

## COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING NO. 17

**Date:** April 17, 2021

**Time:** 10:00 am – 12:37 pm

**Location:** I-526 Lowcountry Corridor Community Office, 5627 Rivers Avenue, N. Charleston, SC; Microsoft Teams (Virtual)

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

**Attendees:**

Larenda Baxley, Ferndale  
Tina A. Baxley, Ferndale  
Earl Muhammad, Ferndale  
Tony Grasso, Russelldale  
Jeanaris Bannister, Liberty Park  
Doris Twiggs, Liberty Park  
Joy Riley, SCDOT  
Chad Long, SCDOT  
Angela Page-Smith, SCDOT  
Pamela Foster, FHWA  
Yolonda Jordan, FHWA  
Maxine Smith, Maximum Consulting

Mattese Lecque, Maximum Consulting  
Carolyn Lecque, Maximum Consulting  
Gwendolyn Boyd, Maximum Consulting  
Clay Middleton, Maximum Consulting  
Janelle Ellis, Empowerment Strategies  
Rick Day, Stantec  
LaTonya Derrick, Stantec  
Amy Sackaroff, Stantec  
Michael Wray, Stantec  
Hannah Clements, Stantec  
Horrace Tobin, Stantec (Community Office)

**Participant Summary:**

Total participants: 23

Ferndale: 3  
Highland Terrace/ Joppa Way: 0  
Liberty Park: 2  
Russelldale: 1  
Adjacent affected communities/ agencies: 0

SCDOT: 3  
FHWA: 2  
Community Liaisons: 5  
Stantec: 6  
Facilitator: 1

**Meeting Summary:**

Welcome and Introductions

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

**Administrative Items**

- CAC Meeting 17 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 served as the technical host for participants joining remotely.
  - Meeting etiquette for call-in, in-person, and on-line participants was reviewed.

- CAC Meeting 17 packets were distributed to meeting participants prior to the meeting date, including minutes for CAC Meeting 16.
- CAC Meeting 16 minutes were approved as presented.

*Safety briefing:* In case of emergency, meeting participants will exit through the front door and meet in the parking lot at the median to the right (upon exiting). In the event the front door is blocked or inaccessible, Mr. Tobin will lead meeting participants through the back door. (Ellis, J.)

### **Agenda Review**

- Welcome and Administrative Items
- Neighborhood Update
- Community Infrastructure Enhancement Plan (CIEP) Results and Recommendations
- SCDOT Response to Environmental Justice Community Mitigation Plan (EJCMP) Letter from the CAC/Updated EJCMP
- Community Office/Outreach Update
- Project Schedule and Milestone Review
- Summary and Next Steps

### **Neighborhood Update**

#### Facilitator:

The project team continues to receive feedback from CAC members on project-related comments from community members, as well as any new insights or feedback from CAC members. Have CAC members spoken with neighbors or members of the community who have questions or comments for the project team? Please note any specific items that your neighbors would like to bring to the project team's attention from any of the four impacted communities. Are there comments from CAC members or any reflections from Maximum Consulting? (Ellis, J.)

#### CAC Member:

I have spoken with a former military comrade and community member who is trying to locate Mrs. Howard to help with the historical preservation project. She moved away from the area to live with her daughter, but efforts are still being made to contact her. (Bannister, J.)

#### Project Team Member:

For clarity, Mr. Banister mentioned some time ago about one of the residents in Liberty Park that lives on Taylor Street named Ms. Howard. So we will share his comment with Professor Fordham who is heading up the community history preservation program because Ms. Howard has a lot of information, a lot of history from the community. If we can get some information from her for the CHPP, then that would be great, but we're still looking. (Derrick, L.)

No additional neighborhood updates provided.

## **CIEP Results and Recommendations**

### Project Team Member:

- The CIEP Open House was held on March 6, 2021 at the Ferndale Community Center. There were 77 people in attendance. The CIEP survey was posted online, distributed at the open house, and mailed to residents in the EJ neighborhoods. The public comment period was from March 6 - March 27. We received 85 surveys via paper submission, computer, and mobile device.
- 89% of survey respondents live in the EJ neighborhoods. We received responses across all of the EJ neighborhoods. The survey asked respondents to prioritize the categories in which improvements are recommended. Storm water drainage and traffic calming were the top two selections. Participants also expressed the need for sidewalks, lighting, and security cameras.
- 88% of respondents desire improved lighting in their neighborhoods. The most recommended locations that we received for lighting improvements were Rebecca Street, Elder Avenue, south of James Bell Drive, Taylor Street, and Piedmont Avenue. Some participants also indicated the need for lighting that would be associated with security devices, as well as tree trimming to improve existing lighting. The most popular pedestrian light fixture was the Shepherd's Crook option.
- A map of shared-use path lighting and existing street lights to be upgraded to LED by the City was reviewed. (Wray, M.)

### Project Team Member:

Recommendations will be discussed in the next few slides. However, are there any questions or confusion about the maps? (Derrick, L.)

### CAC Member:

Will the distance between street lights on Taylor Street be 300 feet? (Bannister, J.)

### Project Team Member:

We don't have the details of the exact spacing. We will review the lighting locations recommended as a result of the survey, but further coordination between the Stantec lighting team and Dominion Energy is required. (Wray, M.)

### Project Team Member:

We will try to get some details about the City's plans at the next Technical Review Committee (TRC) meeting, specifically for the light posts you noted near the vicinity of your home. We will share your comment on street light spacing on Taylor Street during that meeting. (Derrick, L.)

### CAC Member:

The map indicates that additional streetlights are proposed on Elder Street, including at the park entrance. Is the additional lighting intentional because it is the park entrance? (Twiggs, D.)

### Project Team Member:

These locations were recommended in our preliminary review for concept lighting. Based on the survey feedback, there were several comments that Elder Street was poorly lit and needed some improvements, so these recommendations came from our lighting experts. (Wray, M.)

CAC Member:

The only concern with the additional lighting in that area is that the homeowners who live in the house near that entrance will go from having no lights in the darkness to having magnified lighting. I want to call attention to that. (Twiggs, D.)

Project Team Member:

That is definitely something we can take back to our staff and see if they have any additional comments or re-evaluation for having two lights there. (Wray, M.)

Project Manager:

It definitely looks like there are some gaps in lighting on Taylor Street. I can understand the placement of the first light and why lighting starts in that location. There are vacant properties and some commercial properties close to Rivers Avenue and you're probably getting some light from Rivers Avenue. But it seems like there should be a few more lights between Taylor Street where the first and second lights are. It looks different from the rest of the neighborhood. (Riley, J.)

Project Team Member:

We will definitely make a note of that. (Wray, M.)

Project Manager:

That is a reasonable request for the City to add some more lights, unless there's a specific reason that the residents are aware of. Not every resident likes a lot of light. (Riley, J.)

Project Team Member:

- Based on previous feedback, pedestrian lighting will be provided on the shared-use pass in the vicinity of the streets shown on the map. Additional lighting will be considered in the vicinity of the Highland Terrace/Liberty Park Community Center and along the new pedestrian bridge over the railroad. Additional lighting recommendations based on the survey feedback include the addition of street lights along Rebecca Street, Elder Avenue, Taylor Street, and Piedmont Avenue.
- Regarding traffic calming improvements, the most popular locations suggested were Taylor Street, Elder Avenue, Piedmont Avenue, Railroad Avenue, and Rebecca Street. Some other comments included the desire for railroad signage at Taylor Street and some questions regarding the future appearance of the Rivers Avenue interchange area. Speed humps were the most preferred measure for traffic calming and multiple locations were noted as needing crosswalks.
- The current traffic calming map shows several additional locations for speed humps in Highland Terrace and Liberty Park, as well as crosswalks to be investigated at multiple intersections. (Wray, M.)

CAC Member:

Rebecca Street is a state road and not a City of North Charleston road. I've been screaming for 25 years for speed bumps on that road because they've killed every animal I own. They race down the street at 80, 90 miles an hour. Is there going to be some hindrance because it's a state road and not operated by North Charleston at getting those speed bumps? (Grasso, T.)

Project Manager:

SCDOT has agreed to do the traffic calming that the community wants as part of this mitigation plan, as long as it's in accordance with our guidelines. There is a revised traffic calming memo that our folks have

been reviewing. We are still coordinating, but I can't remember if this particular location was an issue in the latest comments. (Riley, J.)

Project Team Member:

SCDOT has directed the project team to do further investigation on the feasibility of the crosswalk locations that were suggested. They also wanted us to revisit the speed humps that are shown on Piedmont and Railroad Avenue. There may have been an issue with the speed limit and whether or not that would meet guidelines. Our staff is looking into that and will provide answers soon. (Wray, M.)

CAC Member:

Regarding the speed humps and Taylor Street, I need you all to take a strong look at Taylor Street. Taylor Street is our major thoroughfare in Highland Terrace. The speeding is ridiculous. The stop signs on the corner of Elder and Taylor Streets is no longer acknowledged. I live halfway down Taylor Street and they come in through my area. It makes no sense the way they drive on Taylor Street. There are no cameras to see how to curb the speeding and people not stopping at the stop sign. Drivers very rarely stop at the stop sign. They drive through like they are still on Rivers Avenue. (Bannister, J.)

Project Team Member:

We currently have a speed hump proposed there as shown off Rivers. We will be adding one in Highland Terrace on Taylor Street as well. (Wray, M.)

Community Liaison:

Does that mean that they won't add a speed hump until 2023? When are we looking at the speed hump to be added? (Lecque, C.)

Project Manager:

We are still working through the timing of when different enhancements take place. Once we get the final mitigation plan, we can provide more feedback later this year regarding when certain things will happen. We have to look for the speed humps, see when our next paving cycles are, and make some decisions on things like pedestrian bridges. Those types of projects have to be done with certain phases of the project because it's major bridge work. But with some of the other enhancements, we've got to really look at them as a total picture and decide how to package and deliver them. Once we have all the final decisions on this plan, we will be able to give you feedback. (Riley, J.)

Project Team Member:

- The previously shared traffic calming improvements are shown in the table here. The additional public recommendations include construction of speed humps on Taylor Street and Highland Terrace and on Elder Avenue, south of James Bell Drive. We will also be looking into relocating the proposed speed humps further south on Piedmont Avenue and Railroad Avenue and implementing the crosswalks at the locations identified by the survey participants. We will reevaluate speed humps on Piedmont and Railroad and should have a final determination on that fairly soon.
- The locations that were suggested for pedestrian improvements were fairly widespread throughout the EJ neighborhoods and also included several streets outside of the CIEP focus area. The most recommended areas included Piedmont Avenue, Railroad Avenue, Rebecca Street, Taylor Street, and in the vicinity of the proposed shared use path near Philbin Creek. There was a comment that we received indicating preference for control of access fencing near the Life Changers Church and off I-

526. We also received three comments that were concerned with pedestrian accommodations at the Taylor Street railroad crossing.

- In the March meeting, we shared two pedestrian bridge options for the crossing of the railroad. The northern option was selected based on several comments received in its favor, as well as its proximity to the existing footpaths across the railroad. This option would also include a smaller bridge across Filbin Creek.
- The pedestrian improvements map depicts the two pedestrian bridges in red, the proposed shared-use paths in blue, and the locations for new and improved sidewalks in pink and yellow, respectively.
- The prior recommended pedestrian improvements are shown in the table as well. Additional pedestrian recommendations based on public comments include the extension of the sidewalk on Piedmont Avenue north of Marson Street, and pedestrian improvements at the railroad crossing on Taylor Street.
- The main locations recommended for drainage improvements were Taylor Street, James Bell Drive, Elder Avenue, and Target Street. Other comments noted the frequent flooding of the Life Changers Church parking lot, the necessary maintenance that would be needed for the Filbin Creek drainage pipe, and the usage of stormwater fees that are currently paid by residents. SCDOT is currently investigating the flooding concerns at Life Changers Church. (Wray, M.)

Project Team Member:

- Mr. Bannister had concern about the “location for improvement” comment regarding Target Street.
- He stated there is nothing on the map that indicates there is a potential improvement. We mentioned that there are a number of improvements regarding this location, but there is nothing that shows potential improvements on the map. (Derrick, L.)

Project Team Member:

We will try to note improvement locations on the map based on the comments. (Wray, M.)

CAC Member:

There is a lot of water coming from that area. Coming off of Filbin Creek, Target runs to Filbin, which runs to Dorothy Williams Boulevard. There is a lot of water coming in that area coming from south off of Rivers Avenue, through Taylor, James Bell, onto Target. (Bannister, J.)

Project Team Member:

I'm sure that the residents that commented have specific locations in mind. We can definitely go back and revisit that if the Project Manager approves. (Wray, M.)

Project Manager:

Anywhere we have stormwater issues, we are willing to take a look at it, whether we do it from a maintenance standpoint or during the project. I can't recall specifics, but everywhere we're doing pedestrian accommodations or upgrades, we will automatically address drainage. It doesn't look like we're doing anything on Target Street specifically. I have to go back and look at our notes, whether we evaluated Target Street in our initial field review. (Riley, J.)

Project Team Member:

In looking at the pedestrian improvements and the drainage table, we didn't have comments marked there either. (Wray, M.)

Project Manager: We probably need a little more detail, and we can go out and take a look at it. If there's a lot of water flowing on Target Street, then there may be a need for an additional inlet. But when they do the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project through Rivers Avenue, they will address a lot of drainage issues that are more on the Rivers Avenue side. If there are issues closer to Dorothy Williams and Target, we can take a look at that and see. (Riley, J.)

Project Team Member: The most popular aesthetics improvements based on comments were resident-maintained mini-libraries and the community center mural. Forty-eight percent of the respondents prefer the neighborhood entrance landscaping option that incorporates Saw Palmetto trees, the Crepe Myrtle, Muhly grass, and red mulch. All improved entrances would be maintained by the residents. Additional comments that we received express the desire for seating at neighborhood entrances and lighting for neighborhood signage, improvements for additional entrance locations at James Bell Drive and Target Street at Rivers Avenue, as well as the neighborhood entrance at Joppa Way and beautification between the Life Changers Church and the I-526 westbound ramp. (Wray, M.)

Project Team Member: What exactly does "maintained by the residents" mean for the neighborhood entrances? (Derrick, L.)

Project Manager:

- From our coordination with the City, any of the landscaping-type items are difficult to properly maintain. We have several communities around here where I live where they have landscaped entrances, and resident volunteers are responsible for maintenance of those. The City would probably be willing to address things such as damaged signs or there was a major wipe out of all the landscaping, but as far as planting annuals or pulling weeds or putting down additional mulch, those are items that are going to be difficult for the City to maintain. They are concerned about setting a precedence because they have so many communities within North Charleston, and if they agree to maintain your entrance then they're going to have 100 other neighborhoods asking for that same type of maintenance.
- Most communities have a volunteer-type system where they keep it looking good. We will install it and just like any maintenance and landscaping in your yard, it's going to look great for the first several months. But once weeds start coming in, it's going to need somebody to spend a little time sprucing it up. It's certainly something we can go back to the City with, but they seem to have a pretty strong position because of the precedence it would set for them. (Riley, J.)

CAC Member:

How possible is it to install concrete instead of mulch and using flowers for beautification with less maintenance instead of mulch? This could eliminate grass and that would be easier to maintain versus going through mulch. There is going to be trash thrown in the area, because it's there now. And my sister-in-law and I are basically the only ones who currently clean the area, at the Taylor Street entrance. (Bannister, J.)

Project Team Member:

Concrete versus mulch. (Derrick, L.)

Project Manager:

I don't think you're going to get plants to grow. If you want concrete, then you could certainly mount a sign on a concrete median, but you're not going to be able to have trees and plants like they have proposed there in the picture. (Riley, J.)

SCDOT Environmental Services Director:

I agree with the maintenance concerns. The project team may want to take a harder look at what is being proposed and make sure that the final entrance design is very low maintenance. Whatever is durable and requires less maintenance over time, may be more desirable. Red mulch may not be the best option. If the team could take a harder look at those items and let's go with a proposal that requires the least amount of maintenance over time, that may be helpful. (Long, C.)

Project Team Member:

That is something we can look into. From the three initial concepts, this one was the most popular, but obviously we can reassess and see if there are more low maintenance options that may be available in the area. (Wray, M.)

Project Team Member:

Ms. Matisse Lecque also mentioned installing a rock bed because concrete could potentially create an impervious surface, contributing to additional flooding. (Derrick, L.)

Project Team Member:

- The personal and professional development responses indicated that residents' main interests are in courses covering computer skills and CPR and first aid. Additional suggestions for course topics included exercise classes and other activities for senior citizens, Spanish language instruction, and cooking.
- SCDOT is proposing to work with CARTA to provide bus shelters at all stops along Rivers Avenue between Taylor Street and Mall Drive. This map depicts the locations of the proposed improvements with red circles. I believe that those intersections include Taylor, Target, Rebecca, Emden, and Mall. Are there any further questions or comments on the bus shelters? (Wray, M.)

CAC Member:

For quite a few years, I've been fighting with the schools. They put their bus stop right in front of my house. If it rains, if it's too cold, if it's a little windy, all the kids are up under my porch, scratching their names into my tables, breaking windows. I've got pictures of all this. Totally destroying my property. Is there any way maybe they could put CARTA and some of the school bus stops together with some kind of shelter for these kids? Because it puts all the responsibility on me to call the police, run them off my property. I mean, it's been ongoing year after. And the old group of kids leave, and the new group comes in and I get the same problem the next year. I just about got in a fistfight with a couple of parents on my street. It's awful. Is there anything that you can do for the school buses at the same time? (Grasso, T.)

Project Manager:

Where is this particular stop? (Riley, J.)

CAC Member:

Rebecca Street and Delta Street is where that particular stop has been. And it's every single year I got to fight with the kids, the parents, and the schools. They go up underneath my porches and just tear up my



place, just throw their pit wrappers down, they leave papers and books and break things up and try to pry open the doors. I've had \$2,000 worth of damage to this one house from the schoolkids tearing up my house. I got broken windows and sliding glass doors that they threw bricks through. They threw bricks through the kitchen windows. They busted open the front bedroom windows. And I've all but gone out there and threatened them with every inch of their lives to get off my property. (Grasso, T.)

Project Team Member:

Let's take some of Mr. Grasso's comments since we have a connection with the school district through the community engagement group and Mr. Dennis Muhammad. Because we are getting this feedback at this meeting, we can take those concerns and at least advise him of those and figure out what type of connection we can make in conversation between Charleston County School District and the concerns in the neighborhood. (Derrick, L.)

CAC Member:

The kids need a shelter to wait for a bus somewhere. (Grasso, T.)

Project Team Member:

Are there any further comments on the CIEP results and recommendations before we move on? (Wray, M.)

No additional comments provided.

### **SCDOT Response to EJCMP Letter from the CAC/Updated EJ Community Mitigation Plan**

Project Team Member:

- The CAC provided a response letter to SCDOT based on the various categories in the Draft Environmental Justice Community Mitigation Plan. We took many of these requests and concerns back to the TRC, which is a meeting of representatives from the City of North Charleston, SCDOT, and FHWA.
- The CAC requested that the community center be equipped to serve as an emergency shelter. The CAC requested that the community center have the capacity to provide supplies as the existing sites do. Both Highland Terrace/Liberty Park and Russelldale are currently designated as sites for emergency supply distribution, ensuring that stormwater management is part of the center's design, having more than one point of access (ingress/egress), because of the potential for increased traffic during events, concerns about making sure children are protected from encounters with undesirable animals, specifically alligators from Filbin Creek, making sure that the space is multipurpose, equipped with all types of audiovisual equipment, Wi-Fi access, and partitioning so that it can be diverse in its offerings. (Derrick, L.)

Project Manager:

- In general, the City and DOT were willing to comply with all of the requests from the CAC and from the original mitigation plan. The City does not designate where emergency shelters are located. That would be the emergency response group, but they did participate in coordination. Because our typical emergency in this area would be a hurricane, which always has associated flooding, they would not typically designate a shelter within the flood zone. All of the areas around Filbin Creek are generally

flood prone. This particular community is not likely where they would locate a shelter. We can, however, fully equip the facility to be utilized in the preparations for emergencies, supplies, etc.

- The City noted that they currently have the community centers flagged for that purpose. The new community center will probably be better equipped to do that more efficiently in the future. Everything else - Wi-Fi, all the equipment, etc. - are just elements of design for the community center and will not present a problem.
- Regarding alligators, we will coordinate with DNR to get the latest recommendations, but typically we would not fence around Filbin Creek. We would do more with signs and educational displays because a fence is not generally effective. Also, because of the flood-prone nature of the area, a fence would probably be an eyesore after a period of time and would be difficult to maintain. (Riley, J.)

Project Team Member:

The second bullet requests that the community center include amenities such as solar power, backup generators, ADA-compliant features, and regular general refrigeration capabilities. CAC members want to ensure that in the event some of the supplies needed for emergency purposes needed refrigeration, that there was the capacity to serve and provide those types of items to the community. (Derrick, L.)

Project Manager:

This facility will be built to modern standards. The same types of things that you see at some of the newer North Charleston facilities will be included here. Backup generators is a standard item that are included in newer facilities. I don't know if solar power will be a part of that. I think it'll probably be either/or solar power or backup generator. The City seems to use backup generators at most of their other facilities. But we can certainly look into solar power. That will ultimately be the City's decision. I don't think we would want to force the City to put in one solar power location here where they don't have it anywhere else because then it becomes a maintenance concern. But I think gas-powered backup generators are pretty common at their other facilities. It's something they're familiar with. (Riley, J.)

Project Team Member:

Regarding residential displacement, we continue to hear that single-family housing is the preference versus multifamily dwellings and replacement housing being located near or within the existing neighborhoods. And DOT's response is that they are continuing to acquire parcels near and within the impacted communities. And one of the things we heard was that the advisory council wanted to be, to the extent appropriate, involved in the affordable housing discussion, understanding the process and engaged in understanding how that will be implemented as well. Are there any other questions or concerns about that? (Derrick, L.)

CAC Member:

Can we have an update on the entrance to the park leading off of Elder and Dorothy Williams Boulevard going into the park? I know I had a conversation with Joy about that and a major concern of the residents on Elder concerning that entrance, and I understand where you came from, Joy, in the conversation about that property that runs along the creek, as an entrance coming in there with, what is it, wetland or being able to make that a viable and key entrance coming in there. Have we stopped the discussion on looking at options there? Or are we just going to continue along the lines of using Elder? (Twiggs, D.)

Project Manager:

- I don't think we could accomplish vehicular access along Filbin. We would not be able to get that approved because we would have to go through one property that is owned by someone who is not

open to vehicular access through the back of his property. Since last we talked about moving forward and purchasing your properties and homes along the end there at Deacon Street and your neighbors', and we're already buying the Anderson properties, there could be the potential to have two vehicular accesses on Elder, one at the very end and then one there that's shown on the map, but also making sure that at Dorothy Williams, the access there that connects to the pedestrian trail and down at Margaret where the pedestrian bridge will be located, that there is some parking on the Margaret and Dorothy Williams signs at those access points.

- Someone could park there and come across the pedestrian bridge and be at the community center. Or vice versa, on Dorothy Williams. They would have to walk a little bit on the trail to go through the back of those other properties, but could access the center that way too, so that you have four different locations where a vehicle could actually come in, park, and go to the center. (Riley, J.)

CAC Member:

Are you thinking that the space on Dorothy Williams will afford enough parking space so that persons attending a high-profile event would be able to park there and come in? (Twiggs, D.)

Project Manager:

I think Margaret Drive's going to be a location where you can get more parking and it'll be a shorter walk to the facility. I think that's probably the location. I think up on Dorothy Williams, you could probably get a few spaces. I don't know how many, it seems at one time, how many spaces do you have up there? Maybe eight, something like that, six or eight? But down on Margaret now, we could do additional parking. It looks to me like it would be a shorter walk from the parking to the actual facility. (Riley, J.)

CAC Member:

Regarding feedback to interested community members, I can explain that Margaret and Dorothy Williams, will be the designated areas of parking, and people would then walk from there, and entering the park, they would then walk from those two spots into the park, as opposed to just driving in to a designated area in the park? (Twiggs, D.)

Project Manager:

Correct. And we could actually have two accesses on Elder as long as we relocate your properties and your neighbors there. We're going to have to have access and parking at the facility. There will be some people who do not have the ability to walk, but that would at least provide several access points where you're not getting everybody coming into the same area. (Riley, J.)

CAC Member:

I'm sorry, the areas on Deacon Street then can become and definitely a drive up to as close as possible entrance to the park. (Twiggs, D.)

Project Manager:

Yes. If we end up acquiring all your properties and your neighbors' there, which I think we've decided to go ahead and do, per our last conversation because of the damages that would result in the change of access. (Riley, J.)

CAC Member:

How many slots could be at the center itself? Versus handicapped. (Bannister, J.)

Project Manager:

- Just keep in mind, this is just a real early conceptual rendering. After we finalize these environmental documents and move forward and actually give some funding to the city to design it, basically what we're giving them is funding and then a list of things that they have to accommodate. And we can certainly change this rendering to reflect or visualize some of those things, but once they get into the design, it's probably not going to look exactly like this because of course you've got to design it and we got to ensure that we can do all the things that we've committed to do on the inside of the building. And then of course, people that know a whole lot more than me about vertical design are going to get in there and start to look at circulation patterns and parking and ADA and all that stuff.
- So the details will come in the future. And as a part of the Project Oversight Committee (POC), there will be communication points when we have draft plans or designs that we can bring back to ensure that the spirit of what the CAC envisioned for this is met through that process. (Riley, J.)

Project Team Member:

I was explaining to Mr. Banister also that as part of most county and city codes, based on capacity of a building, there's usually a designated number of parking spaces for a facility. So that will also be a factor in the number of spaces. (Derrick, L.)

CAC Member:

Would it be possible for the City to establish ongoing process in which CAC members can be engaged in the decision-making process as they work through and finalize the plans? They're looking at the designs because that surely isn't my area of expertise. But as they are looking at the design of this, they can come back to someone on the committee or on the council to have a conversation, even if it's a brief conversation. I just would not want anyone to just assume because they are designing this, that they have cart blanche. I'm afraid of that. And I would hope that they would come back so that the community will not be totally impacted by an event or two that is held at this park, and it becomes distasteful to the residents. We want to embrace this and say, "Hurrah, we're happy to have it," but let's stay on good footing with the residents of the area. (Twiggs, D.)

Project Manager:

We will certainly have those concurrence points in our agreement with the City because DOD has the same concerns as well. We don't want to just write a check and then see what we get. We would much rather be involved at certain concurrence points through the design process to ensure that what the City is proposing meets the spirit of the mitigation plan. Whoever's on the POC... I know you're still going back and forth, how to transition from CAC to POC, but on all these mitigation items, there's going to be coordination through the implementation phase of them with the POC. (Riley, J.)

Project Team Member:

- The College Aid Initiative. Questions that were asked specific to...
  - How was the amount determined? The CAC wanted to make sure that the program was organized and administered equitably and adequately to reflect the demographic of students in the communities.
  - Request to increase the scholarship fund to at least double it to \$100,000,
  - Ensuring that all grade levels have an opportunity to benefit. And the context of that was if there was a student in first grade now, by the time they got out of high school, they would endure every phase of the project's development.

- Students that were relocated because their homes were impacted by the infrastructure improvements, that they remained eligible for the scholarship.
- Ensuring there's some context given to neighboring EJ communities,
  - what did that mean in the draft EIS is version of the mitigation plans language,
  - will the CAC have an opportunity to provide input on the selection process,
- wondering whether this was scholarship money based on needs or academics and merit, will this be for tuition or books and supplies, how will the money be organized and managed and administered, and specifically that no local government entity is given the opportunity to oversee the scholarship fund. SCDOT will respond to those questions and concerns. (Derrick, L.)

SCDOT Environmental Services Director:

- I want to first underscore the importance of the letter we received from the CAC. You really did make a difference. I want to congratulate you on all your hard work. You're moving the needle with this letter, and you pushed SCDOT to address your concerns. So, that kind of relates to all the responses that you're hearing this morning. But regarding college aid, you made an excellent point about the impacts of the project and how long they would occur, and that \$50,000 would not be enough. So, we've increased that aid to a \$100,000. We believe that would provide more benefit during the life of the project. Kudos to the CAC for raising that issue. Relocated residents will still be eligible to participate.
- As far as criteria for scholarship eligibility, we are willing to work with the CAC on kind of defining those parameters for the eligibility of those scholarships. We want to work closely with you and lean on you for what those criteria would be. Regarding the distribution of funds, the SCDOT will need to handle the payment of those scholarship funds. That's what we've done in the past. That would be our plan moving forward. We were likely work with an educational institution to be named, regarding the administration of that program, but SCDOT will be cutting the check. Regarding extending the life of the program by capping the number of scholarships per year, were certainly willing to work with the CAC on that. And it kind of depends on those parameters that the CAC desires. So, that is definitely an opportunity there.
- If there's limited interest in the number of scholarships, we can potentially extend the life of the program by capping the number of scholarships for a year. And then neighboring EJ communities and surrounding areas, again, we're willing to work with the CAC on defining those parameters and which communities would be eligible. You could limit it to those four communities. (Long, C.)

Project Team Member:

- And based on some information Chad shared before and some history that we've benefited from Mr. Tobin's and SCDOT's experience, adding the term "and surrounding areas" was something that was done on other projects because there have been challenges in the past when money has been designated to certain areas to find interested and eligible applicants. So, at least by adding the terms and surrounding areas, it at least extended the benefit to neighboring areas. But in the context here, I think the sentiment of the CAC in preparing this letter was not to be too inclusive and too expansive in that and surrounding areas context. As Chad was saying, it has been deleted from the language, but it may be a consideration that the advisory group and, or the CAC, or however we process the eligibility parameters, that we make sure that's defined and we are as inclusive, but definitely not exclusive. Because again, you may not have enough students to apply.
- You just don't know what your situation will be. I want to talk with Mr. Banister and Ms. Twiggs later, because early in the presentation, we talked about some comments we got from people on Woodburn Avenue and Singing Pines, and particularly where we're sitting now on this side of Rivers Avenue in

north of the railroad tracks, how some of the neighborhoods are characterized. I think some people called this area here right behind the community center part of Liberty Park. So, they got some of the mail-outs, but we can talk about that later, because there were specific comments about improvements, the amenities that we talked about with the CIEP. So, it may be that they're included as well. So, you all can frame that once you start looking at how you develop the criteria for scholarship eligibility as well. (Derrick, L.)

Community Liaison:

We may want to review on an annual basis the criteria so if we see that we're not having enough apply we can expand that. So, it maybe that we start off the exclusive. So, we would need evaluate the criteria on an annual basis or semiannual basis or biannual basis. We can expand if we need to. (Lecque, C.)

Project Team Member:

Let me just restate what you said before you move forward. Ms. Lecque was saying it may be a good idea to revisit annually or at some defined frequency, revisit the eligibility requirements based on responsiveness. So, whatever frequency, if it's annually, biannually, every other year, just at some frequency in response to and in reaction to what you're seeing as applications and successful eligible applicants in her next point. (Derrick, L.)

Community Liaison:

I think we want to start off small and then expand. The other issue was we did bring up an endowment. I don't know if SCDOT has explored the possibility of creating a \$100,000 endowment that would continue to pay indefinitely for the people in those neighborhoods. So, would that be something to be considered? (Lecque, C.)

Project Team Member:

And I think there was a response based on some research by FHWA. Can SCDOT address this? (Derrick, L.)

SCDOT Environmental Services Director:

We reached out to FHWA about the potential for an endowment. There are just some restrictions with the use of federal dollars, regarding that endowment, and kind of extending the life of those funds, just because they're... We'd have to set up some type of monitoring program. And again, the DOD needs to maintain control over use of those funds, just so we can ensure that there's accountability moving forward. So, we explore that idea. I do recognize that there are benefits to it, but based off the feedback I received from FHWA, and even some concerns that our own internal office had regarding project funds and overseeing those project funds, an endowment doesn't look like it's going to be a possibility right now. (Long, C.)

Community Liaison:

Are you saying the money is going to be housed with an account at SCDOT and all of us sitting in this room now, except probably LaTonya and Tony, might not be around for the next 20 years or the life of the program? What happens for succession planning to ensure that the neighborhoods that are impacted still get to oversee or utilize the funds that are set aside? What kind of recordkeeping would be in place to know that this should happen, even when we're not here? (Lecque, M.)

Project Team Member:

The FEIS ROD is essentially a legally binding document that establishes all of that. So, your federal document which is signed by Secretary Hall. I'm certain that maybe Ms. Lawton will still be over federal highways at the time of signature. That creates your initial structure, and then money is allocated. And Chad and Joy can explain this, but I just want to be clear, that first off, once you get a signature on that document, which solidifies all of this and... These documents are either chapters or appendices in the federal document and state document. And that is your first step towards solidifying that you have that coffer of dollars however they're structured internally. Because they do that now with other projects. This wouldn't be the first one nor the only one where they do that or have done it. (Derrick, L.)

Project Manager:

- We have projects like Ravenel Bridge. There're projects that you have mitigation items that are still ongoing after the projects even complete with construction. Before we ever are able to close out those projects, we have to sort of check the box on all those commitments being fulfilled and made. And just so you know, it's not like when we make this commitment and this mitigation plan, we take \$100,000 and put it in an account and sit it over there. That's not the way it works, because we will use federal money. And federal money, you'll have some state money match in there. And so, what we do, we have to spend it and get reimbursed. It's a financial commitment that we track in our system.
- And we're constantly cash-flowing each year. I'll know at the beginning of the year and have to say, "Okay, I think we're going to spend \$5,000 for this particular college age." Whatever you all come up with, you all say it's going to be two scholarships each year. And each one's going to be \$4,000. And I'm going to cashflow \$8,000 for that. But it's not like there's an account where the money is gaining interest and we're... That's not how it works. We spend a lot of money every year on a lot of different projects, and we estimate what those cash flows are going to be at the beginning of the year. If you don't use it, it just rolls over. That commitment is there. We're committed to spending that money. Let's say, nobody applies for your scholarship. You still got the ability to utilize the \$100,000. We're going to pay it when it comes time to pay it. (Riley, J.)

CAC Member:

Revisiting the discussion about the endowment, we were discussing that when we were trying to lay out the criteria. When we were trying to lay out criteria to be suggested for this, the residents and whoever else would be interested in the various communities, establishing an endowment all selves, so that the money would be there for whatever reason. And just like what you were mentioning earlier, about the endowment, we want to put it there. It also lends our involvement, our input as stakeholders, hopefully. The communities will always be a stakeholder in these. By that, I mean they're bought into it. And it's not just what DOT would put in, but it would be an endowment set up on funds that we receive and funds that we could raise and throw in. We visited that idea, and it didn't appear that it was going to happen. And I'm hearing it again today that it will not happen from SCDOT to set up an endowment. The community was concerned with that. And we decided, So, let's look into how can we do it ourselves? And that's where we were with endowment. (Twiggs, D.)

Community Liaison:

Instead of an endowment, obviously, I think what the community can do as a group is set up a nonprofit 501(c)(3) that would allow you to raise monies to add to your scholarship program while they still manage the federal part of the money. So, that would be an answer to that one. (Lecque, M.)



CAC Member:

I said endowment because I think that's what we question here. Could we do it? (Twiggs, D.)

Project Team Member:

- The question in the letter was particularly if... I think as it stated before maybe... We were talking about the context of coastal community foundation. And so, you all asked if there were other organizations because of how they grow the money. Like she said, there's an opportunity, as the CAC transitions to another organization and advocacy group. As you organize, just like we talked about in an organizational training and transition group, becoming a nonprofit, making you eligible for monies that are designated for those types of educational non-profits would give you an opportunity to... Since through federal dollars, you can't put it with an entity that does that has that type of business model. Then maybe you can develop that relationship independently as an advocacy group.
- And just to make sure it's in chat, that Chad said that FHWA requires monitoring of all environmental commitments to ensure that they are fulfilled. That's part of, again, the FEIS ROD document. (Derrick, L.)

CAC Member:

Basically on the lines of what was asked earlier in reference to the continuation and the monitoring of the funds as time goes on, we pray that we all can live forever, but we're not going to. So, are we saying that how we set up this non-profit will ensure that this money is going to be handled the way it's supposed to be, and that the community will have the say as far as this funding is concerned? Is that where we're going? Is that what's being said, or are we going to just leave it out after a certain time that SCDOT is going to be handling everything, and then the community is going to be at the mercy of some other agency? Or will it allow the community to have continuous input as far as having a say as how fund is going to be handled? And I have another question after this as well. (Muhammad, E.)

SCDOT Environmental Services Director:

- As it relates specifically to the scholarship program, I think we're fully committed to working with the CAC on setting up those parameters and also monitoring that program over time, either through the POC, because that's the role that that committee will play, is the monitoring of all environmental commitments. Or if we need a subcommittee that's specific to the scholarship program, we can explore that topic. So, we are meeting kind of on an annual, bi-annual, or semi-annual basis to determine if the program would need to be adjusted at all. But the DOT will need to, I guess, control the use of those funds. I'm talking about the endowment that I didn't mention before. One of the concerns that was raised by FHWA and our own internal office is if we provided those bonds to a third party, a non-profit or some other type of organization, then the DOT loses control over those funds.
- And that non-profit, if something happens and if they cease to exist in the future, then we would be left without those funds potentially. And we're required through the FEIS ROD commitment as LaTonya was saying, to make sure that those funds are utilized in accordance with the plan and with the record of the decision. So, I think we are fully committed to working with the communities in developing some type of monitoring program to ensure that those funds are utilized in the best interest of the communities, and that we're able to adjust the program over time if we're not getting much interest in the scholarship program, if we have to expand it, if we have to increase the amount of the scholarship or decrease the amount of the scholarships, we're completely open to that. And we were completely open to working with the POC, or potentially a subcommittee on the scholarship program moving forward. (Long, C.)



CAC Member:

Will Berkeley County be involved with the POC? Are they connected with this project? (Muhammad, E.)

SCDOT Environmental Services Director:

No. Berkeley County is not involved in this project. (Long, C.)

CAC Member:

I am concerned about the agencies who will serve on the POC. Would they have more influence or the final say on how these funds are going to be distributed or will they work in coordination with the CAC or anticipated nonprofit? Who would have the final say on disbursement of funds? Will the POC or CAC have more influence on determining how funds are spent? (Muhammad, E.)

SCDOT Environmental Services Director:

SCDOT and FHWA will be the final decision makers on how those funds are utilized. But we would not allow other agencies with other interests who are on the oversight committee, whose interest may be outside of the scholarship program to dictate how those funds are utilized. We would be completely reliant on community input, whether that's the membership of the CAC or the POC. We haven't established who that's going to be at this point in time. But I think in general, it would be DOT, FHWA, and members of the community who would dictate how those funds are used. (Long, C.)

Project Manager:

I'll just clarify that the POC, the outside entities other than DOT and the community members that were listed to be a part of the POC, or other parties that we may be contracting with to administer certain components of the mitigation plan...For example, the City...we're contracting with them because they will own and operate the community centers. They are on the POC because of that component, not to have control or authority over any other components for which we have no inter-governmental agreement with them. The housing authority is there because we are partnering with them on some of the housing initiatives. The other parties are only there because we have governmental agreements with them for certain components of the plan. (Riley, J.)

Project Team Member:

- The school-to-work program is designed to provide an opportunity for students to learn more about the transportation industry. There were several questions. DOT's response is that the Summer Transportation Institute Program is going to focus on high school aged students to learn more about the transportation industry and opportunities for employment. It is very diverse. There is also a component with OJT and the Summer Transportation Institute program. Some of these things are part of what the contractor institutes or implements, but there is the allocation of money to make sure that students are being exposed to opportunities to learn more about the transportation industry and a designated coffer of dollars for that to be hosted.
- Is it over a period of time? Maybe it's over a five-year period. There will be a designated amount of time to ensure that students have access to the program.
- Organizational training. You wanted to know how to organize, how you're going to function, and if there was an opportunity for some seed money to help you form and grow into that group. We provided sample bylaws and some other information to start. We are also helping with developing a packet of information so that you'll understand how to form as a 501(C)(3) and the tax implications of that, and securing business licenses and all the other legal and technical documentation and filings associated with that. SCDOT has indicated that seed funding could not be provided, but additional

funding options could be explored. They are still willing to ensure that the community office space is available for the group to meet. (Derrick, L.)

SCDOT Environmental Services Director:

SCDOT is committed to providing organizational training. We are continuing to explore what those training opportunities might be moving forward. (Long, C.)

Project Team Member:

- In the interim, members of the CAC have been providing questions and requests for additional information, even as recent as the past few days. Between the EJ team and Maximum Consulting, we are responding to their requests because that will help populate the list of training opportunities that you requested as well. It's still in development and under construction.
- We provided the Advisory Council with the white paper of what the POC would look like. And what we heard from the CAC's letter is that there may need to be more time to evaluate neighborhood representation, to ensure that those persons that participate in the POC have relevant knowledge, not just the local at, "I am a resident," perspective, but understanding the spirit and tenor of what the mitigation plan was intended to provide to the community.
- If there are opportunities for other neighbors and residents to participate, if CAC members aren't interested in transitioning over to the advocacy group that will support the POC, then making sure those representatives have an opportunity to be identified and get up to speed. Also, the request was made for Dr. Ellis to provide some support since she understands the context of how the plan was developed and because of her relationship over time with interacting with the CAC.
- SCDOT's request was for more understanding of the first bullet. And I might've explained that better now than I did in the past, which is simply to make sure that the residents that become part of the oversight committee, if it is a different group from the advocacy, making sure they understand fully what their role will be on the POC and how to ensure and enforce every component of the mitigation plan. I think I'm relaying what you all shared. And DOT is agreeable to asking Dr. Ellis to facilitate those conversations and those meetings of the POC.
- Noise and air quality. The CAC asked that DOT and fed highways reconsider the decision to not install noise barriers along the perimeter of the impacted neighborhoods. Noise and air quality are important, particularly because the structures are encroaching more so into the neighborhoods and more so in the presence of residents who weren't as close to them before. So, it is important to prioritize noise and air quality concerns. (Derrick, L.)

SCDOT Environmental Services Director:

- I really appreciate the letter once again. It is making a difference, and we have reconsidered the need for noise barriers along I-26. We are continuing to explore barriers on I-526, but you'll notice a slight change in language here. We're calling them mitigation barriers and not noise barriers. That's simply due to how we have access to federal funds. In response to your letter, we've met with upper management, and we have agreed to build mitigation barriers on both sides of I-26. And those mitigation barriers are basically designed to maximize the benefits to the residents from a noise perspective. So those will be included as part of the project. On the I-526 Corridor, we are still in the process of exploring the best option for mitigating noise.
- It is a complex situation there due to the fact that we're going to have four elevated sections of roadway on structure. They're going to be relatively high. So you will not only be experiencing noise coming directly from the pavement and where tires are meeting the pavement, but there is also noise

stemming from the deck joints. And I'm sure you've all heard the cars running over those deck joints. We are looking into how we can mitigate the noise from the deck joints and the noise from the tire pavements, but it's just difficult really due to the height of those structures and the fact that those structures, they cross the railroad twice. Working with the railroad can be very difficult. Any barriers that we would put on structure there, we have to look at the long-term maintenance of those barriers and what happens if they potentially get hit by a truck or a vehicle.

- We are working closely with our district engineers and some of those existing barriers get hit six to ten times per year. From a safety perspective, we have to look at what would happen if we put a barrier on top of the structure, where could that barrier potentially fall? If you're crossing a railroad, the railroad would have major concerns over that. And if it would potentially fall on a roadway, that could be a major issue as well. And there are long-term maintenance costs associated with it. Again, we're committed to building those structures on Interstate 26. [A slide is presented that shows where those barriers would be constructed and some renderings of what they would look like.]
- Again, I want to say thank you to the members of the CAC who wrote that letter. It was very important in pushing the SCDOT to reconsider the need for some type of barrier along I-26, and also to continue to explore options for mitigating noise on I-526. I am working closely with our engineers, the consultant team, and our district to provide some options for upper management to consider on I-526. Again, I want to thank the CAC for putting the letter together and pushing DOT to take a harder look at this, and I can guarantee you that we are taking a very hard look at it. (Long, C.)

Project Team Member:

Traffic and congestion. There were concerns about the additional apartments that will be added on Mall Drive and the impact to traffic and access to I-26, by virtue of the fact that there will no longer be access to I-26 from I-526 if you access I-526 from Rivers Avenue. (Derrick, L.)

CAC Member:

Throw in those 300 units they're building on Mall Drive now, add that to the mix. That's going to be a heck of a lot of traffic, like we used to have in the '80s on Mall Drive. I remember Mall Drive was backed up to Rivers Avenue because there was no access to the Interstate, like we're taking away now. (Grasso, T.)

Project Team Member:

- I will attempt to cover the details and I think there are two fundamental issues.
  - What about this new apartment complex there at Mall Drive? Let's look at the traffic associated with that.
  - Let's take a deep dive in terms of the ramping there at I-526 and Rivers Avenue, and at the proposal that we have before us today.
- I am going to talk about these two things. First, I want to explain how traffic is typically analyzed for apartment complexes and a development like this. This is what we call a traffic impact study. And it's, for a development like this, it is required by the city of North Charleston before they will allow these kinds of developments to be built.
- We went back to the City of North Charleston and asked them to take a look at the traffic impact study that they developed for the 300-apartment unit and where it is and what the impacts are, to make sure I understand it. They have one on file specifically for this development. It was performed by a reputable engineering firm, and we obtained a copy of it. We reviewed it in detail. I would like to give you a quick, fundamental step of how traffic impact studies are evaluated. This is what we use to estimate the type of traffic, the times of the traffic, the routes that the traffic would take to make sure we're not building something that causes a lot of congestion and aggravation to the residents here.

- We first look at the type of development that is proposed. This is a 300-unit apartment complex. So you estimate the number of trips, vehicular trips to be generated or produced, by this development. We look at the number of trips developed not just by the total day, but also by the times of the day, how many, and we just look specifically at the morning rush hour and the afternoon rush hour. That is when most of the trips are really produced by an apartment complex like this. So the way we do that is look at hundreds of other apartment complexes similar to it across the region and the U.S. to help us estimate these numbers of trips. Then we look at where these trips are made. Where are vehicles taking trips throughout the entire day, as well as during the peak conditions.
- They travel to school or to work, to shop or to other recreation trips, or other trips, other social trips. We do our best to estimate how those trips are distributed onto the network. And then we also look at those again, I mentioned the peak hours, the A.M. peak, which is normally 7:00 to 9:00 AM, or the afternoon peak, which is somewhere in the neighborhood of 4:00 to 6:00 PM.
- We want to make sure the streets can accommodate those volumes of traffic during those times, those peak times. Then, we compare the number of trips out there today, as well as this additional traffic load, if you want to think of it that way, to see if those streets and roadways can accommodate the additional load from this development. So we look at existing traffic, we grow the population background and traffic population. We determine the future traffic, and we compare the near road by roadways at the peak hours. Then we determine if we have enough capacity to handle the additional load? (Day, R.)

CAC Member:

I understand the survey on those apartments, but are you mixing that in with the new directed traffic that can no longer go to I-26? (Grasso, T.)

Project Team Member:

- Yes, I am going to address that next. Right now, I am focusing specifically on the apartment complex, but they will interact with each other. That's exactly right. Good point.
- This is a rendering of the location of the 300-apartment complex, as you can see where I-26 and Montague Avenue are, and where the City Hall is, and how it would gain access. The way to gain access, of course, is by way of Mall Drive to Montague and then to points beyond. When you look at the traffic study, it estimates about 75% of the traffic generated by these apartments will be oriented to and from I-26 direction. In other words, they'll be interested in getting out of Mall Drive going onto Montague and be interested in heading one direction or the other toward I-26, either going beyond it or getting on I-26. This is based upon the different types of trips they make.
- Those are the general distribution, what we call distribution of the trips. We do have some on Mall Drive. We do have some on Montague Avenue as it's shown here, but most of it is heading toward, to and from I-26. And this is according to the, so during the trips, during the peak time, during the day, the trips to the apartments equal about 77. Based upon the empirical data, the trips from the apartments, that being leaving the apartments, going somewhere else, is about 50. So, about 75% of those trips are headed toward I-26 and about 25% are headed toward Rivers, and they're headed toward Rivers via either Montague or Mall Drive.
- Assuming that traffic, the numbers of traffic based upon those percentages of where they're oriented to and from, we said, "What does that mean in terms of absolute number of trips out there today?" The traffic study that was done basically assigned those number of vehicular trips to those individual roadways. And then they did what they kind of called a CAT capacity, a highway capacity analysis, where they evaluated based on standard empirical data of how they analyze traffic capacity. Can this

traffic be accommodated, both the existing traffic out there with the 300-apartment complex unit and other associated background traffic growth that's going to grow regardless of whether this is developed or not? And they did find that basically the apartment complex, it amounts to about less than 5% of the traffic on the existing roads.

- And the summary of the traffic study pretty much indicated that they felt it could be accommodated without providing undue congestion onto the adjoining streets for this traffic study. It indicates that they don't anticipate a whole lot of traffic that would come into either Ferndale or Russelldale, unless they were visiting people into those neighborhoods. So most of it would not be oriented to those neighborhoods. Are there questions about the traffic study, the one that was done or our review of it? Or anything that we didn't cover that you'd like to talk about? Any concerns that you had with maybe the assumptions or findings? (Day, R.)

CAC Member:

I have a question. (Muhammad, E.)

Project Team Member:

Yes, sir. (Day, R.)

CAC Member:

I see that you're mentioning I-26. (Muhammad, E.)

Project Team Member:

Yes sir. (Day, R.)

CAC Member:

Did you take into consideration any traffic coming onto I-526? (Muhammad, E.)

Project Team Member:

Some of that traffic that will get on I-26 will probably be distributed, some amount of it, we don't know exactly what it is, will get on I-26 and then it will eventually get onto I-526. And some of it will continue on beyond that going towards Summerville. And some of it will be heading down toward Charleston. I don't have those numbers right now, but they have been included in the overall traffic study. (Day, R.)

CAC Member:

All right, because obviously we know that the population is growing. (Muhammad, E.)

Project Team Member:

Yes, sir. (Day, R.)

CAC Member:

I am thinking about people coming to Mall Drive. A lot of people come from the Mount Pleasant area or Daniel Island or Clements Ferry. And it has been increasing, I'm sure you know the population has been increasing as far as Charleston, North Charleston, is concerned. Did you take into consideration the in coming and outgoing traffic from I-526? (Muhammad, E.)

Project Team Member:

- Yes. When we did our traffic modeling and estimation work for the entire project to I-526, we looked at the regional travel demand models for the whole region. And that is driven based upon a number of homes, a number of apartments, number of retail, commercial, office developments that are projected between now and the year 2050. We actually forecasted growth between today's traffic all the way out to year 2050 to make sure that we had enough capacity to satisfy our design. And that's what we are trying to make sure that our traffic analysis includes, an adequate level of service through the year 2050. And it does. So yes, sir, most definitely. We've included allotted growth on Daniel Island, of course, north in the Cainhoy area, North Charleston, Summerville, so forth. There is a lot of growth through this region. Our future traffic numbers in the models reflect that growth above today's numbers. (Day, R.)

CAC Member:

I think I understand your study about the apartments, and I think I'm understanding more so that you're blending it all in as one. (Grasso, T.)

Project Team Member:

Yes, sir. (Day, R.)

CAC Member:

- I remember when I moved here in 1983, Mall Drive was a cluster. It was awful and that was long before we had Walmart, Sam's Wholesale, and that entire Centre Pointe on the other side. That was long before we had I-526. In fact, I-526 was a mound of dirt that they were starting to put together.
- I'm not trying to be disagreeable, but I just see a cluster coming up with all those roads, particularly with Mall Drive and Remount Road, where people are going to divert to go that direction because they did not incorporate some kind of access on these major highways to get to the major highways like they are now. You know, I-26 could go either way.
- You just mentioned you still have traffic coming from Mount Pleasant. I forgot all about that. Coming down the interstate from I-526, they have to get off at Rivers Avenue and maneuver over to Mall Drive and Remount Road now. (Grasso, T.)

Project Team Member:

If I were from Daniel Island and I wanted to go these apartment complex, I would probably do that. I'd probably get on I-526 and get off at Rivers and then come back to Mall or Montague, right? (Day, R.)

CAC Member:

That's exactly what I'm telling you. (Grasso, T.)

Project Team Member:

According to the traffic study, that represents 25% that would be oriented to and from Rivers. (Day, R.)

CAC Member:

I hope it works out. But I just remember what 1983 looked like when I first moved here, and it was awful. (Grasso, T.)

Project Team Member:

I remember that because I was living there as well, but that was when they had an actual mall there, and that's why they call it Mall Drive, right? (Day, R.)

CAC Member:

Yes sir. (Grasso, T.)

Project Team Member:

So that whole land use area in that area has been reconfigured. And, of course, the travel demands differ quite a bit from back in those days when they had the mall there versus today. But we've looked at it and I'd be happy to go back and actually meet you on the street corner one day out there. And let's look at it together if we need to. (Day, R.)

CAC Member:

I'm okay with what you're saying. I just hope there's some real hard consideration, considering the Centre Pointe is a well-traveled area. (Grasso, T.)

Project Team Member:

It is. It's a retail hub for the region. (Day, R.)

CAC Member:

And I've never understood why they didn't take Mall Drive and just go right over the interstate right into Centre Pointe, because that could have been a really good access for all people concerned. (Grasso, T.)

Project Team Member:

I don't disagree with you at all. I think that our office is right over there off of Centre Pointe, and I think that would be a fabulous project one day. (Day, R.)

CAC Member:

Yes, sir. All right, well, thank you, appreciate it. (Grasso, T.)

Project Team Member:

But I think that's a great point to accommodate those trips between Centre Pointe and Mall Drive area without having to get on Montague or 526. (Day, R.)

CAC Member:

I have another question. (Muhammad, E.)

Project Team Member:

Yes, sir? (Day, R.)

CAC Member:

I have I-526 coming off on Rivers when you're going to, I guess, north or south. That's basically going to be taken away. So if you're coming from, so if I want to go like to Trident or some places in the little shopping area on Rivers...Or churches or other places on Rivers, Gerald's on Rivers. I can go there based off me coming off of I-526 and getting onto Rivers. Are you saying I cannot do that anymore? I would have to find



another way, another route to come off I-526 to get to Rivers instead of coming off of 526 to get onto Rivers directly? So those two entrances and exits will be taken away? (Muhammad, E.)

Project Team Member:

No, sir. Let me try to articulate the difference a little bit. And I'll try to verbalize this, but please make sure I do it correctly and we all understand. So today you can go really from, let's say, Daniel Island to get off at Rivers and go up to Gerald's or down to Mall Drive, right? And you will continue to be able to do that. And let's say you're at International and you want to go toward Rivers Avenue and get off at Rivers Avenue and go to Gerald's or Mall Drive, you will still be able to do that in the future. (Day, R.)

CAC Member:

Okay. (Muhammad, E.)

Project Team Member:

- The only difference is today you can go from Rivers Avenue to I-26 by way of 526.
- And if you remember, it's a very short, what I call a weaving section where traffic merges on and other traffic merges off, today. And that's the problem. We are proposing not to allow that maneuver, to go from I-26 to Rivers or from Rivers to I-26 at I-526. It's just so close together. Now you could still go up to Remount or you could go up to Aviation or you go back to Phosphate, whatever, and jump over. Or down south, you could go to Mall Drive or Montague and jump over and get on to I-26. So let's, if we can, I'd like to talk about that a little bit with the graphics that are up here, Brother Muhammad, is that okay? And make sure I get it straight.
- Okay, so right now we have two, we looked at two alternatives. Well we really looked at more than that, but the primary two alternatives are what we call Alternative Two and Alternative Two-A. Now, Alternative Two allows you to go from Rivers, and if you want to go west on 526, you can continue to get on west on 526 and go to International or Dorchester or Montague or all the way over to Savannah Highway from Rivers Avenue.
- But we are not proposing to allow you to get from Rivers Avenue and get right back off at I-26, just because it's too tight a distance in there, to merge on and merge right off. Under Alternative Two, that is not allowed. It allows you, as you can see, today you can get on just like you can always, will still be allowed. You come under that little ramp right where the cursor is, and you merge right onto 526 and you head west. (Day, R.)

CAC Member:

Right. (Muhammad, E.)

Project Team Member:

- Right? But it won't allow you that red ramp there as it's shown where the cursor is taken out. That red is erased but allows you to continue on straight through the interchange. Not there, but down to the interchange, straight west of West Ashley. There you go, it allows you that way, but it doesn't allow you to get onto I-26. This is Alternate Two, right? It allows you equally to come from West Ashley to get off at Rivers just as you do today, in terms of getting off right there, at the location there.
- come straight through the cursor, right through there, and there's a loop ramp right at Rivers. Keep going down to Rivers if you would with the cursor, to Rivers. And see that loop ramp right there? Keep going a little bit further. It's still, right there, that's what I'm looking at, right there. It still allows you to get off there. And it allows you to get on and keep going toward. So that's still allowed. You can still go



to and from West Ashley and also to and from Daniel Island from Rivers. Brother Muhammad, does that make sense? Under Alternate Two. (Day, R.)

Project Team Member:

You just can't get on 26.

Project Team Member:

- You just can't go from 26 to Rivers by way of 526. Now, but you can do other, you can jump to other connector roads, north or south of 526. Now let me show you Alternate Two-A. Two-A was one we looked at to try to allow that maneuver to happen. We said, "We really want to show an alternative where we still can do that maneuver, where you can get on at Rivers and get off at I-26. And likewise, the return movement." Okay, so coming from I-26 and get off at Rivers, but it does some things to it that we don't like. From traffic, as well as impact to the community, you can see where the new road is and how it eats into that neighborhood a little bit more, with that new road, compared to the other one. So the issue is, what I call the area that the traffic weaves in. Whereas under the top-
- The traffic weaves in, whereas under the top one that says Alternate 2A that allows that maneuver to go from Rivers to I-26, it allows people to merge in and merge back out to go. They have to... That's a lot of traffic that gets mixed in that reasonably short period of route there. That is essentially the same problem we have out there today that causes a lot of that congestion on 526.
- We're saying if you do Alternate A, Alternate 2 down at the bottom shows that is not allowed. You still can get on the main line I-26, I-526 to go to West Ashley, but it does not allow you to get on I-26 in the future. Alternate 2 from a traffic perspective allows a greater free flow of traffic, both directions, eastbound, westbound so you can continue to go traveling at a good speed, but if you have Alternate 2A, you will basically be as shown on the top with the short weaving section, a very bumper to bumper traffic, basically 15 miles an hour during the day time or even less. It will cause congestion back to Rivers Avenue on that ramping system, simply because of the amount of traffic out there.
- Now, what also that does to the communities, both north and south of 526, you'll find, I think, you'll have more noise if you have traffic standing still out there during the peak time. You'll also have air quality if you have traffic standing out there during those peak times. We believe not just for the operation of the road, but also for the adjacent communities that because of the congestion out there with the weaving of Alternate 2A, it would be preferred from an operational standpoint and the air quality and noise that Alternate 2A would be a better alternative as one topic.
- Why do we think Alternate 2A was not the right one to carry forward? Why was it eliminated? Because we talked about the amount of traffic growth out there today, where we have congestion out there today, where people are trying to get on and off, you know, that weaving section today on 526. People trying to get on Rivers and get off at I26. We're going to have 35% more trucks out there and probably 65% more vehicles out there that will make that maneuver, and it'll actually be a worse situation out there than we find ourselves today in, with the additional traffic growth. (Day, R.)

Project Team Member:

This part of the presentation wasn't in the packet. (Derrick, L.)

Project Team Member:

- We do have a few more lanes out there but still have that weaving section that's problematic today and will remain problematic with us if we keep 2A. That's why we decided Alternate 2 was better than 2A.

- The other thing that we talked about is if you did try to develop Alternate 2A versus Alternate 2, and 2A again allows that maneuver, right? That you saw the ramp, the ramping system before, when we looked at it. It basically went into the neighborhoods more. It edged into the neighborhoods slightly more than the Alternate 2. Alternate 2, which eliminates that maneuver, it does show an impact to the single-family homes of being about 16, but with Alternate 2 the additional ramping it eats further into the neighborhood. It goes from 16 to 21. We do have more homes taken. We have more mobile homes taken, and you can see the differences here.
- We have one resident to duplex, additional residential duplex taken, and we also have two churches, one church and one commercial center that are impacted. That's Life Changers Church in the way of making that happen, as well as the Roper St. Francis building there at the south side at corner of Rivers.
- Because of those kinds of impacts, as well as the overall traffic flow and the better air quality, better noise levels, we felt that Alternate 2 was the better alternative that not only helped the traffic operate better, but also helped the neighborhood out.
- How do I get there if you do take this maneuver away from me? If I can't get there from where I am today, how will I get there from Rivers to I-26? These are some of your immediate options, okay, because Rivers kind of parallels I-26, but you could go from Rivers Avenue up to Remount, which is the next one north. If you want to, you could go to Aviation or you can really even go further north than that and go all the way to either past your Phosphate, or if you wanted to continue on, you could go up there near the Highway 78, thereby Charleston Southern. There's a number of different options of how you could move from Rivers over to I-26, heading north. In the south it's similar. You would probably the first two you come to would be either Mall Drive or Montague Avenue.
- These are options that we feel are very reasonable, and it probably would take you a whole lot more time, anyway, if you did have that level of congestion on that short weaving section, that it probably is just as quick to take the routes during those peak times.
- These are just some graphics that we can run through if you want to, that shows you the location in your neighborhoods from Ferndale Liberty Park, Russell Dale, you know, how you would get to either Remount. This is a view of Aviation, heading south. You could come down to Montague shown in these routes with the blue arrows, or one more shows you to a Mall Drive, how you get Mall Drive down. These are just some of the options that we said you could reroute some traffic to these and not have the impacts into the community under the Alternate 2.
- Now, let me pause. I'll do a real quick summary, and then we'll take questions. How about that? The findings say the new apartments it would add traffic to those neighborhoods, streets of Montague and Mall Drive. Most of them would be oriented toward I-26, excuse me, I-26, but it wouldn't significantly increase traffic on the roads where the capacity couldn't handle. We also feel that there'd be very, very minor if any impact into the neighborhoods we're talking about.
- Just a note that we've mentioned in the presentation earlier is that we do have a traffic model that projects traffic out in the future. It does include growth in those traffic numbers that we're designing our highway to, and things like this apartment complex are included in our growth projections already. Then the last two bullets here for the summary is we looked at Alternate 2, demonstrates a better traffic performance. In other words, it moves traffic better and therefore equates to less noise and better air quality in those adjacent neighborhoods, as well as Alternate 2 has fewer residential commercial and church right-of-way impacts in the communities than Alternate 2A.
- Those are hopefully articulate some of our logic in terms of how we thought Alternate 2 was a better alternative all around than the Alternate 2A with that connection. Now let me pause and see if I can help answer any questions or respond to any comments. (Day, R.)

CAC Member:

Is there a Plan B if what I'm predicting is going to be a traffic cluster at those other two or something else the highway department could put into perspective five years after all this is completed? (Grasso, T.)

Project Team Member:

Would be hard to do that, Mr. Grasso, to be honest. I think the Plan B if it would be, it would be to go to those alternate routes and look at other additional improvements to make those connections. That would be plan B. (Day, R.)

CAC Member:

Well, I mean, I see the plan that which you have done do eliminate traffic coming off of a 526, but like Mr. Grasso said, and I'm right in the next community from him. It takes me back to the beginning of time now because I have to go to Mall Drive once before, you know, to get to where I'm going. It was an easy access right at 526 and I-26 to go there on time or go west to the Ashley. Now I'm having to revert back to the beginning or go a mile from me to get back on the interstate. I understand both ways. It's just at a late age, in my life, it was adjustment. (Bannister, J.)

Project Team Member:

It's unfortunate, but the growth is so large here, the traffic growth, background growth. It does make quite an impact with not allowing that because we always like the most direct route, but it's just no real reasonable way to make that connection from Rivers to I-526, I mean, via 526 to I-26 and make it work. (Day, R.)

Project Team Member:

No other questions online or by phone? What we will do is to make sure, because this part of the presentation was not part of your packet, we will get this information to you all so that if there are other questions that you receive from your neighbors, then you're able to at least demonstrate with some of the mapping and the tables how the additional impacts would have had to have been factored into the decision matrix of which alternative to select. (Derrick, L.)

**Community Office and Outreach Update**Project Team Member:

- An outreach update, we had a good bit of traffic between February and the middle of this month. We had a number of visitors. We've had some right-of-way appointments as well. We made a lot of calls to encourage residents to attend the community infrastructure enhancement plan open house. We received a number of calls as well, and we continued to be very responsive to the voicemails that are left either during the week while we're fielding other calls, as well as those received over the weekend.
- The Community Liaisons continue to identify resources that are helpful to both you and your neighbors. We continue to send emails to you about opportunities to either engage some of the community resources that they continue to identify to provide support to you and your neighbors as well as events that are occurring locally, like Change before Character?
- The event today with the Women of Change and Character cleaning up the Ferndale Community, and that will be in, I think Dee's Hill next month. Then other neighborhoods upcoming in the area, but mental health tips and resources included in your packet. We'll continue to share that information with you by phone and by email.

- Summary and next steps, we are continuing to assemble and update the narrative for that was included in the draft Environmental Impact Statement so that we can finalize the final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision. We hope to have that signed and, it's including all the responses that we've shared with you today and any other feedback we've received from other stakeholders and partnering agencies. The timeline is included in your packet as well. (Derrick, L.)

### **Project Schedule and Milestone Review**

#### Project Team Member:

If you ever have a question about any of that, particularly as your neighbors ask you questions about those years for mitigation, right-of-way acquisition and construction, please send those to us so that we can help you answer questions. The next, the common question from the, to use your phrase, Mr. Banister, since the beginning of time and the beginning of time on this project is either when are you going to start construction, or when will I have to move? Just make sure you have the year range, not necessarily committed to memory, but if you don't push them to the project website, then you have in your packet the schedule. You'll be able to remind them that no, you don't have to move tomorrow, but you will be contacted about if you are required to move. You will be contacted in that range of time that's identified in the schedule and milestone review. (Derrick, L.)

#### CAC Member:

For acquisition, we enter '23 now. (Twiggs, D.)

#### Project Team Member:

Right. Some of the right-of-way acquisition is necessary for construction of the replacement community center in particular. (Derrick, L.)

#### CAC Member:

It should be before 2023 for our little close-knit crew that's close to that big community center that's going to acquire Anderson. (Twiggs, D.)

#### Project Team Member:

Yes. Joy, do you want to respond for the Deacon Street impact in particular coming from Elder all the way down, including the Anderson Family? (Derrick, L.)

#### CAC Member:

I think that rental, people who were renting just let them know. (Twiggs, D.)

#### Project Team Member:

Right. Ms. Twiggs is wondering if it's going to happen any earlier than 2023 because many of those units or those parcels are rental units, and they would want to at least be in contact with their tenants. Keep in mind the tenants have rights, too. (Derrick, L.)

#### CAC Member:

Are we ever going to be able to visit the site? (Bannister, J.)

Project Team Member:

Mr. Bannister's question is, are we ever going to be able to visit the site? You mean the side of the replacement community center? You mean after it's acquired from the Anderson family? (Derrick, L.)

CAC Member:

Yes. (Bannister, J.)

Project Manager:

The schedules are currently under development. We will release/publish something more definitive either late this year or early next year. We are going through those exercises now of understanding when we're going to do certain things. That will be coming. As far as the replacement community center site, we are still working with the Anderson family to help relocate them and to finalize that purchase deal. Because of the real estate market and what it is right now, it is going to take some time for that process to happen. I think those are things that we can address in the future, but right now it is in limbo. (Riley, J.)

Project Team Member:

- Particularly from the environmental services office perspective in the EJ community mitigation plan, some of his takeaways were that we need to allow for additional community involvement during the development and design of the community center, allow for periodic and continual monitoring of scholarship program with the affected communities and not just the POC, and identify low maintenance options for landscaping at the community entrances.
- One of the things I noted was trying to get some more information to Mr. Grasso about school bus stops in coordination with the Charleston County School District. There was a concern about the number of parking spaces at the community center once it's designed or design starts taking place.
- Ms. Twiggs is concerned about not impacting residents on Elder Street and ensure that there's some community engagement on design and access so that they're not additionally burdened from the construction.
- Chad noted that the tracking with the scholarship and eligibility requirements was noted by Ms. Carolyn Lecque about revisiting those at some frequency once that scholarship is being implemented.
- We are going to send the presentation that Rick prepared to the advisory council members. We'll let Professor Fordham update him on the status of maybe connecting with Ms. Howard.
- Follow up on the City's plan on repairing and replacing lights, particularly on Taylor Street, the lights at the entrance of park.
- Ms. Twiggs had a question about whether that was intentional. I think we addressed that.
- Storm water and pedestrian amenities on Target Street. Joy mentioned that anywhere we do pedestrian upgrades, we also do stormwater upgrades, but there was no distinction or identification of any of that on the mapping. So we'll definitely revisit that. (Derrick, L.)

Facilitator:

- You captured most of the comments that I had. I want to encourage CAC members to continue to take time to review and understand the survey results from the CIEP survey and understanding some of the nuances that were discussed in terms of the maintenance requirements at the entrances. That would be something that the residents would be responsible for, and they need to understand what that means and looks like for the community.
- The other thing is making a mental note of the change in terminology from noise barrier to mitigation barrier so there's no confusion moving forward in future discussions about the mitigation barriers.

- CAC members should continue to understand and ask questions about the parameters regarding the right-of-way and relocation packages. Those were my primary comments. (Ellis, J.)

Community Liaison:

I want to add to the minutes that in addition to Mr. Grasso's mention of issues with the school buses, Mr. Muhammad also made a request for resource information that would be available through the Greek Organizations in North Charleston. We will be following up with that as well. (Smith, M.)

Project Team Member:

That's part of what I was mentioning about the organizational training and transition subcommittee receiving some comments, even as recent as the past couple of days that I had not reported to DOT yet. We're still assembling that list for DOT as we provide the continued support to that component of the CAC. (Derrick, L.)

Community Liaison:

- Maximum Consulting team and CAC members can engage in door-to-door canvassing, visiting with the neighbors and residents in those four neighborhoods.
- Also, we want to talk about the history project. We want to make sure that we kept to the culture and history of the four communities. What we're doing now is collecting local interest spots that Mrs. Twiggs gave us.
- Earlier this week, we may ask CAC members to stand in front of a place in Ferndale, maybe on Iron Street, where the community center used to be and share some memory that they have of that community center. We'll be picking two spots out of each community.
- What we want to do is get people to talk about what their culture and their history looked like during the time when they were growing up in those communities to give us a perspective of what that community was, what it looked like before the interruption of I-526 and I-26. If you have pictures or mementos or anything we could use, that would be great. We'll take pictures of those, and we'll use those for part of the history exhibit at the new center. (Lecque, M.)

**Summary and Next Steps**

Project Team Member:

- In the upcoming meetings, we will have Professor Fordham and his support group present the plan for the community history preservation plan, which as you remember, is an initiative in the community mitigation plan. As those different initiatives are further developed, we will continue to report those plans and ongoing efforts or developing then ongoing efforts to the advisory council. Right now, I don't think we have very specific content for the next CAC meeting. However, again, we have discussed internally having Professor Fordham and the rest of the community history preservation team come before the CAC to start giving you information about their plan and make appeals as Ms. Lecque did so that you'll have an idea of how your neighborhood can participate more in depth and thoroughly in that effort.
- As of now, if we return to schedule, the next advisory council meeting is scheduled for May 1st. If you all have any conflicts with that date, please let us know because we will need to start assembling content, but I think there is an opportunity at that meeting, if not attended by DOT and Fed Highways, then definitely the advisory council talking about how we plan to move forward, the transition part of the organizational training and transitioning committee, getting some of your ideas on further

delineated about the scholarship program and any other concerns you have with, as we are presenting narrative to DOT for finalization of this environmental document. How we make sure we're tracking where monitoring and we're developing these initiatives; the steps to actually implement them consistent with what you requested for your mitigation plan.

- SCDOT and FHWA, would you like to leave any closing comments? (Derrick, L.)

SCDOT Environmental Services Director:

I just want to thank everyone for your participation today, and it's excellent feedback. We couldn't do this without you, so I really appreciate your time and hope you enjoy the pretty weather out there today. (Long, C.)

FHWA:

This is Pam from Federal Highway. I really want to thank the CAC for their involvement in and the participation with the letter. I think that has made a big difference, and I want to really express appreciation from Federal Highway for your submittal and the information that you had in that letter. This was a very informative meeting. Thank you very much for your participation in this meeting. Have a good weekend. Thank you. (Foster, P.)

Project Team Member:

We appreciate your continued calls to the office with your questions and concerns as well as your calls to us individually. Enjoy your weekend and thank you for obliging us to extend over time. (Derrick, L.)

Project Manager:

Thank you. (Riley, J.)

**CAC Meeting #18 is scheduled for May 1, 2021 at 10:00 AM.**