

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Frequently Used Abbreviations

I-526 LCC WEST – I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST project

CAC – Community Advisory Council

POC – Project Oversight Committee

EJ – Environmental Justice

FEIS – Final Environmental Impact Statement

ROD – Record of Decision

SC Housing – South Carolina State Housing and Finance and Development Authority

CIEP – Community Infrastructure Enhancement Plan

Mitigation proposed in this EJ Community Mitigation Plan will be part of the FEIS-ROD which is anticipated to be completed in Fall/Winter of 2021. The full plan and additional details on how the plan was created can be reviewed in FEIS-ROD Appendix H. Additional components of the proposed mitigation may be added through coordination with the City of North Charleston, the CAC, the POC, EJ residents, and other local entities.

2.0 FOCUSED OUTREACH

2.1 COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Community Advisory Council (CAC) was established in September 2019 and consists of residents, property-owners, and community leaders from the impacted EJ neighborhoods. The CAC's role primarily consists of:

- sharing individual knowledge and perspectives with the project team;
- providing input on project-related impacts and proposed mitigation;
- serving as a voice for the EJ neighborhood residents; and,
- distributing project-related information.



SCDOT will continue to support the CAC throughout the remainder of the I-526 LCC WEST project development phase and publishing of the FEIS-ROD by facilitating their regularly scheduled monthly meetings and providing logistical and administrative support, as needed. When the project transitions from the project development phase to the design phase, a Project Oversight Committee (POC) will be tasked with overseeing the implementation of the various EJ mitigation commitments. *See Section 7.0 for additional details on the composition and role of the POC.*

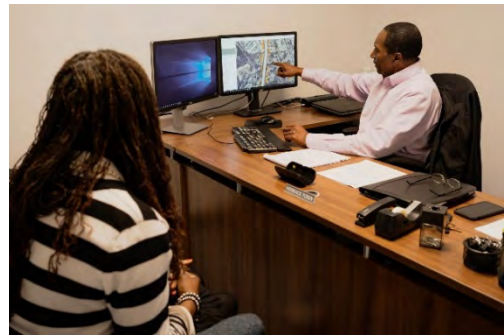
2.2 ORGANIZATIONAL TRAINING

SCDOT will provide organizational training for the CAC and community members interested in creating a **community advocacy group**. The Community Office and its staff will be available to provide support and identify resources that support, at a minimum, the new group's administrative and leadership development, and strategic and community planning. The organizational training will be provided until 2024.

2.3 COMMUNITY OFFICE

SCDOT will continue to maintain a Community Office for the remainder of the project development phase and throughout both the final design and right-of-way phases of the project. The Community Office will continue to be staffed with a **full-time Office Manager, Community Liaisons/Outreach Specialists, and part-time Right-of-Way Specialists**. The Community Office will continue to serve as a space for:

- Residents to receive information related to the implementation of the items identified in the EJ Community Mitigation Plan,
- Residents to receive real-time project, relocation, and property acquisition information,
- The POC to conduct meetings, and
- Community advocacy groups and other stakeholders with an interest in the I-526 LCC WEST project to meet.



2.4 COMMUNITY RESOURCE GUIDE

SCDOT will work with the CAC, Community Liaisons, and local non-profit organizations to develop a Community Resource Guide for EJ neighborhood residents. The purpose of the guide is to **help sustain livability within affected EJ neighborhoods by increasing residents' awareness of local organizations, resources, and other information** on the following topics: food insecurities; health and wellness; home repair; financial assistance; minority-owned businesses; and referral agencies. The Community Resource Guide will be made available to residents of the EJ neighborhoods within six months of the approval of the FEIS-ROD. It will be updated yearly throughout the construction of the project and construction sequencing and access.

3.0 RESIDENTIAL DISPLACEMENTS

3.1 AFFORDABLE HOUSING

SCDOT's approach to addressing the replacement housing needs of the potentially displaced residents in the impacted EJ communities includes:

- A Single-Family Affordable Housing Program
- A Developer Incentive Affordable Multi-Family Housing Program
- Financial Literacy & First-Time Homebuyer Counseling

These programs will be completed prior to the completion of the right-of-way acquisition phase, which is projected to begin in 2023 and last until 2027. These dates are based on approval of environmental documentation without legal challenge and are subject to change.

Single-Family Affordable Replacement Housing Program

SCDOT is working to secure 20 vacant lots within the EJ communities and partner with a local non-profit that specializes in managing and developing affordable housing to implement this program.



- SCDOT will secure vacant lots in each of the four impacted EJ communities: *Russelldale, Ferndale, Highland Terrace, and Liberty Park*.
- The program would give priority to displaced families but could be opened to other EJ community residents currently renting if there are remaining lots once all families are relocated.
- If SCDOT is unable to acquire all 20 lots within the EJ communities, additional lots for the program will be purchased in adjacent communities.

Affordable Multi-Family Housing Program

SCDOT will partner with SC Housing to implement this program with priorities based on input from the CAC and POC.

- Construction of 100 affordable housing units with a mixture of unit sizes (1 – 3 bedrooms) for the lowest income level category.
- Developments must include green space or a recreational area component.
- Developments must be located in close proximity to the impacted communities; the closest developments will be given first priority, but proposed developments must be located, at a minimum, within the City of North Charleston.

3.2 FINANCIAL LITERACY AND FIRST-TIME HOME BUYER COUNSELING

SCDOT will develop partnerships with local organizations to provide financial literacy and first-time home buyer workshops and counseling to residents of the impacted EJ community residents. This educational offering is intended to assist participants as they attempt to ***secure residential loans*** and ***transition from renters to homeowners***. The counseling will continue until the projected completion of the right-of-way phases in 2027.

4.0 RECREATIONAL AMENITIES

4.1 FACILITIES AND AMENITIES

SCDOT will fund the construction of replacement recreational facilities and associated infrastructures to lessen project impacts and satisfy Section 4(f)¹ and Section 6(f)² requirements.

SCDOT will acquire parcels located within the affected neighborhoods and provide funding to the City of North Charleston, who will oversee construction of ***one large, modern and centrally located community***

¹ Section 4(f) refers to the original section within the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 which provided for consideration of park and recreation lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites during federal transportation project development.

² Section 6(f) refers to the original Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act that provides protection for federal investment in public outdoor recreation. The primary protection is a requirement to replace any LWCF outdoor recreation property with property of equal or greater economic and recreational value if the original property will be converted to another use that is not considered as an outdoor recreation use.

center complex and two pocket parks, one within the Liberty Park neighborhood and one within the Russelldale neighborhood. The Russelldale pocket park location is preliminary and SCDOT is committed to continuing to identify additional locations within Russelldale and reviewing the options with community members. Draft concepts of the potential replacement facilities are included at the end of this handout. Additional details of the replacement amenities, the expanded programs, and extended operating hours will be in an inter-governmental agreement between SCDOT and the City of North Charleston. Construction of the new community center and pocket parks will be completed prior to the project construction impacting the existing community centers.



4.2 PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

SCDOT and the City of North Charleston will develop an inter-governmental agreement outlining the programs, services, structural components, and arrangements for long-term operation and maintenance of the replacement community center and recreational facilities. The agreement will include language that gives **priority access to residents of the communities served by the community centers** in areas such as program enrollment/participation, reserving facility space, volunteer, and job opportunities.



The City of North Charleston will continue to look for qualified candidates who live in the impacted EJ neighborhoods to fill Parks and Recreation positions at the community center. The City of North Charleston will post job openings for these positions within the neighborhoods and encourage the POC and neighborhood councils to refer qualified applicants.



Additional details related to programs, amenities, and community member employment opportunities at the recreational facilities will be included in the FEIS-ROD and the inter-governmental agreement.

5.0 EDUCATIONAL AND EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES

5.1 SCHOOL-TO-WORK PROGRAM



SCDOT will develop partnerships with organizations to develop school-to-work employment programs with the goal of **enhancing employment opportunities within the fields of construction, engineering, and transportation**. During the right-of-way phases, SCDOT will seek to hire up to ten (10) high school students, college students, or young adults 25 years of age and younger from the impacted neighborhoods to work as summer interns. This program will begin in 2023 and end once ten (10) students have participated.

5.2 PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRAINING

During the right-of-way phase of the project, SCDOT will identify and provide financial support for pre-employment training opportunities that **encourage career placement in the transportation industry**. The program will be administered through the Community Office and offered to residents of the impacted EJ communities prior to construction of the I-526 LCC WEST improvements. Participants who successfully acquire relevant job readiness skills will be considered for the On-The-Job Training (OJT) Program implemented by the contractor selected to construct the project.

5.3 SUMMER TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE PROGRAM

SCDOT will provide a skill building program to **create awareness of and expose high school students to career opportunities in the transportation industry**. The Summer Transportation Institute Program will begin in 2022 and will provide two programs that accommodate 15-20 students per program.

5.4 COLLEGE AID INITIATIVE

SCDOT will establish and manage a **scholarship fund of up to \$100,000**. High school and college students from the impacted EJ communities that intend to or are currently attending institutions of higher education will be eligible for the scholarship. Residents of the EJ neighborhoods that will be displaced and relocated by the proposed project would remain eligible for the scholarship program. Members of the CAC will assist in the development of the selection criteria and members of the POC will assist in the selection of the scholarship recipients. The College Aid Initiative will begin in 2023 and funds will be available through construction or until all scholarship funds have been awarded.



6.0 COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

6.1 COMMUNITY HISTORY PRESERVATION STUDY



SCDOT will fund a study to **document the cultural history and character of the impacted EJ communities** through the support of a qualified historian and photographer. The study efforts will include collecting oral history, archival research, collection of historic photography, and the development of a report that will be available for viewing online and at the community center. The Community History Preservation Program will be completed within two years of the approval of the FEIS-ROD. However, the visual imagery will be implemented as part of the construction of the replacement community center and pocket parks.

If you live or have lived in the Ferndale, Highland Terrace, Liberty Park, or Russelldale neighborhoods, please contact your Community Office at 843.258.1135 to share stories, pictures, and videos of your memories. *Please see Section 8.0 for more information.*

6.2 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE ENHANCEMENT PLAN

SCDOT will implement the Community Infrastructure Enhancement Plan (CIEP), which is a subset of improvements that will **address infrastructure needs within the impacted EJ neighborhoods**.

Field evaluations were conducted to quantify specific neighborhood infrastructure needs identified by the CAC, then planning and design studies were conducted to develop recommendations for addressing the deficiencies. Once the recommendations were reviewed by the City of North Charleston Planning and Public Works Department staff for feasibility, an Open House was hosted, and a survey was conducted to receive input from residents (March 2021). 85 completed surveys were received from residents to help shape the final set of infrastructure needs to be addressed by the CIEP which include:

- Bicycle and pedestrian connectivity and safety – to include safer at-grade railroad crossing amenities, improved and new sidewalks, shared-use paths, and pedestrian bridges,
- Neighborhood lighting,
- Bus shelter amenities,
- Traffic calming measures,
- Stormwater infrastructure and maintenance, and
- Neighborhood entrance aesthetics.

The majority of the CIEP components will be completed prior to the construction of the I-526 LCC WEST improvements. However, the schedule for construction of components such as a shared use path along Margaret Drive and pedestrian bridges will be dictated by the acquisition of right-of-way for the I-526 LCC WEST Project, construction sequencing, and access needs.

6.3 MITIGATION BARRIERS

Mitigation barriers are walls constructed along a highway to protect sensitive land-uses (such as residential neighborhoods) from impacts associated with transportation projects. **SCDOT will construct mitigation barriers** along the eastbound and westbound sides of I-26 between the I-526 and Remount Road interchanges to benefit the residents of the Highland Terrace and Liberty Park communities.



In addition, SCDOT will require the selected contractor to submit a design for the I-526 bridges that **reduces the anticipated noise levels** for receptors within the Liberty Park, Russelldale, and Ferndale communities.

7.0 PROJECT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

A Project Oversight Committee (POC) will be established after the FEIS-ROD is approved. At that time, the POC will be tasked with **overseeing the implementation of the EJ Community Mitigation Plan commitments**. Prior CAC members and/or EJ neighborhood residents interested in getting involved with the project will be encouraged to participate on the POC (*see Section 8.0 for more information*). In addition to residents, the POC will consist of agency representatives responsible for implementing the various components of the EJ Community Mitigation Plan including: SCDOT, FHWA, the City of North Charleston,

North Charleston Housing Authority, and the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments. SCDOT will provide administrative support to the POC, consistent with the services provided to the CAC, as the POC assumes the following duties:

- Coordinate with technical staff on issues related to implementation of the EJ mitigation,
- Serve as a liaison between the communities and project staff during the final design and construction phases, and
- Assist SCDOT in outreach efforts and meetings to get input from the greater community on detailed design concepts for those mitigation items that require physical construction.

Once established, it is anticipated that the POC would meet on a quarterly basis until the completion of I-526 LCC WEST construction.

7.1 COMMUNITY MEETINGS

SCDOT will conduct community meetings and distribute flyers throughout the implementation of the EJ Community Mitigation Plan to **keep residents informed of the project schedule and to seek input on any mitigation-related commitments.**

8.0 MERGE INTO THE CONVERSATION!

8.1 VISIT YOUR COMMUNITY OFFICE

Located at 5627 Rivers Avenue (CARTA Route 10), in the heart of the project study area, the I-526 LCC Community Office is your place to meet one-on-one with the project team and connect with resource specialists such as right-of-way relocation experts. Our goal is to answer your questions about the project and how it may impact your home, business, or daily commute. Our Community Liaisons and Resource Specialists have lived or worked in the Charleston area for most of their lives, acting as dedicated public servants in a variety of roles. They have a vested interest in the impacted communities and the residents they serve.

The Community Office is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. If these hours don't work for you, we also offer custom appointments to meet on your schedule. For those with questions or to make an appointment, the community is encouraged to email info@526LowcountryCorridor.com or call/text the project hotline at 843.258.1135 to speak directly with a team member.

8.2 PARTICIPATE IN THE COMMUNITY HISTORY PRESERVATION PROGRAM

If you live or have lived in the Ferndale, Highland Terrace, Liberty Park, or Russelldale neighborhoods, please contact the Community Office at 843.258.1135 or historyproject@526LowcountryCorridor.com to share stories, pictures, and videos of your memories to document the unique historic and cultural elements of your community.

- What are some fun memories you have of your community?
- What was or is one of your favorite community events?
- Who are some interesting people you have met in your community?



8.3 PARTICIPATE IN THE PROJECT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

As noted above, the Project Oversight Committee (POC) is a group of EJ neighborhood residents, various

Agency representatives, and other stakeholders that will meet during the implementation of the EJ Community Mitigation Plan to discuss mitigation-related schedule, issues, and concerns.

The POC will meet in Spring 2022 and continue to meet quarterly until 2031 or when construction is expected to be completed. The proposed structure of community representation includes a former CAC member and an additional representative from each EJ neighborhood (ideally 4 representatives and 4 alternates). POC EJ Community Member roles include facilitating accountability and oversight in the EJ mitigation implementation and giving other EJ neighborhood residents a voice in the mitigation implementation process.

Ideally, POC Community Members are neighborhood advocates who are interested in the I-526 LCC WEST project and available to attend quarterly meetings. If this role sounds interesting to you, please stop by your Community Office, or give your Community Liaisons a call at 843.258.1135.

8.4 FOLLOW PROJECT UPDATES

The I-526 LCC WEST project website is updated on a regular basis to provide you with accurate and up to date information on project development, timeline, NEPA & planning studies, frequently asked questions, public involvement opportunities, and community commitment updates. For more information, please visit: <https://www.526lowcountrycorridor.com/west/>

Follow us on our **social media channels** for regular project and mitigation updates.



Facebook | www.facebook.com/526Corridor/



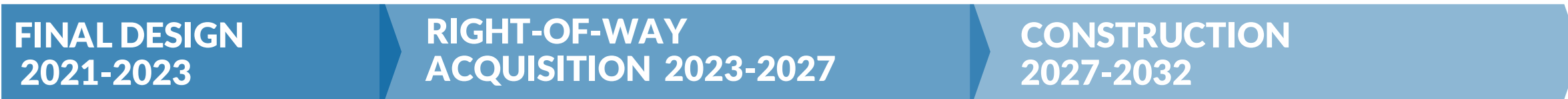
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WHAT IS PROPOSED TO BENEFIT MY COMMUNITY? *And When?*

PROPOSED SCHEDULE



PUBLIC HEARING



Mitigation Schedule is based on approval of environmental documentation without legal challenge; subject to change



Community History Preservation Study
A study will document the cultural history and character of the impacted neighboring communities. This study will be available online and at the new, modern community center.



Community Infrastructure Enhancement Plan
A Community Infrastructure Enhancement Plan would identify a set of improvements to address bicycle and pedestrian safety, access to community centers, enhanced street aesthetics, community mitigation barriers, project-related stormwater improvements, pedestrian bridges, and traffic calming measures that would be implemented as part of the project.



Community Centers & Parks
A large, centrally located community center complex and 2 smaller parks will be constructed within the affected neighborhoods to replace lost, smaller centers and parks.



Community Programs & Activities
The new, modern community center will be equipped to provide enhanced programs and activities, including priority for community residents for programs and facilities.



Affordable Housing
Replacement affordable housing (multi- and single-family) will be constructed near the impacted communities. SCDOT is acquiring vacant lots within the communities early so displaced families will have affordable housing options within their communities.



Financial Literacy/First-time Home Buyer Counseling (2022-2027)
Financial literacy and first-time home buyer counseling will be made available to displaced residents to assist in securing residential loans and transitioning from renters to homeowners.



School-to-Work Program (2023 - 2032)
SCDOT will partner with organizations to implement school-to-work programs within the fields of construction, engineering, and transportation.



Pre-Employment Training (2023 - 2032)
A program to prepare participants for consideration for an On-the-Job Training Program to be implemented by the project contractor during construction.



College Aid Initiative (2023 - 2032)
Up to \$100,000 in scholarships will be awarded to students from the impacted communities (scholarship amounts to be determined). The funds will be available through construction or until all funds are awarded.



Organizational Training (2022-2024)
Training to support community advocacy, leadership development, and community planning.

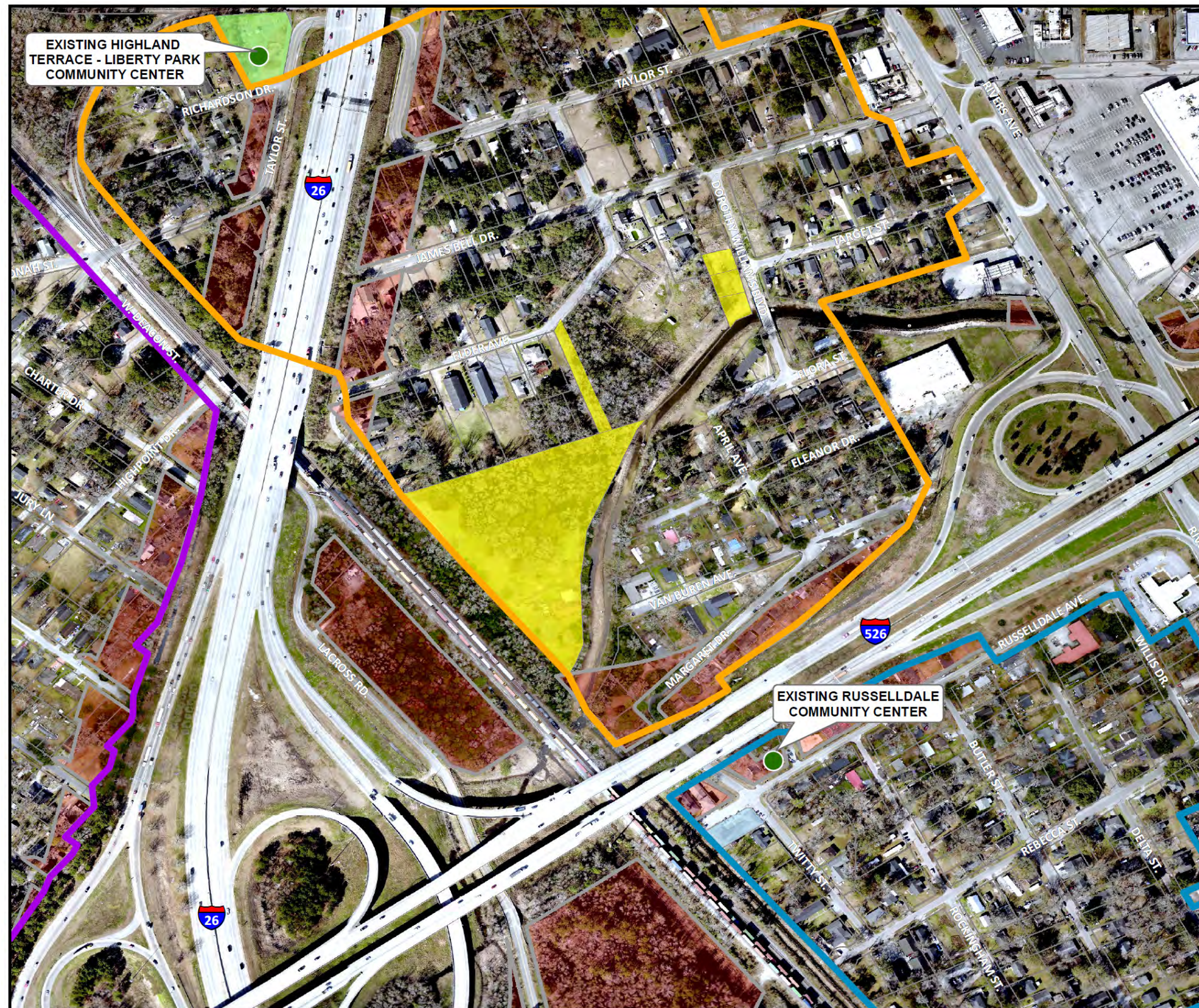


Summer Transportation Institute (2023 - 2032)
Summer skill building programs that will expose high school students to careers in the transportation industry. 15 -20 students per program.

Please note: SCDOT will conduct community outreach throughout the implementation of the EJ Mitigation Plan.
Document current as of September 2021.

REPLACEMENT RECREATIONAL FACILITY CONCEPTS

POTENTIAL LOCATION OVERVIEW

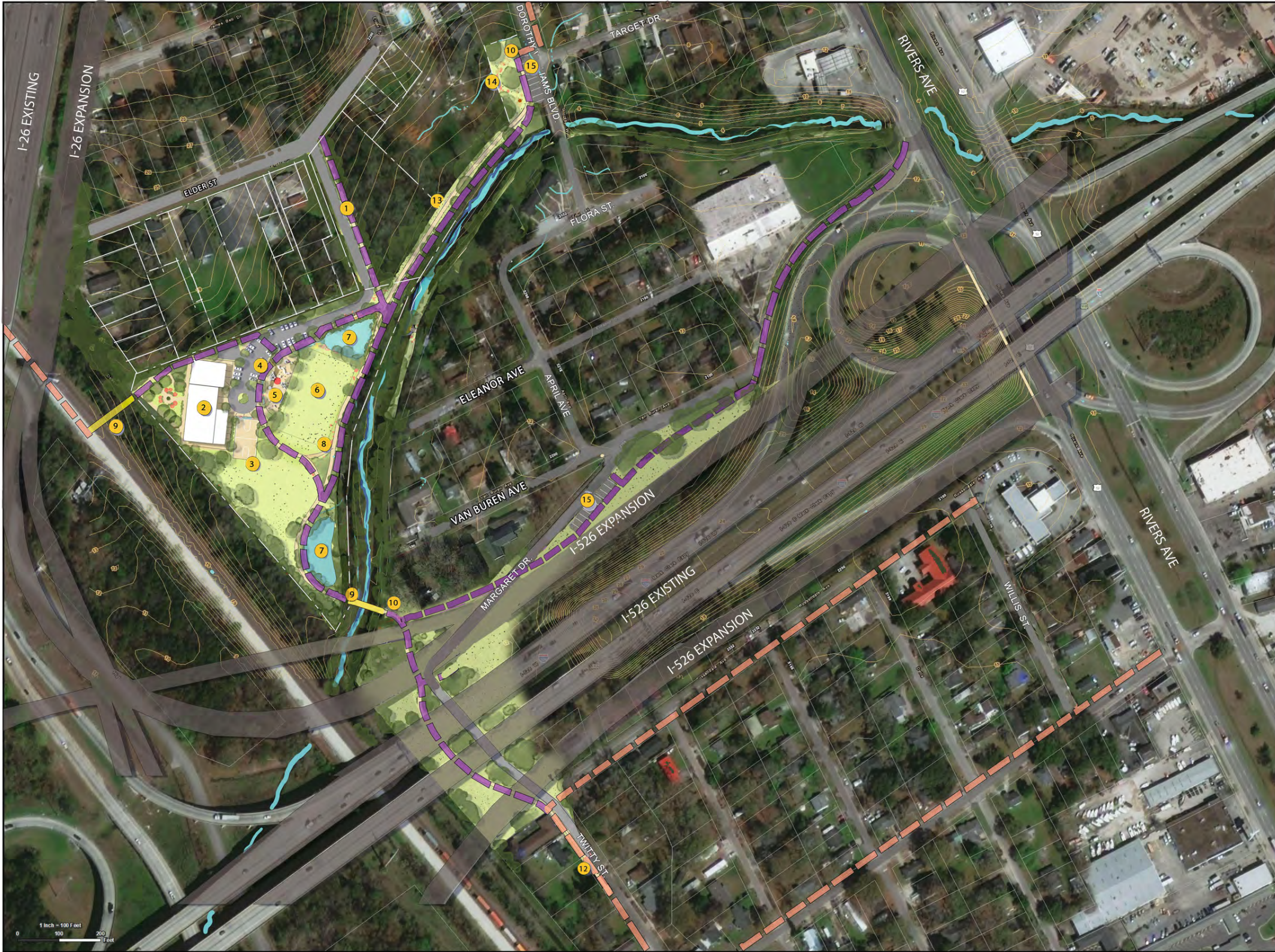


REPLACEMENT RECREATIONAL FACILITY CONCEPT LOCATIONS

- EXISTING COMMUNITY CENTER (TO BE DISPLACED)
- RIGHT OF WAY
- EJ NEIGHBORHOOD**
 - LIBERTY
 - HIGHLAND
 - RUSSELDDALE
- POTENTIAL REPLACEMENT RECREATIONAL FACILITY PARCELS**
 - HIGHLAND TERRACE-LIBERTY PARK POCKET PARK
 - MODERN REPLACEMENT COMMUNITY CENTER AND PARK
 - RUSSELDDALE POCKET PARK

Note: As of Sept 2021, the location for the Russelldale Pocket Park is preliminary and SCDOT is committed to continuing to identify additional locations within Russelldale and reviewing the options with community members

REPLACEMENT RECREATIONAL FACILITY CONCEPTS
COMMUNITY CENTER



WEST 526 LOWCOUNTRY CORRIDOR

MODERN REPLACEMENT COMMUNITY CENTER

BUILDING BREAKDOWN
 GYM 130 X 75 - 9750 SF
 OFFICE 60 X 75 - 4500 SF
 CLASS 40 X 90 - 3600 SF

- 1 ACCESS DRIVE
- 2 COMMUNITY CENTER BUILDING
- 3 OUTDOOR BASKETBALL COURT
- 4 RAIN GARDEN
- 5 5000 SF PLAYGROUND
- 6 120X210 MULTI USE FIELD
- 7 EDUCATIONAL WETLAND
- 8 FITNESS LOOP
- 9 PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE
- 10 TRAILHEAD SIGNAGE
- 11 DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE
- 12 CONNECTION TO RUSSELLDALE
- 13 POTENTIAL CONNECTION
- 14 POLLINATOR LOOP
- 15 ON STREET PARKING

*FINAL PARKING LOCATIONS TO BE DETERMINED

PATH LEGEND

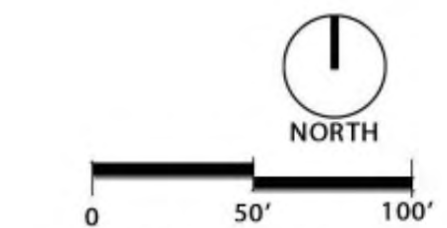
- POTENTIAL NEW/ IMPROVED SIDEWALK INFRASTRUCTURE
- POTENTIAL PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE/ OVERPASS
- POTENTIAL SHARED USE PATHWAY

REPLACEMENT RECREATIONAL FACILITY CONCEPTS
HIGHLAND TERRACE COMMUNITY POCKET PARK



HIGHLAND TERRACE COMMUNITY POCKET PARK

- 1 ON STREET PARKING
- 2 WOOD BENCHES
- 3 FULL COURT BASKETBALL
- 4 HALF COURT BASKETBALL
- 5 25 X25 OPEN AIR PAVILION
- 6 5000SF PLAYGROUND
- 7 SIDEWALK CONNECTION
- 8 IMPROVE CROSS WALKS



THIS PLAN IS CONCEPTUAL IN NATURE
AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE

REPLACEMENT RECREATIONAL FACILITY CONCEPTS
RUSSELDALE COMMUNITY POCKET PARK



**RUSSELDALE
 COMMUNITY
 POCKET PARK**

OPTION 1

- 1 IMPROVED CROSSWALKS
- 2 FLOWERING SHRUBS AND PARK SIGNAGE
- 3 PRIVACY PLANTING
- 4 BASKETBALL COURT
- 5 TRICYCLE LOOP
- 6 WOOD BENCHES
- 7 15' X 30' OPEN AIR PAVILION
- 8 3000 SF PLAYGROUND
- 9 PUBLIC ART
- 10 WOOD PRIVACY FENCE



THIS PLAN IS CONCEPTUAL IN
 NATURE AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE