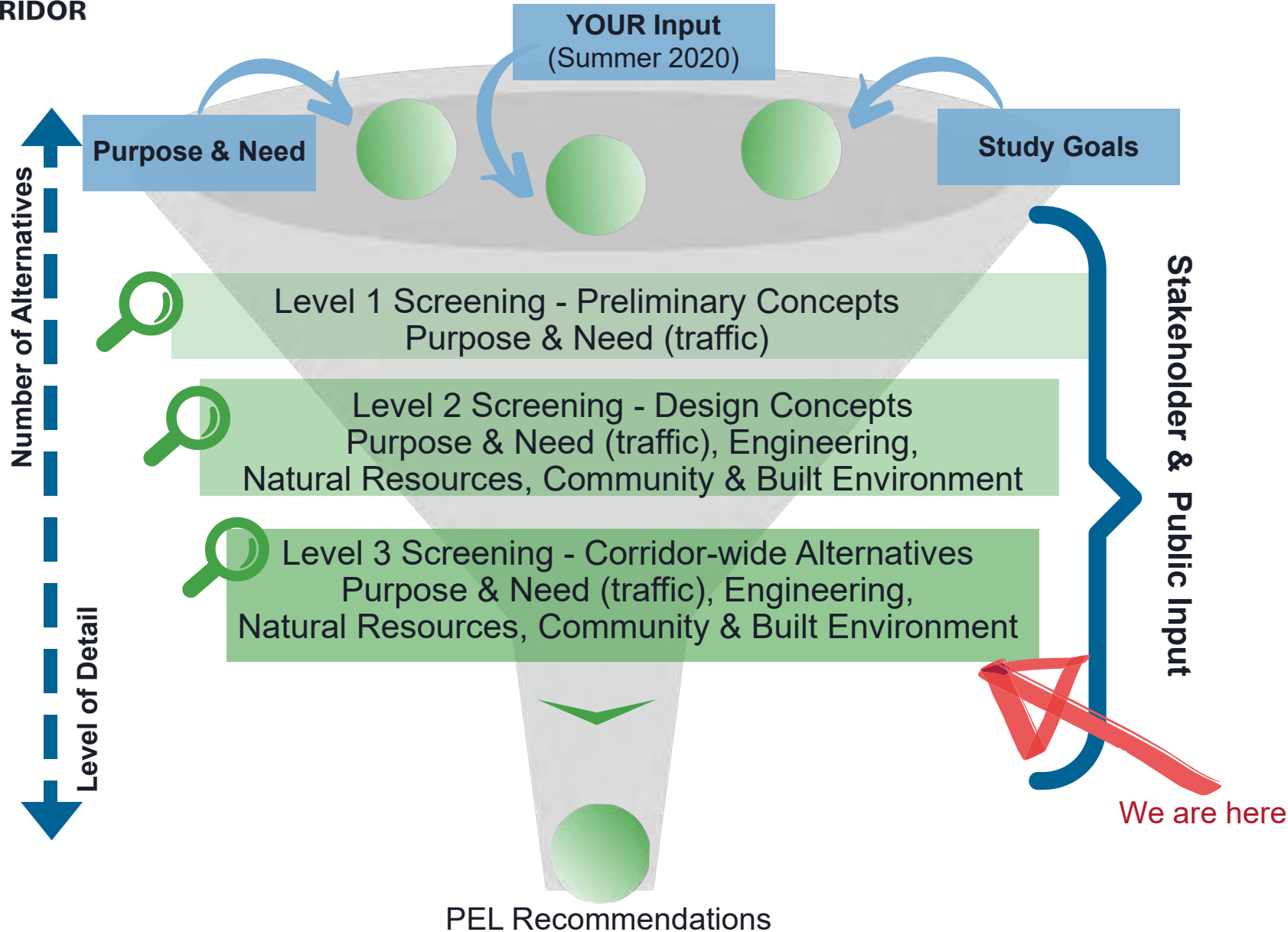
Ramp Metering
Controls the number and pace of cars entering the freeway

Why not? Some simulation models showed merging issues for general traffic.



Truck Platooning
Uses technology to allow multiple trucks to travel in a very tight formation

Alternatives Concepts Screening Process



How were the alternative concepts evaluated?





























The project team evaluated the alternatives through a three-step screening process to identify the reasonable alternatives that are presented today.

Each level of screening included a more detailed analysis of the alternatives. As the process progressed, poorly performing alternatives were removed from further review.

The resulting alternatives are proposed to be carried forward into the NEPA process.

Reasonable Alternatives Matrix

How do each of the reasonable alternatives compare based on the identified criteria?

	No Build	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 4	Alternative 5	Alternative 7
 Replace Don Holt Bridge?	 Keep	 Keep	 Keep	 Replace + Raise	 Replace + Raise	 Replace + Raise
 Replace Wando Bridge?	 Keep	 Replace + Lower	 Replace + Lower	 Replace + Lower	 Replace + Lower	 Replace + Lower
 Impacts to Aquatic Resources (acres)	0 Acres	179 Acres	177 Acres	167 Acres	174 Acres	178 Acres
 Relocations	0  0  0	73  48  25	73  46  27	80  68  12	64  49  15	72  46  26

Reasonable Alternatives Matrix - Continued

How do each of the reasonable alternatives compare based on the identified criteria?

	No Build	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 4	Alternative 5	Alternative 7
 <p>Impacts to Parks & Recreational Facilities?</p>	0	3 Ralph M. Hendricks Park, Governors Park, Kearns Trail	3 Ralph M. Hendricks Park, Governors Park, Kearns Trail	2 Ralph M. Hendricks Park, Governors Park	3 Ralph M. Hendricks Park, Governors Park, Kearns Trail	3 Ralph M. Hendricks Park, Governors Park, Kearns Trail
 <p>Impacts to Threatened & Endangered Species?</p>	No	No	No	No	No	No



Bike & Pedestrian Access

All reasonable alternatives, except the No Build, include a 14 ft. shared-use path along the river crossings to provide access for bicycles and pedestrians. The shared-use path along these river crossings would connect with planned and existing facilities and support regional multi-modal goals.



Costs

Cost is not a determining factor at this stage. However, variables influencing costs include whether or not a bridge would be replaced, the right-of-way needed, having to move any utilities, and any costs associated with mitigating impacts to the environment or communities.

Don Holt Bridge Features

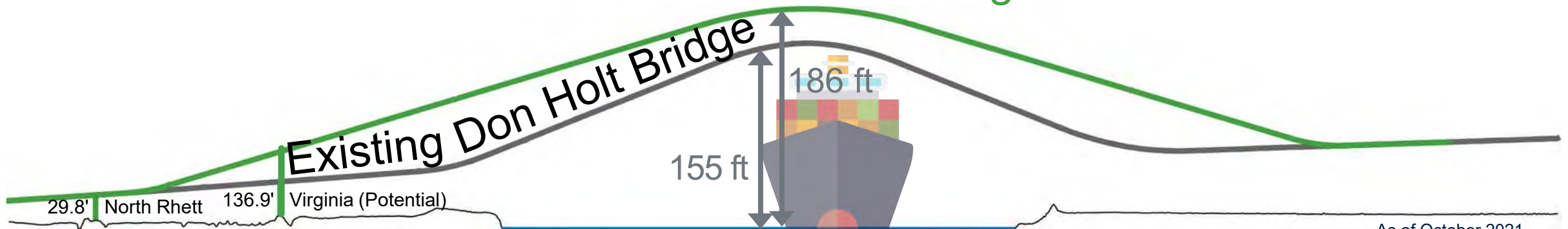
How tall should the Don Holt Bridge be?

How do we determine the proposed bridge height?

Navigation studies and coordination with US Coast Guard are required to establish new bridge height



Potential Don Holt Bridges



Wando Bridge Features

How tall should the Wando Bridges be?

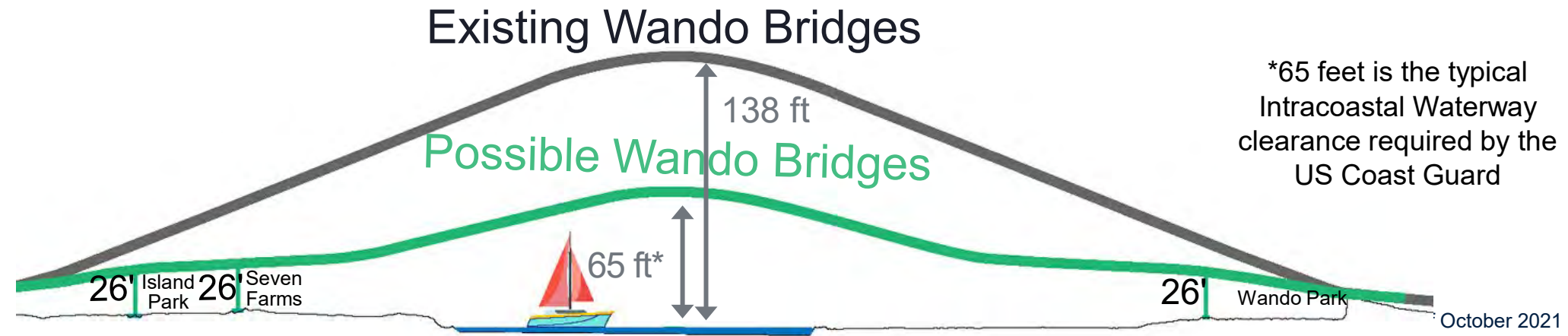


How do we determine the proposed bridge height?
Navigation studies and coordination with US Coast Guard are required to establish new bridge height

14-foot, Shared-use Path for Bikes & Pedestrians



Rendering for illustrative purposes only



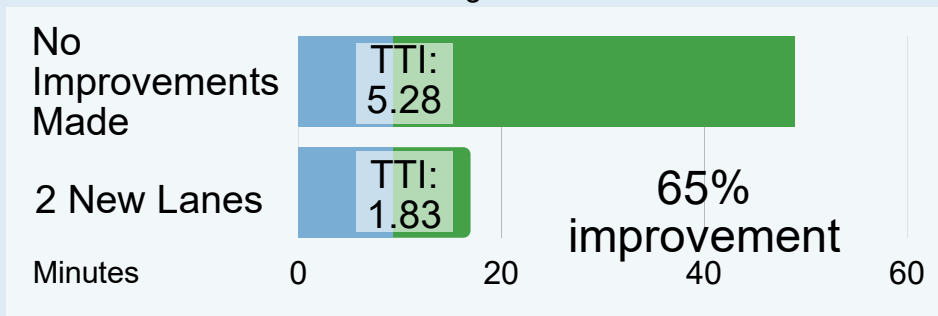
Traffic Performance of Reasonable Alternatives

How do the reasonable alternatives improve the Travel Time Reliability?

All reasonable alternatives have the same lane configurations and therefore would provide similar improvements

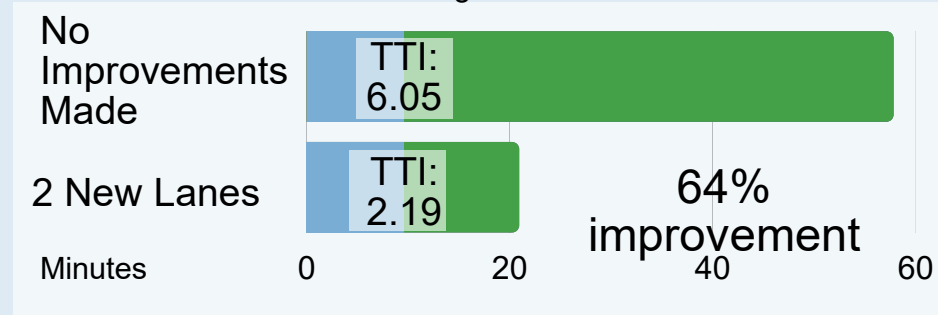
Comparing the No-Build vs. Build in 2050

Eastbound - Going to Mount Pleasant



No Traffic
(Like Middle
of the Night)

Westbound - Going to North Charleston



Rush Hour
(Such as
5-6pm)

These graphs help explain the Travel Time Index. The blue shows how long it would take to drive the corridor if there were no traffic in 2050 (AKA how long it takes to drive it going the speed limit) and the green shows the additional time it takes to travel the corridor during rush hour. Note, the green bars are substantially longer if no improvements are made - meaning it would take that much longer to drive the corridor.

What does this mean?

The Travel Time Index indicates it would take less time to drive from North Charleston to Mount Pleasant (and the reverse) if any of the reasonable alternatives were constructed



Estimated Drive Times During Rush Hour in 2050





Stop & Pause for Questions



PEL Study Next Steps and Milestones



Next Steps

How does a PEL Study transition to NEPA and what happens after?



PUBLIC & AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

Planning & Environmental Linkages Study (PEL)

1.5 - 2.5 Years

- Planning studies
- Existing conditions analysis
- Future forecasts
- Study goals
- Purpose & need
- Range of alternatives and screened reasonable alternatives
- Cost estimates and Implementation Plan
- Level of NEPA analysis: Categorical Exclusion, Environmental Assessment, or Environmental Impact Statement

NEPA

1 - 2 Years

- Confirm/refine purpose & need
- Detailed environmental studies & noise analysis
- Refine alternatives
- Explore mitigation & commitments
- Prepare decision document

Project Implementation

- Final design
- Right-of-way acquisition
- Permitting
- Mitigation commitments
- Construction

Maintenance Operations

- Maintenance of roadway and right-of-way

- ✓ The PEL provides SCDOT leadership the estimated project costs to better plan the schedule for future improvements
- ✓ Schedules for construction will be established in the next phase based on:
 - Priorities
 - Estimated Costs
 - Available Funding
 - Design details
- ✓ Detailed noise and environmental analysis will be done in NEPA

Official Comment Period
October 11 - December 1, 2021

How to Participate

Project Website

526LowcountryCorridor.com/eastvpim2021
Live, October 11, 2021

The Public Information Meeting webpage contains all the materials you would see at an in-person meeting.

A mailed public information meeting packet may be requested by calling 843.258.1135 or emailing info@526LowcountryCorridor.com.

In-person Public Meetings

Tuesday, October 26, 2021 5-7 PM

R. L. Jones Center
391 Egypt Road, Mount Pleasant, SC

Wednesday, October 27, 2021 5-7 PM

Felix C. Davis Community Center
4800 Park Circle, North Charleston, SC
CARTA Routes 13 & 104

Spanish translation services available at all meetings.

How to Comment

Meaningful input is our number one priority. Below are the ways to make your voice heard in the official project records.

Project Website

526LowcountryCorridor.com
Fill out a comment form on the project website.

Project Hotline

843.258.1135 (Call Us)
Press "2" to leave a verbal comment. Comments will be limited to 2 minutes.

Project Email

info@526LowcountryCorridor.com

Mail

Joy Riley, PE, PMP, CPM, DBIA
SC Department of Transportation
Post Office Box 191
955 Park Street, Room 401
Columbia, SC 29202-0191



Stop & Pause for Questions



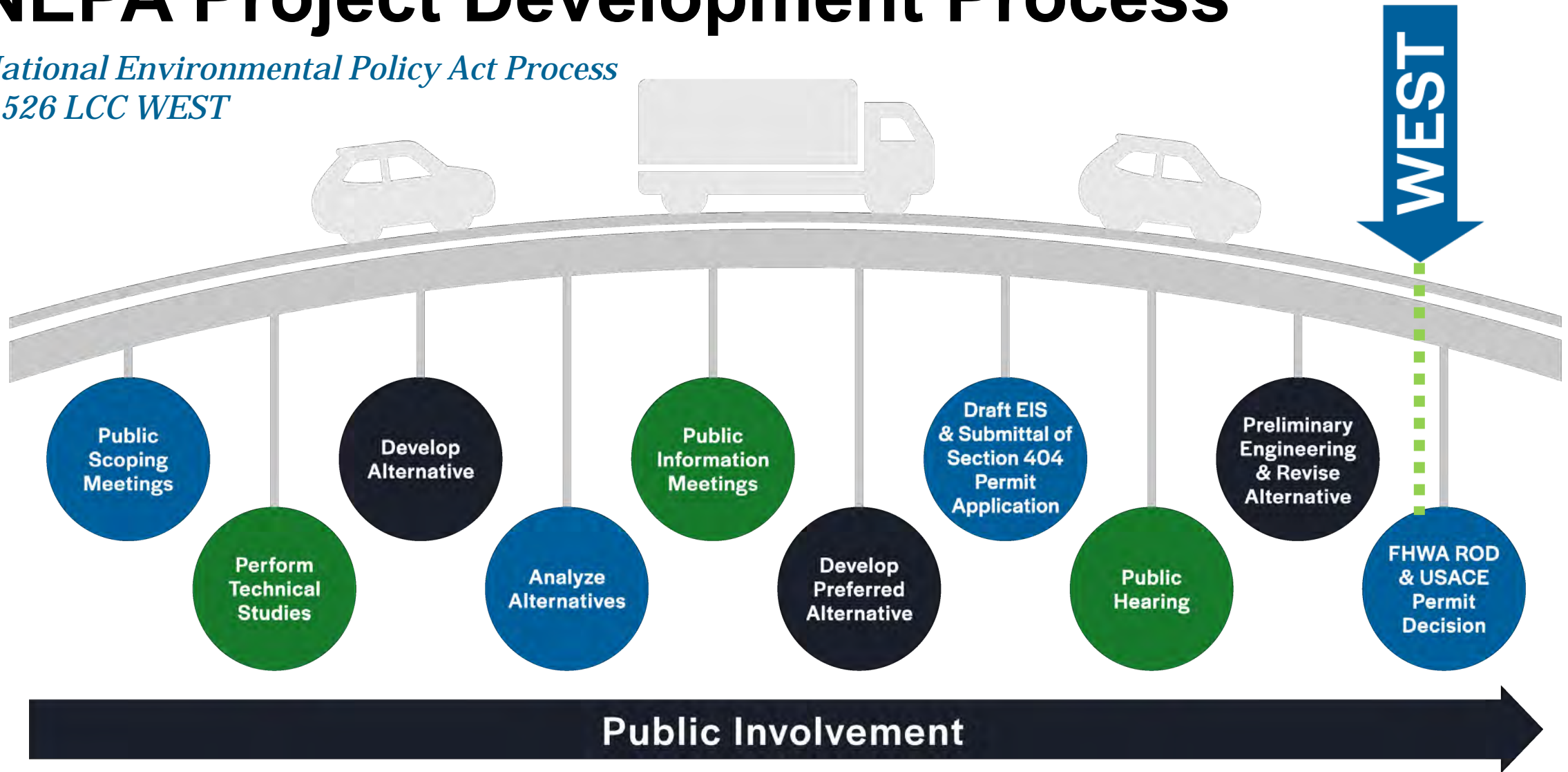
WEST Updates

An Environmental Impact Statement



NEPA Project Development Process

*National Environmental Policy Act Process
I-526 LCC WEST*



What is missing from this story?

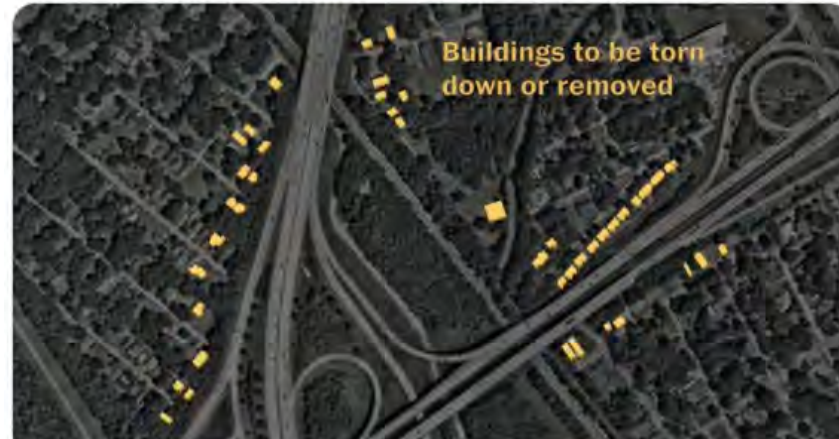


The Washington Post 
@washingtonpost



The dismantling of Black communities for highways is not just a thing of the past.

In a planned highway widening project a few miles north of Charleston, 94 percent of displaced residents live in communities mostly consisting of Black and Brown people.



Black people are about to be swept aside for a South Carolina freeway — again South Carolina destroyed Black homes to build I-26 and I-526 without much engagement. The state vowed to engage residents for a new project, but it still ...
[washingtonpost.com](https://www.washingtonpost.com)

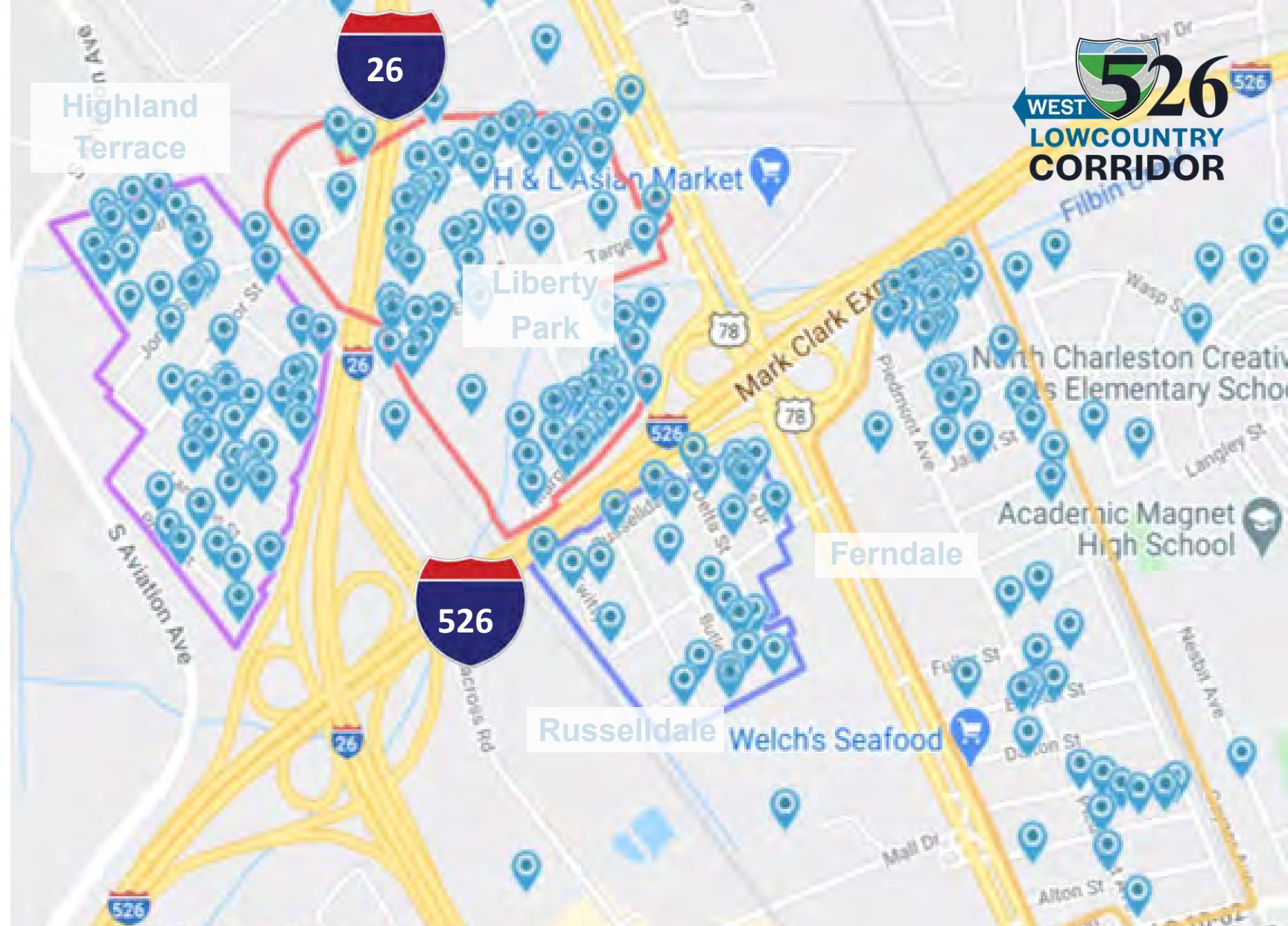
12:21 PM · Sep 19, 2021 · Twitter Web App

3,420 Retweets 545 Quote Tweets 3,833 Likes

We reached out, but how many engaged back?



By the end of the public hearing in Winter 2021, each of these addresses had "touched" us back!



IN THE COMMUNITY, FOR THE COMMUNITY



LOWCOUNTRY
CORRIDOR

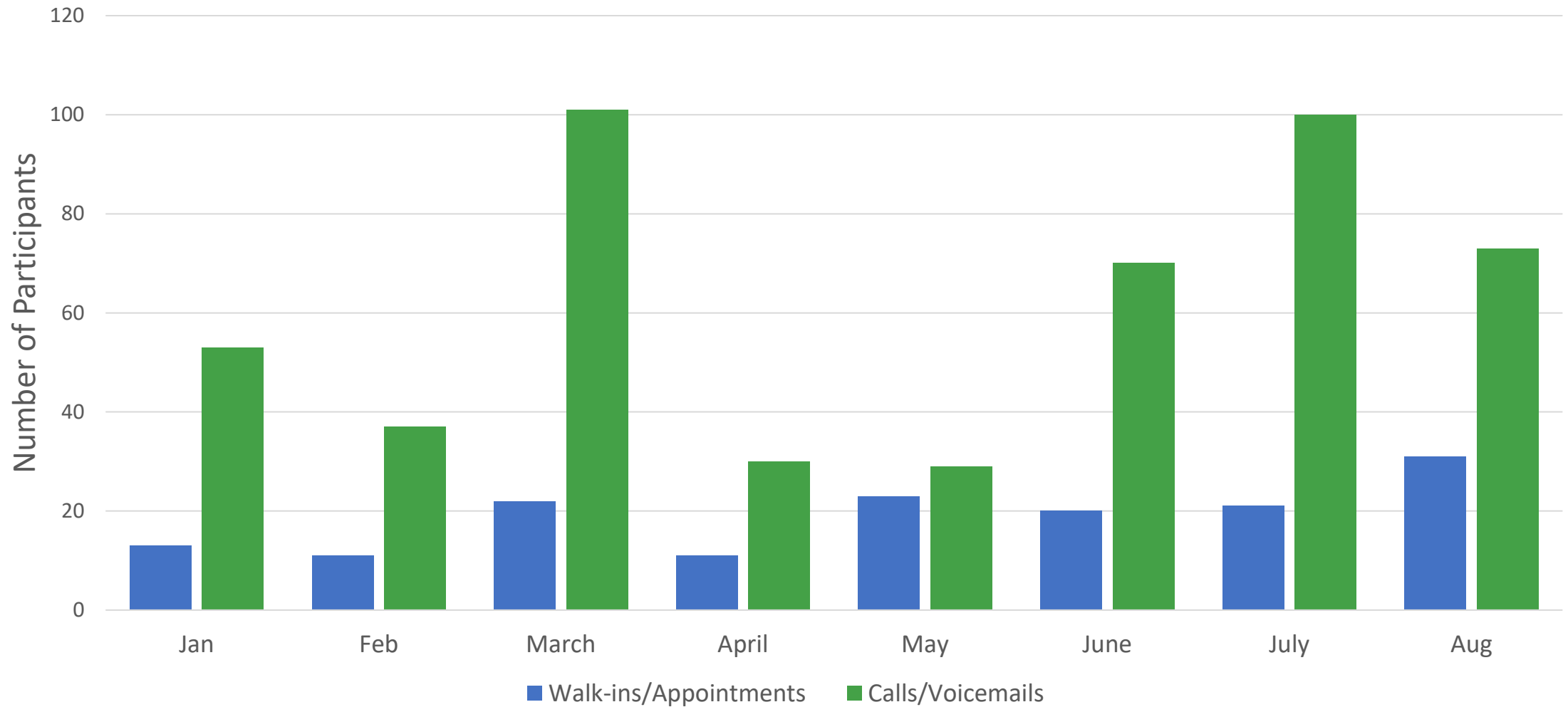
YOUR COMMUNITY OFFICE

152 VISITS THIS YEAR!

431 SINCE OPENING
NOVEMBER 2019



2021 Community Office Engagement



COMMUNITY RESOURCE INFORMATION SESSIONS

- Monthly, August - December 2021
- 2 Sessions per Topic (Lunchtime & Evening)
- In-person & Online
- Topics handpicked



Monday, September 27, 2021

Let's Put Your Financial House in Order!

Learn how to manage your finances, save for unexpected expenses, and plan to buy a home.

Monday, October 25, 2021

White Coat Fright

Are you afraid to visit a doctor? Don't be! Learn more about white coat fright and how to prioritize your healthcare.

Monday, November 8, 2021

What's the Difference in Trusts Versus Wills?

Learn the difference between a trust and a will and how you can begin planning for your family after your death.

Monday, December 6, 2021

What is PTSD (Personal Traumatic Stress Disorder)?

Learn more about PTSD and how to handle stress during difficult times.

2021 Community Advisory Council Activities

The project team has worked with the CAC to:

- Formed subcommittees to further develop mitigation commitments
- Shared project information with neighbors
- Advise the project team on adjusting and finalizing mitigation components
- Develop and improve tools to engage with residents
- Serve as a voice for the EJ neighborhoods
- Begin preparing for the Project Oversight Committee

Stay tuned - the Project Oversight Committee is coming soon.

Proposed Community Mitigation Schedule



COMMUNITY HISTORY PRESERVATION PROGRAM



Get involved and help document the rich historic and cultural aspects of your community!



**Interviews with
past and current
residents**



**Historic
photographs of
communities**



**Information
documenting cultural
and historic elements**



Stop & Pause for Questions

Contact Information



www.526LowcountryCorridor.com



www.facebook.com/526Corridor



@526Corridor



info@526LowcountryCorridor.com



Community Office:
5627 Rivers Avenue | North Charleston, SC 29406



843.258.1135 (call or text)



Joy Riley, PE, PMP, DBIA
SCDOT
Project Manager



Introduction to the Database

This document is intended to track outreach and engagement among I-526 LCC stakeholders and interested parties

Stakeholder: Generally an agency-level or large employer participant.

Interested Party: Individuals or smaller groups who have expressed interest in the project or have been identified as being potentially impacted.

Key:

Red = Unsubscribe

Blue = Email Bounced

Gray = No longer in office

Update Log	Type of Update	Intitals
2019-4-19	Organization. Added introduction sheet. Streamlined stakeholders and interested parties.	JW
2019-5-30	Organization. Added stakeholders and interested parties.	JW
2019-7-17	Updated with any new form sign ups	LL
2019-7-31	Updated with any new form sign ups	RL
2019-8-14	Updated with contact sent from CDM Smith and with any new form sign ups	RL
2019-8-20	Added a project team database. Updated list with any new form sign ups	RL
2019-9-30	Updated with any new form sign ups	RL
2019-10-16	Added stakeholders from 4/19 meeting	RL
2019-11-1	Updated with any new form sign ups	RL
2019-11-12	Updated with any new form sign ups before 11/14 email	RL
2019-12-2	Updated with any new form sign ups	RL
2019-12-31	Updated with any new form sign ups	RL
2020-1-6	Changed database to fit tabs similar to comment form. Added additional VPIM comments. Added Unsubscribes and Email Bounces	RL
1-10-20	Added new contacts to Stakeholder list	RL
1-31-20	Updated with any new form sign ups, unsubscribes, and community office open house attendees	RL
2-3-20	Updated with any new form sign ups, unsubscribes, and checked community office open house attendees names.	RL
3-5-20	Added new signups from	RL
5-12-20	Updated with new email sign ups	AL
5-20-20	Updated with new tab for the Influencer list from Maximum Consulting	AL
6/9/2020	Updated with any new form sign ups	AL
7/13/2020	Added new EAST survey signups and website form fills to Interested Parties. Updated unsubscribes/bounces.	AL

Added new EAST survey signups
and website form fills to
Interested Parties. Updated
7/31/2020 unsubscribes/bounces. AL

Added new EAST survey signups
and website form fills to
Interested Parties. Updated
9/8/2020 unsubscribes/bounces. AL

Updated stakeholders to remove
outdated elected officials and
7/16/2021 anyone else that needed updating RF

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Mr.	Ronald	Cooper	President/Owner	B.W. Mitchum Trucking	549 Long Point Road	Mt. Pleasant, SC	29464		Mr. Cooper	bwmtc@bellsouth.net
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Mr.	Jeff	Burns	Manager	Authority	36 John Street	Charleston, SC	29403		Mr. Burns	jburns@ridecarta.com
Mr.	Mike	Kelleher	Chief Operating Officer	Charleston Battery	1990 Daniel Island Dr	Daniel Island, SC	29492		Mr. Kelleher	mike.kelleher@charlestonbattery.com
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Ms.	Katie	Zimmerman	Executive Director	Charleston Moves	1630 Meeting Street, Suite 105	Charleston, SC	29405		Ms. Zimmerman	katie@charlestonmoves.org
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Lt.	James	Byrne		Charleston Team 5 Police Department	235 Seven Farms Drive	Charleston, SC	29492		Lt. Byrne	brynej@charleston-sc.gov
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Mr.	Kevin	Shealy	City Council Member	City of Charleston	80 Broad Street	Charleston, SC	29401		Mr. Shealy	SHEALYK@charleston-sc.gov
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Mr.	Wes	Dickerson	Director of Operations	North Charleston Coliseum	5001 Coliseum Drive	SC	29418		Mr. Dickerson	c.com
Mr.	Wes	Dickerson	Director of Operations	North Charleston Coliseum	5001 Coliseum Drive	North Charleston, SC	29418		Mr. Dickerson	c.com
Mr.	Rick	Comps	Building Services Manager	North Charleston Coliseum	5001 Coliseum Drive	North Charleston, SC	29418		Mr. Comps	m
Mr.	Sam	Skardon	Project Director	One Region Strategy	4500 Leeds Ave	North Charleston, SC	29405		Mr. Skardon	Sam.Skardon@oneregionstrategy.com
Mr.	James	Chavez	President & CEO	Corporation	1201 Main Street, Suite 1710	Columbia, SC	29201		Mr. Chavez	jchavez@scpowerteam.com
Mr.	Jeff	McWhorter	President & CEO	Palmetto Railways	540 East Bay Street	Charleston, SC	29403		Mr. McWhorter	JMcWhorter@PalmettoRail.com
Ms.	Hollis	Infanzon	District Director	Rep. Cunningham's Office	530 Johnnie Dodds Blvd Suite 201	Mount Pleasant, SC	29466		Ms. Infanzon	Hollis.Infanzon@mail.house.gov

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Secretary	Robert M.	Hitt, III	Secretary of Commerce	SC Department of Commerce	1201 Main Street, Suite 1600	Columbia, SC	3200		Secretary Hitt	bhitt@sccommerce.com
Secretary	Harry M.	Lightsey III	Secretary of Commerce	SC Department of Commerce	1201 Main Street, Suite 1600	Columbia, SC	3200		Secretary Lightset	hlightsey@sccommerce.com
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		Rhodes		Molina Healthcare	Suite 120	North Charleston, SC	29405		Mr. Rhodes	x
		Brown		Cumulus	Suite 100	North Charleston, SC	29405		Ms. Brown	x
		Minster		Premier Income Advisors	Suite 203	North Charleston, SC	29405		Mr. Minster	x
		Brown		Lowe's Home Improvement	3125 Glenn McConnell Parkway	Charleston, SC	29414		Mr. Brown	x
				Trimsetterz Barbershop And Salon	Suite 124	North Charleston, SC	29418			x
		Dowd		Signature Sales of Charleston	5522 Rivers Avenue	North Charleston, SC	29406		Mr. Dowd	x
		Chaplin		Roco's Italian Sausage	Suite 100E	Charleston, SC	29407		Mr. Chaplin	x
		Henning		Sierra Club	P.O. Box 2388	Columbia, SC	29202		Mr. Henning	x
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		Harris		DD Peckers	1975 Magwood Drive	Charleston, SC	29414		Mr. Harris	x
		Spillers		Coastal Pediatric Associates	2051 Charlie Hall Boulevard	Charleston, SC	29414		Ms. Spillers	x
				Gallman Personnel Services	4986 Calvin Street	North Charleston, SC	29418			x
				Office People	3129 West Montague Avenue	North Charleston, SC	29418			x
		Rabon		Medicine	2079 Charlie Hall Boulevard	Charleston, SC	29414		Ms. Rabon	x
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				TJ's Barber & Beauty Shop	4591 Dorchester Road	North Charleston, SC	29405			x
				Old Towne	Suite 101	North Charleston, SC	29405			x
				China Chef	Suite 116	North Charleston, SC	29405			x
				Cycle Gear	Suite 115	North Charleston, SC	29405			x
				Seacoast Home & Leisure	Suite 2	North Charleston, SC	29405			x
				Water Works Car Wash	4610 Dorchester Road	North Charleston, SC	29405			x
				Palmetto Paint Shop	Suite C	North Charleston, SC	29418			x
				Shell	3855 West Montague Avenue	North Charleston, SC	29418			x
				The Foot Institute	3471 West Montague Avenue	North Charleston, SC	29418			x
				Sherman Williams	3161 West Montague Avenue	North Charleston, SC	29418			x
				Spinx	3109 West Montague Avenue	North Charleston, SC	29418			x
				National Express	3815 West Montague Avenue	Charleston, SC	29418			x
				Big Billy's Burger Joint	Suite 118	North Charleston, SC	29418			x
				Capelli Bliss Salon	Suite 106	North Charleston, SC	29418			x
				Good Earth Dry Cleaner	Suite 112	North Charleston, SC	29418			x
				All Nails	5637 Rivers Avenue	North Charleston, SC	29406			x

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				Carolina Laundry	Suite B	North Charleston, SC	29406			x
				Floral Tune Ups	Suite A	North Charleston, SC	29406			x
				H & L Asian Market	Suite 1	North Charleston, SC	29406			x
				Jimmy's Auto	5413 Rivers Avenue	North Charleston, SC	29406			x
				K T Enterprises	5023 Rivers Avenue	North Charleston, SC	29406			x
				Lee Nails	5608 Rivers Avenue	North Charleston, SC	29406			x
				Nai Coin Laundry	5503 Rivers Avenue	North Charleston, SC	29406			x
				Oriental Cuisine Restaurant	5623 Rivers Avenue	North Charleston, SC	29406			x
				Palmetto Shoe Repair	5635 Rivers Avenue	North Charleston, SC	29406			x
				Parks Auto Parts	5429 Rivers Avenue	North Charleston, SC	29406			x
				Pho #1	Suite 1	North Charleston, SC	29406			x
				Phuong Vietnamese Restaurant	5634 Rivers Avenue	North Charleston, SC	29406			x
				Salon Zoe	5607 Rivers Avenue	North Charleston, SC	29406			x
				Tienda	Suite C	North Charleston, SC	29406			x
				Trane	4951 Rivers Avenue	North Charleston, SC	29406			x
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Representative	Joe	Bustos	Representative	SC State House District 112		Columbia, SC	29202		Representative	JoeBustos@schouse.gov
Representative	Linda	Bennett	Representative	SC State House District 114		Columbia, SC	29202		Representative	LinBennett@schouse.gov
	Peter	McCoy	Representative	SC State House District 115		Columbia, SC	29202			PeterMcCoy@schouse.gov
Representative	Spencer	Wetmore	Representative	SC State House District 115		Columbia, SC	29202		Representative	SpencerWetmore@schouse.gov
Representative	Robert	Brown	Representative	SC State House District 116		Columbia, SC	29202		Representative	RobertBrown@schouse.gov
Representative	Chardale	Murray	Representative	SC State House District 116		Columbia, SC	29202		Representative	ChardaleMurray@schouse.gov
Representative	Krystle	Simmons	Representative	SC State House District 117		Columbia, SC	29202		Representative	KrystleSimmons@schouse.gov
Representative	JA	Moore	Representative	SC State House District 15		Columbia, SC	29202		Representative	JAMoore@schouse.gov
Representative	Joseph	Danning	Representative	SC State House District 92		Columbia, SC	29202		Representative	JoeDaning@schouse.gov
	Converse	Chellis	Representative	SC State House District 94		Columbia, SC	29202			ConverseChellis@schouse.gov
Representative	Gil	Gatch	Representative	SC State House District 94		Columbia, SC	29202			GilGatch@schouse.gov
Representative	Mark	Smith	Representative	SC House District 99		Columbia, SC	29202		Representative	MarkSmith@schouse.gov
	Nancy	Mace	Representative	SC House District 99		Columbia, SC	29202			NancyMace@schouse.gov
Senator	Ronnie	Sabb	Senator	SC Senate District 32		Columbia, SC	29202		Senator	RonnieSabb@scsenate.gov
Senator	Stephen	Goldfinch	Senator	SC Senate District 34		Columbia, SC	29202		Senator	StephenGoldfinch@scsenate.gov
Senator	Sean	Bennett	Senator	SC Senate District 38		Columbia, SC	29202		Senator	SandySenn@scsenate.gov
Mr.	Mike	Hedgepath	President	Charleston Motor Carrier Association						mike.hedgepath@sefl.com

What has been happening with the I-526 LCC EAST?

We appreciate all of you who shifted from the planned in-person engagements last summer to join us online and offer your concerns and vision for the I-526 LCC EAST (I-526 from Virginia Avenue to US 17 in Mount Pleasant).

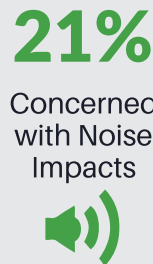
Your feedback is critical to the success of this Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study. Input received now is helping to set the purpose and need and priorities for future improvements within this corridor. The graphics below summarize what we learned from both the survey and the public meeting.

Meeting Live:
July 15 -
August 15, 2020
526LowcountryCorridor.com

84
Comments
83 Online Comments
1 Emailed Comment

The online survey began May 14, 2020 and was extended through August 15, 2020 to coincide with the launch of a full online public information meeting, which ran from July 15 through August 15, 2020.

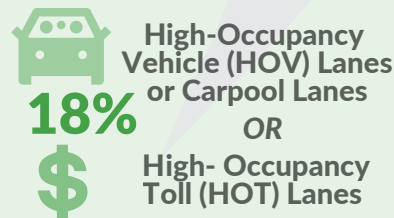
Top 5 Comments & Concerns:



Survey Live: May 14 - August 15, 2020

3,103
Responses

Most Travelers Experienced Congestion both AM & PM



Most people use the corridor daily for:

work, shopping, entertainment & recreation



Most people travel the corridor using their personal vehicle 85%



Travelers are experiencing these top safety-related issues:



How was your input used?

▶ To validate the purpose & need for transportation improvements in the corridor.

We heard from you that you experience congestion during morning and evening commutes and that congestion was a top safety concern. This was consistent with the available data - confirming the following purpose statement for any improvements along this corridor:

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.

We know it's important to get to work and other places on time. That's why we've also included travel time reliability in the purpose and need statement. Currently, the amount of time it takes to travel along I-526 can vary greatly from day to day. Travel time reliability in this sense means that we're looking to provide some consistency in how long it would take to travel through the corridor from point a to point b. This "reliability" can help you better plan when to leave and which route to take.

▶ To refine project goals.

We also understand that proposed improvements to this corridor must be comprehensive. A PEL study allows us to think strategically and fold in regional and community considerations. With your input, the following goals have been established. These goals provide additional guidance for creating alternatives and the evaluation of those alternatives.

Compatibility: Align with local land use plans & projects

Demand: Accommodate increased numbers of vehicles

Seismic: Any new roads or bridges should be designed to new earthquake standards

Connectivity: Improve connections with local ports, railway facilities and transit

Safety: Reduce traffic-related crashes

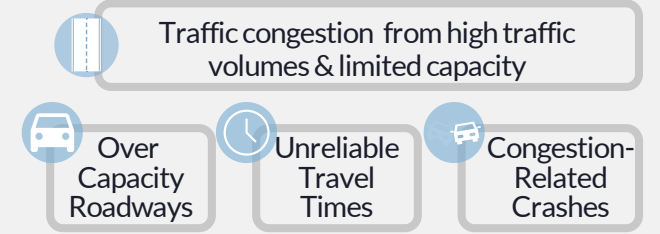
Multimodal: Enhance movement through the corridor including through other modes such as carpool, transit, walk, bike or truck

Technology: Accommodate future transportation technologies such as vehicle technologies, system monitoring, driver information and traffic operations technologies

Identified Needs

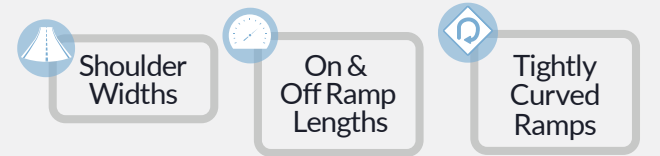
Mobility

This corridor is a busy corridor - with a large number of people, goods and services. The key issues are:



Roadway Deficiencies

The current roads, bridges and interchange ramps are not designed to handle the current or future traffic demands. The key issues are:



How was your input used?

▶ To develop alternatives concepts.

This PEL study will use several steps to identify, evaluate, and refine planning-level concepts for improving the corridor. The first step includes developing the preliminary alternatives concepts.

A PEL study should consider local planning efforts while offering an opportunity for creating new solutions. As such, the concepts evaluated in this study include solutions identified by the Charleston Area Regional Transportation Study (CHATS) as well as new alternatives based on your input and the analysis of existing and anticipated future traffic conditions.

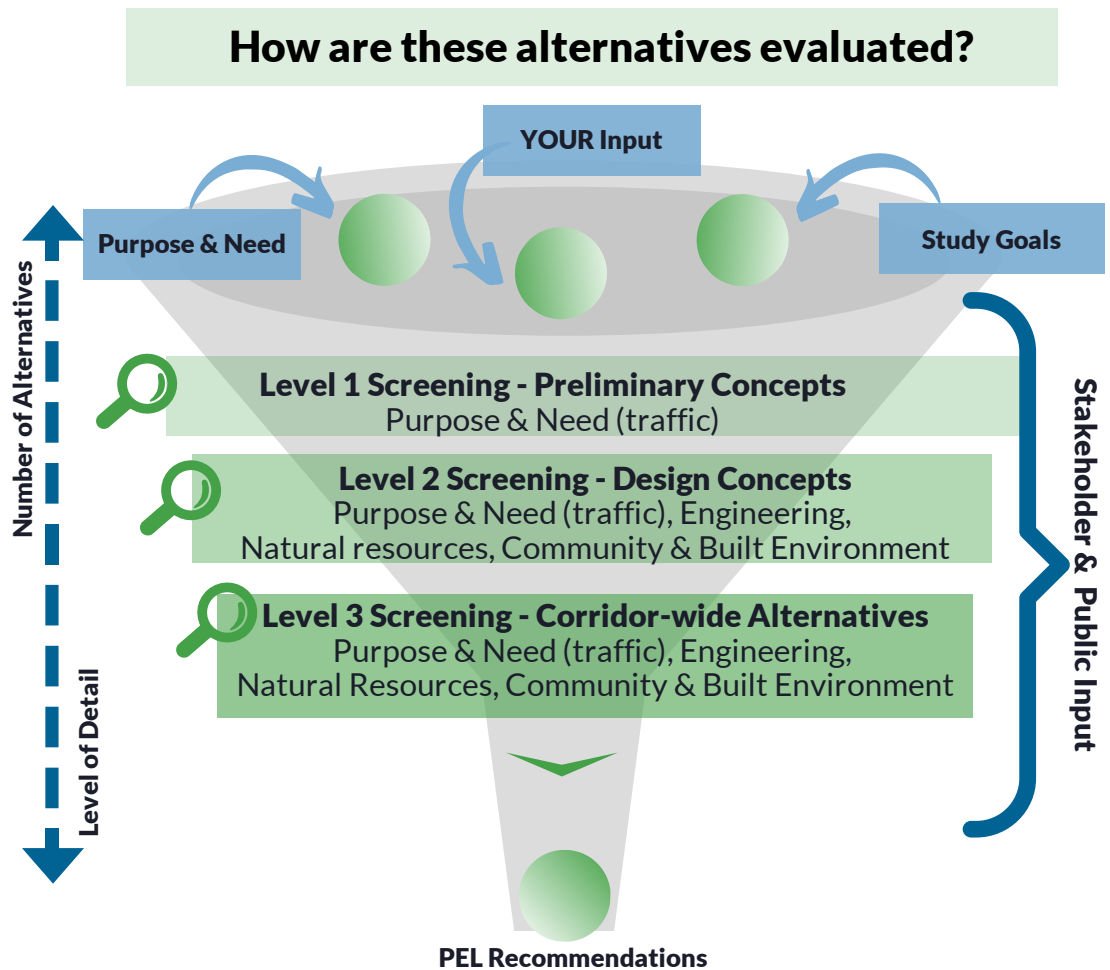
Preliminary Concept Development

The range of congestion management strategies and infrastructure improvements to be evaluated are identified. *Concepts include:*

- ▶ **No Build (Do Nothing)**
- ▶ **Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) Strategies**
- ▶ **Infrastructure Improvements**
 - Alternative Alignments
 - Mainline Improvements (Widening 6 or 8 lanes)
 - Interchange/Ramp Improvements

What happens next with the I-526 LCC EAST?

The team will evaluate the alternatives through a three-step screening process to identify the reasonable alternatives that will be carried forward to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. Each level of screening involves a more detailed analysis of the alternatives. As the process progresses, alternatives that perform poorly are removed from further review.



Visit our Community Office (5627 Rivers Avenue, Gas Lite Square)

How can I learn more and provide my input?

A set of public information meetings is being planned for later this fall to share more detail regarding the creation and evaluation of potential improvements for this corridor. The meeting will also highlight the proposed reasonable alternatives to be carried forward in the NEPA planning process.

How does a PEL Study transition to NEPA?

Following the public information meeting, the project team will finalize the PEL Study. This study will provide the framework for implementing future transportation improvements - including possible funding, prioritization, and potential issues that may need to be resolved in NEPA. This process is designed to move the project forward with little to no-need for rework of these important studies. This information will be used to help determine the level of NEPA environmental evaluation that would need to occur. The NEPA process would be able to build on this valuable input by confirming and refining the purpose and need for the corridor. Additionally, the engineering and environmental analysis would build on these initial studies to help determine the preferred alternative.

SAVE THE
date

In-Person & Online Public Meetings tentatively planned for October 26th & 27th!

When could construction start?

The NEPA process must be completed and the project permitted before any construction can occur! See estimated times below to understand the process.



PUBLIC & AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

Planning & Environmental Linkages Study (PEL)

1.5 - 2.5 Years

- Planning studies
- Existing conditions analysis
- Future forecasts
- Study goals
- Purpose & need
- Range of alternatives and screened reasonable alternatives
- Cost estimates and Implementation Plan
- Level of NEPA analysis: Categorical Exclusion, Environmental Assessment, or Environmental Impact Statement

NEPA

1 - 2 Years

- Confirm/refine purpose & need
- Detailed environmental studies & noise analysis
- Refine alternatives
- Explore mitigation and commitments
- Prepare decision document

Project Implementation

- Final design
- Right-of-way acquisition
- Permitting
- Mitigation commitments
- Construction

Maintenance Operations

- Maintenance of roadway and right-of-way

What is happening with the I-526 LCC WEST Community Mitigation Plan?

What is the Community History Preservation Program?



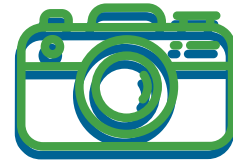
The purpose of the Community Mitigation Plan for the I-526 LCC WEST, is to effectively mitigate project impacts in partnership with residents of the Ferndale, Russelldale, Highland Terrace, Liberty Park neighborhoods. These four neighborhoods are just a few of many neighborhoods in North Charleston with a rich cultural history. The purpose of the Community History Preservation Program is to record the past of these neighborhoods through interviews with current and former residents; to collect historic photographs of the communities prior to the construction of I-26, I-526, and other developments; and to gather images of the communities prior to the potential construction of the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST transportation project as part of the Community Mitigation Plan.

We encourage you to stay engaged—participate in interviews, share your historic images, and provide information to document the unique historic and cultural elements of your community. Based on community feedback, this program will also be used to inspire design concepts to be incorporated into the appearance of the new community center. Upon completion, a final report will be available at the new community center, the public library, and online. Stay tuned for information regarding community events where you can meet and interact with our History Preservation Program Manager, Professor Damon L. Fordham, and share your stories.

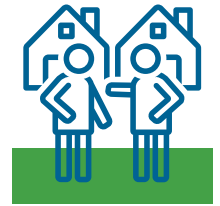
Live or have lived in the Ferndale, Highland Terrace, Liberty Park, or Russelldale neighborhoods? Please contact us at the Community Office by phone at (843) 258-1135 or in person at 5627 Rivers Avenue in Gas Lite Square, North Charleston. Email us at HistoryProject@526LowcountryCorridor.com to share stories, pictures, and videos of your memories. Join us, and be a part of history.



Participate in interviews!



Share your photographs!



Be a part of your Community History!

How are we reaching out to the community?

Have you seen our Community Liaisons in your community? We have been canvassing in the Ferndale, Highland Terrace, Liberty Park, and Russelldale neighborhoods over the last few months distributing project information and talking with the community about mitigation opportunities, such as job training. This has been a great opportunity to talk with community members face-to-face and invite them to come to the Community Office to have their questions answered. The Community Office and Liaisons are resources for you to learn about project updates and opportunities available under the Environmental Justice Community Mitigation Plan. If you see them out in your community, be sure to stop and say hello!



So far, our Community Liaisons have reached over 1,190 homes across the potentially impacted neighborhoods.

Visit our Community Office (5627 Rivers Avenue, Gas Lite Square)

✉ info@526LowcountryCorridor.com

☎ 843.258.1135(Call/Text)

📱 @526Corridor

Is there an update on the professional development training?

Residents of the Ferndale, Highland Terrace, Liberty Park, and Russelldale have been invited to participate in free professional development classes this summer as part of the Environmental Justice Community Mitigation Plan. The initial offerings included a Commercial Drivers License (CDL) permit preparation class, the CDL full license program, and career development training.

Interested? Come to the Community Office or call 843.258.1135 to make an appointment and register for these free courses!

The career development classes are geared towards high school graduates or college students (aged 16+) to enhance their career skills. Training topics may include: interview skills, communication skills, time management, employability, CPR/First Aid, computer classes and more. Classes would last 4-6 weeks online during the weekends and participating students would also be eligible for a stipend for their participation. **This is the first round of job training opportunities, but we want to hear from you what training opportunities you would like to see offered next year!**

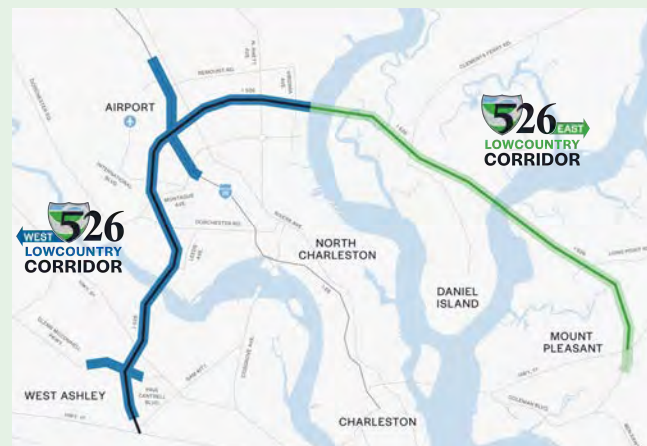


We want to hear from you!



SCDOT Project Manager
 Joy Riley, PE, DBIA, PMP, CPM
 info@526LowcountryCorridor.com
 843.258.1135(Call/Text)
 @526Corridor

Your comments and suggestions are important to the development of a quality transportation project. We have multiple ways for you to stay informed about upcoming project-related events and information updates.





A Note From Our **SCDOT Project Manager**

Today, I'm pleased to announce the launch of the [I-526 Lowcountry Corridor EAST \(I-526 LCC EAST\) Public Information Meeting](#)! View information [online](#) or participate in-person at one of our open house meetings. Online and in-person, you will have the opportunity to review and provide comments on the draft purpose and need of the study, conceptual roadway improvements, and current and future traffic conditions. Learn about next steps and how this Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study transitions into the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

The I-526 LCC EAST study extends from Virginia Avenue in North Charleston to U.S. Hwy 17 in Mount Pleasant. The purpose for transportation improvements along this corridor is to improve travel time reliability and reduce congestion.

In-person Open House Meetings

- Tuesday, October 26, 5-7 PM, R. L. Jones Center (391 Egypt Road, Mount Pleasant, SC)

These drop-in Public Information Meetings will take place partially indoors and partially outdoors and will not have a formal presentation. The City of North Charleston requires masks inside their buildings. Masks are highly encouraged when they are not required. In accordance with current public health guidelines, temperature checks will be performed at all meetings. Anyone with a temperature of over 100.4 will not be allowed to enter the facility. The COVID-19 conditions will be continually monitored. Check our [website](#) or call for updates. As a reminder, all materials are available online, including the comment form.

As always, thank you for your interest in the I-526 LCC project.



Joy Riley

I-526 Lowcountry Corridor Project Manager

JOY RILEY, PE, PMP, CPM, DBIA
SCDOT

Phone: [843.258.1135](tel:843.258.1135)

Email: info@526lowcountrycorridor.com

What You'll Find In This Issue



Ways to Participate

Participate in the I-526 LCC EAST Public Information Meeting! Review materials, ask questions, and provide comments. View our helpful [engagement guide](#) to make sure you don't miss an opportunity to participate!



Visit the Meeting Online

The EAST public information meeting launched today online! Learn more about the I-526 LCC EAST study and provide your insight. [View the meeting online now!](#)



Ways to Comment

Meaningful input is our number one priority. The official comment period is open until **December 1, 2021**. Make your voice heard in the official project records by sending an email

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Past Issues

or letter, leaving a voicemail

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[View the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor EAST Public Information Meeting!](#)



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SC Department of Transportation
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526 LOWCOUNTRY CORRIDOR

I-526 Lowcountry Corridor Newsletter: Special Edition Issues VIII - Summer 2020



Study Overview

SCDOT is conducting a Planning & Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study for I-526 LCC EAST, which extends from Virginia Avenue in North Charleston to approximately US 17 in Mount Pleasant. The PEL study will identify existing and projected transportation issues within the corridor through public and stakeholder engagement. The results of the study will help establish a vision for the corridor that will guide future transportation decision-making. This resulting information of the PEL study will be carried into the next phase of project development which is the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. After the needs are better understood in this corridor, and potential improvements identified, the next steps, including potential phasing and project opportunities, may be developed.



Did you know over 65% of I-526 LCC EAST is elevated roadway & bridges??



Draft Purpose & Need

Draft Purpose

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

Draft Considerations

- Coordinate with local plans & projects
- Accommodate increased traffic volumes
- Enhance mobility for people & goods

Draft Need

Roadway Deficiencies

- Over Capacity
- Shoulder Widths
- On & Off Ramp Lengths
- Tightly Curved Ramps

Mobility

- Traffic congestion from high traffic volumes & incidents

- Improve seismic resilience
- Accommodate future transportation technologies
- Improve connections with area ports & transit



PEL Study Process & Schedule

Identify Transportation Needs

Fall 2019

Draft Purpose & Need

Winter 2020

Develop Performance Measures

Spring 2020

Public Information Meeting
Summer 2020



We are here!



Develop & Screen Alternatives

Summer 2020

Identify Reasonable Alternatives

Spring 2021

Complete our Survey & Leave a Comment by Aug. 15, 2020

We want to hear from you!

www.526LowcountryCorridor.com

Have more questions? Contact us.

✉ info@526LowcountryCorridor.com

843.258.1135

☎ 866.632.5262 (Toll Free)

f 526Corridor

🐦 @526Corridor

Make an appointment at our Community Office:
5627 Rivers Avenue

Public Information Meeting

Spring 2021

Final PEL Study

Summer 2021

Your comments and suggestions are important to the development of a quality transportation project. We have multiple ways for you to stay informed about upcoming project-related events and information updates.



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





Have a voice in the I-526 LCC EAST PEL study by taking our short survey.



I-526 LCC EAST Metroquest Survey

Despite the current uncertainty our region and nation are facing, the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor (I-526 LCC) project team continues to move forward with important planning work. Public feedback is a critical component to the success of the [I-526 LCC EAST PEL study](#), so we've created a [short survey](#) so you can easily share your concerns about the corridor and the strategies you would like to see us explore to help improve them.

We want to know about your first-hand experience using the I-526 LCC EAST corridor, which extends from Virginia Avenue in North Charleston to U.S. Hwy 17 in Mount Pleasant.

- When do you experience congestion?
- What safety issues do you typically experience when using this corridor?
- What are your main transportation concerns, and where do you see the highest occurrence of them?
- Which solutions would you like us to prioritize based on your needs and/or problems for the I-526 LCC EAST corridor?

We hope you will take the time to complete this short survey to help us better understand the issues that are important to you.

Subscribe

Past Issues

Joy Riley

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I-526 Lowcountry Corridor Project Manager

JOY RILEY, PE, PMP, CPM, DBIA

SCDOT

Phone: [866.832.5282](tel:866.832.5282) (toll free)

Email: info@526lowcountrycorridor.com

[Take our short survey now!](#)



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EAST → Planning & Environment Linkages (PEL) Study Being Prepared for I-526 LCC EAST

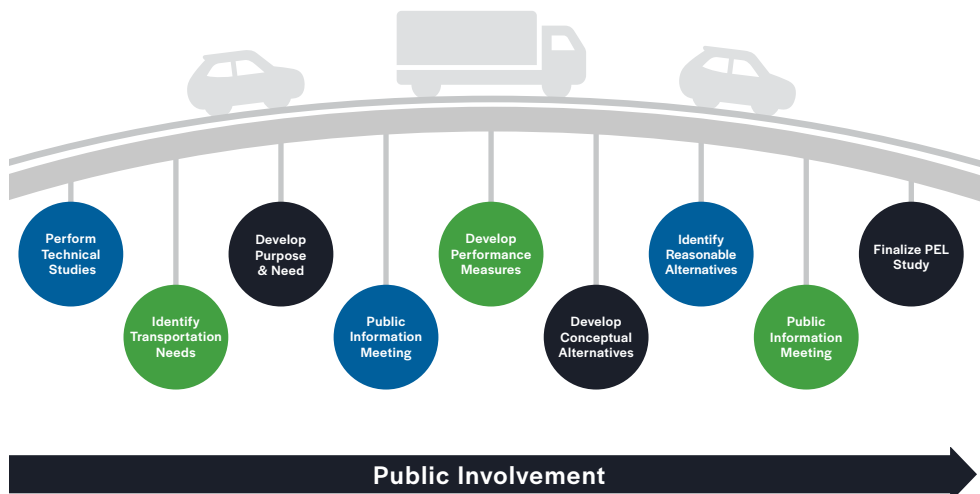
I-526 Lowcountry Corridor EAST (I-526 LCC EAST) project runs from approximately Virginia Avenue in North Charleston to US 17 in Mount Pleasant. Due to the major river crossings along the I-526 LCC EAST corridor, identifying feasible project alternatives and cost estimates are challenging without extensive planning efforts. Additionally, this corridor serves as a major economic connector in the lowcountry, linking the goods that flow to and from South Carolina's busiest port terminal with Interstate 26 and other integral components of the state's freight network. For these reasons, the I-526 LCC EAST project will move forward with a PEL Study. This will allow the project team to extensively study the challenges and

opportunities present in the area, and will allow public engagement regarding possible solutions.

A PEL study is a collaborative approach to decision-making used to identify transportation issues and environmental concerns. This integrated approach considers environmental, community, and economic goals early in the planning process and uses this information to streamline the transportation project development and environmental review process. The resulting information of a PEL study will be carried forward into the next phase of the project development process, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

The I-526 LCC EAST PEL study may result in the identification of multiple potential projects, such as intersection improvements or capacity improvements along the corridor, that could be phased and prioritized for implementation. This will help SCDOT understand the potential number of project packages, delivery methods, schedules, and costs to complete the improvements on this corridor.

I-526 LCC EAST PEL Study Process



PEL Study Benefits

As described by FHWA, potential benefits of a PEL study include:

- ▶ Improved sharing of information
- ▶ Elimination of duplicative efforts in planning and NEPA processes
- ▶ Improved communication and stronger relationships
- ▶ Early consultation and collaboration among stakeholders to identify potential impacts
- ▶ Accelerated project delivery
- ▶ Better environmental outcomes
- ▶ Timely permit decisions
- ▶ Mutually beneficial outcomes

For More Information Visit:

www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/env_initiatives/pel.aspx

I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST: Where We've Been

WEST



Left: Joy Riley presents at a speakers bureau event in summer of 2017. Right: Check-in table at a Community Meeting.

The I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST (I-526 LCC WEST) will host a public information meeting on November 21, 2019 at the Charleston Area Convention Center. As we look ahead to this meeting in which alternatives will be presented to the public, we thought a look back at how we arrived at this point was important.

The I-526 LCC WEST project was born out of a 2013 planning study—the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor Analysis project. The purpose of this study was to evaluate potential approaches for improving traffic flow through the corridor. While this report included conceptual interchange and road widening alternatives, these were only evaluated from a traffic analysis standpoint.

Enter the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. In January 2016, the I-526 LCC WEST, initially called the 526 Lowcountry Corridor (Phase I), began the NEPA process to conduct an

Environmental Assessment along existing I-526 between Paul Cantrell Boulevard in West Ashley to Rivers Avenue in North Charleston.

Shortly thereafter, the newsletter, website, and social media were launched, and the first round of community, stakeholder, and local business meetings were held (July, October 2016).



Above: Community members engage in dialogue at a West Ashley Community Meeting.

Key issues raised included congestion and safety. Additional analysis conducted during this time included: traffic

studies; a survey for historic buildings and archeological sites; environmental studies; a hazardous materials study; and a topographical conditions study.

Following this initial level of analysis, the public was invited to participate in a virtual public meeting (October 2016.) During this time, several other local and regional planning efforts were underway, such as the I-26 Corridor Management Plan which includes consideration of managed lanes along I-526. Since these studies were in various stages of completion, the I-526 LCC WEST project's schedule was revised so the results of these transportation planning efforts could be part of the alternatives development and the NEPA documentation processes.

In the spring of 2018, the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor EAST project (formerly known as Phase II) was announced, extending along existing I-526, east from the Rivers Avenue interchange to US 17 in Mount Pleasant.

I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST: Where We've Been (Continued)

Initial studies showed severe congestion and safety concerns around the North Rhett/Virginia Avenue interchange resulting in revisions to both projects' limits to ensure the areas with the greatest challenges would be prioritized. I-526 LCC WEST would now extend from Paul Cantrell Boulevard in West Ashley to Virginia Avenue in North Charleston (as opposed to Rivers Avenue), and the I-526 LCC EAST project would pick up there instead. Additionally, the I-526 LCC WEST project was elevated to an Environmental Impact Statement. The project purpose was refined: to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/I-526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Paul Cantrell Boulevard to Virginia Avenue.

The upcoming public information meeting will provide the results of this extensive work to date and ask for your feedback on the purpose and need, the roadway improvement concepts (draft reasonable alternatives), community impacts, and more.



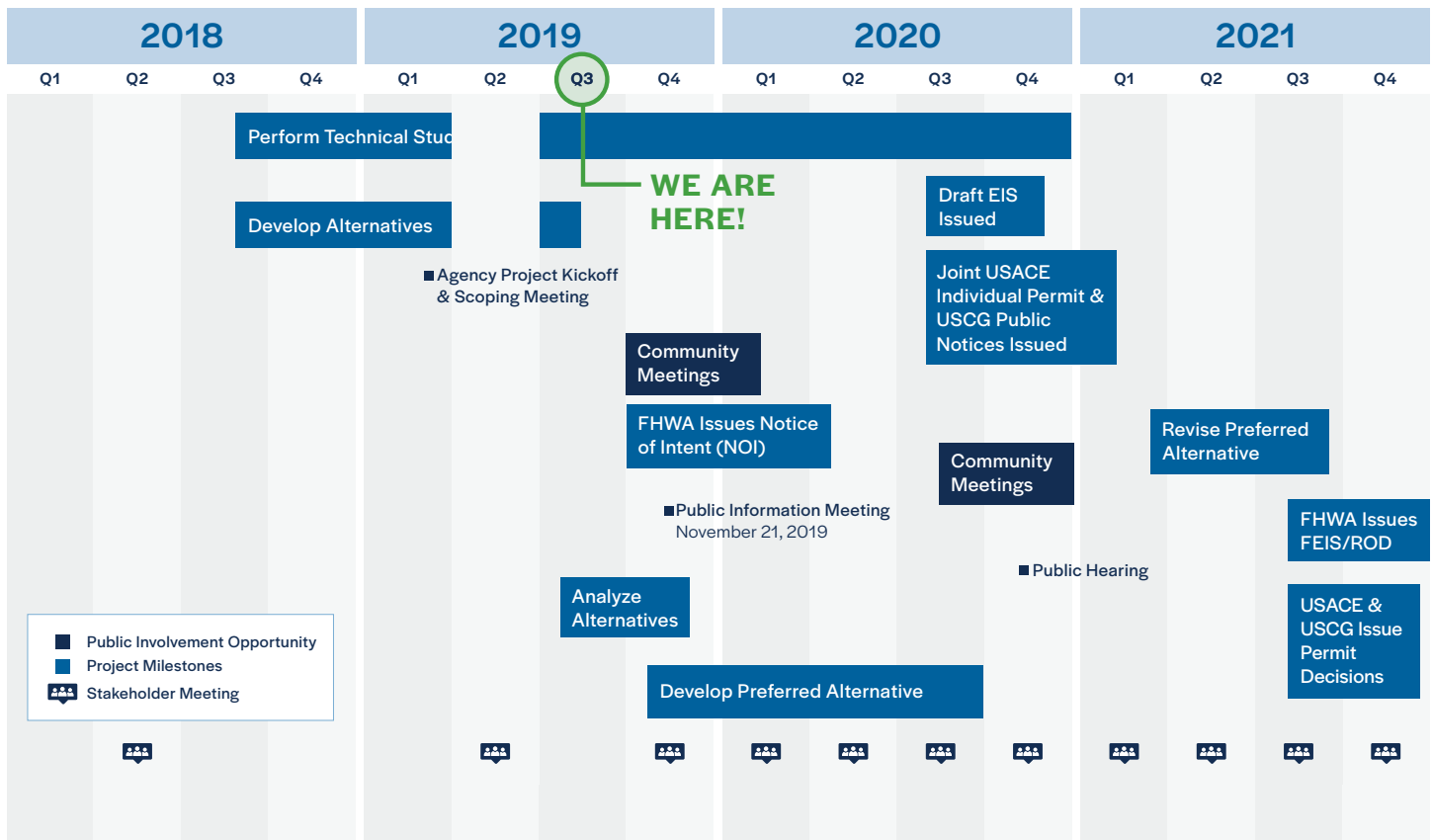
Above: Joy Riley speaks at a West Ashley Community Meeting.

Upcoming I-526 LCC WEST Public Information Meetings:

- ▶ **November 21, 2019 from 11 AM – 7 PM at the Charleston Area Convention Center**
- ▶ **Virtual Online Public Information Meeting will be available mid-November through January 4, 2020**



I-526 LCC WEST Timeline



* Current Schedule. Subject To Change.

Understanding Right-Of-Way Acquisition

Frequently Asked Questions

When SCDOT builds or improves roads and bridges, we often have to acquire property, known as right-of-way, or ROW. We have uniform practices for conducting property acquisitions, providing relocation assistance, and preparing appraisals. We follow the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisitions Policies Act of 1970, which protects property owners' rights and ensures everyone is treated fairly and equitably during property acquisitions. Below includes several Frequently Asked Questions about ROW Acquisition. For more, visit our project website at 526lowcountrycorridor.com/west/faqs/ and watch our new video explaining this process!

Q: What is the process for determining the project footprint and which homes/businesses will be impacted by the project?

A: SCDOT roadway and bridge improvement projects are planned and developed through an extensive environmental review process, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). During this environmental review process, SCDOT performs environmental and community surveys and evaluates all the potential project alternatives that could be considered to meet the purpose and need of the highway improvements. The new right of way is established by standard offsets from proposed bridges, roadway fills, and drainage facilities that are required for SCDOT maintenance and service operations, as well as for incorporating modern design and safety standards into the proposed improvements. SCDOT seeks to find the project alternative that strikes the best balance between meeting the transportation needs and minimizing the impacts to the natural and human environments.

Community impacts, such as right-of-way impacts and property owner relocations, are considered as a part of the NEPA process. The public and potential impacted communities will be engaged throughout the NEPA process to gather input on the proposed project alternatives.

Q: When does the ROW process start?

A: The ROW acquisition process does not typically start until the NEPA process is completed and a NEPA decision has been issued by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), who is overseeing the project. If a build alternative is selected, SCDOT will develop the final ROW plans for the project. Once ROW plans are finalized, the plans will be provided to the SCDOT ROW agents and ROW acquisition activities would begin. In some cases, FHWA will allow an early ROW phase of work for complex project corridors with significant ROW impacts anticipated. SCDOT is currently seeking funding for an Early ROW phase on this project due to the complexity.

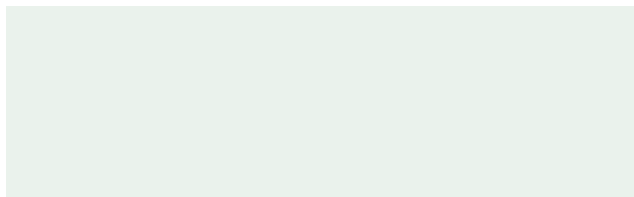
Q: How are you looking to minimize residential and commercial displacements along the I-526 LCC WEST corridor?

A: Finding the right balance between the project footprint and displacements is one of the most difficult challenges to any roadway project. SCDOT is minimizing ROW impacts through design by:

- ▶ Widening to the inside of the roadway first
- ▶ Bridges and retaining walls are being proposed through developed areas to greatly reduce the impacts that would be incurred with the use of a more cost-effective roadway section of fill
- ▶ Proposed roadway alignments have been located away from private properties as much as possible while still allowing for a safe and sufficient operating roadway to be built
- ▶ Minimum offsets from existing structures are being used that will still allow for construction and maintenance of traffic during construction to occur

Contact Us:

We Want to Hear from You!



Your comments and suggestions are important to the development of a quality transportation project. We have multiple ways for you to stay informed about upcoming project-related events and information updates.



Website

Visit our website to join our mailing lists, stay up to date, and get notified of public involvement opportunities.



Mail

I-526 Lowcountry Corridor Project
SC Department of Transportation
Post Office Box 191
955 Park Street, Room 401
Columbia, SC 29202-0191



Social Media

Follow us on our social media channels for regular updates at @526Corridor on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).



Text / SMS

Text 1526 to 555.888 for project updates via text message.



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration



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526LowcountryCorridor.com

SPRINGTIME FOR I-526 LCC

New Project Limits, Branding, and Website



■ I-526 LCC West Project ■ I-526 LCC East Project

As spring arrives with splashes of new color from the flowers and trees, the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor (LCC) emerges out of a long winter of planning and project development. Some significant project changes have developed over the last several months for these two projects that span the 23-mile corridor of existing I-526. For instance, the project limits have been updated. The I-526 LCC West begins at Paul Cantrell Boulevard in West Ashley and now extends to the new terminus of Virginia Avenue in North Charleston. The I-526 LCC East project, now begins at Virginia Avenue and follows the existing I-526 roadway to U.S. 17 in the Town of Mount Pleasant.

One key update is that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is being prepared for the I-526 LCC West instead of an

Environmental Assessment (EA). The I-526 LCC East project is in the planning phase and project feasibility studies are in progress.

Additionally, the I-526 LCC West and East projects also have a new look. The I-526 LCC team has rebranded the two projects so they are easily recognizable and distinguishable. Along with a new look, the project website has been updated and restructured to accommodate information about both projects. The site is still at the same location 526lowcountrycorridor.org, just with a new look and feel.



MILE MARKERS

A look at where we've been and where we're going on the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor projects.

W I-526 LCC WEST

Where We've Been in 2018:

- ▶ [Project priorities established](#)
- ▶ Initial environmental studies completed
- ▶ Interchange concepts developed
- ▶ NEPA coordination for elevation to EIS

Where We're Going in 2019:

- ▶ Alternatives development and analysis
- ▶ Community and stakeholder meetings
- ▶ Public input on alternatives
- ▶ Begin developing preferred alternative

E I-526 LCC EAST

Where We've Been in 2018 & Where We're Going in 2019:

- ▶ Traffic analysis underway
- ▶ Survey data collection in process
- ▶ Environmental studies underway
- ▶ Public involvement plan being developed
- ▶ Bridge and roadway feasibility analysis underway

New Website Features Include:

- Educational videos
- Resource maps
- A mobile-friendly interface

I-26 Corridor Management Study

Examining ‘Managed’ Lanes

Managed lanes are separated from general purpose lanes by a physical barrier or pavement markings. These special purpose lanes are controlled to maintain free flowing traffic conditions.

Options Include:



Vehicle Eligibility

Buses or carpools



Access Control

Limited on and off ramps



Tolls

Traditional or congestion pricing



A GLOSS for WORDS

Don't be at "A Gloss for Words" when it comes to major infrastructure projects!

We explore and explain common transportation terminology below!

- ▶ **Corridor:** Transportation corridors are typically a linear area with one or more modes of transportation—such as highways, railroads, or public transit—linking major gateways and hubs, where both passenger and freight traffic mix.
- ▶ **Environmental Impact Statement (EIS):** An EIS is a full disclosure document that details the process through which a transportation project was developed, includes consideration of a range of reasonable alternatives, analyzes the potential impacts resulting from the alternatives, and demonstrates compliance with other applicable environmental laws and executive orders.
- ▶ **Environmental Assessment (EA):** An EA is prepared when the significance of a proposed project's effects are not clearly known. An EA essentially determines whether an EIS should be prepared. If significant impacts are identified, an EIS must be completed.

Could tolled, high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) or some other sort of “managed” lanes help improve traffic conditions in the Charleston region?

An ongoing SCDOT study aims to answer that question.

Managed lanes are freeway lanes separated from general-purpose lanes by a physical barrier or pavement markings. They are controlled to maintain free-flow traffic conditions—approximately 45 miles per hour—through vehicle eligibility (buses or carpool), access control (limited on and off ramps), and/or tolls (traditional or congestion pricing).

As part of the I-26 Corridor Management Plan project, the concept of a regional managed lanes network is being analyzed for all of existing I-526, as well as I-26 between Ridgeville and downtown Charleston.

SCDOT officials say the resulting analysis could provide options to improve future freeway operations.

“Because a network of managed lanes is truly evaluated as ‘system,’ the potential for such improvements are regional in nature,” said I-526 Lowcountry Corridor project manager Joy Riley.

The initial stages of the analysis will determine if managed lanes would benefit travelers. If viable, the concept will be refined to identify proposed start and end points and the type of lane to be implemented, whether carpool, express or some other option.

The study includes a review of further improvements to the I-26 corridor including congestion management and truck mobility improvements, transit service improvements, and interchange-level improvements throughout the I-26 corridor.

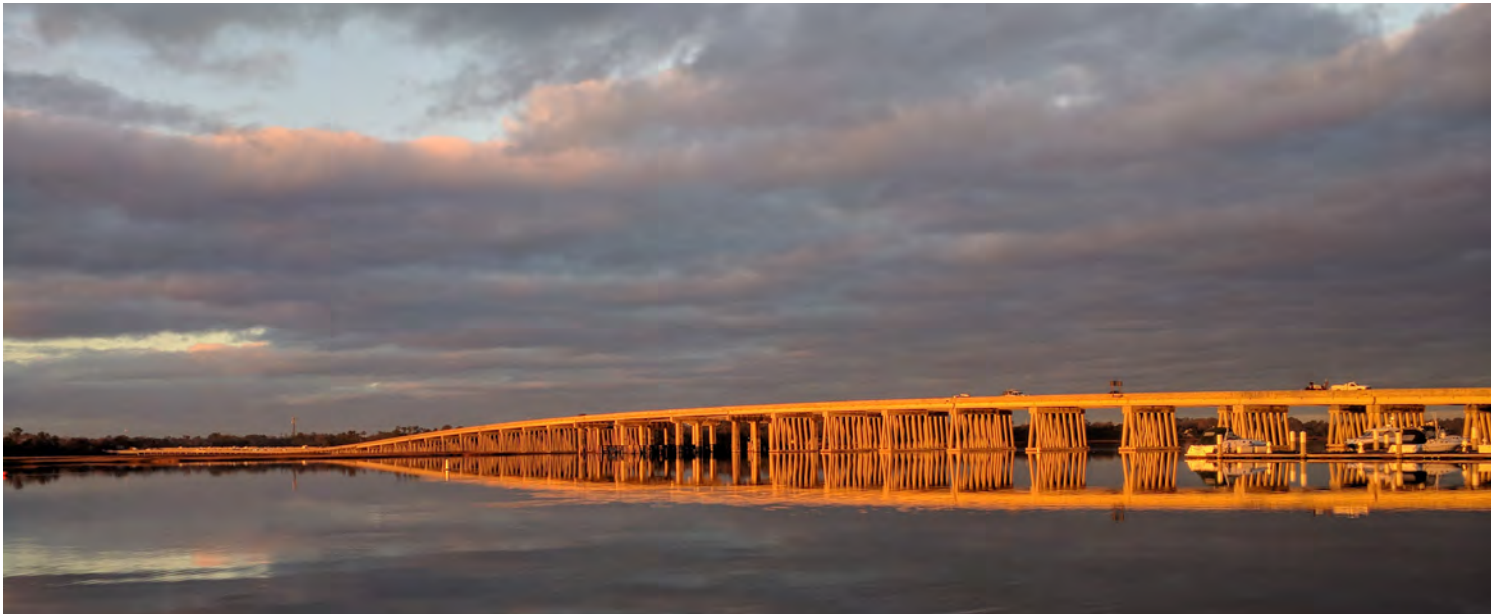
The preliminary findings of the I-26 Corridor Management Plan, including a regional managed lanes concept, will be presented for public input at a summer 2019 public meeting. Additional information regarding the public meeting will be available on the I-26 Corridor Management [project website](#).



Above: The I-26/I-526 interchange.
Below: Free-flowing traffic on I-526 LCC West.

Streamlined Environmental Review Process: One Federal Decision

WEST



The Westmoreland Bridge is a key piece of infrastructure on I-526 LCC West.

After initial analysis, it was determined that the environmental review for the I-526 LCC West project should be elevated from an Environmental Assessment (EA) to an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

The I-526 LCC West project will follow a streamlined environmental review process mandated by Executive Order 13807: Establishing Discipline and Accountability in the Environmental Review and Permitting Process for Infrastructure Projects.

This process applies specifically to projects undergoing an EIS.

Through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) called Implementing One Federal Decision (OFD) Under Executive Order 13807, federal agencies agree to actively participate in environmental reviews and communicate with one another in a structured process that starts early in the project development process so

that agencies can “identify concerns, raise potential issues early in the review process, and identify solutions.” The MOU also calls for cooperation to accomplish several relevant goals.

The goals of the streamlined process are:

- **Completion of all environmental reviews and permitting within two years of the publication of the notice of intent**
- **Active communication between agencies**
- **Concurrent agency reviews**
- **Development of a permitting timetable**
- **A commitment to the process and improvements of the process**

In addition to the MOU, a working agreement between the United States Coast Guard (USCG), United States Army

Corps of Engineers (USACE), United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) was reached for major infrastructure projects that require the preparation of an EIS. These agencies, along with state natural resource and regulatory agencies, have been actively engaged working together to develop a schedule to streamline the NEPA and permitting processes for the project. This should result in quicker delivery of this major project in the Lowcountry Region.

“The I-526 LCC WEST project is one of the first few Environmental Impact Statements in the nation being developed by SCDOT and FHWA under the One Federal Decision process.”

- Joy Riley, SCDOT Project Manager



Joy Riley speaks to Park Circle residents in March 2019.

Speaking of the I-526 LCC...

Project team engages community via speakers bureau

The I-526 Lowcountry Corridor project team met with community residents in North Charleston March 18, 2019, to answer questions and discuss project progress. The meeting, held at Felix C. Davis Community Center in Park Circle, was organized by North Charleston councilman Bob King and attended by more than 60 residents. If you're interested in having the project team speak to your neighborhood or group about the I-526 LCC projects, please [contact](#) SCDOT project manager Joy Riley.

BRIDGES OF THE LCC

In a region abundant with rivers, bridges play an important role in mobility.



The Westmoreland Bridge

The Westmoreland Bridge (Ashley Crossing) is a Stringer, or Multi-Beam, Bridge that was opened 1982 with an overall length of 3,900 feet.



The Don N. Holt Bridge

The Holt Bridge (Cooper Crossing) is a Truss Bridge that was opened to traffic in 1992 with an overall length of 27,065 feet.



The James B. Edwards Bridge

The Edwards Bridge (Wando Crossing) is a Segmental Box Girder Bridge that was opened to traffic around 1989 with an overall length of 7,900 feet.

Contact Us:

We Want to Hear from You!

Your comments and suggestions are important to the development of a quality transportation project. We have multiple ways for you to stay informed about upcoming project-related events and information updates.



I-526 Lowcountry Corridor Project Manager

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526 LOWCOUNTRY CORRIDOR NEWSLETTER



ISSUE IV, Spring 2018

GETTING IT RIGHT FOR THE LOWCOUNTRY 526 LOWCOUNTRY CORRIDOR EAST HAS BEGUN!

As noted in the last newsletter, new work on a portion of existing I-526 has begun. Phase II of the project, 526 Lowcountry Corridor EAST, will extend east from the Rivers Avenue interchange to US 17 in Mount Pleasant. Initial survey and aerial mapping efforts are now underway, along with preliminary traffic and planning studies.

The first portion, formerly referred to as Phase I, is now called the 526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST, and extends west from the Rivers Avenue interchange to the Paul Cantrell Boulevard interchange in West Ashley.

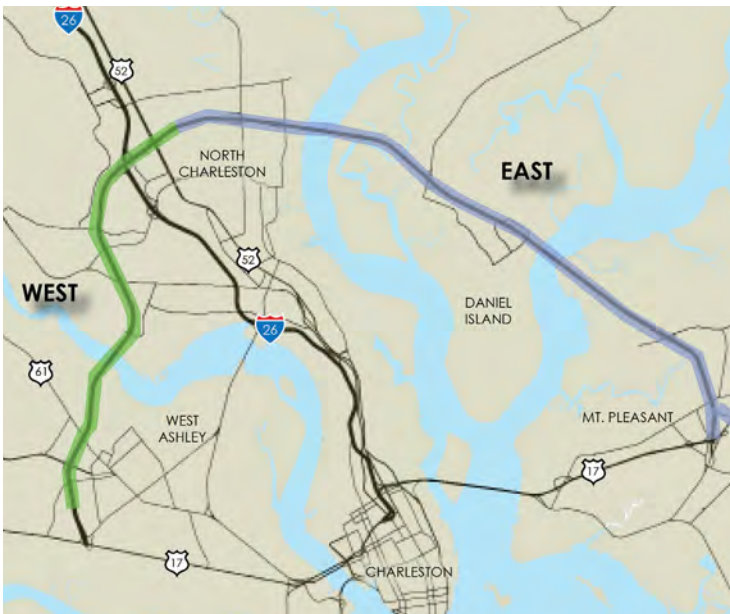
The South Carolina Department of Transportation's 526 Lowcountry Corridor Project team understands that this may be the best opportunity for the foreseeable future to make

significant improvements to the 526 Lowcountry Corridor. We heard the primary concern expressed in public comments, which was that the solution not be a short-term "Band-Aid" that does not fix the problem. This project must provide designs that not only address the current problems in the corridor, but these improvements must work well into the future. The team's approach is that it is much better to come up with the right approach for long-term benefits for the traveling public than to develop a "quick fix for 526."

To that end, the team has been working diligently to complete initial studies needed to begin developing conceptual alternatives for improving the project corridor. Since the start of the project, the team has completed many tasks, including:

- Aerial photographic mapping of the project area
- Baseline conditions hydrology report
- Wetland and stream survey
- Threatened and endangered species survey
- Historical and archaeological sites survey
- Underwater archaeological survey
- Hazardous material sites survey
- Crash analysis to identify problem areas
- Traffic modeling of existing/forecasting future conditions
- Preliminary concepts for improvements

During the course of these and other studies, the team identified many important issues, including the dynamic nature of growth in the Charleston area, the high cost of construction in the Lowcountry, and factors limiting options to improve existing transportation facilities. (CONTINUED ON PAGE 4 »)



DESIGNING FOR THE UNTHINKABLE

Between June and November, residents in the Charleston region are on high alert regarding the potential for a hurricane to make landfall in the Southeast. Fortunately, well-planned evacuation routes and procedures are in place if that occurs.

SCDOT's evacuation protocol for the Lowcountry region consists of reversing the eastbound lanes of I-26 to provide four lanes of westbound traffic flow. The lane reversal begins at the interchange of I-26 and I-526 and continues west until the I-26 interchange with I-77 just east of Columbia in Lexington County.

The 526 Lowcountry Corridor project must consider hurricane evacuation strategies, and design alternatives accordingly. Specifically, all interchange design concepts at the I-526/I-26 interchange must include hurricane lane reversal compatibility.

Under the existing plan, I-526 traffic approaching I-26 from the east is split into two lanes. The right lane exits normally to westbound I-26. Traffic in the left lane uses the I-26 East exit, but is diverted to travel west on the reversed lanes of I-26. This diversion takes place at a temporary crossover near the base of the ramp.

Traffic on I-526, approaching I-26 from the west, is directed to the I-26 East exit, but is then diverted to travel west on the reversed lanes of I-26. This diversion also takes place at a temporary crossover near the base of the ramp.



(DON'T) BRING THE NOISE

NOISE ANALYSIS OF HIGHWAY PROJECTS

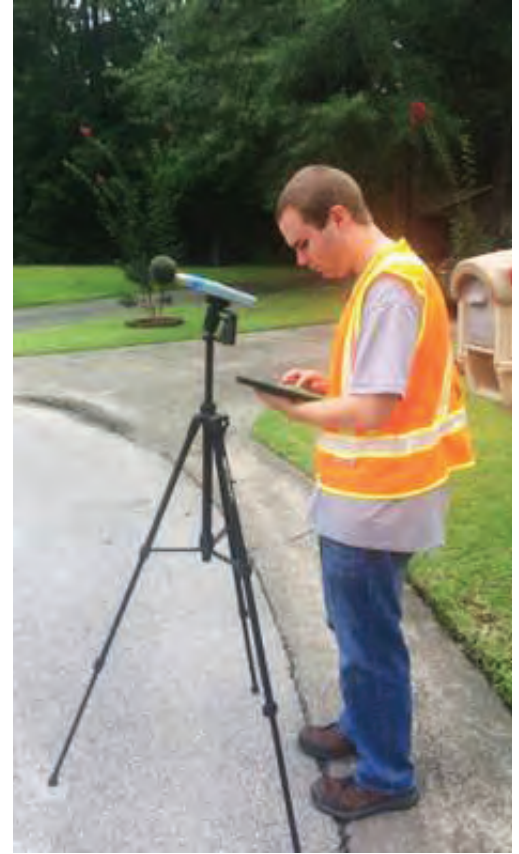
The Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) regulation on highway traffic noise requires that we conduct noise studies when building new highways or changing or expanding existing ones. The purpose of a noise study is to learn whether highway traffic sounds will have an impact on nearby outdoor areas frequently used by people. All traffic noise studies and analyses prepared for SCDOT projects adhere to procedures and requirements established by Federal law and follow SCDOT noise analysis guidelines. Key steps in the process of analyzing highway traffic noise include:

✓ **Identification** of land uses in the project corridor that may be impacted by traffic noise. Residences, libraries, houses of worship, preschools and daycares, hospitals, schools and parks are the most common locations where a lowered noise level would be of benefit.

✓ **Measurement** of existing traffic noise levels throughout the project corridor. The measurements are taken at representative locations to ensure the noise model will predict realistic results. Some may ask why noise measurements were not taken at their house and assume that they were not considered for noise abatement. The measurements, however, are only used to set and verify the prediction model and not as a basis for noise abatement decisions.

✓ **Noise Modeling** is performed using an FHWA approved, computer-based noise model to predict future conditions with the proposed project. Noise projections are reported in decibels (dBA) and based on design year (typically 20 years in the future) traffic forecast information. The project's design details and terrain modifications are included in the model. SCDOT considers a location to be impacted when predicted noise levels reach or approach (within 1 dBA) the criteria for a specific activity area, or if the predicted noise substantially exceeds (more than 15 dBA) existing levels. In either of these situations, noise abatement is considered.

✓ **Noise Abatement** is considered for all noise-impacted locations. Consideration is based on feasibility (Can it be built?) and reasonableness (Does it fit in the community and is it cost effective?). Feasible noise abatement measures are those that provide a noise reduction of at least 5 dBA for 75% of the receptors in an impacted area and pose no safety, engineering, or access restrictions. Reasonableness is based on property owner input, the number of impacted locations that are benefited and the cost per benefited location.



For more information about SCDOT's traffic noise abatement policy and how it is applied, or about how noise is measured please [click here](#) and select 'Traffic Noise' from the dropdown menu.

In addition to the initial studies, the team reached out to the public by hosting nine meetings in communities along the corridor that could be directly impacted by the project. Public outreach activities also included frequent educational postings about the project on social media, implementing a project website that provides the public with information and the opportunity to ask questions and submit comments, and hosting multiple meetings for small businesses, large businesses, and other organizational stakeholders from the project area.

The team also became aware of many regional efforts to address transportation needs, some of which are on-going and some of which are completed. These endeavors include:

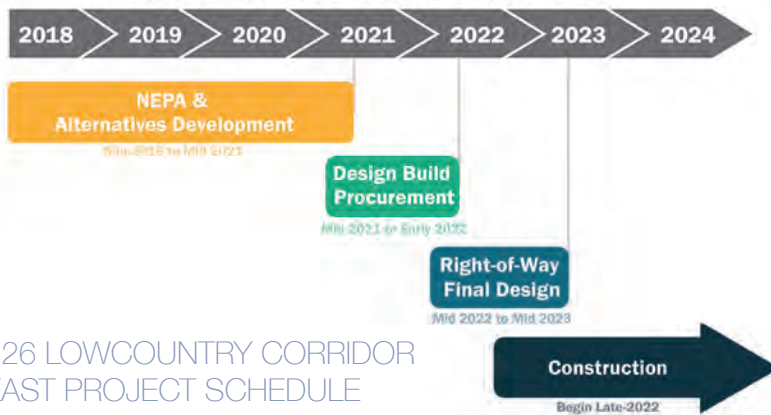
- The 526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST Traffic Operations Study (SCDOT)
- The 526 Lowcountry Corridor EAST Traffic Operations Study (SCDOT)
- The I-526 Corridor Management Plan (SCDOT)
- [The Regional Park and Ride Study \(Berkeley Charleston Dorchester Council of Governments, BCDCOG\)](#)
- [Lowcountry Rapid Transit \(Charleston Area Transportation Study, CHATS\)](#)

- [Lowcountry Go Travel Demand Marketing/Strategy Project \(BCDCOG\)](#)
- [The Regional Transit Framework Plan \(BCDCOG\)](#)
- The I-26 Corridor Management Study (SCDOT, which will include consideration of managed lanes)
- [Walk Bike BCD Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan \(BCDCOG\)](#)

These plans, studies, and projects are to be incorporated into a comprehensive CHATS Regional Interstate Congestion Management Plan (SCDOT).

The best path forward to developing a sustainable solution for the 526 Lowcountry Corridor is to consider the results of these studies and the ultimate recommendations of the CHATS Regional Interstate Congestion Management Plan. This will ensure that the appropriate options for addressing congestion are appropriately evaluated in the NEPA analysis process. Since these studies are in various stages of completion, the 526 Lowcountry Corridor project schedule has been revised so that the results of the transportation planning efforts can be part of the alternative development and the NEPA documentation processes. A copy of the new schedule for 526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST is shown below.

LOWCOUNTRY CORRIDOR WEST PROJECT SCHEDULE



526 LOWCOUNTRY CORRIDOR EAST PROJECT SCHEDULE
COMING SOON.

CONTACT INFORMATION

- www.526LowcountryCorridor.com
- www.Facebook.com/526Corridor
- @526Corridor
- Text i526 to 555-888 for project updates



PROJECT CONTACT

For more information, please contact:

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 PO Box 191, Columbia, SC 29202-0191
 (803) 737-1346
526distribution@scdot.org



526 LOWCOUNTRY CORRIDOR NEWSLETTER



ISSUE III, Spring 2017

BREAKING NEWS!!

526 LOWCOUNTRY CORRIDOR WIDENING AND IMPROVEMENTS:

PHASES I AND II

A new portion of existing I-526 has been added to the 526 Lowcountry Corridor Project. This means that improvements are coming to all of existing I-526. Phase I, already underway, will address improvements to nearly 8 miles of interstate between the interchanges at Rivers Avenue in North Charleston and Paul Cantrell Boulevard in West Ashley.

Phase II preliminary development will start soon and will extend these operational improvements approximately 11 miles between mile marker 19 and mile marker 30. To address the existing and anticipated future traffic needs of this corridor, SCDOT, in cooperation with the FHWA, will be performing an in-depth analysis of the needs for this corridor. An Environmental Assessment will be prepared to promote informed decision-making for the improvements to Phase II of the Lowcountry Corridor.



www.526LowcountryCorridor.com

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT IS ONGOING HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN DOING!

FOR PHASE I



✓ **Aerial Mapping**

- June 2016

✓ **Project Website Developed**

- July 2016

✓ **Stakeholder Meetings***

- Stakeholder Group: July & Nov. 2016
- Small Business Stakeholders:
November 2016

✓ **Community Meetings*
(N. Charleston & West Ashley)**

- July and October 2016

✓ **Preliminary Design Criteria
Memo**

- September 2016

✓ **Evaluation of Roadway
Deficiencies**

- October 2016

✓ **Virtual Public Meeting***

- October 2016

✓ **Completed Cultural
Resource Survey**

- October 2016

✓ **Future Traffic Projections
Completed**

- November 2016

✓ **Seismic Analysis Methods
Developed for Bridge
Evaluations**

- December 2016

✓ **Completed Underwater
Archaeology Survey**

- January 2017

✓ **Local Small Business
Outreach Initiative***

- March and April 2017

**Collected comments were studied prior to starting design efforts.*

SPECIAL STUDIES

Typically project pre-construction activities include many types of studies to determine potential project impacts. Research of possible historical and archaeological sites is one example. One of the many studies done as part of Phase I was the search for underwater archaeological sites in the Ashley River.

In the winter of 2017, Tidewater Atlantic Research conducted an underwater archaeological survey using magnetic and acoustic (sonar) equipment. The survey identified two magnetic anomalies, or unusual features that could indicate the remains of a vessel or some other underwater feature. One of the sites was determined not to be significant and no further analysis was required. The other site could be the remains of an old ship which may contain information about the maritime history of South Carolina.

DOT projects often result in the finding of historical or archaeological sites that might not be discovered without these pre-construction efforts. Impacts to significant sites are avoided when possible. One day, the mysterious nature of this site may be determined- Is it an old ship, or just a piece of debris lying on the floor of the river? But for now the site will be avoided, leaving it for another day to answer the questions about it.





526 LOWCOUNTRY CORRIDOR SPEAKERS BUREAU

As the 526 Lowcountry Corridor Design Team works to complete the project, SCDOT is looking for opportunities to share project information and updates with local community, residential, business and civic groups. The project leaders will be happy to meet with your organization.

Anyone wishing to have the 526 Lowcountry Corridor Project Team address their group is asked to provide their contact information and the group's meeting schedule via email, 526distribution@scdot.org, with the subject line: "Speakers Bureau."

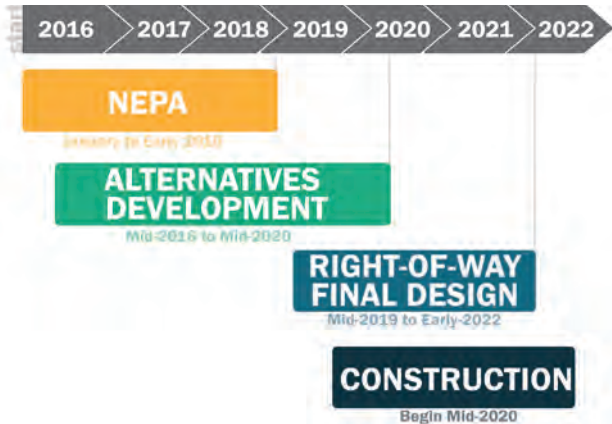
LOCAL SMALL BUSINESS OUTREACH INITIATIVE

As part of ongoing public outreach efforts, businesses located nearest the interchanges along the Phase I area were visited, provided project information, and invited to participate in the Small Business Stakeholder Group. The Project Team hopes that through this forum, issues and potential impacts unique to small businesses can be presented and made part of the decision process as the project continues to develop.

Six to seven meetings over the next two years are planned, with the next meetings to be held on May 24, 2017. If your business is located within or near the project study area and you would like to be a member of the Small Business Stakeholder Group, please provide your contact information via email at 526distribution@scdot.org.



PHASE I PROJECT SCHEDULE



THE PHASE II
PROJECT SCHEDULE
COMING SOON.



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**CONTACT
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