

Appendix Z

Comment Tracking and Responses



Categories

Header	Description
Noise	Concerned with traffic noise
Positive Meeting Experience	Expressed they received the information they needed or thought it was a successful meeting
Meeting Request	Expressed they would like to speak with someone from the project team about a specific question
Specific Question	Asked a specific question that need immediate answer
ROW Concerns	Concerned with losing property or amenities, or concerned for others losing property or amenities
Other	
BikePed Lanes	Mentioned bike lanes or pedestrian lanes
Bus Lanes/BRT	Mentioned lanes specifically for buses or Bus Rapid Transit
Transit	Talked about any type of transit options
Affordable Housing	Concerned with cost of house increasing and lack of affordable housing options
Environmental Concerns	Talked about any type of environmental concern, including flooding, wetlands, air pollution, water pollution, animal habitat, etc.
Maintain access to Rivers	Specifically mentioned needing Rivers Avenue access
Supportive of: 1	Specifically said they support Alternative 1
Supportive of: 1A	Specifically said they support Alternative 1A
Supportive of: 2	Specifically said they support Alternative 2
Supportive of: 2A	Specifically said they support Alternative 2A
Concerns RE N. Rhett	Specifically mentioned N. Rhett and having concerns there
Managed Lanes	Brought up any sort of managed lane (bus, toll, HOV)
No Build	Specifically said they do not support this project; does not include comments that said to go back and look at other alternatives
MCX	Comment related to the Mark Clark Extension Project or we thought they were likely talking about this project

Community Drop IN Meetings

ID	Comment	Date Received	Source	Actual Response	Date Sent	Delivery Method	Noise	Positive Meeting Experience	Meeting Request	Specific Question	ROW Concerns	Other	Bike Lanes	Bus Lanes	Transit	Affordable Housing	Environmental Concerns	Maintain access to Rivers	Supportive of: 1	Supportive of: 1A	Supportive of: 2	Supportive of: 2A	Prefer N. Rhett 1	Prefer N. Rhett 2	Concerns RE N. Rhett	Managed Lanes	No build
CDI1	Meeting was helpful. Got questions answered. :)	11/9/2019	Community Drop-In - Biblical	Follow up phone call from Community Office, Letter and FAQ Document	11/15/2019	Phone Call, Email		1																			
CDI2	Concerned about church location on 2355 James Belle Dr. Enoch Chapel UM Church; Pastor Rev. Victoria Richardson needs info and would like to make an appointment.	11/9/2019	Community Drop-In - Biblical	Follow up phone call from Community Office, Letter and FAQ Document	11/15/2019	Phone Call, Email			1																		
CDI3	Are they going to make a road coming from Aviation to Highland Terrace?	11/9/2019	Community Drop-In - Biblical	Follow up phone call from Community Office, Letter and FAQ Document	11/15/2019	Phone Call, Email				1																	
CDI4	Have active variable speeds; in high (heavy traffic) close right truck lane; add bike lanes; fix ashley phosphate interchange as all this wont work unless the major choke point is not fixed	11/9/2019	Community Drop-In - Biblical	Letter and FAQ Document	5/5/2020	Mailed Letter						1															
CDI5	The Paramount Road/I-526 crossings are badly rutted, pot holed and deteriorating.	11/9/2019	Community Drop-In - Biblical	Follow up phone call from Community Office, Letter and FAQ Document	11/15/2019	Phone Call, Email						1															
CDI6	As a personal concern, what happens with a second parcel of property than is corner off or at dead ends. 5280 and 5274 Deacon Street. Call when SCDOT is getting into final phases.	11/9/2019	Community Drop-In - Biblical	Follow up phone call from Community Office, Letter and FAQ Document	11/15/2019	Phone Call					1																
CDI7	I-526 new CD Road, Can that be higher? Raised up so that it can be higher and closer to the existing road at Langston and further back	11/9/2019	Community Drop-In - Biblical	Follow up phone call from Community Office, Letter and FAQ Document	11/15/2019	Phone Call						1															
CDI8	Concern about noise level from the airport and transportation of cars from the interstate. Plans for property without buildings should be communicated even if it is tentative.	11/13/2019	Community Drop-In - Ferndale	Letter and FAQ Document	5/5/2020	Mailed Letter	1				1																
CDI9	Consider connecting Center Point Drive to Mall Drive, allowing for 2 way traffic.	11/13/2019	Community Drop-In - Ferndale	Letter and FAQ Document	5/5/2020	Mailed Letter						1															
CDI10	Very Informative and good information received. My questions and concerns were answered.	11/13/2019	Community Drop-In - Ferndale	Letter and FAQ Document	5/5/2020	Mailed Letter		1																			
CDI11	Please keep access ramps as shown in 1A&2A. Concerned if that is removed all the traffic for the Tanger area would move to Montague, Mall drive, Remount and Aviation.	11/13/2019	Community Drop-In - Ferndale	Letter and FAQ Document	5/5/2020	Mailed Letter											1		1		1						
CDI12	Concerned that the most impacted community will benefit least esp if current access to Rivers is removed; Safety on 526 a concern if police leave it unchecked still; Consider impacts of residents on other times than rush hour. The access to 526 along Rivers improves accessibility form many other areas during non-work hours for shopping, medical, recreational, education opps; Early education (on the project) is so appreciated. Your staff has been very informative); Suggests using other community resources such as churches like Royal Missionary Baptist , Charity Babtpist and Liberty Hill Community Groups; Happy to hear planning being done in winder spans than 20 years.	11/13/2019	Community Drop-In - Ferndale	Letter and FAQ Document	5/5/2020	Mailed Letter		1										1									
CDI13	Fix Ashley Phosphate Exit	11/14/2019	Community Drop-In - Life Changers	Follow up phone call from Community Office, Letter and FAQ Document	11/15/2019	Phone Call, Email						1															
CDI14	Provide bus and bike lanes	11/14/2019	Community Drop-In - Life Changers	Letter and FAQ Document	5/5/2020	Mailed Letter							1	1					1		1						

ID	Comment	Date Received	Source	Actual Response	Date Sent	Delivery Method	Noise	Positive Meeting Experience	Meeting Request	Specific Question	ROW Concerns	Other	Bike Lanes	Bus Lanes	Transit	EJ/Affordable Housing	Environmental Concerns	Maintain access to Rivers	Supportive of: 1	Supportive of: 1A	Supportive of: 2	Supportive of: 2A	Prefer N. Rhett 1	Prefer N. Rhett 2	Concerns RE N. Rhett	Managed Lanes	No Build
PIM19	Wants someone involved in hydrology to call him. iNterested in learning proposed plans to reduce residents around Filbin Creeks' flood insurance policy.	11/19/2019	PIM	Letter and FAQ Document	5/5/2020	Mailed Letter			1								1										
PIM20	Would like more focus on non-car transportation such as bikes or public transprotation.	11/19/2019	PIM	Letter and FAQ Document	5/5/2020	Mailed Letter							1	1	1												
PIM21	The Orleans Rd/ Paul Cantrell intersection needs to be addressed. Northbound Orleans road backs up through the previous intersection on a routine basi. The turn lane from International to West 526 needs more storage. (traffic in turn lane backs up into left thru-lane)	11/19/2019	PIM	Letter and FAQ Document	5/5/2020	Mailed Letter																					
PIM22	Great presentation. Please consider making a bus lane part of the plan; proposing more solid plans for noise control; flood impact plan/proposal; let us know what it will cost	11/19/2019	PIM	Letter and FAQ Document	5/5/2020	Mailed Letter	1	1						1													
PIM23	Very Concerned! Basically backs up to his property: Road Noise, Home Value, Flooding. Really worried about the harm this will have on his financial future and enjoyment of life.	11/19/2019	PIM	Letter and FAQ Document	5/5/2020	Mailed Letter	1				1						1										
PIM24	Very good information. Thanks for the postcard notificatio!	11/19/2019	PIM	Letter and FAQ Document	5/5/2020	Mailed Letter		1																			
PIM25	Lane reversal component of 526/26 for emergency evacuation	11/19/2019	PIM	Letter and FAQ Document	5/5/2020	Mailed Letter						1															
PIM26	We do NOT need another highway! The 1/2 percent sales tax was/is to go ot mass transit. Nix 526 and give us some good user-friendly environmnetally sound busses - mass transit for all.	11/19/2019	PIM	Letter and FAQ Document	5/5/2020	Mailed Letter									1												
PIM27	Great plans. Needed very much. Phenomenal meeting, helpful staff. Please get started ASAP.	11/19/2019	PIM	Letter and FAQ Document	5/5/2020	Mailed Letter		1																			
PIM28	Concerns: Having to decide which travel lane to get int if you get in the wrong lane not being able to get over; People from outside the area navigating the 26/526 interchange. Trucks routed across N. Rhett. N. Rhett already backed up would like to see truck access to VA Ave. Fly over N Rhett to VA.	11/19/2019	PIM	Letter and FAQ Document	5/5/2020	Mailed Letter																			1		

ID	Comment	Date Received	Source	Actual Response	Date Sent	Delivery Method	Noise	Positive Meeting Experience	Meeting Request	Specific Question	ROW Concerns	Other	Bike/Ped Lanes	Bus Lanes	Transit	Affordable Housing	Environmental Concerns	Maintain access to Rivers	Supportive of: 1	Supportive of: 1A	Supportive of: 2	Supportive of: 2A	Prefer N. Rhett 1	Prefer N. Rhett 2	Concerns RE N. Rhett	Managed Lanes	No Build	MCK			
	I own the property at Corner of Rivers and Target. How will it be affected?	11/15/2019	Info@ Email	Tarrant – Our proposed I-526 WEST alternatives do not show any impacts to the corner of Rivers Avenue and Target Street. You can view all the alternatives and potential impacts online at this link: https://www.526lowcountrycorridor.com/virtual-public-meeting-112119/ . Or you are welcome to visit our community office at Gas Lite Square (5627 Rivers Avenue) and see all the maps and project information in person. The office is open Mon,	11/15/2019	Email					1																				
	Hi Joy, I hope you are doing well! I wanted to reach out – I know you guys have holding public meetings regarding the I-526 West project... Have you guys also been taking written comments/comments people are able to make online via some kind of form? Thank you,	11/15/2019	Info@ Email	Letter and FAQ Document	5/5/2020	Email					1																				
	Good morning! I'm trying to preview the two meetings coming up this week in regards to the 526 Lowcountry Corridor Project. I'm looking to get in touch with Ms. Joy Riley. If anyone can have Ms. Riley please get back to me, I'd really appreciate it!	11/18/2019	Info@ Email	Letter and FAQ Document	5/5/2020	Email					1																				
	Hi Joy, I just want to go on record as saying I don't particularly care whether I-526 is extended to Johns island or James Island. I do care, however, about its financing. I will consider it an absolute breach of promise if one red cent of the half-cent tax is used for it. That idea was dropped from the proposal we voted for only after I-526 was dropped from the list of projects the tax would pay for. Thank you. - Skip	11/19/2019	Info@ Email	Thank you for your comment. Please note that the www.526lowcountrycorridor.com is for the proposed improvements to the existing I-526 corridor. The Mark Clark Extension project information is available at https://www.scdot.markclark.com/ . I have forwarded your comments to the project manager for this project, Jae Mattox.	11/19/2019	Email																									

Date Contacted	TIME	Contact Type	Initial Voicemail Date	Initial Voicemail Comment	ID	TOPICS DISCUSSED	TOPIC MAIN SUBJECT	ACTION ITEMS	Actual Response	Date Sent	Delivery Method	Noise	Meeting	ETING Req	ific Ques	W Concer	Other	kePed	Lans	Lanes/B	Transit	idable Hou	mental Cn	access to	portive o	portive o	portive o	portive o	frms RE N	inaged La	No Build		
11/15/2019	2:06 PM	VOICEMAIL FOLLOW UP	11/15/2019	concerned about property in the area, and wanted to talk to someone about moving due to ROW	HOT1	Appointment with ROW personnel	ROW - Appointment	ROW appointment 2:00 PM Wednesday								1																	
11/27/2019		VOICEMAIL FOLLOW UP	11/26/2019	Has property in area and wanted to find out impact.	HOT2	pulled up google earth map to determine impact. No impact; really appreciated information.			Letter and FAQ Document	5/5/2020	Mailed Letter					1																	
12/3/2019	5:15 PM	VOICEMAIL FOLLOW UP	12/3/2019	Concerned about property, and wanted a call back ASAP. Had called multiple times. Wants to know who is in charge and wants to talk to someone directly.	HOT3	Ms White's home is in the impacted area & I told her that she can talk to the ROW folk who will be in this office every Wednesday. She can make an appointment. She said she also lives in Virginia and she will let me know when she can come in and talk to the ROW folk. she thanked me for listening	ROW - Property Impacted		Letter and FAQ Document	5/5/2020	Mailed Letter					1																	
12/13/2019		VOICEMAIL FOLLOW UP	12/13/2019	Parents live in area and wanted to know more information/impacts.	HOT4	Whether she and her relatives living on her street are impacted	ROW - Relatives/Others									1																	
1/9/2020		VOICEMAIL FOLLOW UP	1/8/2020	With Charleston Radio Group and wanted to talk with Joy Riley. Was interested to see if we had interest in radio marketing.	HOT5	Discussion of radio offerings	Marketing/advertising	Rawle Murdy called and received rates from Charleston Radio Group for placing ads									1																
1/13/2020	3:45 PM	CALL IN			HOT6	Called to set up ROW appt for 1/15/2020	ROW - Appointment	Left message for him to call with time of convenience on 01.15.2020	Letter and FAQ Document	5/5/2020	Mailed Letter					1																	
1/15/2020	11:21 AM	CALL IN			HOT7	Need to get an appointment with ROW	ROW - Appointment	Set the appointment to 1:00 PM Jan 22, 2020 and talked about open house	Letter and FAQ Document	5/5/2020	Mailed Letter					1																	
1/15/2020	2:55 PM	CALL IN			HOT8	Negative impact on property values and no compensation. His property will be devastated by the project. Amenities in Ashley Harbor will lose walking tracks, homes back up to boat storage. If there is a barrier wall 2 house west of where he is, his property unscalable.	Opposition to the Project	will forward concerns to project team leaders. His proposal: continue I-526 eastbound traffic moved back between 2 speeds of highway. but 2 more	Letter and FAQ Document	5/5/2020	Mailed Letter					1																	

Date Contacted	TIME	Contact Type	Initial Voicemail Date	Initial Voicemail Comment	ID	TOPICS DISCUSSED	TOPIC MAIN SUBJECT	ACTION ITEMS	Actual Response	Date Sent	Delivery Method	Noise	Meeting	ETING Req	ific Ques	W Concer	Other	kePed	Lans	Lanes/B	Transit	dable Hou	mental Cn	access to	portive o	portive o	portive o	portive o	frms RE N	inaged Lan	No Build	
		VOICEMAIL FOLLOW UP	12/12/2019, 12/20/19	Read and article that said something different from our website. He is trying to understand impacts to Rivers Ave. Owns property in the area. Called again after Horrace tried to call back but could not reach him.	HOT30		Does live at the address but has a business and is concerned about access	given website information and will call back if he has further questions	Letter and FAQ Docu	5/5/2020	Mailed Letter						1															
		VOICEMAIL FOLLOW UP	12/13/2019	Parents live at 1889 Waters Street. Want to know how the expansion is going to affect them. Lives right next to Salvation Army. Would like to have a community meeting.	HOT31		Questioned wheter her property would be impacted & her relatives on the street	Invited to the community office to discuss and to see maps	Letter and FAQ Docu	5/5/2020	Mailed Letter						1															
		VOICEMAIL FOLLOW UP	12/20/2019	Interested in information about overpass affecting Paul Cantrell (West Ashley). Would like a call back.	HOT32		concerned about interchange (overpass) at Paul Cantrell & Magwood	Invited to the community office to discuss and to see maps; she agreed	Letter and FAQ Docu	5/5/2020	Mailed Letter						1															
		VOICEMAIL FOLLOW UP	1/3/2020	Has property that fronts 26 and Glenn McConnel, wants to meet Joy at the office.	HOT33																											
		VOICEMAIL FOLLOW UP	1/6/2020	Has an appointment with ROW at 10:30 Wed. 1/8/2020, but cannot make it. Wanted to let the staff know.	HOT34		Called in to cancel the ROW appointment. They have a doctor's appointment at the same time	Row appointment 1/8/2020 cancelled									1															
		CALL IN	1/14/2020	Recently attended the Ashley Harbor meeting and wanted to speak with ROW. Wants to make an appointment.	HOT35		Need to get an appointment with ROW	Set the appointment to 1:00 PM Jan 22, 2020 and talked about open house	Letter and FAQ Docu	5/5/2020	Mailed Letter						1															
		CALL IN	1/15/2020	Thinks there is a public meeting tonight with MCX, wants to know more information via a phone call back.	HOT36		Negative impact of property values and no compensation. His property will be devastated by the project. Amenities in Ashley Harbor will lose walking tracks, homes back up to boat storage. If there is a barrier wall 2 house west of where he is, his property unsaleable. no accommodations for loss in equity. Property values will be decreased. "negative equity" no justification for widening to four lanes. not happy with project.	Opposition to the Project	will forward concerns to project team leaders. His proposal: continue I-526 eastbound traffic moved back between 2 speeds of highway. Put 2 more lanes of bridge project, no trucks in left lane, low speed limits for trucks. Lanes designated for exits only.								1															

May 5, 2020

«AddressBlock»

Re: Public Information Meetings and Community Meetings for I-526 LCC WEST Corridor Improvements
Charleston County, South Carolina

«GreetingLine»

Thank you for providing a comment during the official public comment period for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST (I-526 LCC WEST) project public information meeting held on November 21, 2019 (and/or accompanying virtual public meeting). Due to overwhelming public interest, the public comment period was extended from January 4, 2020 until January 31, 2020. Your interest in this project is appreciated.

As you know, the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) is proposing to make improvements to the I-526 LCC WEST between Paul Cantrell Boulevard in West Ashley and Virginia Avenue in North Charleston. The I-526 LCC WEST project also proposes upgrades to five interchanges along I-526: the I-526 at Paul Cantrell Boulevard interchange; the I-26/I-526 system-to-system interchange; the I-526 at Rivers Avenue interchange; the I-526 at North Rhett Avenue interchange; and the I-526 at Virginia Avenue interchange. The purpose of the I-526 LCC WEST project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/I-526 interchange and along the mainline from Paul Cantrell Boulevard to Virginia Avenue.

At the public information meeting, several project alternatives were recommended as reasonable and advanced for further study. These include one (1) reasonable alternative for the I-526 mainline widening; one (1) for the I-526 at Paul Cantrell Boulevard interchange; four (4) for the I-526/I-26 Interchange, including two (2) variations for the I-526 at Rivers Avenue interchange; and two (2) for the North Rhett/Virginia Avenue interchanges. During the comment period for the public information meeting, we received many comments concerning the number of trucks that would be required to pass through North Rhett Avenue as a result of both North Rhett/Virginia Avenue alternatives. Additionally, input regarding potential future traffic was provided by the North Charleston Terminal and Joint Base Charleston. These updated traffic numbers resulted in the development of Alternatives 2A, 5, and 6 as additional proposed Reasonable Alternatives for I-526 at North Rhett/Virginia Avenue interchange.

Individual maps (PDF format) of the reasonable alternatives, including the two new proposed reasonable alternatives at North Rhett and Virginia avenue, are provided on the project's website on the West Project Resources page (<https://www.526lowcountrycorridor.com/west/#Alternatives>). These maps are designed to be downloaded and provide you with the ability to zoom in and out of specific areas for a better look at each alternative. We invite you to review specific aspects of each proposed alignment if you have not already done so. These drawings (except for the new North Rhett/Virginia Avenue Alternatives 2A, 5, and 6), along with all the other information that was provided at the Public Information Meeting can be found at the following link: <https://www.526lowcountrycorridor.com/virtual-public-meeting-112119/#slide-2-alternatives-evaluation-criteria-and-alternatives>



As this project progresses through the planning phase with an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), SCDOT will continue exploring ways to improve the project and minimize impacts on the surrounding community, including human and natural resources. We will continue to focus our efforts on community involvement and communication to ensure the successful development of the proposed project.

Your interest in the I-526 LCC West project is valued, and SCDOT assures you that all suggestions, objections, and concerns are carefully considered before any final project decisions are made. Your comments have been entered into the public information meeting file and made part of the official record.

As a result of your comment or question, we have compiled a list of Frequently Asked Questions to provide you with the key project details you want to know. We encourage you to review the attached documents addressing the most Frequently Asked Questions for more detailed information on specific areas of concern and share these with your friends, neighbors, and colleagues. If you should have any further questions, please contact me directly at info@526lowcountrycorridor.com, or call (843.258.1135) or visit our Community Office in Gas Lite Square (5627 Rivers Avenue, North Charleston; CARTA Route 10) Monday – Friday 10 a.m.- 6 p.m. *Please note that in response to the current Covid-19 health concerns, the office hours have been modified to an appointment-only basis to ensure your safety. We encourage you to call ahead to confirm our hours as this situation progresses.* If these times do not work for your schedule, or you would like to set a one-on-one appointment with a right-of-way specialist to discuss your unique situation, please give us a call toll-free at 866.632.5262 or locally at 843.258.1135.

To stay engaged in the process, please visit our project website at www.526lowcountrycorridor.com/west/ to sign up for our newsletter, like us at www.facebook.com/526Corridor/, or follow us at twitter.com/526corridor.

Sincerely,



Joy Riley, P.E., PMP, DBIA
Project Manager– Lowcountry RPG
South Carolina Department of Transportation

cc: Chad Long – Environmental Services Office
David Kelly – Environmental Services Office
Will McGoldrick – Environmental Services Office

Enclosures: Asked & Answered: Frequently Asked Questions
Community Office Hours Insert



Environment

- ▶ **How will concerns about increased flooding of Filbin Creek be addressed by this project?**
The project team is currently performing detailed studies and will incorporate new drainage features as required to handle increased stormwater from the proposed improvements. More information on the hydraulic study results will be presented at the public hearing in late 2020.
- ▶ **How will the project minimize and mitigate impacts to wetlands?**
Field visits are being conducted to document the potential Waters of the United States including wetlands within the project study area. After efforts to avoid and minimize wetland and stream impacts are considered SCDOT will mitigate for unavoidable impacts to these resources. SCDOT will present the proposed compensatory mitigation plan at the public hearing in the late 2020.
- ▶ **What type of air quality analysis will be completed by the project?**
Air Quality refers to the condition of the air and level of pollutants such as smoke dust smog or other impurities. Air quality is assessed by measuring pollution indicators or criteria pollutants. Criteria pollutants are the only air pollutants with defined acceptable levels by national air quality standards. A quantitative air quality analysis will be performed for criteria pollutants including carbon monoxide and fine particulate matter as well as for mobile source air toxins for the entire project corridor. The air quality analysis is ongoing and information will be made available as the process continues.
- ▶ **Will any threatened and endangered species be impacted by the project?**
Coordination with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service about potential impacts to protected species and their habitats is required under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. The current status for protected species within Charleston County was provided by a review of the US Fish and Wildlife Service at-risk threatened and endangered species list. Field studies were then completed to review the habitat within the project study area to determine if suitable habitat for protected species exists within the project study area. Suitable habitat was found for the West Indian manatee Shortnose sturgeon Atlantic sturgeon and American wood stork; however no adverse impacts to these species are anticipated. Precautions during construction will be taken to avoid potential injury to the protected species and minimize impacts to their habitats within the project study area.



Still have questions? Come See Us.
5627 Rivers Avenue, North Charleston

Community Office Hours:
Mon-Fri: 10 AM - 6 PM
Available on YOUR schedule by
appointment!
Hours Subject to Change



866.632.5262 OR 843.258.1135



info@526LowcountryCorridor.com

Asked & Answered

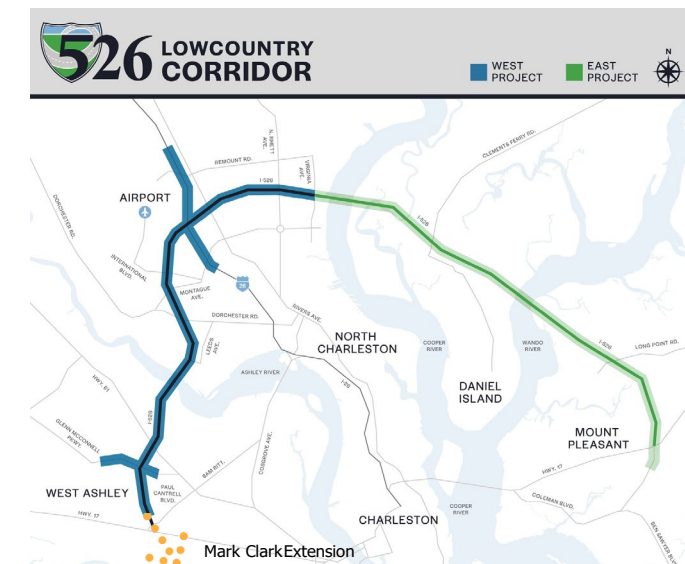
We've heard your questions & concerns.
Here are some answers.

Background

- ▶ **What are the priorities of the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor (I-526 LCC) WEST project?**
Based on traffic analysis the highest priority of the project is the improvement of the interchange between I-526 and I-26. This interchange is a bottleneck for both interstates and improvements to the I-526 / I-26 interchange would provide the greatest improvement to operations on the corridor. While most of the I-526 corridor is either currently over capacity or projected to soon be over capacity the other high-priority segments include the segment between I-26 and Virginia Avenue and the segment between Paul Cantrell Boulevard and Leeds Avenue.

- ▶ **What is the difference between the I-526 LCC and the Mark Clark Extension project?**

The I-526 Lowcountry Corridor project focuses on improvements to the EXISTING I-526 roadway network from Mount Pleasant to West Ashley. The Mark Clark Extension project would pick up at approximately the end of existing I-526 in West Ashley and connect the communities of Johns Island and James Island. For more information on the Mark Clark Extension project visit www.SCDOTMarkClark.com.



- ▶ **If the Mark Clark Extension is constructed, would widening still be necessary since I-526 would no longer dead-end at Sam Rittenburg?**

Yes. Construction of the Mark Clark Extension does not affect the total forecasted traffic volumes enough to change the number of lanes needed on existing I-526. Our analysis indicates the effects of the Mark Clark Extension are fairly minimal to I-526 actually increasing traffic over the Ashley River by approximately 8.7% in the westbound direction and 2.9% in the eastbound direction.

- ▶ **What happens next with the I-526 LCC WEST project?**

The project team will be working toward the recommendation of a preferred alternative over the coming months. This recommendation will be based on public feedback and a detailed evaluation of potential impacts to the human and natural environments. The recommended preferred alternative will be presented to the public at a public hearing in late 2020.

- ▶ **What is the funding source of the I-526 LCC WEST project?**



The project is being funded by Interstate System Upgrade funds (federal and state). These funds if not utilized for this interstate project would not be available for other non-interstate projects in the region.

Your Input is Valuable-- It Impacts our Alternatives Analysis!

Alternatives & Traffic

▶ Can you better explain the “No-Build” Alternative? What might the result be if nothing is done?

The No-Build or do nothing alternative is always evaluated as part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) alternatives evaluation process to provide a baseline for comparing potential benefits and environmental impacts of the other alternatives. The No-Build Alternative refers to the option to not make any improvements leaving the corridor as it currently is.

However there are considerations for the No-Build as well. For instance if no improvements are made future traffic congestion would continue to worsen. Today travelers of this corridor are already experiencing several areas with unacceptable delays congestion and the inability for backups to clear. This type of congestion can lead to increased safety concerns such as more frequent crashes. Additionally new infrastructure such as widened shoulders updated electrical and internet systems and bridge structures that can accommodate modern overhead signs would be required to incorporate this type of future “active traffic management.” This means in the No-Build Alternative we would be unable to incorporate managed lanes or other congestion management technologies that support alternative forms of transportation for single passenger vehicles to reduce traffic congestion.

▶ What is the difference between Alternatives 1/2 and Alternatives 1A/2A for the I-526 and I-26 system-to-system interchange? What does this mean for access to Rivers Avenue?

Because the Rivers Avenue and I-26 exits are so close these interchanges needed to be evaluated together. Therefore the I-526/I-26 alternatives include the Rivers Avenue interchange. The difference between Alternatives 1 and 1A is the same difference as between Alternatives 2 and 2A – how they handle access from Rivers Avenue to I-26. Alternatives 1 and 2 prevent those getting onto I-526 at Rivers Avenue from getting off at I-26. Alternatives 1A and 2A maintain the access that exists today allowing vehicles to merge onto I-526 and then immediately take the next exit to I-26. However this is accomplished by replacing the current ramps with new ramps designed to handle more vehicles more smoothly by eliminating the tight curves along those ramps. During the next stage of the alternative evaluation process the project team will conduct a detailed environmental impact analysis for each alternative and analyze the traffic and safety consequences of keeping or removing the access from Rivers Avenue along with the right-of-way impacts associated with each.

▶ I am concerned about the amount of truck traffic that may be added to North Rhett Avenue under both draft reasonable alternatives shown at the public meeting. Will this worsen the traffic on North Rhett Avenue?

As a result of public and agency feedback on the two alternatives presented at the public meetings for the North Rhett and Virginia Avenue interchange the project team has developed three additional alternatives. These will be called North Rhett/Virginia Avenue Alternatives 2A 5 and 6. These new alternatives recognize the increasing large volume of trucks between the existing Virginia Avenue exit and North Rhett Avenue interchange with I-526. They would not require that traffic go through North Rhett Avenue to access I-526. These alternatives have been posted to the project website at (www.526lowcountrycorridor.com/west/#Alternatives) for your review. If you have questions about these alternatives we encourage you to visit our Community Office.

▶ Why does Glenn McConnell only have a partial interchange concept?

The Glenn McConnell Parkway and Magwood Drive intersection causes traffic to back up over three miles on I-526 crossing the Ashley River and beyond Leeds Avenue. This also prevents other vehicles from moving along I-526. To eliminate this bottleneck the concept includes a bridge over Magwood Drive at Glenn McConnell but only in the westbound direction which would prevent traffic from backing up onto the interstate. This meets SCDOT’s project goals to improve operations on I-526. The concept is adaptable to a full interchange improvement in the future if additional funding becomes available

▶ Couldn’t SCDOT eliminate the need for widening the West Ashley portion of I-526 if you simply fixed the interchanges with Paul Cantrell Boulevard and US 17?

The traffic entering from Paul Cantrell Boulevard to eastbound I-526 (going toward North Charleston) is at a point of unacceptable levels of congestion with a high concentration of crashes. This merge point is a key bottleneck for the interchange and for eastbound traffic on I-526. The added eastbound lanes that begin at this point in the build alternative eliminate this problem and are a part of this interchange fix. Traffic studies indicate I-526 needs a two-lane exit ramp in the westbound direction to Paul Cantrell Boulevard and three lanes beyond.

▶ How do these alternatives fit into a broader transportation and development strategy that moves us away from cars and toward other forms of transportation?

With the growth and future travel demands in this region the SCDOT knows that simply adding capacity is not going to be the sole long-term solution for congestion in this corridor. However there are many basic infrastructure needs that must be addressed in order to implement new technologies known as “Active Traffic Management.” These strategies such as variable speed limits ramp metering managed lanes and opening up shoulders during peak times not only require additional lane capacity but also other new infrastructure such as upgraded electrical systems and internet capabilities. The current alternatives presented “pave the way ” quite literally for these types of future alternative traffic management strategies.

▶ Will adding more lanes just increase the traffic on I-526?



Regional traffic models as well as rush-hour observations indicate that because of congestion commute times have increased. The primary result of adding more lanes would be reduced travel times for those currently using I-526. Those currently using other longer routes for their commutes because of the congestion and frequency of crashes on I-526 may choose to use I-526 in the future. This “latent traffic demand” consists of trips that are not new but will be attracted to I-526 with added capacity. This is accounted for in the project’s future traffic forecasts.

Your Input is Valuable -- It Impacts our Alternatives Analysis!

▶ Why can't SCDOT just convert an existing lane to a bike, carpool (HOV) or truck lane instead of widening?

SCDOT studied the application of managed lanes such as carpool and high occupancy toll lanes (HOT) on both I-526 and I-26 to offset the general capacity widening needs. A carpool or HOV lane must have two or more occupants in their vehicle. A HOT lane requires the vehicle to have either two or more occupants or to pay a toll for use. A regional approach involving a connected system of managed lanes between both interstates would be necessary to attract the needed users. Such a system would have to extend west on I-26 a long distance possibly as far as University Boulevard. HOV and HOT lanes are only successful when humans shift their behavior to riding with more than one person in a vehicle or pay a toll. Other limitations include the space required to access the managed lane system.

State requirements do not allow SCDOT to convert an existing general purpose lane to a managed lane, nor do they allow bike traffic to intermingle with interstate vehicular traffic. Even if it were a possibility converting one lane to a managed lane would reduce the number of general flow lanes down to one. This would cause an unacceptable slow down potentially even gridlock.

On I-526 west of I-26 trucks are only approximately 5% of the total traffic and approximately 12% of the total traffic east of I-26. While trucks do affect overall operations because of their size designating one lane for trucks and the single remaining lane for 87% to 95% of the remaining traffic would result in system gridlock.

To accommodate any of these types of alternatives an investment in additional infrastructure and lane widths is required. As part of the proposed widening alternatives twelve-foot shoulders are included to provide the needed future infrastructure to implement these types of alternatives.

▶ Will the project team consider a bike/ped path like the one over the Ravenel Bridge?

Bike and pedestrian improvements have been identified along the I-526 corridor in the Walk-Bike Plans developed by the local transportation planning organization. The project team has evaluated bike and pedestrian improvements as part of this project in accordance with this local plan. The current alternatives do not prohibit the addition of bike and pedestrian improvements in the future. Typically bikes and pedestrians are prohibited on interstates. However in regions where there are limited corridor connections across major water crossings shared use pathways could be considered if properly protected from high speed vehicular traffic. For instance these types of paths would have to be placed behind controlled access fencing or a barrier separation with an appropriate shoulder distance. However current funding limitations do not allow for the funding of all the improvement priorities on this corridor. During the development of this project the project team will work to identify opportunities through surplus rights of way for a future shared-use pathway along this corridor.

▶ Will the project be obsolete by the time it is completed? Will it keep up with the growth in the region?

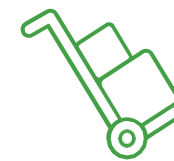
Typically SCDOT's goal is to build a project that will still function efficiently approximately 20 years after completion of construction. For this project we're designing a project for 2050. When SCDOT designs a project several factors such as current and future land use are analyzed to estimate the future use of the roadway. To do so we coordinate with the Charleston Area Transportation Study (CHATS) the local transportation planning organization to include future uses of the roadway and regional growth trends. That analysis is then used to design the facility (roadway bridge etc.) to accommodate the estimated future traffic capacity.

Relocation & Right-Of-Way Impacts

▶ How will I know if I'm in the path of the I-526 LCC WEST project?

If you think your property may be impacted by the I-526 LCC WEST project which runs from Virginia Avenue in North Charleston to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in West Ashley we encourage you to give us a call or come by our community office (843.258.1135 5627 Rivers Avenue North Charleston). While all maps and materials are available online we are able to look up your address and confirm if you are in the path of any of the proposed alternatives and even provide the approximate distance. If so we can provide you with a one-on-one appointment with a right-of-way specialist to better understand the process and your rights as a property owner or a renter.

▶ How do I learn more about relocation benefits?



To learn more about potential relocation benefits we encourage you to give us a call or send us an email to schedule an appointment with our right-of-way specialists. Every situation is different so it is important to speak one-on-one about your unique circumstances to better understand the process and your rights. **This is true for homeowners, renters, and business tenants.**

▶ What if I need to relocate but equivalent housing is not available?

When a highway project in South Carolina leads to people being relocated a preliminary survey is conducted by SCDOT of the types of housing impacted and the availability of replacement housing in the area. The right-of-way agents working on the project will personally interview you if you are to be relocated and determine your relocation needs and preferences. You will be provided current and continuing information on the availability purchase prices and rental costs of comparable replacement housing. You are not required to choose the comparable replacement housing presented by the agent and can pick other housing units or move to other locations at your discretion. You cannot be required to move unless a comparable replacement housing option is made available by SCDOT. Comparable replacement housing must meet the following criteria

- Decent safe and sanitary.
- Functionally equivalent to the acquired house with particular attention to the number of rooms and living space.
- Large enough to accommodate the occupants.
- Located in an area that is not subject to reasonable adverse environmental conditions and not in an area that is generally less desirable than the acquired house.
- Reasonably accessible to the person's place of employment.
- Located on a site that is typical in size for residential developments with normal site improvements including customary landscaping.
- Currently available on the market.
- Within financial means of occupants.

SCDOT is currently reviewing potential opportunities to create or build replacement housing in the impacted communities since there is currently inadequate affordable housing inventory available in the Charleston market.

Your Input is Valuable -- It Impacts our Alternatives Analysis!

▶ If equivalently priced housing is not available and the new housing costs more, who pays the difference?



Residents being relocated may be eligible for a replacement housing payment or supplemental rent payments if the comparable housing available costs more than your current home value or rent payments. The right-of-way agent will inform you in writing of the specific comparable replacement housing the sales prices or rent used as the basis for establishing the replacement housing payment or supplemental rental assistance and the basis for that determination. This is done to ensure you are aware of the amount of the replacement housing payment to which you may be entitled.

If the comparable replacement housing available on the market is priced higher (property appraised value or rent) the homeowner may be eligible for supplemental benefits for a period of time to cover this price differential including increased mortgage interests costs and all eligible incidental expenses (such as closing costs). If you have questions about the relocation process or the benefits for which you may be eligible visit our community office and make an appointment to meet with our Rights of Way Specialists. In order to discuss what relocation benefits you may be entitled to our relocation agents will need information that is unique to you and your household.

▶ I live in Ashley Harbor and have concerns about the loss of amenities in my neighborhood. Can't we widen to the other side to avoid this?

For each direction of travel almost all the widening will be toward the median. The shaded areas on the concept maps shown online represent the limits of right-of-way that would be needed if we took no further steps to minimize the impacts. Our next steps will include looking at ways to reduce these impacts by minimizing right-of-way needs. Some of the measures we will evaluate to reduce these impacts include steepening slopes and using guardrail or retaining walls.

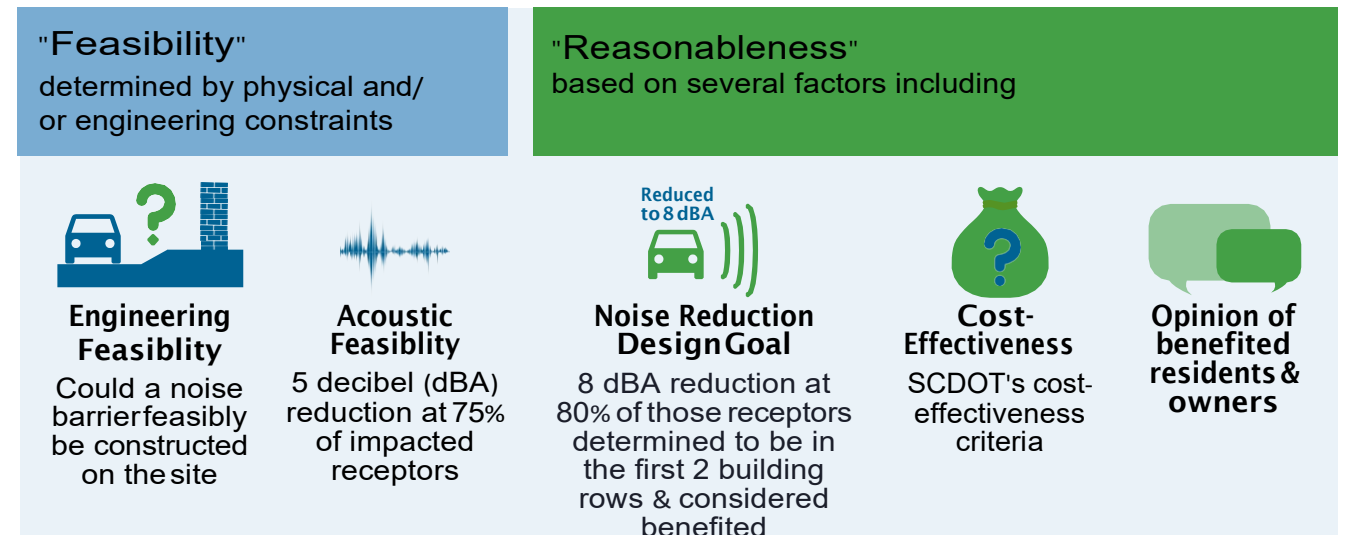
▶ What types of mitigation will be done for those potentially impacted communities?

The overarching goal of the I-526 LCC WEST Community Mitigation Plan is to develop a holistic package that effectively mitigates the direct impacts of the project such as displacements but also considers impacts still being experienced as a result of the original construction of I-26 and I-526. A Community Advisory Council (CAC) formed of residents from the potentially impacted neighborhoods is guiding the development of the Mitigation Plan. After the plan is finalized the CAC will transition into a Project Oversight Committee to help guide the implementation of the identified mitigation measures. The proposed improvements are anticipated to create a large number of residential relocations and reduce the amount of affordable housing in the area. As such mitigation will include initiatives or measures to offset project-related impacts to affordable housing. It is SCDOT's goal to mitigate affordable housing during the right-of-way acquisition phase so new housing may be available to displaced residents. Because the proposed project would impact both the Russelldale and Highland Terrace/Liberty Park Community Centers and associated recreational facilities mitigation in this area focuses on how the replacement of these facilities can be developed to include features that provide enhancements for these communities. Similar to the timeline for replacement housing it is also SCDOT's goal to have replacement recreational facilities constructed prior to the displacement of the existing community centers. SCDOT is also exploring mitigation measures to improve neighborhood safety and other measures related to employment and economic opportunities as identified by the impacted community members.

Traffic Noise

▶ Where are we in the SCDOT noise analysis process? What happens next?

SCDOT recognizes the impacts that highway traffic noise may have on citizens and will do what is reasonable and feasible to lessen these effects. Our team has been conducting noise readings within the project study area to understand the current noise levels. As part of the project development process we will be performing noise studies on each of the proposed reasonable alternatives presented at the Fall 2019 public meetings and the new N Rhett/Virginia Avenue Alternatives 2A 5 and 6. These studies will assist us in determining if noise abatement such as a noise barrier(s) is needed. There are feasibility and reasonableness criteria that must be met for construction of noise walls. Noise walls are assessed under the feasibility criteria first and if all conditions are met are then considered for reasonableness (see chart below). The three mandatory reasonable factors must be collectively achieved for a noise abatement measure to be deemed reasonable. Failure to achieve any one of the reasonable factors will result in the noise abatement measure being deemed not reasonable. The results of the noise studies will be presented at the public hearing tentatively set for the end of 2020.



SCDOT Noise Policy www.526lowcountrycorridor.com/west/traffic-noise/

▶ What about any impacts to my property value because of the potential increase in noise as a result of the widening?

A noise study is conducted during the Environmental Impact Study (EIS) and if warranted a noise barrier or other noise-reducing technique is included during the plans' development stage. The right-of-way appraisal does not address devaluation due to noise because the environmental study has already determined the level of increase or lack thereof and made a decision as to a cure. Therefore there is no compensation for noise.

Sometimes homeowners may mention the vegetative buffer being destroyed during construction at their appraisal interview. In some cases this is used as justification and an adjustment is made to the settlement amount to possibly cover the cost to replace trees and or shrubs.



NOTICE: For the health and safety of you and our staff..

A graphic of a blue sign with a green border and a yellow starburst at the top. The sign contains the following text:

**YOUR Community Office
will be open by
APPOINTMENT ONLY**

Starting March 17, 2020

We will continue to monitor the situation. To make an appointment or to check our hours, please call, email, or visit:

843.258.1135

info@526LowcountryCorridor.com

www.526lowcountrycorridor.com/

