



## MEETING MINUTES

# COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING NO. 5

**Date:** February 8, 2020

**Time:** 10:00 am – 1:05 pm

**Location:** I-526 Lowcountry Corridor Community Office, 5627 Rivers Avenue, N. Charleston, SC

**Project Name:** I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST

### Attendees

Larenda Baxley, Ferndale  
Tina A. Baxley, Ferndale  
Charlynn Smith, Ferndale  
Geneva Swett, Ferndale  
Ruth Mae Whitney, Highland Terrace  
Jeanaris Bannister, Liberty Park  
Carolyn Varner, Liberty Park  
Prayonda Cooper, Joppa Way  
Tony Grasso, Russelldale  
Angela Anderson, Russelldale  
Venus Silva, Russelldale  
Earl Muhammad, Muhammad Mosque

Ryan White, Stantec  
Rick Day, Stantec  
Amy Sackaroff, Stantec  
LaTonya Derrick, Stantec  
Joy Riley, SCDOT (Project Manager)  
David Kelly, SCDOT  
Pamela Foster, FHWA  
Yolonda Jordan, FHWA  
Maxine Smith, Maximum Consulting (Community Liaison)  
Janelle Ellis, Empowerment Strategies (Facilitator)

### Participant Summary:

Total participants: 22

Ferndale: 4

Highland Terrace: 1

Liberty Park: 2

Russelldale: 3

Adjacent/affected communities/agencies: 2

SCDOT: 2

FHWA: 2

Community Liaisons: 1

Community Office: 0

Stantec: 4

Facilitator: 1

### Meeting Summary:

#### Welcome and Introductions

- Roll call
- Meeting participants were reminded to sign in. Meeting was recorded for accuracy.
- CAC Meeting 3 minutes approved
- CAC Meeting 4 minutes distributed
- CAC Meeting 5 agenda distributed
- An overview of the agenda was provided
  - Administrative Items
  - Approve CAC Roles and Responsibilities
  - Items Currently in the Parking Lot

- 'Open Mic' Session
- Highway Project Impacts
- Break
- Vision Statement Activity
- Brainstorming Session: Potential Mitigation Ideas for Recreational Facilities
- Outreach Update
- Summary and Next Steps
- CAC members were encouraged to utilize the Open-Mic session for questions and comments from residents of the four impacted communities.
- CAC members were asked to submit the Demographic Survey for Meeting 4.
- CAC meeting minutes are subject to the Freedom of Information Act.
- The CAC is also encouraged to direct community members to visit the Community Office (the Office) to discuss questions directly with the Office staff and liaisons.
- CAC members who were unable to attend meeting 4 were provided the Brainstorming Worksheet for potential mitigation ideas for recreational facilities

#### **Approve CAC Roles and Responsibilities**

- Approval of final Roles and Responsibilities guiding document. The primary purpose of this document is to:
  - Outline the expectations for the CAC and project team
  - Establish the CAC as a non-voting body
  - Limit the number of CAC members to 20, with flexibility to accept additional members to ensure proper representation
  - Establish that no chairperson will be selected to represent the CAC. Members will represent their respective communities.
  - Change meetings from a 2-hour to 3-hour format

#### **Open Mic**

- The floor was open for discussion.

A CAC member expressed concern about rezoning causing unforeseen problems. A meeting is scheduled for February 10<sup>th</sup> at City Hall regarding rezoning (R1, single-family to R2, two-residential dwelling units) on Cary Street/Piedmont Street in the Ferndale community that will focus on multi-family units, specifically apartments. Ferndale residents are opposed to more apartments due to increased crime, particularly drug-related activities, in these areas. There is concern that higher density often contributes to increased crime. CAC members prefer duplexes or single-family housing.

Project Manager: SCDOT is considering purchasing five lots in that area. There is a significant number of renters who will be displaced as a result of the project. While SCDOT is working to get as many residents as possible to enter into homeownership, there will be a percentage that cannot or will not choose to do so. For those residents, SCDOT must be able to provide replacement rental units. Ferndale and Russelldale are the only two communities that have parcels zoned for multi-family units.

CAC Member: Expressed desire to see multi-family units, such as duplexes, as opposed to apartment complexes.

Project Manager: [Although the project team is still working on the details], the mobile home park will likely be moved and the land will be used for a multi-faceted development that includes new affordable housing and some type of recreational facility. Multi-use facilities can sometimes discourage certain activities (i.e. crime).

CAC Member: Residents will continue to fight rezoning. Although they understand the rationale behind considering apartment complexes, apartments have created problems in the past. Once property has been rezoned, the community must live with the consequences.

Program Manager: SCDOT is required to collaborate with the Housing Authority under the tax incentive program. The property in question is not Housing Authority property. The property falls under the Tax Incentive Program in which developers must qualify by meeting certain criteria for the housing to remain affordable for a certain number of decades. Under the program, developers own the property. They have a rigorous inspection program. SCDOT wants to ensure that new apartments will be desirable units and that they will be maintained for the duration. These are anticipated to be different from the current apartments which are owned by developers, but under the current program, are not required to be maintained. SCDOT must meet requirements for affordable rates for renters as well as standard of living considerations.

CAC Member: Re-emphasized the tax credit programs. There are much more rigorous background checks involved with this program, and management takes better care of their units.

Program Manager: Tax credit programs are required to be more stringent in order to receive tax incentives annually. The developer cannot build the unit and walk away. They also vet potential tenants to ensure tenants qualify for units. The proposed units are for people who qualify for the low-income bracket, and require rent at a lower rate. These units will be market-rate apartments (with amenities) at a lower rent rate.

CAC Member: Not everyone will meet the criteria. What happens to low-income tenants who engage in drugs and drinking who will be displaced?

Project Manager: From SCDOT's perspective, all housing will be built to house people who are displaced. As long as the current tenants meet the requirements and can pay the rent, if they are displaced by this project, they will be placed in a new unit. SCDOT is required to offer replacement housing that is safe, decent, sanitary, and at the same rent rate that they are currently paying. They are guaranteed to be qualified if they meet the criteria during the relocation period. If someone begins to make a higher income or does not pay rent, there may be a time when they no longer qualify. Once a person is in a unit, as long as that person complies with the criteria of their lease, it is not anticipated they can be removed because of subsequent background checks [absent a crime committed post-lease]. SCDOT welcomes these types of questions. Community members are concerned about sustainability, so all of the questions you are presenting are things we need to know and consider as we begin the relocation process.

CAC Member: Is it possible to distribute money to current residents and allow them to find housing on their own rather than placing them in one multi-family unit?

Project Manager: Single-family parcels are limited. However, residents have choices about the type housing in which they would like to relocate. SCDOT's responsibility is provide choices and comparable pricing. We will encourage people to use their benefits package to move towards long term stability in affordable housing. Every resident will not choose affordable housing. SCDOT cannot force residents to make housing decisions.

CAC Member: Has SCDOT conducted a survey to assess the types of housing residents currently own or rent and where they will move as a result of this project?

Project Manager: SCDOT has conducted a relocation study. The results of the study provided information on the number of displacements the project will require, specifically in the four communities that center around the I-26/I-526 system to system interchange. In the relocation study the team looked at all of the different types of housing that will be impacted, whether single-family homes, apartment duplexes, etc. Then they look at the market and determine the availability of housing that would be comparable to the housing in this region. The study also indicated that there are limited affordable housing options available in the Charleston and Tri-County region, not enough to absorb the number of displacements that will be experienced.

Project Manager: Past expansion projects have broken up the communities numerous times. SCDOT does not want to disrupt the communities beyond what is minimally required. The intent is not to move people out of communities they have lived in their entire lives, but everyone will be given a choice. However, SCDOT cannot relocate 150 people, the approximate number of displaced units estimated in North Charleston. SCDOT is trying to identify whether or not the owners of some of the vacant lots in the area would be interested in selling. Once SCDOT has purchased lots it is fairly easy to secure builders, get plans, and build homes. We are also considering other active developments. We have to give people options because if they are in a single-family home that they own, they will probably want another single-family home. SCDOT generally relocates people in the same type of housing they are being displaced from or better, but the choice will be left to individual residents.

CAC Member: I would like to see SCDOT visit every resident that will be displaced and ask them where they want to live. The current residents may not want or need to be relocated but will be stuck with apartments that typically bring another set of concerns.

Project Manager: [In terms of community perceptions] Is there a difference between apartments versus the duplexes?

CAC Member: Apartments have denser occupancy so there may be 10 families in a building, while duplexes only house two families. There is likelihood of crime and police calls.

CAC Member: Liberty Park and Highland Terrace are supposed to be single-family dwelling only. What about modular homes? Community members have protested modular homes at City Hall in the past because they reduce the appraisal value for a stick-built house. Are modular homes included in this project or just stick-built houses?

Project Manager: We generally like to upgrade residents. I am not familiar with the community's perceptions of modular homes. What are the community's perceptions?

CAC Member: Are we speaking of modular homes or mobile homes? Modular homes are more expensive. They are basically stick-built homes. They are just built in a factory and brought to the location in parts.

CAC Member: A mobile home can be moved. A modular home is permanent.

CAC Member: Main concern is whether new homes will be slab-built houses as opposed to homes built with a crawl space. Also, it appears the project will use/purchase many of the vacant lots in Liberty Park and Highland Terrace, but I am not aware of many families that live in the area.

Project Manager: We have identified a number of families. Some single-family homes are occupied by renters. SCDOT is collecting that type of information as people visit the Office to discuss right-of way. I encourage residents to visit the Office to find out if they are going to be displaced and to begin developing a plan for relocation.

CAC Member: As a long-term resident of Liberty Park and Highland Terrace, there are many renters in houses that do not remain in the community long-term.

Project Manager: Generally, we want to start off with single-family homes. We would build homes that are similar to all the other homes [in the community]. We are not going to build three-story houses that look completely different than other homes in the neighborhood. The CAC is here to help the project team begin conceptualizing what will be included in the mitigation package. That would include apartments with recreational areas and other amenities. SCDOT will draw a plan that will be presented to the CAC at the Open House to give you an opportunity to provide feedback. CAC input is important.

CAC Member: Joppa Way is a new neighborhood and is still growing. They have a selection of different style homes, but they fit into the community.

CAC Member: Is there the opportunity along the recreational areas to upgrade street lighting to help the overall community?

Project Manager: Yes. Not only is SCDOT providing replacement housing, but we have to mitigate for SCDOT's impact on affordable housing in North Charleston. If no one chooses to move into housing that we build, we still have to build housing because we're removing so many apartment complexes. Affordable housing units cannot be eliminated in this area of North Charleston without replacement units, regardless of who decides to live there. SCDOT has to mitigate the impact to your communities, even if you are not displaced, including beautification.

CAC Member: When the project is completed, the neighborhood is going to be much better, as long as we can all come together and create this opportunity.

Project Manager: That's why it is important not to focus on an isolated piece of property. When all the pieces come together, it will change the look and feel of the neighborhood. The project team will likely secure an expert to help determine ways to make the area less desirable for crime.

CAC Member: There is a difference between low-income housing and affordable housing. Affordable housing means you have to meet a median (income). There is sometimes confusion between low-income and affordable housing. Low-income is based directly on income. So, if someone has no income, they still qualify. Affordable housing means they have to have some income, and usually it's the median of the surrounding area. There will be some low-income residents to be displaced.

CAC Member: We don't want to make it a worse situation for everybody concerned. We do not want to replace single-family homes with placing many people in one apartment complex. We have seen the negative consequences of this in the past. I was very little when that happened years ago, but I remember the difference in having a family versus a ton of families move in.

Project Manager: We are waiting on the City of North Charleston to provide the zoning plan so that we understand their plans for the land. We also want to know what the community members want for their communities in the hopes that we can all come together. SCDOT is not authorized to dictate planning for neighborhood development. Community members carry more weight through this process than the City, but the City controls zoning. We have to agree at some point on how to proceed.

Program Manager: Approximately 150 residents will be relocated. The project team will have more exact numbers this fall. It is important to understand that 150 individual lots are not available in the area. Some residents have indicated they are not interested in staying the community. Some older residents have indicated they would like to relocate. They are going to represent a percentage of people who want to move out of the area. Even if half of residents want to stay, we are tasked with creating a lot of housing.

CAC Member: You mentioned you are looking at some vacant lots. Are you also looking at lots that are vacant, but have homes that are boarded up?

Project Manager: Yes, If you know the owners of any of these properties and they are willing to sell please refer them to the Office.

CAC Member: We can get you a list of the owners.

Project Manager: SCDOT has pulled that information, but we are currently focusing on the multi-family units because that is the most complex part of the project. Regarding single-family parcels, we are trying to purchase land. We monitor the MLS listings regularly.

CAC Member: We have not been able to obtain information about the City's 5- or 10-year plan.

Project Team Member: You have access to that information.

Project Manager: That is why it is important you understand that community members drive this process. We are bound by the same zoning laws that everybody else is. SCDOT cannot override zoning, so whatever we come up with in this process, the CAC (and community members) has some power. The City is going to want these infrastructure improvements because it helps them also. A part of completing this project is going through the process of mitigating and minimizing impacts. You have a powerful voice through this process.

Project Team Member: We are collecting information to support your decision-making process. We have mapping that shows the vacant underdeveloped parcels, proximity to transit, school district lines, voting district boundaries, etc. I would like to learn more about the demographics of renters. If renters are mostly young people of working age, they want to be closer to employment centers. The City has also updated their comprehensive plan which will be presented to City Council this month. As soon as it is released, the project team will provide the CAC with the City's future zoning maps.

Project Manager: The project team is actively coordinating on the design aspects of the project.

Project Team Member: Prepared materials already exist. You may have questions about how the bus rapid transit fits into this area or what the transit-oriented development on Rivers Avenue will look like.

Project Manager: North Charleston is developing the comprehensive plan in anticipation of the bus rapid transit system. Employment centers and housing must be located near the bus lines and trains. The community should help decide where the primary features of the system should be placed. The project team can help leverage what the community wants with the City.

CAC Member: We need affordable housing for low-income people. What sets the dollar value of what a low-income family is considered? Where is the dollar value? You need to be able to provide that affordable housing. I own property. There are no such things as low-income taxes, low-income city fees, low-income material to build a house. What is that dollar value that you need to be at to provide that?

Project Manager: SCDOT must ensure that we create comparable housing to the housing from which residents are being displaced. It will be a market rate apartment. The unit will be a brand new apartment, but the rent will be the same as the amount paid at the previous apartment.

CAC Member: I could not rent one of my older three-bedroom units for \$700. How are you going to do that with a new unit?

Project Manager: The Senate's tax credit program offers tax credits and seed money. That helps off-set the difference and we get first rights on those units. The residents who are being displaced under this project have priority in being placed in these units. They still have to pay their rent and meet the requirements of their lease.

CAC Member: There was a shortage of apartments prior to the proposed highway expansion. How long will the tax credit apply for renters? Will the rates increase after a certain amount of time?

Project Manager: We are still collecting information for people who come into the Office to see whether they are Section 8 voucher holders or are currently receiving any kind of housing assistance. Some of those programs will be transferrable. There may be people in apartments that do not qualify. If we use tax credits for a sum of money, the housing will be affordable housing for the duration. We have to have some other options of housing for people that make too much money to be in that affordable housing. That is why we have to create single family homes, different levels of housing, and it helps us to know who we are displacing so that we can make sure we have options for everybody.

Facilitator: That is why it is important that people come into the Office so that the project team has a better understanding of the needs of the community.

CAC Member: Expressed concerns about what happened with the John C. Calhoun project. Residents were displaced and promised they would be able to move back into the community, but that did not happen. They were displaced and told they would be able to come back once the project was complete. Many residents fell through the cracks with the John C. Calhoun project.

Project Manager: That is why it is important that we move people directly into housing when they are displaced, and not move them somewhere else with a promise of housing them when the expansion is complete. That is too risky. We have learned our lesson. SCDOT is trying to avoid mistakes of the past by placing residents in relocation housing as a part of project.

CAC Member: There are residents in the Ferndale community who are renting single-family homes without a working bathroom, kitchen sink, and holes in the floor. They don't report it because they are afraid of being evicted with no place to go. Some landlords get away with that. We want to make sure that landlords are held accountable.

Project Manager: SCDOT is not in the business of property management. We meet with the Housing Authority regularly. They have a vigorous program. They were moving away from building their own housing, instead using incentives to partner with developers and holding them to the wire. That is key. They have the resources to ensure enforcement and inspection annually.

Project Team Member: We are looking at titles on some of the potential properties. Sometimes, acquiring property titles can take a long time and that can put us behind. We are trying to learn lessons from other projects across the country and not make the same mistakes here.

CAC Member: In 1987, the Housing Authority was more rigorous, but now you have to do your own walk-throughs (inspections). Now, I write that into my contracts.

Project Manager: The inspection program is a lot more rigorous on apartments under the tax credit program.

CAC Member: Warned against slum landlords that just want the money and do not maintain the property.

CAC Member: Revisited the John C. Calhoun project where people did not meet the requirements to move back in, and asked if there is a mitigation plan for displaced residents who spent time in prison and have a felony record, but are required to have a background check. Is there a mitigation plan to ensure people who fall into this category will qualify for the tax credit?

Project Manager: Those are considerations SCDOT is currently discussing with the Housing Authority because we have to make sure that we can provide safe, decent, and sanitary housing to everyone we displace - to everyone, no matter what. We are meeting on a regular basis with the Housing Authority to determine the best way to move forward because we know there are section 8 voucher holders that will be displaced. We want to make sure that we mitigate for the affordable housing impact the project is presenting. Regardless of whether they move into a unit that we create, a market-rate apartment, or a house, SCDOT is required to provide housing for everyone displaced.

CAC Member: Will residents be allowed to take the money and relocate where they want?



Project Manager: No.

FHWA: You have to spend the money to receive the money, then provide SCDOT with assurances the money was spent appropriately.

CAC Member: So, it's like reimbursement?

CAC Member: I believe we have a lot of members here who own or manage property. Are they a part of the meeting to determine how to manage properties?

Project Manager: No. The meetings that take place are between two state agencies to determine if they can partner with each other to mitigate for affordable housing under their existing programs and with funding SCDOT is required to spend towards those efforts.

CAC Member: Can the property owners take part in those meetings to serve in an advisory capacity?

Project Manager: No. Developers who develop their own property are going to compete to get the contract. Developers cannot help develop the procurement details because they would have an unfair advantage in securing contracts. The Housing Authority and SCDOT are partnering through the regular tax credit program to build some of the housing that falls within the mitigation plan of this project in North Charleston.

CAC Member: I think what he is asking is whether SCDOT will partner with a private individual .

Project Manager: No. We are not set up to manage that. The Housing Authority is set up to do that.

CAC Member: You have members of this council who are property owners and who have a better understanding of what needs to be done and what should be done. Can they be a part of the advisory for [property] management?

Project Manager: That's part of your role as a CAC member, to help come up with mitigation strategies. In our next meeting, we will begin developing real concepts upon which the project team can produce drawings. We will move into different phases. After the mitigation plan is finalized, we will begin the implementation phase. The CAC's role is to advise the project team through the entire process.

CAC Member: I did not go into business to support low-income housing. When I bought property, I bought property to gain as much money as I can as a businessman. That is what I have done. This is something you are going to be fighting against, especially with landowners like myself. I do not want to be governed by an entity telling me how much I have got to accept for rent. I experienced this with my last Section 8 unit. I will not do it again. I do not want anyone to tell me how to run my business.

Project Team Member: These are good things to keep in mind once we get those maps in front of us and we start thinking about the kind of themes that we have talked about regarding revitalization versus redevelopment and how to make sure that some of the integrity of the neighborhoods is being preserved

and enhanced and that we're not doing things with this project that are creating other kinds of ripple effects such as gentrification. Be prepared to discuss this in detail at the next meeting.

### Highway Project Impacts

- Direct impacts to recreational facilities were discussed.
- Because of the proximity to the project, the Russelldale Community Center and Highland Terrace-Liberty Park Community Center will have to be relocated.
- The project team reviewed preliminary displacement totals and maps displaying the proposed new locations for each recreation facility. CAC Members were invited to look at maps in greater detail during the break.
- Cumulative Impacts from past highway projects (review of aerial maps of pre-and post I-26 and I-526 construction, in 1957 and 2018 respectively)
  - Historically, there were a significant number of homes on Taylor Street and in Highland Terrace; I-526 construction split the Russelldale community
  - CAC Member: Revisited concerns about SCDOT taking portions of property in the past and residents not having enough acreage to build or profit from sale of the land parcel
- Project Manager: With the current project, everyone has the right to express concerns about property damage associated with taking partial parcels of land, and make a decision to relocate. The difference in the relocation process today is that local governments have requirements on how far back houses must be from the road.
  - If SCDOT violates those requirements, they must pay damages. Because most of the neighborhoods have smaller lots, it is likely many of them will have setback violations.
  - If a resident stays in a home that violates setback requirements and their home is destroyed by hurricane or fire, they cannot rebuild, and they still end up having to move. Some people take that because they would rather receive \$30,000 in damages and the fair market price of the land and stay there or decide to relocate because they do not meet the requirements.
- CAC Member asked how SCDOT handles renters who decide not to stay, but want to use the money for relocation, if they have identified a place of residency outside of the project area.
- Project Manager: A Right-of-Way workshop was held in which these questions were reviewed. She offered to talk with the CAC member one-on-one to address remaining questions.
  - Right-of-Way experts are at the Office to answer any related questions on Wednesdays.
- CAC Member: If a renter has to move, would they be eligible for moving expenses?
- Project Manager: Renters are eligible to receive benefits of moving expenses, real estate services, and supplemental rent for up to 42 months.
  - SCDOT must ensure that new units are comparable, but, safe, decent, and sanitary
  - A formula is used to determine the minimum number of bedrooms a replacement unit can have based on the number of individuals that currently live in the home
  - Because supplemental rent is limited to 42 months, SCDOT encourages residents to consider the affordable home option which will have longer term benefits of 30-50 years. SCDOT does not want to create a situation that is unsustainable for residents if they are unable to maintain rental payments beyond the 42-month window. If they have an income increase, they will still have to find another place to live.
- Project Manager: Job training should be a part of the Community Mitigation Plan

- CAC Member: That is why it is important for residents who are being displaced to visit the Office
- Project Manager: Would like to see the Office be successful in offering workshops such as contractor job training, financial planning, and resume writing.
- Project Team Member: Completed review of Past Impacts from Highway Projects and Community-wide cumulative and recurring EJ Impact

### **Developing the CAC Vision Statement**

CAC decided to adopt the draft vision statement provided by the project team which states, “A diverse and engaged group of residents working together, embracing new ideas to develop an equitable and inclusive approach to address project-related impacts and contribute to building a sustainable, healthy, and safe community.”

### **Brainstorming Session: Potential Mitigation Ideas**

- Project Manager/Project Team provided clarification for the term mitigation and the difference between right-of-way and mitigation within the context of this project.
  - Mitigation means to offset negative/cumulative impacts.
  - Right-of-way is the part of the project in which you have to spend the money provided for relocation.

Project Manager provided clarification on the difference between mitigation and right-of-way. Right-of-way requires that you spend the money to get the money. Mitigation is an overarching approach to offsetting impacts to the community. In the right-of-way process, we will interact with every renter. In the case of the I-526 construction, how were the apartments that were there before construction impacted? What was the community like? Was there crime before I-526 was constructed? Did the construction of I-526 being so close to those apartments devalue them and make it less desirable to live there? All of these things are considered impacts and those are things for which we are trying to mitigate. How do we replace those apartments in a way that makes it better or returns it to the same quality as it was before I-526 was constructed? We have to do mitigation regardless of whether anybody who is displaced chooses to live there. We are still required to mitigate for affordable housing.

CAC Member: Has SCDOT considered surveying how many residents would settle for a payment for moving?

Project Manager: SCDOT is required to follow federal laws that dictate the process. I have to comply with federal laws. People will make their own decisions about where they want to move. We are required to move them into a new residence that is safe, decent, and sanitary.

CAC Members: Expressed concerns about some residents taking relocation funds and spending them on items unrelated to housing and relocation. The Program Manager emphasized that as the reason controls are in place, to reduce mishandling of allocated funds.

CAC Member: Giving people money to spend it on housing as they wished is a quicker, easier approach than building a 200-unit apartment complex.

Program Manager: But that would not mitigate for the impacts to the community because of construction. Our focus is on whether the quality of those apartments was diminished because they were 20 feet from

the Interstate. Moving relocated residents into subpar housing would not be mitigating, but rather perpetuating a problem.

Project team member: We are going to talk about the recreational facilities and replacement locations for those facilities.

Maps of proposed new recreational facility locations were reviewed. Highland Terrace-Liberty Park Community Center is a Section 6(f) property. That means the property or a portion of the property was purchased with Land and Water Conservation Act funding. When you impact that type of property, you need to find a replacement location of comparable appraisal value. We are essentially trying to recreate something of the same value or better under the 6(f) requirements. An additional federal regulation guiding the project is Section 4(f), of the U. S. Department of Transportation Act. This is related to the Russelldale Community Center. Under federal law, we are required to mitigate the impact. Early public involvement is a part of both processes.

CAC Member asked if the plan was to place both recreation facilities back in their respective communities. [Project team member responded yes]. CAC member did not think that would happen.

CAC Member: The new location will present a little longer walk, but that is where the sidewalks could come in under the highways. The City has expressed a desire to have a more centralized community center with a gymnasium and indoor classrooms where they can host afterschool activities. Pocket parks are also being considered.

CAC Member: Liberty Park and Highland Terrace are already compact communities. Where will a new recreational facility be placed?

Program Manager: The City already owns larger lots in Liberty Park. So our initial goal would be to determine whether some of the surrounding landowners would be interested in selling some of their property to combine into a single, larger parcel. The City owns the lots next to Filbin Creek.

CAC Member: Is that off of Dorothy Williams, where the drainage ditch is located? That is a lowland area.

Project team member: That is one of the things that could work in our favor because you can put features such as picnic shelter and playgrounds in those low areas.

Project Manager: That area has some flooding, but we are required to do a full hydraulic study as a part of this project. That will address some of the issues with drainage.

CAC Member: When it rains, Taylor Street floods.

Project Manager: The bridge on Rivers Avenue holds everything back. There is a culvert and a bridge that is not allowing the water to flow through. We are currently studying that to see what happens when we replace that bridge, how it affects flooding upstream and downstream. The current proposed location for the recreational facilities is the ideal area to get a big enough piece of property combined with the city property to potentially build. The facility would have a nice indoor facility with computer classrooms and indoor gymnasiums and some outdoor amenities. We are also hopeful we can secure smaller parcels for

playgrounds close to the communities. You will also have the after school events center that's upgraded and a much nicer facility.

CAC Member: Recommended not using the small wooded lots in the back corner due to safety reasons. The Project Manager acknowledged the feedback.

CAC Member advised that two things are made clear before entering into an agreement: (1) how the facility will be used and what types of limitations will be placed on the residents to use it. (2) Determine whether people will allow their children to go to the facility, if it is not centrally located

Project Manager: Our understanding is that the Russelldale and Highland Terrace/Liberty Park facilities are very well used, both for afterschool and for community events. SCDOT will not own these facilities. Although SCDOT is building the facilities, we are giving them to the City as an asset. Ownership will belong to the City, but we can place stipulations on how the facility is used to better ensure community members are able to use them.

Project team member: The new athletic center may work in our favor in terms of making the recreational facilities a community focus. There may be parking limitations that would require more land for facilities and make it less enticing. The goal is to make it more walkable.

- The Social Needs Assessment identified service for seniors, youth employment opportunities, and supervised after school youth activities as primary concerns. The project team can ensure those elements are being addressed in the relocation of facilities from staff with the city. We want to ensure connectivity for all residents. Children in Joppa Way walk home across the railroad tracks from the Highland Terrace-Liberty Park Community Center. Rail safety is important.
- Brainstorming should include high level ideas. CAC members may consider writing down thoughts to bring to the next meeting. Potential areas to discuss:
  - What resources are lacking?
  - What are preferable locations?
  - Based on the maps provided, what do you think about the potential locations? What are optimal locations considering multiple facilities?
  - What are some of the resources you would like to see?
  - Should computers and fax machines be included as resources at the community center?
  - Including amenities such as walking trail, shaded play areas, picnic tables, grills, benches, pickleball, bike racks, lockers, outdoor drinking water fountains and space for a community garden

CAC Member would like have books at the recreational facilities.

Project team member: Noted that libraries are South and North, but none in close proximity to the impacted communities.

CAC Member: Will recreational facilities monitor for crime? Expressed concerns about local police unfamiliarity with streets in their communities, and lack of police presence less than three blocks from City Hall. Residents need to have casual (non-emergency) patrols through the neighborhood occasionally.

CAC Members: Installation of cameras for security.

Project team member: Encouraged CAC members to complete the brainstorming worksheet. Additionally, two hard copy resources were distributed during the meeting: Planning for Equity and Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED). These documents will be discussed at the next meeting.

### Public Outreach Updates

- During the month of February, the Office had 14 visits
- Managed 5 calls (February 2020); Made calls to residents who provided comments after the Public Information Meeting public comment period
- No calls received on the toll free line; To-date, the Office has answered 11 calls
- The January 25th Open House was successful. There were approximately 58 people, including about 10 CAC members, one elected official and one city official
- At the beginning of March, office hours will change to Monday thru Friday, 10 AM – 6 PM. Staff will accept appointments for meetings outside regular office hours. Right-of-way experts are in the office on Wednesdays from 10 AM – 4 PM, both walk-ins and appointment.
- Flyers are being distributed in venues such as churches. CAC members were asked to review them and provide any suggestions for additional content so that information provided remains relevant to the community.

### Community Outreach Liaisons”

- Conducted two ride-along canvassing efforts on January 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Leaflets placed in doors or mail slots.
- The January 25<sup>th</sup> Open House focused on the Russelldale community. Recommend hosting more open house events.
- Canvassing will be held leading up to any event
- The Office will have a booth for the EJ Mitigation Project at the Black Expo on March 14<sup>th</sup> at the Charleston Area Convention Center from 10 AM - 5 PM.
- March 19<sup>th</sup> MUSC Senior Expo, 9AM – 1 PM, Charleston Area Convention Center
- First in the series of Informational Workshops will be held on March 21<sup>st</sup>. Capacity for the session is approximately 20. Consultants will rotate different topics each quarter. Topics will be selected from a list of 8-9 topics selected by Maxim Consulting. Three sessions will be held during each Informational Workshop:
  - 9-10:15 AM
  - 11 AM-12:15 PM
  - 1:00-2:15 PM
- Subsequent Informational Workshops will be held on June 20, September 19, and January 2021, for which a specific date has not yet been identified.
- CAC Members encouraged to use the meeting space as a resource and to notify the Office of events that are held throughout the area that may be beneficial to the community such as the Black Expo or MUSC Senior Expo. This includes events at local churches, including health fairs.
- Community Liaisons attended the recent Ferndale Community meeting
- Project team member: Proposed Meet Your Community Advisory Council Open Houses where the draft mitigation plan would be available as a resource when residents visit the Office to ask CAC members questions. Renderings can be made available. Target timeframe is April 2020.

- Outreach will be conducted before the CAC Open House is held.

#### Summary and Next Steps

- Review project schedule
- CAC Member: Asked that the Mitigation Process also addresses the effects on Senior Citizens.
- Facilitator: How is the senior population, particularly those who may be disabled and unable to visit the Office, informed and included in the mitigation process
  - Community Liaison – Home visits will provide better information on senior and disabled populations. This will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
  - Transportation can be provided
  - Contact the Senior Center on Dorchester Road

**CAC Meeting #6 is scheduled for March 7, 2020 beginning at 10:00 AM until 2:00 PM at the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor Community Office, 5627 Rivers Avenue, N. Charleston, SC.**

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