



MEETING MINUTES

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING NO. 13

Date: October 3, 2020

Time: 10:00 am – 12:45 pm

Location: Ferndale Community Center (across from Harvest Pointe Church, 4870 Piedmont Avenue, North Charleston, SC),

Microsoft Teams (Virtual)

Project Name: I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST

Attendees

Larenda Baxley, Ferndale
Tina A. Baxley, Ferndale
Michael Halls, Sr., Ferndale
Gilbert Reeves, Ferndale
Geneva Swett, Ferndale
Angela Anderson, Russelldale
Jeanaris Bannister, Liberty Park
Carolyn Varner, Liberty Park
Doris Twiggs, Liberty Park
Prayonda Cooper, Joppa Way
Omar Muhammad (Panelist), LAMC
Nashonda Hunter (Panelist), The Charity
Foundation, Executive Director
Phillip Scott (Panelist), NAACP, North Charleston
Chapter, President
David Brunson, NAACP Guest of Phillip Scott
Allison Lane (Event Photographer), Rawle Murdy

Joy Riley, SCDOT
Chad Long, SCDOT
David Kelly, SCDOT
Pamela Foster, FHWA
Yolonda Jordan, FHWA
Maxine Smith, Maximum Consulting
Mattese Lecque, Maximum Consulting
Carolyn Lecque, Maximum Consulting
Clay Middleton, Maximum Consulting
Janelle Ellis, Empowerment Strategies
Rick Day, Stantec
Amy Sackaroff, Stantec
LaTonya Derrick, Stantec
Ryan White, Stantec
Hannah Clements, Stantec
Horrace Tobin, Stantec (Community Office)

Participant Summary:

Total participants: 31

Ferndale: 5	Adjacent/affected communities/agencies: 5	Community Office: 1
Highland Terrace/Joppa Way: 1	SCDOT: 3	Stantec: 5
Liberty Park: 3	FHWA: 2	Facilitator: 1
Russelldale: 1	Community Liaisons: 4	

Meeting Summary:

Welcome and Introductions

- Roll call (in-person, online, and phone participants)

Administrative Items

- CAC Meeting 13 hosted using a hybrid approach with participants joining via the Microsoft Teams platform, by phone, and in person.
 - The meeting was recorded solely for accuracy of meeting minutes.
 - LaTonya will serve as the technical host for participants joining remotely.
 - Participants may raise their hands, virtually and in person, to ask questions.
- CAC Meeting 13 packets were distributed to meeting participants prior to the meeting date, including minutes for CAC Meeting 12.
- CAC Meeting 12 minutes require changes to include corrected spelling for both Pinders and Welch's markets.

Safety briefing: In case of emergency, meeting participants should exit through the front entrance of the community center and congregate on Piedmont Avenue at the front of the Harvest Pointe Church across the street from the Ferndale Community Center. In the event the entrance is blocked, meeting participants should exit through the door in the gymnasium space and proceed to the front of Harvest Pointe Church. (White, R.)

Review of Agenda

- Welcome and Administrative Items
- Neighborhood Update
- Education and Employment Mitigation Subcommittee
- Community Leader Panel Discussion
- EJ Neighborhood Impact Update
- Community History Preservation Plan Update
- Outreach Update
- Summary and Next Steps

Neighborhood Update:

Facilitator: CAC Members representing each of the impacted communities (Ferndale, Highland Terrace/Joppa Way, Liberty Park, and Russelldale) were asked to share concerns expressed by the residents of impacted communities regarding the I-526 project since CAC Meeting #12. (Ellis, J.)

CAC Member (Liberty Park):

- Flooding on Target Street and in the back of Taylor Street, parallel to the railroad tracks continues to be a problem. When it rains, that whole area floods.
- Neighbors complain about the (poor) lighting in Liberty Park and Highland Terrace as well. (Bannister, J.)

CAC Member (Russelldale):

- Flooding at the corner of Rebecca and Rivers Avenue and poor lighting continues to be a problem in the Russelldale community. (Anderson, A.)

Project Manager:

- May I ask a question about the lighting? Is it the lack of lighting or the light power? (Riley, J.)

CAC Member (Russelldale):

- Both, lack of lighting and light power. The lighting is so old that even when the lights are on, it doesn't provide enough light. (Anderson, A.)

Project Manager:

- The City of North Charleston is planning to upgrade existing lighting to LED lights. I don't know the timing on installing those upgrades, but so that you are aware, there are plans to upgrade lighting in the area. (Riley, J.)

Project Team Member:

- And again, as a part of our Community Infrastructure Enhancement Plan (CIEP), there is a lighting component. The project team is planning to start the lighting study in early 2021. This is when we will begin evaluating lighting needs of the community. (White, R.)

CAC Member (Liberty Park):

- The old system in my neighborhood, I think it used to be 300 feet from light post to light post, that is the old system. In some areas, there is no light, because they have taken the light off of the post. I don't know why. (Bannister, J.)

Project Team Member:

- As part of that scope, one of the things we will be looking at is the actual light spacing. For the most part, it will be a pretty comprehensive look at what the lighting needs are for all four communities. So, that is a part of the proposed mitigation for the project. (White, R.)

Unknown Speaker:

- This is a part of the [inaudible]?

Project Team Member:

- Yes sir. This will be a part of the CIEP. (White, R.)

Facilitator:

- Ms. Cooper, thank you for joining us. We are going through and asking if there are any questions about individual communities. Do you have any comments regarding Joppa Way? (Ellis, J.)

CAC Member (Joppa Way):

- Just (poor) lighting. (Cooper, P.)

Facilitator:

- Thank you. Any other questions or comments for the neighborhood updates? Before we move to the next agenda item, we wanted to make sure that we circled back to close the loop on a couple of items from previous meetings.? Is Ms. Twiggs on the line? (Ellis, J.)
- Project Team Member:
She is. (Derrick, L.)
- Facilitator:

In CAC Meeting #11, Joy commented on the overgrown vegetation at the Rebecca and Twitty Street parcel which is under consideration for the Russelldale pocket park. Her point was that the parcel is not currently the responsibility of SCDOT or the City of North Charleston (because it is privately owned). In the event that parcel is chosen and purchased as the Russelldale pocket park location, the City will then be responsible for maintenance of the location. I know we have had some discussions about intergovernmental agreements, but I think, if it is their property, they will be responsible for maintaining it. (Ellis, J.)

Project Manager:

- The City currently has a program for overgrown lots. For lots that we (SCDOT) are responsible for, we get notices for overgrown lots. We are fined if we don't address it. That is how SCDOT manages notices for overgrown lots. Once we purchase a lot, our intention is to maintain it. (Riley, J.)

Facilitator:

- I just want to make sure we closed the loop on that conversation to ensure that people understood the comment in its entirety. The other item...Mrs. Twiggs, can you hear us? (Ellis, J.)

CAC Member:

- Yes, I can hear you. (Twiggs, D.)

Facilitator:

- One of the comments that you have made as sort of a recurring comment is a concern about those residents that are "left behind" and wanting to make sure that the project team is clear in terms of what these changes "will look like" in the process of implementing this plan. So, one of the things we think, as the project team, that we understand is what you mean by being "left behind," but if you are comfortable and you can take a couple of minutes to clarify for us the meaning of your question to make sure the project team is answering the question you are asking...Would you mind taking a minute to clarify that comment? (Ellis, J.)

CAC Member:

- Well, I did not hear your question in its entirety. The audio is not clear on my end. But, I think I heard you say that you wanted clarification on what I meant by "left behind," and yes, that is my comment taken from a conversation that I had with someone.
- My only focus here is to make sure that the person's who are not going to be immediately impacted, will know that they will have a comfortable life in the area, in the neighborhood, going forward. I can't answer that question, and maybe some of you cannot today, but I would like for us to keep it upfront so that we are inclusive of everyone that's in the neighborhood, whether they are in the shadow of what is to come, or whether they will be, quote unquote, "left behind."
- Left behind merely means when they remain in that neighborhood going forward into another seven, eight years and beyond, that they can truly say that they'd be comfortable. One reason why I can adapt, or think about it from the standpoint of left behind, is that my family experienced some of that. And it was, I would say, maybe no intentional, whatever, of the first project that came through with I-26, but there were many unpleasant situations for persons that were left there in terms of beside the lane that is on Liberty Park side that would pass into James Bell, Elder, and possibly some of Taylor.
- And that's my only concern. I would like for the quality of life for those persons to be pleasant and sustained. Some of them are elderly. Some of them are younger persons inheriting the property of

their family. And I would just like for us to be very sensitive to how the neighborhood will look in terms of those persons that will be there. And maybe that's a lot or too much, but I just felt it needed to be said. And, definitely, I will not be leaving it out as we go forward. (Twiggs, D.)

Facilitator:

- Thank you, Ms. Twiggs. (Ellis, J.)

Project Team Member:

Sure thing. And I'm also open for Joy and Chad to add, but that's where a big part of the Community Infrastructure Enhancement Plan comes in. We're looking at a wide range of things. I did mention lighting, sidewalks, landscaping, etc. So we're trying to look at the neighborhood improvements with that plan from a holistic standpoint, as best we can, with the mitigation for the project. And so hopefully that addresses some of the concerns. (White, R.)

Project Manager:

And, I think a couple of other components...[inaudible]. (Riley, J.)

CAC Member:

Ryan, are you speaking directly to what my comment was? (Twiggs, D.)

Project Team Member:

I'm trying to. And Joy was just adding as well that there is a... (White, R.)

CAC Member:

I can't hear Joy. I can hear you. I'm sorry. (Twiggs, D.)

Project Team Member:

They're passing the microphone now. (Derrick, L.)

Project Manager:

I was going to say... Can you hear me now? (Riley, J.)

CAC Member:

That's much better. (Twiggs, D.)

Project Manager:

I was going to say that what Ryan said was a very general overview, but things that can come into play in that Infrastructure Enhancement Plan would also be visual appearance, or aesthetics. And that could be done with landscaping or with other types of things, such as walls or cultural displays. There's a wide range of things that you can look at, and the community can drive those decision points. But also storm water is a component of that. I know that was a concern that Ms. Twiggs and I have had a conversation about before. And also, noise. Ms. Twiggs, is there anything else that would contribute to quality of life that falls beyond the things that Ryan and I just mentioned? (Riley, J.)

CAC Member:

I think you did hit upon, the both of you, several things that may ease my mind some. But, I will be talking more about this as we go forward, especially thinking back on the water that flooded communities and

yards from Elder to Deacon, the mudslide that became a part of person's backyards between James Bell and Elder. And these issues are not hearsay... What I'm mentioning to you are experiences as I grew up in that area. So I understand perfectly when Mr. Bannister talked about stormwater and how the area floods. I just would like to make sure this time, along with some of the residents that continue to live there, that we do not have this unpleasant experience again, because it does impact the property of these persons when we have the overgrown areas that become their yard or part of their yard, or the mudslides that become part of their yard. And as you get the vegetation, you get less of the mudslide. I understand all of that. But, I would like for us to have lovely pocket parks, such as the Filbin Creek Development. All of those nice things. But as we walk through the community, I would like to know that I'm walking through a community that is left better than when we first entered it. And I guess that's the crux of it all. (Twiggs, D.)

Project Manager:

- I'll just add one more thing. This is Joy. Because I live in a community that DOT is responsible for the drainage, as well. It's a 1930's-style community that was built a long, long time ago. Please recognize that you guys have the same situation, and that drainage system was probably installed well before all that development came through, so it's undersized for what is out there. There are some things that you can do proactively to put... I put in a maintenance request every time there's a major storm event, because our ditches and our pipes fill up. And that means if nobody calls in a maintenance request, that means we don't know it's a problem.
- We are not out inspecting every time there's a storm event, all our infrastructure. We just don't have the personnel to do that. So we do have a maintenance request. You can either call to the 855-GO-SCDOT and talk to somebody. We're not open on the weekends unless it's an emergency, but during normal business hours you can call that number and file the maintenance request.
- On our homepage, there's a maintenance request. You can just type it in, and they will call you and follow up if you say, "I want to be followed up with." A lot of times, it's not that DOT is not doing it because they don't want to do it. It's, a lot of times DOT doesn't know it's a problem, because we have a long list of problems, and a lot of times, very few resources and manpower to get to them. So if you make sure you file those issues, then at least somebody can come and look at it, because, nine times out of ten, in a neighborhood that's older, it's going to be... It just needs to be maintained. And that's an easy way for us to address a problem without having millions of dollars to upgrade the infrastructure. (Riley, J.)

CAC Member:

Joy, I have a question. (Bannister, J.)

CAC Member:

Thank you. (Twiggs, D.)

CAC Member:

My question is, being in North Charleston paying stormwater fees, do I need to call DOT about my drainage, or call City of North Charleston Sanitation? (Bannister, J.)

Project Manager:

Well, you're on Taylor Street.

CAC Member:

We're on Taylor Street. Also, I have some property on Beulah Avenue. (Bannister, J.)

Project Manager:

Nine times out of ten, you're going to call the City. (Riley, J.)

Project Team Member:

I think Ms. Varner had a question. (Derrick, L.)

CAC Member:

Starting I guess at Taylor Street and the stop sign, going back to what really is happening. I mean, it flows like a river if we have a very bad downpour of rain. I'm glad to hear them say that, because I do not call every time, and maybe that's something that we need to start doing because it is horrible. Cars pass through that water, and water is splashed everywhere on everyone's property. And what's happening is that sometimes it's mixed with sewage. And when you do that and you're splashing it on people's properties, to me, that's a health issue, also. And I understand that. Earlier, I was the person who was complaining. They did come and they improve some things but from my standpoint, it looks like it made it worse. I mean, the water looks like all of a sudden we have a river now instead of just that slow and standing water from before. So I guess I don't understand what happened. (Varner, C.)

Project Manager:

Yeah, if you take pictures, it helps a lot, because if we're not out there during a storm event, a lot of times we don't know what the problem is. (Riley, J.)

CAC Member:

I will do that. (Varner, C.)

Project Manager:

I mean, I usually have to take pictures. Even I have to take pictures. And that may help them to [crosstalk 00:24:57], but it's also something that you may just have to do more than once. (Riley, J.)

CAC Member:

I understand that. (Varner, C.)

Project Manager:

But I will say that, when we do projects, we will upgrade all the infrastructure that is tied to the interstate, and also just so you know, the major project that's coming through on Rivers Avenue, the BRT will upgrade that drainage infrastructure, which is probably contributing somewhat, because all those systems are connected to what's on Rivers Avenue. And of course, all these projects that we do in the infrastructure enhancement plan, I mean, we're not obviously going to go in and upgrade all the drainage infrastructure in the neighborhoods because that would cause another impact. But, everywhere where we're doing traffic calming, or a sidewalk improvement, we are required to upgrade the drainage as well. So I think that there will be a positive benefit, but if you do have a [inaudible] you can up being one of those people who live and have that older infrastructure that hasn't been upgraded, you just have to stay on top of the maintenance requests unfortunately. Because if it's undersized, if it gets clogged, it's going to be much worse. (Riley, J.)

Facilitator:

Thank you, Joy. Chad, did you have anything to add to that at all? (Ellis, J.)

SCDOT Team Lead:

I would just add this. We have recently discussed putting together a resource guide for the communities, and so this is something that would fit right in there. So beyond the life of this project, you would know who to call, how to document this information, and have them hopefully help you out or point you in the right direction. Good discussion. These are great comments and that's what we need to hear. (Long, C.)

Facilitator:

Perfect. Thank you for your questions, are there any other questions? And Ms. Twiggs, does that, for now- and I know that you said you continue to have questions throughout the process, and that's good. That's what the purpose of these meetings is. But for today, at this moment, do you feel like your question has been answered substantially? (Ellis, J.)

Project Team Member:

You're still on mute. (Derrick, L.)

CAC Member:

Yes, I'm sorry. (Twiggs, D.)

Facilitator:

That's okay, just giving you a chance to get back on the call. That's fine. (Ellis, J.)

CAC Member:

Go ahead, I'm sorry. (Twiggs, D.)

Facilitator:

Oh, no ma'am, you're fine. I just wanted to make sure that, for right now, you feel like your question is being answered according to what it is that you're interested in understanding. (Ellis, J.)

CAC Member:

Yes. I'm okay for today. Of course, at meeting 14, I'll be back. (Twiggs, D.)

Facilitator:

Okay. All right. Thank you. Any other questions regarding neighborhood updates before we move on? Yes, ma'am, Ms. Baxley? (Ellis, J.)

CAC Member:

One question in about the drainage thing. I know some areas have very shallow ditches, or no ditches. Others have ditches that literally I could stand in and you can't see the top of my head. For someone who is not quite five foot tall, getting down and there and cleaning those out makes it kind of difficult at times. For people who have these huge ditches in front of their houses, how do you get those filled in? Obviously, the other house I had did not have pipes put in. That was a problem. (Baxley, L.)

Project Manager:

That's a much bigger thing, because what you're talking about is doing a full drainage project in the community. And right now we don't have a funding source that's specifically geared towards drainage, so we can do some maintenance stuff, but probably installing a closed drainage system...you can't always just

put a pipe right there. A lot of times it entails taking a pipe all the way to your outlet point. So all I can say is put in a maintenance request, and try to give them as much information as possible. A description of what happens when the storm event, exactly what your problem is. I took pictures of my yard flooded. I took pictures of sediment in the pipe. I mean, I kind of got down in the ditch, took pictures, and I got better results doing that than just saying, "I got a drainage problem." Because believe me, in older neighborhoods, there are hundreds of drainage problems. (Riley, J.)

CAC Member:

Well, luckily with mine, it's not a drainage problem. (Baxley, L.)

Project Manager:

And a lot of times it is that the squeaky wheel gets the grease. So if somebody calls and says, "I've got flooding in my yard," their initial reaction is to go out and clean out the ditch, and it's going to make it deeper, and clean out the pipe, but it might be clogged. A lot of times it is, areas, ditches get filled in over time. Sometimes even property owners still do work in their yard, and inadvertently fill in ditches, which cause problems for all the neighbors. (Riley, J.)

CAC Member:

Yeah I actually had that problem at the other house. They had to come out and dig it out. (Baxley, L.)

Project Manager:

The squeaky wheel gets the grease. So if you get proactive about it... and I even sometimes put in requests that are not on my property because I know it's causing a problem on my property. (Riley, J.)

Project Team Member:

And to address a quick comment in the chat, Ms. Foster from FHWA wanted the number restated, it is 1-855-GO-SCDOT or 855-467-2368. (Derrick, L.)

Facilitator:

Thank you, Ms. Baxley. Any other questions or comments regarding individual neighborhoods? The next thing on our agenda is that Ryan is going to give us an update on the education employment mitigation subcommittee. (Ellis, J.)

Education and Employment Mitigation Subcommittee:

Project Team Member:

Yes ma'am, and this will be really brief, but we did, at the last meeting, solicit volunteers to participate in our subcommittee. So as part of our mitigation plans, there are employment as well as educational opportunities that are being funded by the project. And so, as part of this, we've reached out to our advisory council to help us continue to develop how these programs should be administered, specifically the scholarship program. That includes developing the qualifications, but also helping us to get the word out to members of the community that there's a scholarship program that's available to them. Members who have committed to serving on the Education and Employment Mitigation Subcommittee include: Mr. Nathaniel Bryant will be representing Highland Terrace. Miss Prayonda Cooper, representing Joppa Way. Miss Cynthia Anderson, Liberty Park. Brother Earl Muhammad, from the Muhammad Mosque. We did not get a volunteer from Ferndale. (White, R.)

Project Team Member:

I thought Gilbert Reeves... (Derrick. L.)

Project Team Member:

Oh, yeah I'm sorry. My apologies Mr. Reeves. Then also Ms. Carolyn Lecque is making herself available also. (White, R.)

CAC Member:

And also Russelldale. (Anderson, A.)

Project Team Member:

Russelldale. Okay. Yes ma'am. And then also Ms. Pam Foster from FHWA has also volunteered to make herself available to assist in this effort. So what we'll do as a project team is take the lead on scheduling the meetings with Pam Foster, just so she can give you all some guidance on things that she's experienced in her work to help develop the criteria and help us move forward. And then as an individual committee you all are definitely free to meet as you need to, and then just be prepared to follow back up with us as a committee during the next CAC meeting. We'll just make sure we schedule time at each CAC meeting for you all to provide us with an update. That's all I've got. (White, R.)

Facilitator:

Okay. Yes, ma'am. (Ellis, J.)

CAC Member:

As far as I'm concerned, Mr. Earl Muhammad, he comes to our Ferndale meetings. I don't think he's here today. As far as I'm concerned, he's kind of representing us. So I don't see where we don't really have a representative. So I just wanted to mention that. (Baxley, T.)

Project Team Member:

Yes, ma'am. (White, R.)

Facilitator:

Is Muhammad on the phone? (Ellis, J.)

Project Team Member:

He's not able to participate today. (Derrick. L.)

Facilitator :

Okay. Thank you Ms. Baxley. All right. Thank you for your comments. And thanks to everyone who's actually volunteered to serve on this subcommittee as well. The next thing that we're going to- (Ellis, J.)

Project Team Member:

Real quick, one thing. And just as we move forward, as we start looking at other mitigation items, one of the things me and Chad have discussed is developing subcommittees to help address some of the other components of the mitigation plan. For example, when you start to dig into the Community Infrastructure Enhancement Plan, creating a subcommittee that is constantly engaged with the project team to give feedback and help us receive input from the neighborhoods as well. So as we continue to progress the advisory council, there will be other opportunities for a subcommittee to help us to continue to develop

the mitigation plan. So if you haven't volunteered, we'll make room for you. (White, R.)

Facilitator:

So quick question. You guys have been talking more about the small groups. Will those things be determined through the small groups, or will we just... (Ellis, J.)

Project Team Member:

Well, they'll still report back. It's just more intimate conversations where we may not have time for this bigger collective group to have more detailed dialogue. (White, R.)

Facilitator :

Okay. Yes ma'am, Ms. Mattese? (Ellis, J.)

Community Liaison:

We don't want to deter a person, a chairperson in volunteering if they are interested. So, if a person is volunteering their time and saying that they express an interest in what is going on, we need to let them do that. (Lecque, M.)

Project Team Member:

Absolutely. (White, R.)

Community Liaison:

He might not be representing Ferndale, but he is representing some component of community needs. (Lecque, M.)

Facilitator:

Okay. That's a good point. Thank you Ms. Mattese. Any other comments regarding subcommittees? Okay. And then you're going to move into our community leader panel discussion now. And Ms. Carolyn, I need to make sure you have the microphone. (Ellis, J.)

Community Leader Panel Discussion:

Facilitator:

[To Ms. Carolyn] We need to make sure you have the microphone, so I will run it back. Okay. Then we will talk about the objectives of the session. (Ellis, J.)

Community Liaison:

- We have three panelists for today's meeting. We have Ms. Nashonda Hunter who is with the Charity Foundation. Charity just completed a house that they just sold in the Liberty Hill neighborhood. Ms. Hunter will be able to give us some information regarding what they went through in terms of getting that house. And I think the important part is advocacy and working with the City of North Charleston in terms of the hoops that they put them through in order to get to that point and which advanced all for affordable housing going forward. We want you to give us the experience about those things, because we want to make sure that this group has the information they need now to advocate for themselves. So, if you will tell us about that and also tell some more about yourself as Executive Director of the Charity Foundation.

- We have Mr. Phillip Scott who is the President of the North Charleston NAACP. Mr. Scott has worked a lot in this community. He knows North Charleston well because he grew up on Liberty Hill. So, he is familiar with a lot of the things that we need and he could tell us again about advocacy and also about what the and North Charleston NAACP can do to improve the lives of citizens here in North Charleston.
- We have Mr. Omar Muhammad who is the president and executive director for LAMC. LAMC did an excellent environmental study where they really did a real good job of looking at issues that impact the environment in this area. They called to our attention a lot of things that we need to think of in terms of how the power lines effect our community, how the water effects our community, and they also did some things in Ferndale and Liberty Hill, which he could probably tell us about, and also about their role in advocacy for the North area. (Lecque, C.)

Facilitator:

- Before we get started, I'm going to keep the microphone close in case they need it here. Let me just kind of set the stage or set the tone for the discussion this morning. And we'll start by just kind of establishing what the objective is for this session. And so bear with me. It's a little long, but I want to make sure if you guys have any questions about why we're here this morning you can ask those as well and throughout this process, if you have any questions, stop and ask. So it's not that we'll have presentations by guests (panelists), and then we stop for questions. We really want this to be interactive. So at any point, if you have a question, make sure that you are clear in articulating that. The objective of this panel is:
 - to provide CAC members an opportunity to engage with leaders of local community organizations,
 - to learn about their experiences in working with the City of North Charleston and other government agencies, and
 - to gain an understanding, a better understanding of what is required to remain engaged and effective also
 - to solicit and maintain involvement and participation from younger members
 - to assess how to organize for the benefit of their community beyond the I-526 LCC West project.
 - And so keep in mind that the purpose for this session this morning is to empower the CAC members, but also to help SCDOT, understand how they can best facilitate the success of the efforts that the CAC members are putting into this process. And not only now as, during the community advisory council, and I believe LAMC has the CAB (Community Advisory Board), but beyond and looking at the, the Project Oversight Committee. So please keep those things in mind. And so even though the SCDOT is in the room, we have, if they FHWA on the call, this is not what that's about this morning. We really need transparency. And if you are helping to empower this group of people as they came forward, please be honest, open and honest about some of the challenges you face as we get to some of the specific questions. (Ellis, J.)

Facilitator:

So, same thing for CAC members. As we go through, please do not hesitate to ask this panel of guests any questions. This is why this session has been established. So again, any comments, questions, concerns - this is a good time to articulate it. I know Ms. Carolyn said we'd like for you to tell a little bit more about yourselves. If you can each take about a minute because we only have 50 minutes for this session. And I know that the short amount of time to get a lot of information covered, but if you will please just start by giving us a little more information about your organization and your role with the organization. (Ellis, J.)

Panelist:

Good morning, everyone. I am the Nashonda Hunter, the Executive Director of the Charity Foundation. We are a nonprofit that stems from Charity Missionary Baptist Church here on East Montague Avenue. Reverend Nelson B. Rivers, III is my Pastor, and I'm actually sitting in as a proxy for him today. We have four initiatives with our Transformation Liberty Hill Initiative:

- STEM education
- Affordable housing
- Workforce development, and
- Financial literacy.

And those all work together to make Liberty Hill a community of choice. (Hunter, N.)

Facilitator:

Very good. Thank you so much Ms. Hunter. (Ellis, J.)

Panelist:

And I'm a native of Charleston. (Hunter, N.)

Facilitator:

And if you need the microphone... (Ellis, J.)

Panelist:

No, I am fine. My name is Phillip Scott. I'm from the Liberty Hill area. I am the President of the North Charleston branch of the NAACP. I served in the United States Air Force. I look forward to...this is very helpful for me. This is some very powerful discussion. I am probably the least knowledgeable about the area you're talking about right now. (Scott, P.)

Facilitator:

Very good. Thank you. Mr. Muhammad. (Ellis, J.)

Panelist:

Good morning. I hope everyone can hear me, okay good. Omar Muhammad, the Executive Director for the Lowcountry Alliance for Model Communities. Our goal as an organization or the purpose of our organization is to build healthy families. And we build healthy families by creating opportunities. The four core areas of our organization are:

- Affordable housing
- Economic development
- Education, and
- Environmental justice.

And as we go through this presentation today, I'm pretty sure that it will help clear why those four core areas were selected by the residents. It wasn't our organization. The residents of the community, that we now represent, they formed LAMC. And they came together and coordinated and collaborated with each other to form this organization that I represent. (Muhammad, O.)

Facilitator:

And just a key point there that I'd like to stress is the last point that Mr. Muhammad made, and that is that the community was instrumental in shaping that program. Mr. Muhammad works very closely with Mrs. Frazier-Rahim, and a lot of times over the years, I've seen the two of you representing the organization,

but the community members are really responsible for putting that program together. So keep that in mind if we're going through this process. So I'm going to start with you and just ask you as it relates to LAMC, specifically, if you will provide some background on how the organization was formed, the level of community engagement that was required, and just talk a little bit about maybe some of the activities currently, kind of post mitigation, in terms of implementing some of those programs. (Ellis, J.)

Panelist:

- So, I mean, we were in the same seat that you all are in right now. Concerned about quality of life in the communities, what does the project that's happening in the periphery or even in your community, what are the impacts of those projects? And even prior to those, those types of projects coming in, having those impacts. Our communities already experience disproportionate impacts from, from low income, housing, economic development, educational attainment. So you already had a stressful environment. So, in addition to that, you have projects that come along, it further impacts your community, maybe in positive ways maybe not.
- So the residents wanted to understand the impacts of a project, and at this time it was the port (SC Port Authority) that was coming into the City of North Charleston, the southern end of the City of North Charleston, and the impact that project was going to have on their quality of life.
- The residents wanted to better understand that project. So, they went through the same thing that you all are going through. Reviewing the documents, reviewing the environmental impact statement, understanding what is NEPA, the process of NEPA. You know, it's a huge learning curve, huge. You're talking about residents who work a full-time job. They get off that job and get asked to dedicate six, seven, eight hours after work to review documents that are several hundred papers, to understand that project, and be able to make comments, and represent the best interest of their community, right?
- What's the interest of the community to understand the impacts of the project. And what they did is they realized that it could not be just one community preferences of what the impacts are. It had to be a collective of communities. So, LAMC represents seven communities. Those seven communities came together and formed LAMC to represent the interests of all of those seven communities.
- Since then, what they have been able to do, is we have been able to mitigate the port and we have been able to mitigate the Palmetto Railway and all this was done through the similar process you are all going through, which is the National Environmental Policy Act. So, it allows communities allows other groups to mitigate impacts of federally funded projects like this. And out of that, we received funding, right? And each mitigation project is different. It's different across projects, different across communities.
- But, we received resources to mitigate those impacts in our communities. And the first thing we did is we recognized that we could not, as a grassroots organization manage a multimillion-dollar mitigation package. So, we immediately partnered with the City of North Charleston, right? And we faced some unique challenges there, but ultimately what happened is that you were able to take those funds and establish endowments, so we have endowments at the Coastal Community Foundation.
- This is partnership development. You cannot do this alone. You have to have partnerships. You have to be able to leverage your knowledge against other people's knowledge. The one thing I want you all to take away today is that you are experts. You may not have the degrees. You may not have the level of knowledge of what a transportation project is and what that means, but you are experts. You are the experts in your community and what happens there. So, you have to approach this process that you are the experts and that you have the right to push back on anything that you don't agree with, or that

doesn't represent the interest of your community, you can push back on it regardless of who is telling you.

- You can push back because you are the experts on contextual realities. So we established those endowments. We established revolving funds. We established partnerships that help us today have the substantial impacts that we have now.
- Because of those relationships and partnerships we have been able to land bank 30 pieces of property in our communities on which we are building affordable housing. We have been able to award over \$45,000 of scholarships because we have a scholarship endowment that we pull interest on.
- We have been able to address environmental concerns in our communities because we have established relationships with SCDHEC, EPA, and other environmental groups that help us address systemic flooding and other issues and concerns about brownfields and superfund sites and contaminated sites in the community.
- We have been able to establish partnerships with a local CDC that assist us with building a affordable housing. We helped the community establish its own community development group called the Community Land Trust. So the community was takes the driver's seat and moves the process forward.
- So it's about partnership development, leveraging your knowledge, and it's about representing the best interest of your community. (Muhammad, O.)

Facilitator:

Thank you very much. Just to express, you captured all of that wonderfully. I just want to make sure people heard that you said you can push back? (Ellis, J.)

Panelist:

You can. (Muhammad, O.)

Facilitator:

But that's an option. That's a choice. (Ellis, J.)

Panelist:

Well, it shouldn't be a choice. (Muhammad, O.)

Facilitator:

- I want to make sure that you guys are hearing the language and you have the option to have a conversation with government agencies as you go through the process. And so what he said is you can, and so it's something that you're going to have to proactively do. And that's part of the reason why this panel is here to help you better understand how to participate in that process, as well as for SCDOT and FHWA to understand how you guys can also best support the process.
- So, the next question, and I appreciate that Mr. Muhammad. Is really a question for the entire panel. And that question is really a segue from the previous question. And that's what has been your experience in interacting with not only the City of North Charleston, but other government agencies?
- I know in your case, it was the South Carolina Ports Authority. [To Mr. Muhammad] Is that right? And so if you will just discuss some of the key challenges that you have faced, as well as some of the steps that you took to resolve those issues and some of those success stories. And when I say success stories, that's within the context of working with those government agencies. So if you guys will please take a moment. I don't know who wants to go first. (Ellis, J.)

Panelist:

I will go first. I've been a resident of Charleston County all my life. (Scott, P.)

Project Team Member:

Because we've got people trying to hear on the computer and phone, we want to encourage you all to use the mic. Thank you. (Derrick, L.)

Panelist:

All right. In regards to North Charleston, I've been a resident of North Charleston all my life. I played basketball in Liberty Hill on the basketball courts. We have a great relationship...I have spoken with the mayor. He seems to endorse and embrace NAACP policies. With regards to the NAACP, my mission is to ensure that the residents get what they deserve in regards to this location. As far as other agencies, I haven't dealt with a lot of agencies, but the City of North Charleston, we work very well with them. (Scott, P.)

Facilitator:

Thank you. (Ellis, J.)

Panelist:

- And our relationship with the City of North Charleston has been a positive one. It came with its challenges in the beginning, but one of the leads that worked to our favor, it's that we had support from our Councilman Sam Hart, and he was able to go and stand in the gap for us and actually make appeals for us on our behalf.
- And so one of the things I'd like to piggyback on from what Omar said, is that you are the experts. You have to use your resources as well. If your Councilman is not engaged with you and your community, that is something that you should be looking at as well as far doing business with the City of Charleston.
- You want to make sure that everyone is kind of on board and working together. With our affordable housing project we were able to get the cities to donate that property to us because of advocacy from our council. When we showed them a plan of what we plan to do in order to impact blight in our community, and to build more affordable housing with the City of North Charleston, doesn't have a plan on going at this time. It made it more advantageous for them to support our cause, because it's something that our community needs.
- And so having a plan, having a strategy to present to the City is something that I would recommend. And get the support of your local officials. Also, we work on legislation with our State House Representative, Marvin Pendarvis, as far as rezoning, making sure that developers who are building in our areas are giving back in our communities and putting resources that we need in our communities as a part of their development, including those items.
- And that's where the communities voice comes in. No, you cannot come in and install a 300-unit development without making sure that we have enough sidewalks or that we have street lights and make sure that we don't have traffic issues.
- And so that is what it's all about and using your voice and, and one of my teachable moments from my mentor is, "You're looking for an answer from them. They're not looking for an answer from you." So sometimes they'll say, "Oh, well, I haven't heard back from this person." Stay on them and apply pressure because they're not looking to give you an answer, you are looking for an answer from them. (Hunter, N.)

Facilitator:

I want to also reiterate the point about having a strategy, having a plan. That's a very good point, not just in your role as the CAC, but as you transition into the Project Oversight Committee, as well. (Ellis, J.)

Panelist:

- I mean your first challenge is deciding if you all want to come together. There are four different communities represented. And you all have to speak with one voice. You have very similar challenges. Challenges are not different. They are the same, but it's not going to work if you, if Ferndale is speaking for itself, Russelldale is speaking for itself, Liberty Park is speaking for itself, and other...you know, everyone is speaking for themselves, it's going to confuse the agencies that you are working with. You're going to have to speak with one voice.
- So that means that you are going to have to decide what you are going to be called, such as a nonprofit, or some other type of entity, that represents the best interest of all four of the communities.
- And then in addition to that, are you going to have to stay committed. In the beginning a whole bunch of people are going to want to become involved, but in the end, it's going to be very few of you because this is work. It is a lot of work. It is hard work. So, you've got to stay committed. You've got to stay consistent.
- And the other thing is that people with power don't want to give up that power. So when you have to make a call, they are going to push back on you, believe me. Do not give in to that push back. Know that you are going to be told no a thousand times. You are going to be told that what you are saying is not going to work, but that means you have to go into the room understanding what it is that you want. Even when you told no, even when you told that it is not going to work. Your strength is in numbers. (Muhammad, O.)

Facilitator:

If we can take a moment to see if there any comments or questions regarding any of the feedback that the panel has provided at this point. One of the things you touched on but, but I want to revisit. Could you frame up some of the challenges, and then some of the lessons learned that will help the CAC members and perhaps SCDOT understand how they can work through some of the potential challenges moving forward? (Ellis, J.)

Panelist:

So the first thing is that the information that you all learn during this process, you have to share with the broader community. It can't be kept in this room. You are going to need the community to back you. So when you go to Council, or SCDOT, or the federal highway administration, you need your community supporting that. You need a broad alliance, so that's partnership building, again. You need a broad alliance. It was said earlier, but you need a plan. You need a plan and a vision, a roadmap. And where do you want to go and how you plan to get there and who you need to support. So you need to do a power map. Power map of your community and get to know who your stakeholders are that you need to engage. (Muhammad, O.)

Panelist:

- I'm going to say engage with your community. Earlier, you posed the question about how to get your youth involved and your young people involved. Or even if it's not young people, people are professionals. They have families, but you want them to be engaged. So get a newsletter, make a text bank for your community, put it in writing.

- Communication is key. And so that they know what's happening. They know when the next meeting is. They shouldn't have to question. They should know, "Oh, well, I can go over here. I can look through my messages. Oh, here's the date? And here's the time here's where we're meeting."
- Capture people's emails addresses, set them up for your seniors, show them how to use it, develop a community page, a Facebook page for your community, so that they can check there for periodic updates and make sure that whoever is managing those accounts, that this isn't a spam account. This is where we come for information about what's happening. And this is where we get an update. So my piece is communication is key and make sure that people are engaged. (Hunter, N.)

Panelist:

Communication is the key. I came in and I heard the information about flooding in Liberty Park and Russelldale. I was kind of thrown aback because where I live, we don't have flooding. My thing as the NAACP president is somebody doesn't have flooding on this side of town, we shouldn't have it on your side of town. (Scott, P.)

Project Team Member:

This is a few months back where we had a meeting with FHWA and talked about some of the other projects that were going through very similar environmental justice processes, but one of the things they mentioned was inventory and the resources, and by that I mean the professional resources, and so this was for the project in Indianapolis, but they were able to get professional engineering services and lots of services because they had residents, who had cousins or friends who had connections. So, I think the key thing is that inventory of resources, know who you have, and who will be willing to do some of these efforts pro bono because they believe in what you're trying to accomplish. (White, R.)

Facilitator:

Ms. Baxley. (Ellis, J.)

CAC Member:

This is for Ms. Hunter, especially. One of the problems we've had in Ferndale, for pretty much as long as I can remember, is we have a lot of rental properties. And getting people who rent involved has been a huge problem. Is Liberty Hill still mainly homeowners? (Baxley, T.)

Panelist:

Yes. (Hunter, N.)

CAC Member :

I know when this came up years ago, that was one of the comments, if you guys could get all these people to help you, but a lot of them were homeowners. Do you have any suggestions ... We've run into this, you're getting people who have been, in our case a lot of times, they come in and they go almost as quickly as you get to know them. Any suggestions on getting those people involved? (Baxley, T.)

Panelist:

Thank you for your question, and you sound like somebody who knows your neighbor and who keeps people engaged in the community. You know who's there. I would appeal to them that this is still their neighborhood while they're living here, and so door hangers, a flyer in their mailbox, a quick conversation in passing just to let them know what's going on and why they should be involved, and why it's beneficial for them to be involved while they're living there is what I would recommend. (Hunter, N.)

Facilitator:

That's actually a good segue. I have a question about how has direct community feedback and engagement been important to the successes your communities have experienced. My next question was what steps did you take to successfully increase community engagement? But also, and I think you guys have talked about it, some of it may be having renters. Ms. Anderson actually addressed that to some degree in the last meeting. And Mr. Muhammad actually addressed to some degree some of the challenges that people face in trying to increase community engagement. The other question was what were, or are, some of the common barriers to community engagement? (Ellis, J.)

Panelist:

- So from our experience, it is definitely dynamics within communities, figuring who is the leader. From our perspective, normally it's the person in the neighborhood, the old lady that's sitting on the porch, that knows everybody's business on that street. That's the person you go and talk to about challenges on that street. It's not the person that is being the loudest person, that's always dominate the meeting. Although you listen to that person because their voice is important in the process, too. But, you have to find diversity of voices – youth, elderly, transient renters...Everyone's voice is important in helping you build a profile for the community. For us, what it looked like is that we meaningfully engage communities.
- And this is a process, here, that meaningfully engaged, outside of that, you have to meaningfully engage in meetings. What does meaningful engagement mean? It means that you involve your residents, your communities, in every process, every step of this process. They got to be involved in the discussion. They have to be involved in solutions. They got to be involved with the implementation. And they have to be involved in the evaluation. Did it work or not? And if it did not work, how can we pivot?
- After you meaningfully engage you have to educate them. You meaningfully engage them to educate. Then you educate them so that they become the advocates. The community becomes the advocates. (Muhammad, O.)

Panelist:

Again, I am very new at this, but starting today we're going to upload a lot of this information to the NAACP Facebook page to get folks engaged. (Scott, P.)

CAC Member:

My question is, coming from a laid back community... We have no meetings at all, and usually, right now because of the virus, everybody pretty much keeps to themselves. How could you get the group to come out and just listen...to see what's going on, so we can unite and go forth? But now my community is pretty much over 60 years old. They've been in the community more than 50 years and they just laid back. (Bannister, J.)

Facilitator:

One of the things that I encountered, and certainly I know that LAMC encountered some years ago, is when you talk about the challenges associated with community engagement ... When you're looking to get a younger group engaged, but then you're looking at childcare, or a lack of childcare. People working longer hours, certainly transportation was an issue from time to time. As you respond to Mr. Bannister's question, will you also speak to the fact that it is a process. Before you get to where Mr. Muhammad is talking about - that mid to end point - there is a process of overcoming exactly where you are now in terms

of even getting people to the table. How did you overcome those initial barriers to get people excited and engaged? How to get them to the table? (Ellis, J.)

Panelist:

- At the beginning we had to do creative things like giving away fish fries. We gave door prizes. We gave gift cards. This one group that we're working with now in Gadsden Green to get their communities involved in gatherings since you mentioned challenges in the community, we're paying people to be liaisons. We're paying the community to go out and interview other residents. You have to be creative.
- The thing is the community has to have a feeling that their issues are being addressed. If a single mother is having challenges with their children, how would you address that? Because she is not going to listen to you or anyone else talk about a road project where she's having issues with her child, or she's having issues putting food on the table, if she's having issues with other types of things that is a need, a road project is far from her mind.
- So addressing, in addition to the roads, the issues and concerns around that project, the immediate needs around kids, around education, job opportunities, but identify other resources throughout the community that you know. That is what's going to bring them to the table because they see that their immediate needs will be an addressed. This organization is addressing it. I need to attend those meetings that they're talking about. (Muhammad, O.)

Panelist:

- First off, I want to say, that's a great idea to have a fish fry for your community, but also while you're doing that, see what kind of surveys you can take while they're there, and capture their information while they're all sitting around laughing and having a good time and you're bringing up these issues.
- Try to narrow it down to, okay, what four things are our priorities right now? Then you can take that and then go to the next level.
- Again, like Omar said, I think that financial literacy is always key. That's in any community, workforce is always going to be key, so making sure that you're tapped into these local organizations like SC Works can share their flyers when they're having job fairs. And the Center for Heir's Property recently just had a drive through will clinic, so those ... Especially just saying that she has an older community, those are the kind of things that you're going to get engagement because that's going to pierce the ears of your community and make sure that these are things that address their immediate needs. (Hunter, N.)

Panelist:

I would say get them all involved. Get them involved on a job or a task or whatever, so they feel important to the project. (Scott, P.)

Facilitator:

- Any additional questions or comments about community engagement?
- Okay, and to close out the thought on that particular issue, keep in mind, going back to addressing immediate needs...and, Mr. Banister, that's something that you have expressed from the beginning of this process is the challenge of getting community members to engage in meetings. That is really something that the CAC would have to do, certainly much more so than SCDOT or any other agency because, as Mr. Muhammad said earlier, you are the experts in terms of knowing your community.
- Getting to the base of the problem and understanding what some limitations may be that your community members are facing, might be one of the initial steps. I love the idea of going in, if you

have something like a fish fry or some other similar type of gathering, and taking the opportunity to survey and get a better understanding of people in the community.

- So another question that I have for you is any time you're working with government entities, we know that those agencies have priorities. They come to the table when they're interacting with community groups and they are very often limited because they have to work within certain parameters.
- How, in your experience, are differences between community needs versus local government priorities managed or resolved? (Ellis, J.)

Project Team Member:

Could you repeat it? Say it again. (Derrick, L.)

Facilitator:

How were differences in the community needs versus local government priorities managed or resolved? (Ellis, J.)

Panelist:

- The partnerships that you all develop is going to be important and identifying those resources that can be brought into your community. College of Charleston, you all need to be tapping into that. Those students at the College of Charleston, they can intern with this group to help you all develop a structure, help you all develop other things that you need. Grant writing, whatever it is. Use the College of Charleston. You also have the other organizations like Coastal Community Foundation. They have a grant called the New Fund Grant that you could get up to \$3,000.
- You don't have to be a 501 (c)(3). You can get up to \$3,000 to organize yourself in whatever way that you decide that you want to do that. Then you have other organizations like the Riley Center, other organizations, NAACP, Charity Foundation, LAMC. You need to be reaching out to these groups and saying, we are having this concern. How can you all help?
- There is Together South Carolina which is an organization that organizes global nonprofits and other groups. There is SCACDC that is led by Bernie Mazyck. There's all types of groups out here - Origins, Operation Hope, that does first time home buyer classes and financial literacy. There's a lot of organizations out there that can be tapped into. You mentioned the Heirs Property folks. All of them would be willing to come in and see how their services can be provided. So it's about partnership with them and reaching out and making those connections in your community, in the broader sense.
- And then the City has some resources that you can tap into, too. That's what I mean about power mapping, power mapping your community and looking at where resources are, and learning the structure or your government. What they can do, what they can't do, when they can do it. Because there are CBDG dollars that can be tapped into. Who do you need to go to for that? They're for infrastructure needs, right?
- You have to prioritize those things. A lot of times having continuous ... And remember, this is going to be a frustrating process. You're going to have these conversations over and over and over and over again, but you have got to continue having those conversations. (Muhammad, O.)

Facilitator:

I want to thank you all for your comments. Let's give the CAC and SCDOT an opportunity to provide comments or to ask any questions and to allow the panel time to provide any closing comments. (Ellis, J.)

Project Manager:

- I want to thank you guys for coming, because this is fantastic. Great comments. I do want to ask a question about social media because I live in a very diverse downtown community, and because of the pandemic, that is how we communicate. And I found it very useful because I get information and it's easy for somebody who works a lot. I didn't know if that's a tool that y'all found useful or not, because we're starting to open up a little bit so I think we can get out there a little bit.
- One thing I did want to say for the benefit of all the CAC members is the community office, the community liaisons that work with the office, we are here to support you in this. You guys have given us some great suggestions.
- I just want you to know that we're here to make sure that we give you the resources and the tools to assist our community liaisons who are there to assist you in this. Don't think that this is, "I got to go home and come out with a plan and execute it all myself." Reach out and ask and we will help you through that. (Riley, J.)

Facilitator:

- Chad do you any comments at this time?
- Are there any other comments from anyone else on the CAC or the panel? I wanted to make sure that if you had any recommendations on next steps, particularly considering where the CAC is now in terms of providing insight and information to SCDOT as opposed to where they're going, where they take ownership and become the project oversight committee.
- If you can leave them with some words of wisdom in what they need to be doing now and how they need to best transition into an oversight committee. I think that's how we'll close out the session. (Ellis, J.)

Panelist:

- You all have to organize. You have to come up with some type of structure - a steering committee, a coalition - or some other type of organization. They determined that that is not the best route, but you do have to speak with one voice. They cannot be separate voices. There has to be one voice because the power dynamics that exists with projects like this, they will divide you and you will be on the losing end of this thing. You have to come together, even when you disagree among yourselves. You have to walk outside of your meeting with consensus, speaking one voice in the best interest of the community. Although you may not agree with what happened internally in the meeting, because that's another way that they can divide you. Happens all the time.
- The other thing is you have to stay united. You have to stay united. You're going to have challenges. This is a challenging process, and you have to stay united. You have to have your core group that stays together because once that group gets divided, you have all kinds of issues and concerns.
- And to answer Joy's questions about social media, that's in the toolbox, but for our communities, what happens normally is a strategy. I know COVID presents a lot of challenges, but you have to get creative in how you continue those face-to-face communications with communities. I hope that helps. (Muhammad, O.)

Panelist:

I wanted to say it's been an honor being here today, and next time I'm here, I'll be more prepared. I was out of town and I got the information late, so it caught me off guard. I love being here and I look forward to working with this group, as well. (Scott, P.)

Panelist:

- So I graduated from an HBCU and their bands are known for saying “one band, one sound.” Everybody has to be on the same page. You're all working towards one common goal. You need to make sure that your organization, your community understands that. Like Omar said, it's going to be tough. It's going to be difficult. There are going to be moments where some people say, “oh no, this is the direction we want to go into,” but you're going to have to have a leader or some optimist in the group that brings everybody back together and gets them back on the same page, because the ultimate goal is bigger than whatever other little stuff that's going on down here on a home level, and that is that you're thinking about the presentation of your communities. That's what your community is going to look like once this project is over. What the residents of your community need, and that is always supposed to be at the forefront of your mind.
- Then also dealing with the social media. I touched on that before, but I think that education is really key. If you need to come into a space like this and walk your seniors through what a Zoom call looks like, get some of your grandkids to come in and say, “hey, I need y'all to come in here and spend a couple of hours with us walking us through this,” or like we said earlier, there are organizations that will help you do that.
- There are churches in your community that'll help you do that. Reach out and utilize your resources because one, seniors like face-to-face because they've already been in the house for the past couple of months. And even if they're not comfortable with going outside, a Zoom call gives them that personal feeling. Zoom is one. Again, text messages is another. If some people have the older model phones then they don't have the technology for that. A traditional conference call is not that difficult. Make sure that you're keeping them engaged, and you can utilize several different methods of communication so that your message gets through. Allow no room for errors is what my statistics teacher says.
- Make sure you cover all of your bases. And whenever it is difficult, I want to remind you this is the ultimate goal here. You want to keep in mind, this is about the future of our community. This is what we're looking for.
- [To Mr. Bannister] You mentioned that you have a bunch of seniors in your community. What's this going to look like when their children come in here, or God forbid, but death is inevitable. What have we done to prepare for the next generation? That's what this is all truly about. (Hunter, N.)

Facilitator:

- Thank you for your comments. I want to capture three things.
 - One is the common message, and we've talked about that and working on that now as a CAC, the community advisory council, and talking about breaking down the messaging and making sure that it's being captured in bite-sized, digestible pieces so that you guys can go out into the community and talk with community members, but using the same message. That's one thing the panelists discussed that is perfectly aligned with what the CAC has discussed in previous meetings.
 - Another thing is meeting people where they are. To Mr. Bannister's point, and trying to get people out to these community meetings, making sure that you ... even if it's not a formal survey, making sure that you have taken an opportunity to survey your community and understand who the main players are. In turns to social media and whatever platforms you're using to reach those different members, meeting people at different places. Maybe that's how you get some of the younger people, but you're also accommodating some of the older residents who may not want to use Instagram. That's another point.

- Then going back and reinforcing the point that Mr. Muhammad has made about the power mapping. Clay, you can correct me on this, but I think that is what Maximum is trying to do through the Community Resource Guide. Is that correct? (Ellis, J.)

Community Liaison:

That's part of it. (Middleton, C.)

Facilitator:

That's part of it. If that's something that we can capture in that way, or if a community advisory council members, have questions about how to develop something like a power map, I think that's an excellent point that has been made several times this morning and we can certainly revisit that moving forward. Joy, any other questions. Chad, any questions? FHWA is on the phone, do you all have any questions or comments for our panel members? (Ellis, J.)

FHWA:

This is Pam Foster. The only thing I'd like to say is that I agree with the discussion that we heard and thank the panelists for the information. This has been a very fruitful and informational session. Thank you. (Foster, P.)

Facilitator:

Thank you Ms. Foster. Alright, thank you so much panel. We appreciate the panel members. We appreciate your time. (Ellis, J.)

EJ Neighborhood Impact Update:

Project Team Member:

- If they can, for the panel members, I do encourage you to stay. We have provided a copy of a number of our materials that we provide to the advisory council, and so there is information about the mitigation plan, so I would encourage you all to take time to read it and get familiar with it and see all the things that the advisory council has come up with. Work with us in teams to develop mitigation for the impacts that we're actually going to talk about now. I do want to be a good steward of everyone's comments, so we'll hit the impacts at a high level, but I am committing myself as well as the team to reach out to members of the advisory council one-on-one to make sure y'all have a very clear understanding of these impacts. Again, I'm going to get them high here, but you can go through later on and schedule time for where we can actually call you individually and walk through this in more detail because the key here is for you to have an understanding of what the impacts are, and understand how these all tie back to the mitigation that you all have been working on feverishly for the past year to get to this point.
- So, again, for the panel members, I do appreciate you all coming in. Feel free to stay and participate. From an impact standpoint, we're going to talk about the Right-of-Way (ROW) impacts first, and then transition and talk about some of the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts on the project.
- Really quickly, what I want everyone to understand is that these are preliminary impacts, so as far as what this process ... how this process works is we're at the preliminary design stage. This is still very early in the process. As we continue to refine the design, the goal is to continue to reduce impacts.
- The numbers you're seeing may actually get reduced, and that's really our goal as we go through this design process is to continuously minimize the designs until we get to a point of construction where ultimately these numbers go down. Please understand that these are all preliminary numbers.

- To get everyone oriented to the mapping, and take a look at the legend, but the red line identifies what the proposed right-of-way is for the project. What we're not showing are all the different ramps saying street configuration changes for the sake of clarity on the map. What you're looking at is the proposed ROW at this stage of the project, and then we've got various color coding to represent single family homes, apartments, vacant properties, and partially impacted properties with width. As we go through the various communities, we are going to look at the ROW impacts, community-by-community. Depending on the community we're going to see more items, more different colors based on the lane that you stay in, whether there are apartments or single-family homes.
- So we're going to start with Highland Terrace and the key thing to remember what this project is, even though this is an I-526 project, we are making improvements along I-26 as well. And that's where you'll see in Highland Terrace, there are impacts adjacent to I-26 that's based off on changes that have to be made to the big interchange between I-526 and I-26. When we look at the number of impacts, we've got 12 single family home impacts, one mobile home, 17 vacant lots, and 10 lots that are partially impacted in Highlands Terrace.
- Again, these are preliminary numbers, but as we look at these numbers, if there's any questions, feel free to ask. Whether it's a why we're having these impacts, or anything. Again, the goal here is to make sure there's clarity and understanding about what the impacts are. So, in regards to Highland Terrace, are there any questions?
- And so, for Liberty Park, and as I mentioned, you're going to see impacts on I-26. And again, it is part of I-526 as well, so we have two clusters of impacts when we look at Liberty Park, and along the I-26 portion, and then north along I-526 as well. And so, for a total, for both clusters, 19 single family home impacts, one apartment complex, a church, two commercial buildings, the Liberty Park-Highland Terrace Community Center, which we've had a lot of discussions about in regards to the mitigation. Two mobile homes, eight duplexes, 12 vacant lots, and then eight partially-impacted lots.
- And feel free, as we go through the slides, to ask any questions. (White, R.)

Project Team Member:

Could you describe what a partially-impacted parcel is? (Derrick, L.)

Project Team:

Absolutely. So, when we talk about the partially-impacted projects, so it's a property that will still require some right-of-way acquisitions, but would not require SCDOT to acquire the whole parcel. So, for example, they may need to acquire a portion of someone's backyard, but the house, for example, is far enough away from the proposed ROW so that the parcel itself will not need to be acquired. And so, the homeowner would be compensated for the portion of their property that the department needs for the project, but not will not need to acquire the entire property. (White, R.)

CAC Member:

What's the max you all are going to take from a single piece of property? (Bannister, J.)

Facilitator:

Could you repeat his question? (Ellis, J.)

Project Team Member:

So, Mr. Bannister's question was, what is the max we would take from a single property? Is that correct? (White, R.)

CAC Member:

Yeah, a single property, or a partial property. Because the reason I'm asking this is because I may have mentioned before, that my dad had property. When I-26 came through, and 526, and they took portions of both, of the same piece of property and he ended up having nothing, and no money. They were going to replace him with nothing in property. That's why I'm asking how much is supposed to be taken off the max. (Bannister, J.)

Project Manager:

- Just keep in mind, the rules are different today than they were back then. So, we don't approach it quite the same way, but when we lay the ROW lines out, they're based on what we have to have in order to try to maintain that infrastructure. So, if we are not hitting the corner of a house, then we will show it as a partial acquisition. But you do have rights through that process. And so, some of the things that we look at when we come in and start working with you as a property owner, it may end up being a relocation, if we can't work things out. Because the property owner has rights and they have options.
- So, in some cases, people want to stay, and there will be, and end up probably losing some yard. In some cases, if it's a smaller lot, you're now losing some required frontage that the City is going to require, let's say, if your house burns down, or it's somehow damaged, and you need to rebuild, you're probably not going to be able to rebuild back. So, those are the types of things that you look at through the process. But the property owner has a choice. If they want to stay, they can get paid, what we call "damages," which is a financial compensation for the loss of that. Stay and take on that risk, that they may end up not being able to rebuild there. They may have to move in the event of a, they can't meet the setbacks.
- Or, they can say, "This is unacceptable, and I need to be relocated. And this is not something that I want to stay in." So, in those cases, you'll have options as you work through that ROW process. And that's where it's very a good idea to encourage folks that you know that are in that situation to come to the Community Office and talk with a ROW agent, so they can fully understand what their rights and their responsibilities are during that negotiation process. (Riley, J.)

Project Team Member:

Thanks, Joy. Any other questions? (White, R.)

Project Team Member :

For Russelldale, the majority of the impacts are along the north side of Russelldale Avenue. And so, that does include the need to acquire the property where the Russelldale Community Center is. There would be one single-family home, two apartment complexes, one mobile home, five vacant lots. And then again, a partially-impacted property at the corner of Twitty and Russelldale. (White, R.)

CAC Member:

I believe I've asked this question before, and I don't think I ever really got an answer. Okay. Even though they are being impacted on that back, I believe I asked about the situation of what will happen with Russelldale Avenue? How will Russelldale Avenue be impacted? And then also, will some of it be gone, or will the whole street still be there? (Anderson, A.)

Project Team Member:

My understanding of the plan is that Russelldale Avenue will still be there. And so, what you would have where the homes are being relocated, are elevated bridge structures. So, that's SCDOT still needs to acquire the property in order to build the bridges, but Russelldale Avenue would still remain. (White, R.)

Project Team Member:

Any other questions? (Derrick, L.)

Project Team Member:

- Any other questions? All right. And then lastly, Ferndale. And all of the impacts are centered along the backside of the mobile home park along Morrison Street. And what we're looking at is eight mobile home relocations, one vacant lot, and four partially-impacted parcels.
- Any questions in regards to Ferndale? And so, before we transition and start talking about some of the other impacts, again, we do encourage you to have conversations with your neighbors and encourage them to come to the Community Office to have these discussions about the property acquisition process. We have staff available, so again ... So, any other questions before we transition?
- And again, I know we're kind of going through this pretty fast, but the project team is available to have one-on-one conversations with you as advisory council members. And again, even our liaisons are available to have conversations with your neighbors. So, we're here. This is what our task is, is to help guide people through this process. So, use us.
- So, as far as the additional direct impacts. And so, in addition to just the ROW impacts, visual and aesthetic impacts were mentioned as well. And so, as you know, I-26 and I-526 are currently either on an embankment or bridges, and so, you are going to have a very similar visual view of the project, based on what you're currently seeing. And we're adding additional ramps as part of the project. And so, the visual impacts are going to be very similar, very consistent with what you're seeing now. And so, a key takeaway is, this is where the community infrastructure enhancement plan comes into play, where one of the things that this plan is going to look at, is how to best look at landscape, and to address some of the visual impacts along the ROW.
- Now, understand, that these are bridges, but we're still looking at types of vegetative buffers that can be put into place to help shield and improve some of that view. And so, the individual or the Community Infrastructure Enhancement Plan is looking at a wide range of aesthetic impacts or aesthetic enhancements across the community. But one of the key features is looking at how we can better address the visual impacts of these elevated structures, and the construction of bridges on the backside of some of the properties.
- All four communities are expected to experience an increase in noise impacts. We did a separate noise technical report. And you can see in the packet the actual numbers. So Highland Terrace, about 46 homes would expected to experience an increase. Liberty Park, 25. Russelldale, 40. And then Ferndale, with 30 homes experiencing some increase in noise. And that's in addition to the noise that's already been experienced from some of the other transportation infrastructure, in the area of trains, the airport, and so forth.
- And so, in looking at noise impacts, the things we look at are feasibility. So can a wall actually be built? But then also, the reasonableness of a wall being constructed. And that looks at, one, the noise reduction design. Will constructing this wall actually meet the requirements, and actually get the noise reduction that is required? And so, SCDOT has a 80% goal for noise reduction. So, that's another key factor in looking at whether or not a noise wall is built. But then also polling the community, if a noise

wall is recommended. Not all people want to have a 10-foot wall behind their home. So, there's a polling process, if they're doing it for all that's recommended as well in a community. (White, R.)

CAC Member:

I'm going to say what I want to say. I know that there's some kickback on the wall. And to be honest, I don't think I would like it myself. But what about giving the residents of these communities a discount at some of the window companies in the area, that will give us windows that will be a little better than the older windows that some of us have in our homes. And that's just something I thought about it. I'm not telling them to pay for it, I'm just saying, is there any way we can get some type of discount, maybe? Or set up something with a company? I'm just asking. (Varner, C.)

Project Team Member:

We have had quite a few discussions about weatherization and who pays for new windows, and other things that would assist, and I'll use the term assist in soundproofing. So, as of right now, weatherization isn't included as part of the mitigation. But one of the things Maximum has been tasked to do and what they have done, is to provide an update in regarding the resources out there that will assist residents and communities, collectively and individually, for that matter, on getting those resources to get new windows, and get other things that assist in the preservation of homes that can help with it, in noise reduction. So, even though we can't include it in the mitigation here, we are trying to make sure we are connecting residents with those resources that can help with that. (White, R.)

Community Liaison:

So, to answer Ms. Varner's question, there is South Carolina State Homes. They will do a 50-50 grant. They will replace your windows, and do them up to the hurricane wind standards. I guess noise standards also. The individual has to apply. They have to have someone come out and measure their windows, and see the environment to see what's happening. But we'll get you the information about the site. (Lecque, M.)

CAC Member:

My question is about your numbers. For Ferndale, it says we've got 30 homes expecting to increase noise impact. How do you come up with that number? Because we're four streets away from the current I-26, and we can sit out on the front porch and hear it quite clearly. So, I can't imagine if they're going to move it this much farther back, but it's not going to impact the noise? (Baxley, T.)

Project Team Member:

So, I don't know if you've seen the stats that have come out, the noise meter is actually out. We have to get out and measure existing noises, and then based on existing noises, they will compute a model that measures it. And ultimately that's where the numbers come from. And it's also based on the noise increase as well. And so, we do expect that, again, I wanted to talk about the reduction that the noise wall will provide. I'm going to call it the clickety-clank noise, from the ... So, noise walls won't address that. And that's where one of the things that SCDOT is looking at, is how to adjust what is causing the noise, that noise, and how to address that. And those are like the things that come from different pavements, that help at least that noise. Because you end up with a lot of noise as well as the transportation projects. But ultimately it's a model based on the design. (White, R.)

SCDOT Team Lead:

Impacts, noise impacts, are defined by federal regulations. And for residential properties it's 66 decibels, and it's meant, because we know it's noisy out there, but the 66 decibels is the threshold for when noise

interrupts speech in outdoor settings. So, that is the correctional event, and how the impacts are defined. But we know that even well beyond the interstate, you can still hear it, but we work within federal regulations, and use that 66 decibels to define what impact that actually is. (Long, C.)

Project Team Member:

- And so, five barriers were modeled. And four of those five walls did not meet the noise reduction goal. But then the remaining walls were not determined to be feasible. And that's where we're looking at other options to address some of the noise. And again, the pavement, a lot of noise comes from the actual wheels on the ground, but then also the vehicles hitting the expansion joints. So, those are key areas where SCDOT is going to focus on trying to assist with getting some of the noise reductions.
- But then there's also construction noise. And one thing to remember is, based on all the mitigation we're doing that's proposed for the project, there is noise related to the construction of the project, which is later. And then there is going to be construction noise related to the construction of the community centers, the construction of the new sidewalks, the construction of calming measures. So, there is going to be a considerable amount of time where you're going to experience construction noise. And again, that first phase is going to be based off of SCDOT addressing the mitigation upfront before you actually have to deal with the construction noise.
- So, we do recognize the review document as part of this study, that there is going to be construction noise and dust that residents are going to have to experience. And that's where it goes back to looking at the weatherization, and trying to make sure you all are connected to resources that can help you address some of the noise at an individual, and again, at a community level to deal with some of the noise issues that you're going to have.
- So, before I move on, are there any questions? The key here is to make sure there is clarity and understanding, because we are encouraging all of you to have conversations with your neighbors. But if not now, make sure you hold us accountable, and we will follow back up with you all. Because again, we want to make sure we're very clear on what the impacts are, as well as any other project-related engineering questions that you may have. (White, R.)

Community Liaison:

I'm just wondering, is there a way that you can have the community to monitor the decibels of noise levels on their own, and you could train them to do that? If they have a monitor sitting in the ground, and you give them a number to let you know that the noise is exceeding the 66 decibels, and it could at least be part of the training to our community to monitor that. I was just wondering. (Lecque, M.)

SCDOT Team Lead:

I guess what we could do is provide all of the residents with that, provide them with the information from the model, to let them know what the current levels are predicted to be, and what the future. And when we say impacted, we're looking out 20 years, like what is kind of that worst-case scenario. And really that traffic model is really good. Every state DOT relies upon it across the country. And I think it accurately predicts the information. So, I'm not sure, while putting noise monitors out there would provide someone with the information, let them know that it is really, really noisy. I'm not sure if, at the end of the day, it would lead to anything differently than what the noise model volume predicted. If that helps. Let me explain it. So, it's different than an air quality monitoring system, because it's measured once. So, I think we know it's all pretty, pretty loud out there. The noise model and the data that derives from it, would probably produce the same information. (Long, C.)

CAC Member:

How could we get a copy of that? (Lecque, M.)

SCDOT Team Lead:

It's in the report right now. And we could provide it to the individual residents...Noise is a complex topic. (Long, C.)

Project Manager:

I don't think you want to read a technical report. (Riley, J.)

SCDOT Team Lead:

We will want you to read the report, but we provide a summary, and if the residents want to know individual impacts, or what the noise level is at your house, we can easily provide that. (Long, C.)

CAC Member:

My question I thought about, and I hear you about the construction period, about the noise and about the air quality and about the dust and everything. What happens, let's say, 20 years from now, as far as pollution from cars, trucks, and etc., when all of the extra has been added? What happens to our air quality during that time? (Varner, C.)

Project Manager:

- I'll just say, we did do an air quality study and model similar. And it basically, I'll just give you the gist of it, is that the regulations that are in place that are reduction in place to force the car manufacturers and truck manufacturers to reduce emissions over the next several decades, are actually going to reduce, even though the volume of cars is kind of working inversely together. And so, the air quality study did not come back and say that we were predicting it to be worse. It actually should get better, because of those measures that the state level has taken.
- The one thing I wanted to point out, and just to frame this for you guys, and I'm going to be real with you for a second, so, I hope everybody's listening. The reason that Ryan is going through these impacts, is because we want to be transparent about that. And we want you to fully understand what the impacts are. There's an opportunity over the next three months. This is a draft mitigation plan. So, when you say, "Could we get a discount?" Ask for what you want. It's very important. If you want weatherization, ask for it. Encourage your neighbors to come out and ask for it.
- What we're presenting in the draft mitigation plan is what SCDOT is committed to at this time. Now there's some other things that we've talked about, and we haven't decided whether we can commit to it yet. But if the community comes out and says, "We want a noise wall. We want weatherization." These are the impacts. And we feel to fully mitigate for these impacts, this is what it takes. That is what needs to happen.
- I think Mr. Muhammad put it very, he did a very good job of communicating that. Is when it comes to these government processes, I know that sometimes you think that your voice has no bearing on it. But with this? This money that's being spent in your communities is, it should be driven by what the community feels is most important to improve their quality of life after this project comes through and goes away. We won't be able to come back 10 years from now, when you say, "Gosh, we should have asked for this, this, and this." I don't have a project budget anymore. I've got no money now to spend. I'm going to feel really bad about it, but, there's nothing I can do at that point.

- So, I just want to make sure everybody makes that connection. Look at this information and think about it, and use that, because the things that go into the mitigation plans should tie directly to this. (Riley, J.)

Project Team Member:

Clay, you have a question? (White, R.)

Community Liaison:

- I was going to say, regarding the noise, I think it's important if it is more animated in what the noise levels are, and what it means.
- So that it is, one, on the website, two, on the social media platforms about the project, and three, it will allow a better interaction as it relates to the noise. Second, Joy is correct in terms of emission standards, both at the federal and state level. However, there is no plan, to my knowledge, that some of the noise or environmental meters are going to be available or still out after this has happened.
- And in Rosemont, Rosemont would not join LAMC when it should have, but we had an environmental monitor in the community, and that monitor has long been gone and abandoned. But yet, the impact, now that the noise barrier's up, and when more traffic and emissions and vehicles are wanting to pass, the community is still going to be affected by it, but there's no detection out there. So one thing you all may want to ask is, can there be other, or can there be a regular monitoring of the impact of noise and of the air quality, knowing that this project, the ribbon-cutting is going to happen in 2032. Some people may not be here then, but nonetheless, the effects today are going to be much higher in 2032 and in 2050. (Middleton, C.)

Project Team Member:

- Appreciate it. And, well, LaTonya's going to go through the project website, which is constantly being updated, but there is a section on noise and how we address it, and so forth. So, it definitely, we're going to revisit this in a few minutes, but definitely take some time to go to the project website, because we also update the information on the mitigation as well. And so, I'm not going to dwell on the website, because we will revisit it again, but there is updated information up there that I would definitely encourage you all to go to and check out.
- And really quickly, because I know we're presently out of time. And again, I do encourage you all to hold us accountable. And if you have questions to call us. You all definitely know how to catch up with me to get more information on this. And so, part of this process involves documenting the cumulative impacts. And so, for you all like Mr. Bannister, and so forth, who've been here many years, you all constantly mention the experience from when I-26 came through, and then I-526. And so, this is actually the third time that interstate improvements have impacted your communities.
- And so, these are impacts that we have to document and be mindful of as well as, so, as we go through all these impacts, again, be mindful of the mitigation plans and the contents of it, and what we're looking to do, to not just address the direct impacts, but also some of the indirect impacts that have resulted in community land being taken away. And we're going to have some of the priority issues as well. So, just be mindful of that.
- And so, again, I'm not going to go through all of these, but in addition to the property impacts, the construction noise, there's various environmental stresses related to some of the enduring impacts, again, with the train noise, the airport expansion, and the airport noise. The ports and emissions for ships. So, there are a lot of other things that we actually have to document as well as part of this process as impacts, because those are indirect impacts from the variety of transportation

improvements that occur by virtue of where you're located here in Charleston. You're kind of an epicenter of a lot of different things. And so, those impact your lives as well.

- Housing is another key factor. And with relocations, as well as the ongoing development and gentrification around you, the amount of affordable housing that is under pressure and constantly being reduced. And so, those are also impacts that we had to be mindful of as part of this process, because again, the project is actually having to acquire some of the homes. So your affordable housing stock is considerably reduced as well. And then there's the heir's property issues. And also rezoning of portions of Russelldale. I mean, these are all wider-spread community things that are having to be addressed as part of this process.
- Really quickly before we transition. So, that ends our discussion on at least for now on the impacts. But again, our goal is to make sure everyone has a very clear understanding of the impacts as well as the mitigation. And so, don't leave here without getting your questions answered. I'm here. The project team is here. But also beyond today's meeting, feel free to call us or come by to the office, whatever it takes, to make sure you're very clear on what these impacts are and how this ties to the mitigation. Because remember, the impacts drive the mitigation. So, if there are impacts that you feel like the mitigation isn't addressing, this is definitely your opportunity to make that known to the project team, so we can adjust accordingly. (White, R.)

Community History Preservation Program Update

- And so, really quickly, the first portion of that mitigation plan that you're actually going to see begin to happen, is the Community History Preservation Program. And so, we've already finished up our scope of work when we already started soliciting for historians and photographers to join the team. And so, ideally within, beyond the public hearing in early 2020, is where you'll actually start seeing more engagement. And whoever's actually meeting with the advisory council to get input for this history project.
- And so, This fall and early next year is when you're really going to start seeing things ramped up. And we would encourage you as this history program begins, to make yourself available to sit down with a historian, and tell your story. We're going to document the history, we want verbal stories, photographs, whatever it is that you feel is important about your community, that you want documented, not just in a report, but also documented in a visual display that's going to be a part of the community center. And so, encourage your neighbors to be a part of it. Again, come by the community office and share your story. We'll have scanners. Yes, ma'am? (White, R.)

Facilitator:

Can you just reiterate what the expectations are for an anticipated start date in early in 2021? Will you please repeat that? (Ellis, J.)

Project Team Member:

Yes, ma'am. And so, we're actually going to, as part of our, this fall with our public hearing, we're looking to have the historian on board by then, available to actually start engaging the residents. But ideally, the bigger ramp-up will be early next year, early 2021, is when you'll really start seeing more opportunities for you all to be engaged in, or your neighbors to be a part of this. Again, this is a long-term effort, because again, the goal here is to actually take the input that you've provided, and incorporate this into the community centers. And so, you provided and incorporate this into the community centers. And so, again, reach out to your neighbors, even relatives that moved away, because we are collecting the visual archive as well. We want pictures. We want stories. Anything you've got that are key to the history of these communities that provides history. Yes, ma'am. (White, R.)

Facilitator:

So is the expectation for the involvement or engagement piece to help support this particular initiative for the entire CAC to be involved, or are you trying to form a subcommittee as you've done with educational piece of it? (Ellis, J.)

Project Team Member:

So for this, and that's something we can still work through, but, ideally, their first kick off meeting will be with the advisory council. So the advisory council is going to help guide this process. (White, R.)

Outreach Update

- So really quickly, one of the things, and this is based off of a recommendation from Mr. Bannister, is the community small group meetings. So one of the things we're looking to do later on this month, early November, to coincide with the release of the DES, is actually have some small group meetings with your residents, your neighbors, to talk about the project and to talk about the impacts, and get the feedback on the mitigation plan.
- And so the Ferndale Community Center is probably the prime location for where we're going to do it, but as we start getting closer to those dates and finalizing our plan, we want your help to get the word out, but also any guidance that you all may have that's going to help us pull in the information that we need from your neighbors. So if you feel like there's a particular format that we need to have these meetings more, let us know. Should it be a more formal presentation, or should it be a half a day drop in where people can come in, let us know what you feel like is the best way for us to operate this meeting so we can be productive, and get the most bang for our buck and get the information that we need and you all need to help to continue to develop this mitigation plan.
- So any thoughts, really, in regards to this before we move on? We're looking to probably kick these off before you all see us as a group together again. So are there any thoughts or recommendations in regards to format or timeframe or when they'll... afternoons, midday, weekends? What do y'all feel is the best way to engage your neighbors, to get them out here, to talk to them? Any thoughts? (White, R.)

CAC Member:

You mentioned that we're supposed to have the meeting here. But, for my neighborhood, and I'm not an exception, why can't we try to do a church in the neighborhood first? Well, we can try it. Hopefully we can try it. (Bannister, J.)

Project Team Member:

And we can try. And even if it's attempted, I guess the goal for us is to be out where we can meet with your neighbors. And so any recommendations that you've got, we'll take it and run with it, and put it into play. (White, R.)

Project Manager:

Or even maybe like a tent with a drive-up. Trying to figure out how to do this. (Riley, J.)

CAC Member:

How about the Community Center? It's small, but who know who will be there? (Bannister, J.)

Project Manager:

Well, we can only have six people. (Riley, J.)

CAC Member:

That's it? Okay. (Bannister, J.)

Project Manager:

We could do it by equipment, because people can just drop by. (Riley, J.)

Project Team Member:

Make sure and repeat what you just said because I'm recording. (Derrick, L.)

Project Team Member:

- Okay, absolutely. And one of the things that Joy mentioned is that we are preparing to reopen the community center, as well. So there will be opportunities for drop-ins, but we also want to make sure that we're out in the communities as we need to be, to make sure you get the feedback, and make it convenient.
- Again with COVID that does cause some challenges, but we're trying to be responsive to the needs of your neighbors. So think on it, and give us guidance. As we move forward, we're still going to plan on doing a meeting where people can drop in here, as well as the office, but we do want to get out. And we want to make sure we've got enough bodies to have one-on-one conversations with as many people as we need to ensure that people have a complete understanding of the project. So, next Maximum is going to do a really quick update on the ongoing outreach.
- So the mitigation mailers have gone out, and I'm not sure if everyone's read them or not yet, but they do include a... The mailer? So the mailer is actually going out next week, my apologies, but what we'll include is a community resource magnet, an infographic with the draft mitigation plan, and a survey as well, with a self-address envelope. And, again, we're trying to get feedback from you and your neighbors on the mitigation plan, as well. (White, R.)

Community Liaison:

- We reported at the last meeting that there are about 33 different locations where there's either an exterior box with information about the project, or an acrylic box placed on it the inside of a business. Mattese was able to locate about eight new locations.
- The East Montague market has two locations. The CVS Drug Store on Montague Avenue, the Save-A-Lot Food Store on Durant Avenue, the Max Way Variety Store at Rivers and Durant. The Cooper River Library is going to be two locations, inside and out. They're located on Rivers Avenue.
- And Mr. Banister referred two locations to us, which he's able to confirm, and that's Welch's Seafood and Gerald's Tires.
- So as you move about in your neighborhoods, please call us, leave a message at the office, that we were able to document that we did have this conversation with you. In today's packet, we have information on two weatherization programs that you can contact on your own as individuals. Again, we encourage you to call the office, leave a message for us.
- Whatever your community needs are, you as an individual, families that you know, we can connect you with those resources. But again, just give us a call. And that phone number, we're all learning, 843-225-1135. So please call and keep in touch, and we will stay in touch with you, as well. (Smith, M.)

Project Team Member:

- So at last month's meeting, those who are present in the office, and even today we still have copies of the flyers that Dr. Smith described being placed in real estate boxes at bus stops and interior sites and acrylics things, they look very much like what you will receive in the mail, but they are different. So we also will have copies for you, what you will receive in the mail. We have some today, the entire packet with the exception of the self-addressed envelope, so that you can see it, touch it, feel it, and you will receive it in the mail.
- I would like to know, and you all text me often, I appreciate that, I would like to know when you received it, if you don't mind. We've had some challenges with packets being delivered. Some of you get your packets, some of them were taken out of mailboxes, so I get a phone call, but nevertheless things happen, and we recognize that postal delivery may be a concern in the future. So, we're using what postal service calls every door direct mail right now. So we touch every residential mailbox in Russelldale, Ferndale, Liberty Park, Highland Terrace, and Joppa Way.
- But I would like to know that you received yours, because that's a good indicator of what your neighbors are receiving, and when they receive it. But we will definitely make sure you have a supply of materials in case you find that your neighbors, sorry, your neighbors don't get a packet. One of the tools we're using is the website, so we are encouraging you to encourage your neighbors, and you yourself, become familiar with that website. There is an online survey for which we are providing the paper copy in a self-addressed stamped envelope in the mail packet. So as you become familiar with it, as our panelist here today, you'll be able to advocate, you'll be able to use it, and help others use it as well. So, please reach out to the office, reach out to the rest of the team if you have questions, concerns, if you need copies.
- And I also appreciate you all picking up the yard signs. I see them in both languages, and I understand I probably need to get more, because more are being picked up. So they are visible in both languages. We've also had an Hispanic and Latino outreach coordinator in Ferndale walking around and asking more questions about where that demographic might need to be touched within your community. So please let me know so that we can provide the right direction and support for them to reach everyone. No one should be left out of conversation or omitted from a table seat.
- We have a weekly report of the flyers at our stations in interior and exterior sites, and in our first week about a third of the flyers were taken. And that flyer is the one, that again, some of you picked up from the office, it's called Project Updates. It's not the one you got in your packet last month. It's a different flyer that tells people how to get engaged, how to communicate with the project team, how to use the website, how to invite us to conversation with you. But what you will receive in the mail is the one that you got in last month's packet. About a third of the flyers that were placed in the boxes, totally, I don't have the exact breakdown of interior vs. exterior, but a third in the first week were taken, which is a good indicator.
- And the yard signs... I believe everybody here with exception of Ferndale, got signs at the last meeting. So we still have signs. I don't know that we have any more in Spanish... I don't think so. But we do still have about nine, so I'm happy to order more. And also, today, the magnet that Maximum Consulting put together, I have those here, because they will be part of the mailer. So if you would like to take one, or at least have an opportunity to experience what you're going to get in the mail, all of those materials with exception of the self-addressed stamped envelope, is here today. But the sign work, the flyers are being taken, we're replenishing them on a monthly basis and tracking, and we'll be reporting a little more detail about how they're being moved from interior and exterior sites. (Derrick, L.)

Project Team Member:

Moving forward, one of the things we're working with SCDOT, is our long-term CAC meeting plan. And so let me note that this is your CAC. So, even though we'll develop a plan of what we're looking to do for the next two quarters, we'll adjust as you guide us to. So, as we've been saying, this is your CAC, your plan. We're just trying to lay out a vision for the next few months as we move toward, one, getting the public- or the Draft DEIS being made public, but also working toward the transition to the POC, and ultimately the final EIS being published next year around this time. (White, R.)

Project Team Member:

- And so just scrolling down quickly on the... So on the website, and again, we do encourage you to have your neighbors look at it, but we do lay out what the commitment plans are, and what environmental justice is. There's also videos from FHWA in regards to just more information to educate yourselves and your neighbors about environmental justice, not just all.
- So, as we continue to go through this process, I do encourage you all to look beyond just this project to get information on how, for us, to move forward. You need to know your advisory council members, so your names are on the website, not your phone numbers or addresses, but we do want to make sure that residents know that you are representing them, and making sure that their best interest in regards to this project were being met. And then there are a couple of videos.
- Showed Mr. Bannister's CAC video using the direct link on the project website. (Derrick, L.)

Project Team Member:

And just let me add, also, for the sake of your neighbors, the materials from the previous meetings are available, also the meeting summaries, as well as the packet. So, again, point your neighbors to the website, point to the Community Office, have them reach out to us, but just like the panel said, we need you all to be a part and educate on this process, so that you could better advocate for yourself, and help guide this mitigation plan, because it is your mitigation plan. And again, there are a lot of details on the various components. There's also ways where you can actually... your neighbors can actually get more engaged in this process. So there's a survey, community forum. You can also opt-in to texting up here, as well. So there are a variety of ways for where your neighbors can get engaged in this process, so please, please, please encourage them to be engaged for the sake of the true success of this project. (White, R.)

Summary and Next Steps

Facilitator:

So I guess before we just kind of confirm what the next meeting date is, just making sure that we tap through any questions or comments about any of the topics that you guys have for today's meeting. So if it's okay if I can take just one or two minutes, what are some of the primary takeaways from CAC members, that you got, particularly from the panel discussion today? (Ellis, J.)

CAC Member:

Don't give up. (Baxley, L.)

Facilitator:

Don't give up. Okay. Yes, ma'am? (Ellis, J.)

CAC Member:

We've got a lot of work to do. (Baxley, T.)

Facilitator:

We have a lot of work to do. And Ryan talks about that frequently in terms of this being a marathon. I'm not sure if I can count how many times I've heard that, so absolutely. Anyone else? (Ellis, J.)

Project Team Member:

- I know very early on we talked about the CAC meetings being closed with discussions limited to the advisory council, and then at one point we were going to plan a community advisory council drop-in at the office, but COVID kind of threw that out of whack. We do still think that the integrity of the conversations are very important here, and we would like to keep the conversation as tight-knit as possible, only because we don't want to infuse any other personalities that might impede the progress already made, so to speak. But that just means we have to give you what you need to be successful when you're in the community, getting the conversation and the information out. If you do want to invite someone to these meetings, as it is definitely difficult to convey all of this whole year's worth of conversation and effort into this one meeting or call, please remember that these online tools and paper tools and the community office staff, all of the people and resources are available to inform anyone interested.
- I think at the end of every meeting, I reiterate that whatever we can do to make sure you have what you need when you're out having conversations with residents, please let us know what we can make available to you. Even property owners that we might not be able to touch because either they're not physically here, but you are in relationship with them. Please share the links on the website information that you have, and Joy is clear about transparency. The meeting minutes, in an abridged version, will be on the project website, so there is no reason for anyone to be left out, and the previous conversations, they can review those. And if there's anything they want to add, you certainly want to give them that opportunity, too. But as you plan to be on the streets, we definitely want to make sure you have what you need. And so, just as you all call and ask for copies, don't stop doing that. And let us know, as the office is opening up on Monday from 10:00 AM until 5:00 PM, we want to be as socially responsible as possible.
- But please, anyone that you see in these maps that might be impacted, to reach out to Horrace, so that meetings can be scheduled, conversations are being scheduled with ROW specialists. You know those people. You might know those people. You might know people who know those people, so we need to get those conversations going, as well. (Derrick, L.)

CAC Member:

I was just curious. Normally, most of the time at the end of our meetings, the project team will let the CAC know how many people have called into the office. Are we going to get back to that? (Anderson, A.)

Community Office Manager:

There's maybe two people a week that's calling in. About two people a week. And we do respond to the voicemail. But that's where way it is right now. Hopefully, after this meeting and the office opening up on Monday, we will have more responses, and more call-ins, more walk-ins. (Tobin, H.)

Project Manager:

I was just going to say, all the information that's in the office now is going to be changed over probably by the first of November, maybe... early November, to the public hearing information. So just make sure you let your neighbors know to come by. There'll be new information in the office. (Riley, J.)

Facilitator:

- There are several nuggets that you guys I am hoping, on behalf of the project team, that you walk away with. And just remembering that you're all- and I love that comment, Mr. Bannister, in the video, just kind of speaking to the cohesiveness of the group... I was just saying I really liked the comment that you made about the cohesiveness of this group. And just continue to remember that as you move forward, staying on message, don't let people divide you. I think that's one of the things that this Mr. Muhammad spoke to. Continue thinking about this in terms of a long-term plan, and with the operative word being plan, and then making sure that you're thinking about this in terms of strategy.
- I think it was Ms. Hunter that talked about the fact that you're doing this for the next generation of people coming behind you. And so don't leave today without really thinking on and sharing with those that you live, work with, and around, just kind of pushing that message of how important it is, the work that you're doing here. Particularly over the next two or three months with this public comment period, just wanted to sort of push that home, that don't leave here today without those points.
- With that, the next meeting is November 7th, I believe, at 10:00. So we'll be here. We're not sure if we'll be here, but the date definitely is November 7th. And we will start at 10, location to be determined. And if you have any questions in between, please don't hesitate, of course, to call the Community Office, Mr. Horrace, of course, or project team members, or Joy, or the SCDOT team, as well. I think that's it.
- Joy, Chad, did you have any comments? (Ellis, J.)

SCDOT Environmental Team Lead:

Thanks everyone for coming out and participating, as well as the panelists. We all thank you for that. (Long, C.)

Facilitator:

And then we have FHWA on the phone, or on Teams. Does anyone have comments? (Ellis, J.)

FHWA:

Thank you, Dr. Ellis. I want to thank everybody for participating in the panel. And of course Dr. Ellis, Ryan, and LaTonya for always facilitating such a good meeting. But also I want to add Joy. Joy, I really appreciate today you're being real. And I just want to remind everybody what Joy said about what you have to do within the next three months. So thank you, Joy, for that comment, and I hope everybody adds that to their takeaways today. Thank you. (Foster, P.)

Facilitator:

If there are no additional comments or questions then we will adjourn, and we'll see you on the seventh. Thank you. (Ellis, J.)

CAC Meeting #14 scheduled for November 7, 2020, 10 AM. Location TBD.