

## **Appendix A**

### **Agency Coordination Plan**

### **Agency Letters and Responses**





# AGENCY COORDINATION PLAN





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## 1.1 OVERVIEW OF THE 526 LOWCOUNTRY CORRIDOR

Interstate 526 (I-526) serves as a 23-mile-long, east-west bypass of the Charleston metropolitan area and has been identified by the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) as one of the state's most congested interstate highways. Specific problems within the I-526 corridor include, but are not limited to, congestion and the growing demand for capacity, and design deficiencies.

SCDOT, in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is evaluating existing and future transportation demands for I-526 corridor from just south of Paul Cantrell Boulevard in West Ashley to just south of Virginia Avenue. Named the 526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST Project (I-526 LCC WEST), this effort is intended to improve operations within the corridor for both local and through traffic.

The purpose of this project is to increase capacity at the I-26/I-526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline, thereby relieving traffic congestion and improving operations at the I-26/I-526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Paul Cantrell Boulevard to Virginia Avenue.

Figure 1-1: 526 LCC WEST Study Area



## 1.2 PURPOSE OF AGENCY COORDINATION PLAN

In an effort to provide for more efficient environmental reviews for project decision-making, Section 6002 of Public Law 104-59, SAFETEA-LU, as amended by Section 1304 of Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act and codified in 23 U.S.C. §139, requires lead agencies to develop and implement a plan for coordinating public and agency involvement during the environmental review process, particularly when the environmental review process requires an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

The purpose of this plan is to define the process by which SCDOT and FHWA will communicate information about the **I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST Project** to the agencies. The process described herein will guide SCDOT and FHWA in their communications with each other and the participating and cooperating agencies involved in the project. This Agency Coordination Plan establishes the framework for regular communication among all of the agencies involved in the environmental review process and ensures an interdisciplinary approach in planning and decision-making for any action that potentially impacts the environment. Elements of this plan include identification of the participating and cooperating agencies for the project and their responsibilities; major coordination points and tasks; impact assessment methodologies; and a schedule for the project. This Agency Coordination Plan addresses the development of the EIS in compliance with NEPA. The plan is a living document and can be modified throughout the progression of the environmental review process. A separate Public Involvement Plan has been developed in conjunction with the Agency Coordination Plan to define the process of interaction with the public and stakeholders.

A *Working Agreement* between the United States Coast Guard (USCG), United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and FHWA [[Link to Working Agreement](#)] (collectively "Parties") was reached for major infrastructure projects that require the preparation of an EIS. This agreement, while not legally binding, calls for:

- a. Engaging the Parties in a collaborative and integrated approach to transportation decision-making that considers benefits and impacts of proposed transportation system improvements to the environment during the transportation planning process, and that uses the information, analysis or products developed during planning to inform the environmental review process;
- b. Concurrently conducting the environmental evaluation and processing of relevant environmental permit application materials; and,
- c. Preparing a coordinated environmental document that satisfies the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements for all Parties and results in a shared, or joint, environmental impact decision document where practicable, and a concurrent environmental impact decision document to the extent allowable.

The Working Agreement call for three major concurrence points by the participating and cooperating agencies:

1. Purpose and Need Statement
2. Range of Alternatives/Alternatives Carried Forward
3. Preferred Alternative

Written concurrence will be required for these major points.



It also requires that each agency identify a main point of contact (POC) for this project review for the exchange of information and timely concurrence on NEPA documents (per the project schedule). Also, each POC will coordinate with their internal decisionmakers if issues arise that cannot be resolved at the agency coordination level. The Working Agreement provides information for resolution of conflicts or issues in a timely manner.

All agencies must review and agree to the agency coordination plan and the permitting timetable, as it will be published on the Federal Permitting Dashboard. Refer to Appendix A for details on the permitting timetable and dispute resolution. Quarterly updates will be made to both the plan and the timetable, as needed.

This Agency Coordination Plan was developed using the guidance outlined in the Working Agreement. It consists of a framework for coordination, scheduling, and decision-making for the 526 LCC WEST project in order to streamline the environmental review and permitting process as stated in the OFD.

## 1.3 PROJECT INITIATION

The SCDOT and the FHWA have determined that the appropriate level of environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act for the major infrastructure project referred to as the 526 LCC WEST project is an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The project would receive a Record of Decision (ROD) from the lead federal agency, as well as decisions on any state and federal permit applications. The SCDOT sent the NEPA Initiation Letter to FHWA in May 2019. The FHWA issued a Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS in November 2019 in the Federal Register. Refer to Appendix B.



### 2.1 LEAD, COOPERATING, AND PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

#### 2.1.1 Lead Agencies

FHWA will be the Lead Federal Agency and, as such, and SCDOT will be the Joint Lead Agency as provided in the (23 USC 139, (a) (4) & (c) (3)). Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR 1501.5) require that a Lead Federal Agency oversee the preparation of an EIS and that Cooperating Agencies be identified. This is also consistent with the process described in the aforementioned MOU. 23 USC 139 calls for the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) agencies to serve as the Lead Agency for any transportation project requiring USDOT approval. 23 USC 139 also allows the project sponsor, SCDOT, to serve as a Joint Lead Agency.

FHWA and SCDOT, as the Lead and Joint Lead Agencies, share the responsibility for identifying the status and level of involvement for other agencies in the development of an efficient environmental review, refer to Table 2-1. This includes the identification and invitation of Cooperating and Participating Agencies. SCDOT and FHWA are responsible for the distributions of invitations and confirmations to all agencies identified as Cooperating and Participating. Invitation letters were sent to all potential cooperating and participating agencies in March 2019. Agencies were asked to provide a written confirmation of their status as a Cooperating or Participating Agency, or formally decline the status. Copies of the confirmation letters are included in Appendix C. Federally Recognized Tribal Nations were also involved and invited to be participating agencies on this project.

The Lead Agencies are also responsible for providing requested review items to the Cooperating and Participating agencies in advance (**at least two weeks**) in order to assist the agencies in making informed comments and concurrence.

23 USC 139 also requires the Lead Agency to:

- Establish a plan for agency and public participation in the review process;
- After consultation and concurrence of each participating agency, set a schedule for the review process, including deadlines for agency and public comments; and,
- Involve the Cooperating Agencies in the development of the purpose and need, the alternatives analysis and development, and the designation of a Preferred Alternative.

Table 2-1: Lead Agencies

Agency	Role	Contact Persons	Contact Information
FHWA	Lead Federal Agency	Shane Belcher Jim Martin	<a href="mailto:Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov">Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov</a> 803-253-3187 <a href="mailto:James.martin@dot.gov">James.martin@dot.gov</a> 803-765-5693
SCDOT	Joint Lead Agency	Joy Riley Chad Long David Kelly – NEPA Will McGoldrick – Permitting	<a href="mailto:RileyJ@scdot.org">RileyJ@scdot.org</a> 803-737-1346 <a href="mailto:LongCC@scdot.org">LongCC@scdot.org</a> 803-737-1396 <a href="mailto:KellyDP@scdot.org">KellyDP@scdot.org</a> 803-737-1645 <a href="mailto:McGoldriWR@scdot.org">McGoldriWR@scdot.org</a> 803-737-1326

### 2.1.2 Cooperating Agencies

Cooperating agencies are agencies with jurisdiction by law or by virtue of special expertise (40 CFR 1501.6). A distinguishing feature of a Cooperating Agency is that the CEQ regulations (40 CFR 1501.6) permit a Cooperating Agency to, at the request of the Lead Agency, assume responsibility for developing information and preparing environmental analyses, including portions of the EIS, for which the Cooperating Agency has special expertise. An additional distinction is that, pursuant to 40 CFR 1506.3, if the Classification of Action for the project is an EIS, "a Cooperating Agency may adopt without re-circulating the environmental impact statement of a Lead Agency when, after an independent review of the statement, the Cooperating Agency concludes that its comments and suggestions have been satisfied."

Per the MOU, cooperating agencies were to identify information they need to complete their review, limit their comments to their areas of expertise, make personnel and/or expertise available to the lead agency, and complete their reviews in accordance with the agreed upon project schedule. They were also asked to provide reviews and comments on the EIS and provide concurrence on the four concurrence points identified. A list of Cooperating Agencies can be found in Table 2-2, while Table 2-3 details the invitations and responses.

Table 2-2: Cooperating Agencies

Agency	Primary Responsibility	Contact Person	Contact Information
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)	Jurisdictional Area Determination and Section 404/10 Permitting; Wetlands and streams expertise	Lt. Col. Rachel Honderd Travis Hughes Amanda Heath Richard Darden	<a href="mailto:Travis.G.Hughes@usace.army.mil">Travis.G.Hughes@usace.army.mil</a> 843-329-8046 <a href="mailto:Amanda.L.Heath@usace.army.mil">Amanda.L.Heath@usace.army.mil</a> 843-329-8025 <a href="mailto:Richard.L.Darden@usace.army.mil">Richard.L.Darden@usace.army.mil</a> 843-329-8043
U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)	Navigational Permitting for Bridges	Randall Overton	<a href="mailto:Randall.D.Overton@uscg.mil">Randall.D.Overton@uscg.mil</a> 305-415-6736
National Park Service (NPS)	Section 6(f) Replacement Property Approval	Alexis John	<a href="mailto:Alexis_John@nps.gov">Alexis_John@nps.gov</a> 404-507-5834

**Table 2-3: Cooperating Agency Invitation**

Agency	Invited	Response
USACE	3/29/2019	4/26/2019
USCG	3/29/2019	4/10/2019
NPS	3/29/2019	8/12/2019

### 2.1.3 Participating Agencies

Participating agencies, identified in accordance with 23 USC 139, were to provide information and identify and resolve issues. Participating Agencies were identified as those federal, state, tribal, regional, and local agencies with an interest in the project and specific responsibilities in the process. Several federal and state agencies were asked to serve as participating agencies by virtue of their areas of expertise. Some of these agencies were also be asked to provide reviews and comments on the EIS and provide concurrence on the four concurrence points identified. A list of Participating Agencies can be found in Table 2-4, while Table 2-5 details the invitations and responses.

**Table 2-4: Participating Agencies**

Agency	Primary Responsibility	Contact Person	Contact Information
<b>Federal Agencies</b>			
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)	Consultation on Endangered Species Act Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Bald & Golden Eagle Protection Act, Fish & Wildlife Coordination Act  Streams and wetlands expertise	Tom McCoy  Mark Caldwell	<a href="mailto:thomas_mccoy@fws.gov">thomas_mccoy@fws.gov</a> 843-727-4707 x227 <a href="mailto:mark_caldwell@fws.gov">mark_caldwell@fws.gov</a> 843-727-4707 x215
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)	NEPA/Environmental Justice Review  Section 404, Section 401, Water Quality	Ntale Kajumba Alya Singh-White Kelly Laycock	<a href="mailto:kajumba.ntale@epa.gov">kajumba.ntale@epa.gov</a>  <a href="mailto:singh-white.alya@epa.gov">singh-white.alya@epa.gov</a> 404-562-9339 <a href="mailto:laycock.kelly@epa.gov">laycock.kelly@epa.gov</a> 404-562-9132
NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries)	Essential Fish Habitat	Pace Wilber  Cynthia Cooksey	<a href="mailto:pace.wilber@noaa.gov">pace.wilber@noaa.gov</a> 843-762-8601 <a href="mailto:cynthia.cooksey@noaa.gov">cynthia.cooksey@noaa.gov</a> 843-460-9922
	Endangered Species Act/Marine	Dr. Roy Crabtree	<a href="mailto:roy.crabtree@noaa.gov">roy.crabtree@noaa.gov</a>
	Mammal Protection Act Coordination	Kelly Shotts	<a href="mailto:kelly.shotts@noaa.gov">kelly.shotts@noaa.gov</a> 727-824-5312
	Section 7	Andrew Herndon	<a href="mailto:andrew.herndon@noaa.gov">andrew.herndon@noaa.gov</a> 727-824-5312
	MMPA	Jaclyn Daly	<a href="mailto:jaclyn.daly@noaa.gov">jaclyn.daly@noaa.gov</a> 301-427-8438
	Correspondence	Noah Silverman  Richard Fickley	<a href="mailto:noah.silverman@noaa.gov">noah.silverman@noaa.gov</a> 727-824-5353 <a href="mailto:richard.fickley@noaa.gov">richard.fickley@noaa.gov</a> 727-551-5705



State Agencies			
South Carolina Department of Archives and History (SCDAH)	Archaeological and Historical Resources consultation, Section 106 review	Elizabeth Johnson	<a href="mailto:ejohnson@scdah.sc.gov">ejohnson@scdah.sc.gov</a> 803-896-6168
South Carolina Department of Health & Environmental Control (SCDHEC); Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (SCDHEC-OCRM)	Jurisdiction of Critical Areas, Critical Area Permitting, Air, and Section 401 Water Quality & CZM consistency determinations; wetlands and streams expertise	Chuck Hightower (SCDHEC) Blair Williams (OCRM) Chris Stout (OCRM)	<a href="mailto:hightocw@dhec.sc.gov">hightocw@dhec.sc.gov</a> 803-898-0369 <a href="mailto:williabn@dhec.sc.gov">williabn@dhec.sc.gov</a> 843-953-0232 <a href="mailto:stoutcm@dhec.sc.gov">stoutcm@dhec.sc.gov</a> 843-953-0691
South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR)	State Protected Species; wetlands and streams expertise	Robert H. Boyles, Jr. LoriAnne Riffin Susan Davis	<a href="mailto:boylesr@dnr.sc.gov">boylesr@dnr.sc.gov</a> 803-734-4007 <a href="mailto:riffinl@dnr.sc.gov">riffinl@dnr.sc.gov</a> 803-734-4199 <a href="mailto:daviss@dnr.sc.gov">daviss@dnr.sc.gov</a> 843-953-9003
South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism (SCPRT)	Consultation on Section 6(f) properties funded by Land and Water Conservation Fund Act	Justin Hancock	<a href="mailto:jhancock@scprrt.com">jhancock@scprrt.com</a> 803-734-1658
Sovereign Nations			
Catawba Indian Nation	Historic/cultural resources review (prefers hard copies of survey reports)	Wenonah Haire, THPO Caitlin Tothorow	<a href="mailto:wenonahh@ccppcrafts.com">wenonahh@ccppcrafts.com</a> 803-328-2427 x224 <a href="mailto:caitlinh@ccppcrafts.com">caitlinh@ccppcrafts.com</a> 803-328-2427 x226
Eastern Shawnee Tribe	Historic/cultural resources review	Brett Barnes, THPO	<a href="mailto:bbarnes@estoo.net">bbarnes@estoo.net</a> 918-666-5151 x1845
Muscogee (Creek) Nation	Historic/cultural resources review	Corain Lowe-Zepeda, THPO LeeAnne Wendt	<a href="mailto:clowe@mcn-nsn.gov">clowe@mcn-nsn.gov</a> 918-732-7835 <a href="mailto:lwendt@mcn-nsn.gov">lwendt@mcn-nsn.gov</a> 918-732-7852

Table 2-5: Participating Agencies Invitation

Agency	Invited	Response
USFWS	3/29/2019	4/9/2019
USEPA	3/29/2019	5/6/2019
NOAA-NMFS	3/29/2019	4/26/2019
SCDAH	3/29/2019	4/9/2019
SCDHEC	3/29/2019	6/4/2019
SCDHEC-OCRM	3/29/2019	6/4/2019
SCDNR	3/29/2019	4/10/2019
SCPRT	3/29/2019	5/21/2019
Catawba Indian Nation	3/29/2019	5/3/2019
Eastern Shawnee Tribe	3/29/2019	no response, continue to consult for Section 106
Muscogee (Creek) Nation	3/29/2019	no response, continue to consult for Section 106

## 2.2 AGENCY COORDINATION MEETINGS

Agency coordination was a continuous process throughout the development of the EIS and required permit applications. The following meetings were organized with the agencies:

- Agency project kickoff and scoping workshop;
- Follow-up Agency Meeting to discuss ACP, Permitting Timetable, and P&N Statement;
- A meeting to discuss the alternative evaluation criteria, alternatives analysis process, and preliminary range of alternatives;
- A meeting to discuss the initial alternatives analysis and Reasonable Range of Alternatives;
- A meeting to discuss potential mitigation options;
- A meeting to discuss the Reasonable Alternatives and the Preferred Alternative; and,
- A meeting to discuss comments received during the public hearing comment periods and path forward to FEIS/ROD.

### 2.2.1 Agency Project Kickoff and Scoping Meeting

The initial Agency Coordination Meeting was held on March 14, 2019, prior to the issuance of the Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS. This meeting was a project kickoff/scoping workshop to seek the Agencies' perspective and requirements for the scope of the environmental evaluation and to discuss the draft Purpose and Need statement for the project. The draft Agency Coordination Plan was presented and discussed as well as a draft schedule for the project. The NEPA process for this project was discussed with regards to the OFD process and the roles and responsibilities of agencies under OFD.

In addition, the agencies received a copy of the draft agency coordination plan and permitting timetable/project schedule for the project at this meeting.

### 2.2.2 Follow-up Meeting to Discuss Agency Coordination Plan, Permitting Timetable, and Purpose and Need Statement

A meeting was held on April 23, 2019 to finalize the agency coordination plan and permitting timetable. This meeting was held before the NOI was published, as both the agency coordination plan and project schedule needed to be published on the Federal Permitting Dashboard in a timely manner after the NOI was published.

### 2.2.3 Alternative Evaluation Criteria, Alternatives Analysis Process, and Preliminary Range of Alternatives

A meeting was held on August 14, 2019 to discuss the criteria to be used for evaluating alternatives and the alternative analysis process for the project. This meeting was important to ensure that the lead agencies were evaluating alternatives in a way that can be used by other agencies in their evaluation process for permits and other approvals that are needed for the project.

### 2.2.4 Initial Alternatives Analysis and Reasonable Range of Alternatives

A meeting was held on October 9, 2019 to present the development and analysis of the preliminary alternatives, including the alternative evaluation criteria, preliminary alternatives considered and eliminated and the reasons for the elimination. The result of the meeting was the alternatives carried

forward for further analysis as the reasonable alternatives in the EIS. In addition, potential mitigation options for impacts were also discussed at this meeting.

### 2.2.5 Potential Mitigation Options

An initial meeting was held on September 11, 2019 to facilitate a preliminary discussion about the mitigation needs assessment. An additional meeting was held on December 11, 2019 to discuss mitigation preferences and options with the agencies. This was the culmination of previous discussions with the agencies and the presentation of the development of mitigation options and the primary mitigation package to be incorporated into the permit applications. A meeting was held on March 11, 2020 to provide a project update as well as to discuss the mitigation needs assessment progress.

### 2.2.6 Reasonable Alternatives and Preferred Alternative

A meeting was held on May 14, 2020 to present the impacts and benefits of the Reasonable Alternatives for discussion by the agencies as well as the Preferred Alternative that the Lead Agencies are proposing for the project. Since impacts were quantified, mitigation was again be discussed at this meeting.

### 2.2.7 Post Public Hearing Comment Meeting and Path Forward to FEIS/ROD

During the February 10, 2021 agency coordination meeting, a summary of all public hearing comments from the DEIS and public notices of the USACE and USCG was given. Agencies were provided the list of comments prior to the meeting to facilitate meaningful discussion of opportunities and concerns. Mitigation options for offsetting impacts were also discussed at this meeting for inclusion into the ROD as well for other agencies to make permitting decisions.

In addition, to these specific meetings, monthly teleconference calls were scheduled and conducted, as necessary. There was also consultation with the Cooperating Agencies concerning the information needed in the EIS for their respective permitting decisions, the identification of the Reasonable Alternatives and the designation of a Preferred Alternative. There was also coordination with the Participating Agencies for obtaining their expertise regarding technical issues (refer to List of Agencies & Primary Responsibilities in Table 2-3) during the development of the EIS. Table 2-6 shows a list of all agency coordination meetings. Refer to Appendix D for detailed meeting summaries.

Table 2-6: Agency Coordination Meeting

Date	Topic	Agencies Participating
3/14/2019	Agency Project Kickoff and Scoping Workshop	USEPA, USFWS, NOAA Fisheries, SCDHEC, SCDHEC OCRM, SCDAH, SCDNR, SCPRT
4/23/2019	Agency Coordination Plan, Permitting Timetable, Purpose and Need Statement	USACE, USEPA, USFWS, SCDHEC, SCDHEC OCRM
7/10/2019	Agency Meeting to Discuss Permitting Timetable and Agency Milestones	USACE, USEPA, USFWS, NOAA Fisheries, NPS, SCDAH, SCDHEC, SCDHEC OCRM, SCPRT
7/25/2019	Follow-up Meeting to Review Milestones Specific to Section 7 and MMPA	NOAA Fisheries
8/14/2019	Alternatives Evaluation Criteria, Alternatives Analysis Process, and Preliminary Range of Alternatives	USACE, USCG, USEPA, NOAA Fisheries, SCDAH, SCDHEC OCRM, SCDNR
9/11/2019	Mitigation Needs Assessment	USACE, USEPA, USFWS, NOAA Fisheries, SCDAH, SCDHEC OCRM, SCDNR, SCPRT
10/9/2019	Initial Alternatives Analysis and Reasonable Range of Alternatives	USACE, USFWS, NOAA Fisheries, NPS, SCDAH, SCDHEC OCRM
10/21/2019	Section 6(f) Process	NPS, SCPRT
11/13/2019	Concurrence Points and Upcoming Milestones	USACE, USCG, USEPA, USFWS, NOAA Fisheries, SCDAH, SCDHEC OCRM, SCDNR, SCPRT
12/9/2019	Section 6(f) Conversion Process	NPS, SCPRT
12/11/2019	Potential Mitigation Options	USACE, USCG, USFWS, NOAA Fisheries, NPS, SCDAH, SCDHEC OCRM, SCDNR
1/8/2020	Public Involvement Update	USACE, USCG, USEPA, USFWS, NOAA Fisheries, SCDAH, SCDHEC OCRM, SCDNR
2/12/2020	Reasonable Alternatives Discussion and the Alternatives Evaluation Process Workshop	USACE, USCG, USEPA, USFWS, NOAA Fisheries, SCDHEC OCRM
3/11/2020	Project Update and Mitigation Needs Assessment	USACE, USCG, USEPA, USFWS, NOAA Fisheries, SCDHEC OCRM, SCDNR, SCPRT
4/8/2020	DEIS Update and Preliminary Evaluation of Floodplain Mitigation	USACE, USCG, USEPA, USFWS, NOAA Fisheries, NPS, SCDAH, SCDHEC OCRM, SCDNR, SCPRT
5/13/2020	Review of Recommended Preferred Alternative	USACE, USCG, USEPA, NOAA Fisheries, NPS, SCDAH, SCDHEC, SCDHEC OCRM, SCDNR, SCPRT
6/10/2020	Project Mitigation Strategy Update	USACE, USEPA, NOAA Fisheries, SCDHEC OCRM, SCDAH
8/12/2020	Section 6(f) Update	USACE, USCG, USEPA, USFWS, NOAA, NPS, SCDHEC, SCDHEC OCRM, SCDNR
9/9/2020	EJ Mitigation Plan Update	USACE, USCG, USEPA, USFWS, NOAA, NPS, SCDHEC, SCDHEC OCRM, SCDNR, SCPRT
10/14/2020	Agency Milestones, DEIS Update, Shared Use Path and Public Hearing	USACE, USCG, USFWS, NOAA, NPS, SCDHEC, SCDHEC OCRM, SCPRT
12/09/2021	Agency Milestone Changes, Public Hearing Update, 6(f)	USEPA, USCG, USFWS, NOAA Fisheries, NPS, SCDHEC, SCDHEC OCRM, SCDNR, SCPRT
01/13/2021	Permitting Milestone Updates, Public Hearing Comments, Section 6(f)	USACE, USEPA, USCG, USFWS, NPS, SCDHEC, SCDHEC OCRM, SCDNR, SCPRT
02/10/2021	Public Hearing Comments Review, Mitigation Update, 6(f)	USACE, USEPA, USCG, USFWS, NOAA Fisheries, NPS, SCDHEC, SCDHEC OCRM, SCDNR, SCPRT
04/14/2021	FEIS Schedule, Permitting Schedule, EJ Mitigation, N. Charleston IGA, Section 6(f) and 4(f) Update	USEPA, USCG, USFWS, NOAA Fisheries, NPS, SCDHEC, SCDHEC OCRM, SCPRT

06/09/2021	FEIS Schedule, Permitting Schedule, Open forum to discuss comments and concerns with latest FIES draft	USACE, USEPA, USCG, USFWS, NOAA Fisheries, NPS, SCDHEC, SCDHEC OCRM, SCDNR, SCPRT
09/08/2021	FEIS Schedule, Section 6(f) and 4(f) Updates, EJ Mitigation, Permitting Update	USFWS, NOAA Fisheries, NPS, SCDHEC, SCDHEC OCRM
06/29/2022	Community Mitigation Updates, FEIS Schedule, Request for agency review, Permitting Schedule	USACE, USEPA, USCG, USFWS, NOAA Fisheries, NPS, SCDHEC, SCDHEC OCRM, SCDNR
08/10/2022	FEIS Schedule, Permitting Schedule, I-526 East Study Update	USACE, USEPA, USCG, NOAA Fisheries, NPS, SCDHEC, SCDHEC OCRM, SCDNR

## 2.3 CONCURRENCE POINTS

Concurrence points were sought at various points during the NEPA process, per the requirements in the OFD MOU and Working Agreement. The FHWA and SCDOT requested written concurrence on the following points:

1. The Agency Coordination Plan and Permitting Timetable
2. Purpose and Need Statement
3. Reasonable Range of Alternatives/Alternatives to be Carried Forward
4. Preferred Alternative

In addition to these concurrence points, the agencies agreed in writing to the agency coordination plan and the permitting timetable/schedule, per the OFD MOU and Working Agreement. Concurrence was tracked as part of this plan in Table 2-7. Note: Concurrence on the four concurrence points above was only needed from cooperating agencies. However, to ensure that concerns are addressed during the NEPA process, the lead agencies requested concurrence from all participating agencies also.

**Table 2-7: Concurrence Tracking**

Concurrence Point: ACP, P&N	
Agency	Date of Concurrence
NOAA-NMFS	June 7, 2019 (request specific dates for Table 3-1 in ACP)
NPS	October 9, 2019
USACE	June 7, 2019
USCG	June 4, 2019
USEPA	August 19, 2019
USFWS	June 3, 2019
SCDAH	June 4, 2019 (no comment on P&N)
SCDHEC	No Objection
SCDHEC-OCRM	No Objection
SCDNR	June 3, 2019
SCPRT	June 6, 2019
Concurrence Point: Permitting Timetable, Agency Milestones	
NOAA-NMFS	September 3, 2019
NPS	October 9, 2019
USACE	September 13, 2019
USCG	September 5, 2019



USEPA	August 21, 2019	
USFWS	August 20, 2019	
SCDAH	August 21, 2019	
SCDHEC	No Objection	
SCDHEC-OCRM	No Objection	
SCDNR	August 22, 2019	
SCPRT	June 6, 2019	
Concurrence Point: Reasonable Alternatives		
	FHWA Letter Sent	Agency Response
NOAA-NMFS	March 12, 2020	March 23, 2020
NPS	March 12, 2020	April 6, 2020
USACE	March 12, 2020	March 27, 2020
USCG	March 12, 2020	March 26, 2020
USEPA	March 12, 2020	April 8, 2020
USFWS	March 12, 2020	March 16, 2020
SCDAH	March 12, 2020	April 2, 2020
SCDHEC	March 16, 2020	No Objection
SCDHEC-OCRM	March 12, 2020	No Objection
SCDNR	March 12, 2020	March 19, 2020
SCPRT	March 12, 2020	No Objection
Concurrence Point: Preferred Alternative		
	FHWA Letter Sent	Agency Response
NOAA-NMFS	June 3, 2020	June 12, 2020
NPS	June 3, 2020	June 18, 2020
USACE	June 3, 2020	June 19, 2020
USCG	June 3, 2020	June 8, 2020
USEPA	June 3, 2020	June 26, 2020
USFWS	June 3, 2020	June 8, 2020
SCDAH	June 3, 2020	June 5, 2020
SCDHEC	June 3, 2020	No Objection
SCDHEC-OCRM	June 3, 2020	No Objection
SCDNR	June 3, 2020	June 8, 2020
SCPRT	June 3, 2020	June 24, 2020

## 2.4 DOCUMENT REVIEW

Those agencies with authority or particular expertise were asked to review technical documentation, such as the Jurisdictional Determination request (USACE, USEPA, SCDHEC, and SCDHEC-OCRM), the Cultural Resources Report (Tribal Nations and SHPO), and the Natural Resources Technical Report (USACE, USFWS, NMFS, SCDNR, and SCDHEC). In addition, cooperating and participating agencies were given the opportunity to review sections and appendices of the Draft EIS early prior to the publishing of the DEIS so that their comments could be addressed to the maximum extent possible before the DEIS was published.

All cooperating and participating agencies were notified of the availability of the DEIS and Section 4(f)( EA in letters dated October 23, 2020. Each had the opportunity to review and comment on the DEIS during the public comment period that lasted from Thursday, November 12, 2020 to January 15, 2021. Copies of the notification letters and comments received are included in Appendix C.

## 2.5 PERMITTING

The schedule for submittal and review times for the permitting was determined in consultation with the regulatory agencies during the initial Agency Coordination Meeting.

Based on early coordination with the USCG, a determination of the need for a USCG permit for the Ashley River bridge widening was made. The USCG was provided an initiation letter and navigation impact report. The USCG issued a preliminary navigation determination on June 25, 2019. The FHWA and SCDOT submitted an application to USCG with the information necessary to issue a public notice on navigation with a 30-day comment period when the DEIS was issued. Comments received on the public notice were evaluated and response to USCG made.

The USACE was provided a permit application package. The USACE package included:

- project impact areas
- wetland delineation
- coordination with Corps on impact areas
- alternatives analysis
- avoidance and minimization of impacts, and
- potential compensatory mitigation options

On October 30, 2020, USACE and SCDHEC issued a 30-day Joint Public Notice for the proposed I-526 LCC WEST project pursuant to Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, Sections 401 and 404 of the Clean Water Act, and the South Carolina Coastal Zone Management Act. All comments received were evaluated and responded to through the 401/404 review process. The 404b1 response to USACE, SCDHEC BOW, OCRM CZC, and OCRM Critical Area Permitting was provided to the agencies on March 31, 2021 and is included in Appendix C.

### PROJECT PROGRESS

Since the project inception there have been many tasks completed for this project. These tasks included environmental studies, public outreach, surveying, traffic analysis, preliminary design and initial cost estimates. The efforts that have been completed to date for the project include:

- Field studies for cultural resources, natural resources, hazardous materials have been completed. This included additional underwater archaeology along the Ashley River bridge.
- Meetings have been held with local governments and elected officials.
- Community meetings were held in North Charleston and West Ashley.
- Stakeholders were identified and stakeholder meetings have been held.
- Traffic counts have been performed and future traffic forecasts have been developed for 2050.
- Conceptual road alternatives have been developed based on the 2050 traffic modeling.
- Hydrologic surveys have been completed and initial drainage designs have begun.

Table 3-1: Draft NEPA/Permitting Schedule

Milestones	Date
2019	
<i>Agency Project Kickoff and Scoping Meeting</i>	March 14, 2019
Send Letters Inviting Cooperating and Participating Agencies	March 29, 2019
Agencies review draft Purpose and Need Statement	April 2019
Agencies review Agency Coordination Plan and Permitting Timetable	March-April 2019
<i>Follow-up Agency Meeting to discuss ACP, Permitting Timetable, and P&amp;N Statement</i>	April 23, 2019
<b>Concurrence Point for Agency Coordination Plan</b>	<b>May 2019</b>
<b>Concurrence Point for Purpose and Need Statement</b>	<b>May 2019</b>
Project Initiation Letter and Navigation Report sent to USCG	May 21, 2019
USCG Preliminary Navigation Determination Issued	June 11, 2019
Consultation initiated with SHPO/THPO	June 18, 2019
Submit Preliminary JD to USACE & Critical Area to SCDHEC-OCRM	July 2019
<i>Agency Meeting to discuss the alternative evaluation criteria, alternatives analysis process, and Preliminary Range of Alternatives</i>	August 14, 2019
Agencies Review the Preliminary Range of Alternatives for Concurrence	August 2019
<b>Concurrence Point for Agency Milestones and Permitting Timetable</b>	<b>August 2019</b>
Community and Stakeholder Meetings	August-November 2019
<i>Agency Meeting to discuss mitigation needs assessment</i>	September 11, 2019
JD and Critical Area Line plat approval	September 2019
<i>Agency Meeting to discuss initial Alternatives Analysis and Reasonable Alternatives</i>	October 9, 2019
FHWA issues Notice of Intent (NOI)	November 1, 2019
Public Information Meeting	November 21, 2019
<b>Concurrence Point for Reasonable Alternatives</b>	<b>November 2019</b>
Continued Coordination with Agencies on specific resources (i.e. Permitting, EFH, Section 106, Section 7, etc.)	Fall/Winter 2019
<i>Agency Meeting to discuss potential mitigation options</i>	December 2019
2020	
Potential mitigation site visits	Spring 2020
<i>Agency Meeting to discuss Proposed Preferred Alternative</i>	May 2020
Preliminary Draft EIS section for review by Agencies	Spring/Summer 2020
<b>Agency Meeting and Concurrence Point for Preferred Alternative by Agencies</b>	<b>June 2020</b>
NOAA receives the complete EFH assessment to initiate EFH consultation	July 2020
Pre-Application Meeting with USACE and SCDHEC	July 2020
Consultation with SHPO/THPO on Preferred Alternative	July 2020
Initiate Informal ESA consultation with USFWS	July 2020
Application submittal	August 2020
Section 106 consultation concluded	September 2020
Draft EIS issued; Joint USACE Individual Permit and USCG Public Notices	October 2020
Community and Stakeholder Meetings	Fall 2020
Public Hearing	November 2020
Response to Public and Agency Comments	Winter 2020-2021
2021	
<i>Agency Meeting to discuss comments received during the public hearing comment periods and path forward to FEIS/ROD</i>	February 10, 2021
Response to comments	March 2021
SCDHEC 401 Decision	June 2021
SCDHEC-OCRM CAP	August 2021
2022	
Prepare Final EIS/Record of Decision	Summer 2022
FHWA Issues FEIS/ROD	September 2022
USACE Issues Permit Decision	October 2022
USCG Issues Permit Decision	November 2022

## 4.0 REVISIONS

Version	Date	Person Making Revision	Description of Changes
2	04/05/2019	Heather Robbins (3Oaks)	Added contact information to Table 2-2
3	06/03/2019	Heather Robbins (3Oaks)	Updated with Cooperating/Participating Agency Responses, Permitting Timetable, and Agency Coordination Process Agreement & Dispute Resolution.
4	06/25/2019	Heather Robbins (3Oaks)	Updated Table 3-1 with items in blue and Table 2-6 with agency concurrence
5	8/21/2019	Heather Robbins (3Oaks)	NPS request to be cooperating agency; revised Agency tables to reflect; update Concurrence Tracking Table
6	10/8/2019	Heather Robbins (3Oaks)	Reasonable Alternatives Concurrence Point added
7	5/12/2020	Heather Robbins (3Oaks)	RA Concurrence Dates added, Preferred Alternative Concurrence Point
8	7/2/2020	Shelby Moody (3Oaks)	Recommended Preferred Alternative Concurrence Dates added
9	8/13/2020	Geni Theriot (3Oaks)	Agency Meetings Updated in Table 2-6
10	9/11/20	Heather Robbins (3Oaks)	Agency Meetings Updated in Table 2-6
11	10/16/2020	Mark Mohr (3Oaks)	Agency Meetings Updated in Table 2-6
12	02/10/2021	Mark Mohr (3Oaks)	Agency Meetings Updated, Updated Section 2.2.7,
13	04/21/2021	Mark Mohr(3Oaks)	Agency Meetings Updated, updated sec 2.4, removed OFD references
14	06/11/2021	Mark Mohr (3Oaks)	Agency Meeting Updates, Permitting timetable revision, POC table revisions
15	10/4/2021	Mark Mohr (3Oaks)	Agency Meeting Updates
16	7/12/2022	Mark Mohr (3Oaks)	Agency Meeting Updates, Permitting timetable revision
17	8/22/2022	Mark Mohr (3Oaks)	Agency Meeting Updates

# AGENCY COORDINATION PLAN

## APPENDIX A

PERMITTING TIMETABLE, AGENCY COORDINATION  
PROCESS AGREEMENT & DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Permitting Timetable

Revised 06/13/2022

\* Unless specified, an action within a month will be completed by the end of the month. A 10-day comment period will be requested for each Concurrence Point.  
\*Adjustments to the proposed schedule may be made when sufficient information is available for an agency to proceed with an action so long as that action does not adversely affect the overall permitting timeline.



2019	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Action					CP ACP + Purpose and Need  USCG Navigation Data Report to USCG	USCG Preliminary Navigation Determination Issued  Consultation initiated with SHPO/THPO  Section 106 Consultation initiated (6/18)	Submit JD and CALP packages  NOAA Initially Contacted Regarding MMPA Consultation	Agency Meeting to Discuss Alternatives Evaluation Process/Criteria & Preliminary Range of Alternatives (8/14)  CP Agency Milestones and Permitting Timetable	Agency Meeting to Discuss Mitigation Needs Assessment (9/11)	Agency Meeting to Discuss Alternatives Analysis and Reasonable Alternatives (10/9)  JD + Critical Area Line Plat Approvals	NOI issued (11/8)  Det. of Applicability of Section 4(f)  Agency Meeting (11/13)  Section 106 Consulting parties invited  Public Information Meeting (11/21)	Agency Meeting to Discuss Mitigation Alternatives (12/11)
2020	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Action	Agency Meeting to review Public Comment (1/8)	CP Alternatives Carried Forward  Agency Workshop to Discuss Interchange Design Alternatives (2/12)  Initial 6(f) Application received	Agency Meeting to Discuss Update on Mitigation Needs Assessment (3/11)	Request for ESA Consultation Report (NOAA)	Agency Meeting to Discuss Proposed Preferred Alternative  Draft EFH assessment submitted (5/8)	CP Preferred Alternative  Section 106 determination of effect made by FHWA	NOAA receives Complete EFH Assessment to initiate EFH Consultation (7/8)  Pre-Application Meeting with Agencies (Fed & State) Public Hearing Agency Planning Meeting  Consultation with SHPO/THPO on Preferred Alternative  Section 7 Consultation Package complete (NOAA)	Application Submittal-Individual 404 Permit/USCG  Initial State Application received CAP, 401	Section 106 consultation concluded  NOAA issues response to EFH assessment (9/8)  Completed 6(f) Application received	DEIS Notice of Availability  Public Notice: USACE/USCG/CAP /401  FWCA Review initiated  Request for ESA Consultation Report (USFWS)	Public Hearing-Joint Notice to cover all agencies  FWCA Comments to USACE  Section 7 Conclusion of Consultation/Issuance of Biological Opinion (NOAA/USFWS)	Revised EFH Assessment to NOAA (12/1)
2021	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Action	Comments Due: 404b.1/401/CAP/USCG  Revised Section 7 Consultation Package complete (NOAA/USFWS)  Revised EFH Consultation Package complete (NOAA)	Agency Meeting to discuss Comments	Response to Comments due to USACE/OCRM /USCG/DHEC  Revised Section 7 Conclusion of Consultation/Issuance of Biological Opinion (NOAA/USFWS)  Revised EFH Conclusion/Issuance of Decision (NOAA)		Revised Permit Drawings due to Regulatory Agencies week of June 14th  401 Decision			Critical Area Permit			Section 6(f) Issuance of Decision for Permit/Approval & NTP	
2022	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Action									FEIS/ROD Approval (30 day wait period) USACE Prepares Draft ROD  FHWA Approval/Conclusion of Section 4(f)  4(f) Coordination with/Concurrence from Officials with Jurisdiction	USACE Permit Decision/Signs ROD 30 days after FEIS; Complete Application submitted to USCG	USCG Permit Decision	90 Day post ROD period ends

## **I-526 WEST Environmental Impact Statement**

### **Agency Coordination Process Agreement & Dispute Resolution**

This process calls for a commitment by all parties to work cooperatively and abide by the consensus decisions of the group. SCDOT and FHWA commit to coordinate agency concerns and needs and distribute adequate information in a timely manner. In return, the SCDOT and FHWA expect the agencies to commit to providing a dedicated individual to the project to attend the meetings and to provide prompt review and decision-making.

The goals of this process agreement are to:

- Increase agency involvement
- Develop a mechanism that leads to decisions that stick
- Improve the process efficiency
- Meet or exceed agency mandates
- Enhance communication and relationships

The specific steps to be taken to reach these goals are described in the following sections.

#### Increase Agency Involvement

Increased involvement by the agencies will lead to better decisions. SCDOT and FHWA commit to listen to comments from the agencies and provide responses to these comments as the project is being developed. They also commit to a process that allows for viewpoints to be shared among the participants. Multiple opportunities to be involved in the development of the project will be on going throughout the process and include agency participation in the purpose and need, analysis criteria, development of alternatives, selection of alternatives for further study, selected alternative, mitigation of unavoidable impacts, and project design features. This will be accomplished through a series of meetings throughout the process, with agreed concurrence at specific decision points outlined in the Agency Coordination Plan.

#### Decisions That Stick

The goal is that increased involvement and frequent meetings will keep everyone informed and help to build consensus on issues. Through shared information and open and frequent discussions of the issues during the project, consensus and decisions can be reached. At key points in the process (refer to Agency Coordination Plan) agreements will be required. A letter of concurrence by each member at these key points will be integral to the process. Once a decision is reached on each point, the issue will not be revisited during the project, unless new scientific information becomes available or a significant change in circumstances develops that would affect the concurrence.

Also, necessary will be a dispute resolution process. In the event that the agencies are unable to arrive at an agreement, a process for resolving these disputes will be necessary. A mutual interagency effort is needed to achieve timely resolution of issues. The agencies agree to:

- Encourage constructive communication to avoid unnecessary stress on



- interagency relationships
- Recognize disagreements as they occur and initiate dispute resolution procedures
- Keep decision making at the team level, with staff who have specific project knowledge and relevant expertise
- Quickly elevate unresolved issues to higher-level decision makers, so they may apply a broader policy perspective, where needed.

Reasons to initiate the Dispute Resolution Process include, but are not limited to:

- Unresolved written non-concurrence
- Lack of response within agreed-upon time limits
- Substantive departure from the interagency coordination process
- Disagreement on purpose and need, methodology, range of alternatives to be considered, preferred alternative, or recommended actions to avoid, minimize, and compensate for impacts
- Disagreement over adequacy or interpretation of information
- Disagreement on the nature and extent of impacts
- Disagreement over application of legal requirements

A proposed resolution process is included as Appendix A to this document.

#### Improve Process Efficiency

Too often with projects, agencies are asked to make decisions without the benefit of all the information that is needed. This can lead to delayed decisions, as they then have to acquire information. To address this, it is proposed that there be frequent communications between agency members. Regular emails providing information will be sent to the agencies by the Project Team. This will accomplish two things. First, everyone will be kept up to date on the project; communication will be open and frequent. Second, the “learning curve” will be kept short; there will be no surprises. Sufficient information will be provided to agencies at least two weeks before a decision is required. Agencies will be expected to make a decision within two weeks of each decision point.

#### Meet or Exceed Agency Mandates

This process will allow agencies to meet and/or exceed their mandates. The agencies can have their issues, policies, and goals addressed by being involved in the development and selection of alternatives. In addition, enhancement features that help to meet specific goals can be incorporated into the project design. Thus, the agencies are better positioned to see that their individual charges are satisfied by the project.

#### Enhance Communication and Relationships

The commitment of individuals to the development of a project, coupled with frequent communication and discussion of issues, will lead to an enhancement of relations between all participating members. Lines of communication will be established between individuals (hence agencies). Trust will be built through honest dialogue during project development. An improved understanding of each other’s positions will be realized through this process.

## Appendix A: Dispute Resolution Process

### I. Introduction

The purpose of this dispute resolution process is to provide a procedure to resolve disagreements among agencies. The intention of this procedure is to try to expeditiously resolve conflicts through consensus without elevating them. However, if consensus cannot be reached on an issue, the issue will be taken to a higher level of authority. Dispute resolution procedures may be initiated upon request of any agency.

#### Level One – Agency Representative Resolution through Intensified Communication on an Issue

Focused Level One discussion is the first resort for issue resolution and includes: recognition that there is an issue that needs to be resolved; clear articulation of that issue and bringing the issue to the attention of the other agencies; open and respectful discussion of the issue in a forum specifically focused on that issue, where all perspectives are aired and heard; joint problem solving to seek a solution that will satisfy the diverse needs of the various agencies involved; and documentation of decisions. When any agency believes there is an unresolved issue that needs attention, the representative from that agency may request intensified communication and problem solving on that issue. To initiate resolution, the requesting agency representative will fill out the Request for Discussion form and send it to the other agencies. (See attached template, “Request for Issue Discussion”.) If the issue is not resolved within 20 days of the initial Request for Issue Discussion, the issue will be automatically elevated to Level Two, unless the participating agencies agree that further discussion at Level One is likely to resolve the issue within an agreed-to timeframe.

During the Level One issue discussion, the participating agencies are encouraged to apply the following guidance:

- If appropriate, the agencies are encouraged to consider an on-site meeting to discuss the project issue.
- Each agency should bring appropriate agency expertise to the discussion (e.g., an individual or information/guidance materials).
- Each agency should bring or have access to a person who has the authority to approve a decision made at that level.
- The agencies should use a discussion format which provides for orderly and constructive communication and good listening. Such a format may consist of:
  1. An opening statement of the issue by the requesting agency, without interruption, including articulation of the issue and that agency’s needs, concerns, and ideas (i.e., Why is this issue important to your agency? What does your agency want to accomplish through resolution of this issue? What options would your agency like to consider, and why?)
  2. A round robin discussion in which each agency takes a turn, without interruption, expressing that agency’s perspective on the issue, including that agency’s needs, concerns, and ideas (i.e., Why is this issue important to your agency? What does

your agency want to accomplish through resolution of this issue? What options would your agency like to consider, and why?)

3. A summary, by the requesting agency or another agency, of the various perspectives, focusing on the needs of each agency and finding commonalities among the agencies.
  4. A listing of the collective needs and concerns of the agencies (this list becomes a set of joint goals).
  5. A brief presentation, if appropriate, of relevant technical information.
  6. A brainstorming session, in which all the agencies list existing and additional options for consideration, taking into account the joint goals of the agencies.
  7. An identification of the option(s) that holds the most promise and discussion of how to improve upon and implement that option.
- Documentation of agreements reached at this and other levels will ensure that all agencies have the same understanding of the agreement and will facilitate implementation. A concise meeting summary should be prepared and distributed to participating agencies, which documents the decision(s) made and the rationale for the decision(s). A statement of the decision should be recorded on the Request for Issue Discussion form.
  - If the issue is resolved, this will be noted on the Request for Issue Discussion form, including a statement of the decision and the rationale for that decision.
  - If the issue is not resolved, this will be noted on the Request for Issue Discussion form, including a statement of the issue that needs to be resolved. It would then be elevated to Level Two.

#### Elevation to Level Two for Issue Resolution

Elevation, as described in these Dispute Resolution Procedures, refers to focused, informal discussion between interested agencies at higher levels of authority (Level Two). The goal of elevation is to move unresolved issues quickly up to the next level of decision making, where there is broader perspective and more authority. Keys to success in the elevation process are pre-defined Level Two participants for each agency, a clear articulation of the issue to be resolved, and exposure of the decision makers to the various perspectives of each of the participating agencies in order to create a complete picture of the issue. The setting is an informal process based on direct communication among the relevant agencies. An issue will be elevated to Level Two when:

- Any agency that has participated in the Level One intensified communication discussion of the issue believes that resolution at Level One is unlikely, or
- More than twenty days have passed since the submission of the Request for Issue Discussion and there has been no resolution of the issue, unless all the participating agencies agree to continue discussion within an agreed-to timeframe because resolution at Level One is likely, or
- The participating Level One representatives agree that the issue requires higher authority or policy perspective than is available at Level One (in which case, the agencies will skip Level One intensified communication but may meet to frame the issue for the Level Two decision makers)

When any issue moves to Level Two, SCDOT or FHWA will convene a meeting of the Level Two decision makers within 20 calendar days of the request. Each agency will prepare and exchange with the other participating agencies a brief paper that describes the issue, background information, needs and concerns, and options from their perspective. The Level Two decision makers will meet, discuss the issue, and make a decision within 15 calendar days of their initial meeting. The Level Two decision makers may schedule a joint briefing by all the relevant agencies. As soon as decisions are reached, written statements of the decision(s), including the rationale for the decision, will be prepared and distributed to the participating agencies. Agencies will consider the findings of this process in making decisions.

Any issue not resolved by Level Two will be referred to the highest state and regional officials of each agency (Level Three). This will be the final arbiter of unresolved issues.

#### Designated Agency Representatives for Level One and Level Two

	<b>SCDOT</b>	<b>FHWA</b>	<b>USACE</b>
<b>Level One</b>	NEPA/Permitting Coordinator	Env. Protection Specialist/Coordinator	Branch Chief / SCDOT Liaison
<b>Level Two</b>	Director of Environmental Services	Project Delivery Team Leader/ADA	Regulatory Chief

	<b>USCG</b>	<b>USFWS</b>	<b>USEPA - NEPA</b>
<b>Level One</b>	Agency Representative	Agency Representative	NEPA Officer
<b>Level Two</b>	Director	Field Supervisor	NEPA Office Chief

	<b>USEPA -Permitting</b>	<b>NMFS – Essential Fish Habitat</b>	<b>NMFS – ESA/MMPA</b>
<b>Level One</b>	Permitting Officer	Fisheries Biologist	Ecologist
<b>Level Two</b>	404 Office Chief	Chief	Chief

	<b>SCDAH</b>	<b>SCDHEC</b>	<b>SCDHEC-OCRM</b>
<b>Level One</b>	SCDOT Liaison	Agency Representative	Agency Representative
<b>Level Two</b>	Deputy SHPO	Director of Water Quality Division	Director

	<b>SCDNR</b>	<b>SCPRT</b>	<b>Native American Tribes TBD</b>
<b>Level One</b>	Project Manager	Deputy Director	THPO
<b>Level Two</b>	Env. Program Director	Agency Director	THPO

## TEMPLATE

### Request for Issue Discussion at Level One

Requestor's Name/Agency:

Issues(s) – Specific statement of each issue that needs to be resolved or decided:  
(no more than one short paragraph per issue)

Statement of need or concern of requestor's agency, related to the issue(s):

Solution proposed by requestor's agency and statement of why this solution is important to that agency:

Potentially interested agencies:  
(Requestor will send this form to each of the listed agencies and will send a copy to agencies)

Proposed Discussion Forum -

Type of forum (meeting/conference call/site visit):

Location:

Proposed date/time:

Participants:

Contact and date for RSVP:

The information below will be filled out following the discussion forum. The completed form will then be sent to the Level Two representatives of all the interested parties and a copy will be sent to the agencies.

Outcome:

\_\_\_\_ Issue was resolved.

Decision:

Rationale for the decision:

\_\_\_\_ Issue was not resolved.

Statement of the Issue to be elevated:

Comments:

# AGENCY COORDINATION PLAN

## APPENDIX B

### NOTICE OF INTENT

## PROCEDURAL SCHEDULE

October 10, 2019 .....	Motion for Protective Order and Motion for Establishment of Procedural Schedule filed.
October 11, 2019 .....	Application (amended) filed.
November 8, 2019 .....	Board notice of acceptance of application served and published in the <b>Federal Register</b> .
November 25, 2019 .....	Notices of intent to participate in this proceeding due.
December 9, 2019 .....	All comments, protests, requests for conditions, and any other evidence and argument in opposition to the application, including filings of DOJ and DOT, due.
January 8, 2020 .....	Responses to comments, protests, requests for conditions, and other opposition due. Rebuttal in support of the application due.
February 21, 2020 .....	Date by which a final decision will be served.
March 22, 2020. <sup>7</sup> .....	Date by which a final decision will become effective.

*It is ordered:*

1. The application is accepted for consideration.

2. The parties to this proceeding must comply with the procedural schedule adopted by the Board in this proceeding as shown in this decision. The parties to this proceeding must comply with the procedural requirements described in this decision.

3. This decision is effective on November 8, 2019.

Decided: November 4, 2019.

By the Board, Board Members Begeman, Fuchs, and Oberman.

**Kenyatta Clay,**  
Clearance Clerk.

[FR Doc. 2019-24438 Filed 11-7-19; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4915-01-P**

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION****Federal Aviation Administration**

**Notice of Release of Land Affecting Federal Grant Assurance Obligations at Tucson International Airport, Tucson, Pima County, Arizona**

**AGENCY:** Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of request to release airport land.

**SUMMARY:** The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) proposes to rule and invites public comment for the release of approximately 297 acres of airport land, otherwise known as Parcel H, at Tucson International Airport (TUS), Tucson, Pima County, Arizona from the aeronautical use provisions of the Grant Agreement Assurances since the land is not needed for airport purposes. The land for proposed release consists of two parcels along the southern boundary of the abandoned Hughes Access Road, adjacent to the main airport airfield sand campus, and a portion of property which is used by Aerospace Parkway. The land will be

sold to the City of Tucson, to accommodate future expansion of a public roadway, and to permit future compatible development adjacent to United States Air Force Plant 44. The airport will be compensated for the fair market value of the land. The use of the land for a roadway and industrial development represents a compatible land use that will not interfere with the airport or its operation, thereby protecting the interests of civil aviation.

**DATES:** Comments must be received on or before December 9, 2019.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Comments on the request may be mailed or delivered to the FAA at the following address: Mr. Mike N. Williams, Manager, Phoenix Airports District Office, **Federal Register** Comment, Federal Aviation Administration, Phoenix Airports District Office, 3800 N. Central Avenue, Suite 1025, Phoenix, Arizona 85012. In addition, one copy of the comment submitted to the FAA must be mailed or delivered to Ms. Danette Bewley, Interim President/CEO, Tucson Airport Authority, 7200 S. Tucson Boulevard, Suite 300, Tucson, Arizona 85756.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** In accordance with the Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century (AIR 21), Public Law 10-181 (Apr. 5, 2000; 114 Stat. 61), this notice must be published in the **Federal Register** 30 days before the DOT Secretary may waive any condition imposed on a federally obligated airport by surplus property conveyance deeds or grant agreements.

The following is a brief overview of the request:

The Tucson Airport Authority (TAA) requested a release from the provisions of the Grant Agreement Assurances to permit the disposal of approximately 297 acres of land, otherwise known as Parcel H, at Tucson International Airport, Tucson, Pima County, Arizona to permit the expansion of a public road (Aerospace Parkway), and to permit future compatible development adjacent to United States Air Force Plant 44. The Tucson Airport Authority will sell the

land, obligated by Airport Improvement Program grants, and Passenger Facility Charge funding. In return, TAA will be compensated for the fair market value for the property. An Environmental Impact Statement was completed for Parcel H, and a Record of Decision executed on November 28, 2018. The proposed use of the land is a compatible land use that will not interfere with or impede the operations and development of the airport. Based on the benefits of fair compensation and enhanced public safety, the interests of civil aviation will be properly served.

Issued in El Segundo, California, on November 4, 2019.

Original signed by

**Brian Q. Armstrong,**  
Manager, Safety and Standards Branch,  
Airports Division, Western-Pacific Region.

[FR Doc. 2019-24452 Filed 11-7-19; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4910-13-P**

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION****Federal Highway Administration**

**Environmental Impact Statement: Charleston County, South Carolina; Notice of Intent**

**AGENCY:** Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

**SUMMARY:** The FHWA is issuing this notice of intent to advise the public that an Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared for a proposed highway project in Charleston County, South Carolina.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Emily O. Lawton, Division Administrator, Federal Highway Administration, Strom Thurmond Federal Building, 1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270, Columbia, South Carolina 29201, Telephone: (803) 765-5411, Email: [emily.lawton@dot.gov](mailto:emily.lawton@dot.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South

<sup>7</sup> The final decision will become effective 30 days after it is served.



Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), will be preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard. The FHWA intends to issue a single Final EIS and Record of Decision (ROD) document pursuant to the FAST Act Section 1311 requirements, unless FHWA determines statutory criteria or practicability considerations preclude issuance of a combined document.

The I-526 and I-26 System-to-System interchange is a vital local connection, linking downtown Charleston, Summerville, West Ashley, and Mount Pleasant. I-26 links the Charleston area with the other major cities to the west like Columbia, Spartanburg, and Asheville, North Carolina, as well as with I-95, I-77, I-20, I-85, I-40, and I-81. In addition, I-526 provides the only freeway access to two important port terminals, the North Charleston terminal, and the Wando Welch terminal. Thus, I-526 is an important part of a network for transporting freight and commercial goods to and from the Port of Charleston and throughout the region.

The Charleston region's population growth is three times the average of the United States. With the increased population growth, traffic congestion is anticipated to worsen over the next 20 years. SCDOT has currently ranked I-526 between I-26 and Virginia Avenue as the most congested interstate segment in South Carolina. In addition, I-526 between I-26 and Paul Cantrell Boulevard is currently ranked among the top ten of South Carolina's most congested interstate corridors. Improvements to the corridor are considered necessary to provide for the existing and projected traffic demand and to address the existing and projected future congestion.

Alternatives under consideration will evaluate mainline widening options along with several interchange improvements at I-26/I-526, North Rhett Avenue, and Rivers Avenue in addition to the no-build alternative. The alternatives will be refined during the NEPA scoping process in consideration of agency and public comments received.

The FHWA and SCDOT are seeking input as part of the scoping process to

assist in identifying issues relative to this project and potential solutions. Letters describing the proposed action and soliciting comments are being sent to appropriate Federal, State, and local agencies, and to private organizations and citizens who have previously expressed an interest in this project. Agency coordination will involve monthly meetings and a public information meeting will be held on November 21, 2019 from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the North Charleston Convention Center that will allow the public to comment on the scope of the EIS, the purpose and need, the alternatives under evaluation, environmental impacts to be considered, and potential mitigation measures.

Further agency and community meetings will be held as the project is developed, and a public hearing will be conducted after the approval of the draft EIS. Public notice will be given of the time and place of the meetings and hearing. Meeting dates and locations will be posted on the project's website at <https://www.526lowcountrycorridor.com/west/> and all known interested parties and the public will be notified via postcards.

To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action are addressed and all significant issues identified, comments are invited from all interested parties. Comments or questions concerning this proposed action and the EIS should be directed to the FHWA at the address provided above no later than January 4, 2020.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program.)

Dated: November 1, 2019.

**Yolonda Jordan,**

*Assistant Division Administrator, Columbia, South Carolina.*

[FR Doc. 2019-24327 Filed 11-7-19; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4910-22-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

### Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request; Multiple Fiscal Service Information Collection Requests

**AGENCY:** Departmental Offices, U.S. Department of the Treasury.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of the Treasury will submit the following information collection requests to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and clearance in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, on or after the date of publication of this notice. The public is invited to submit comments on these requests.

**DATES:** Comments should be received on or before December 9, 2019 to be assured of consideration.

**ADDRESSES:** Send comments regarding the burden estimate, or any other aspect of the information collection, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to (1) Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, Attention: Desk Officer for Treasury, New Executive Office Building, Room 10235, Washington, DC 20503, or email at [OIRA\\_Submission@OMB.EOP.gov](mailto:OIRA_Submission@OMB.EOP.gov) and (2) Treasury PRA Clearance Officer, 1750 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Suite 8100, Washington, DC 20220, or email at [PRA@treasury.gov](mailto:PRA@treasury.gov).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Copies of the submissions may be obtained from Spencer W. Clark by emailing [PRA@treasury.gov](mailto:PRA@treasury.gov), calling (202) 927-5331, or viewing the entire information collection request at [www.reginfo.gov](http://www.reginfo.gov).

### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

#### Bureau of the Fiscal Service (BFS)

*Title:* Pools and Associations—Annual Letter.

*OMB Control Number:* 1530-0007.

*Type of Review:* Reinstatement of a previously approved collection.

*Description:* Information collected determines acceptable percent for each pool and association Treasury Certified companies are given credit for on Treasury Schedule F for authorized ceded reinsurance in determining the companies' underwriting limitations.

*Form:* None.

*Affected Public:* Businesses or other for-profits.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 84.

*Frequency of Response:* On Occasion.  
*Estimated Total Number of Annual Responses:* 84.

*Estimated Time per Response:* 1.5 hours.

*Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours:* 126.

*Title:* FS Form 2888—Application Form for U.S. Department of Treasury Accountable Official Stored Value Card (SVC).

*OMB Control Number:* 1530-0020.

*Type of Review:* Extension without change of a currently approved collection.

# AGENCY COORDINATION PLAN

## APPENDIX C

### COOPERATING & PARTICIPATING AGENCY LETTERS



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

March 29, 2019

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Lt. Colonel Jeffrey Palazzini  
Commander, Charleston District  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
69A Hagood Avenue  
Charleston, SC 29403

**Subject:** Invitation to Become a Cooperating Agency for the Preparation of an  
Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry  
Corridor Improvements Project in Charleston County, South Carolina;  
Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Lt. Col. Palazzini:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard (see study area map on enclosed project information sheet). The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline. Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it will adhere to the One Federal Decision guidance and tracked on the federal permitting dashboard.

Pursuant to Section 6002 of SAFETEA-LU, as amended by Section 1304 of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, cooperating and participating agencies are responsible for identifying, as early as possible, any issues of concern regarding the project's potential environmental, social, or economic impacts. Section 6002 is intended to assure that agencies are fully engaged in the scoping of the project and the decisions regarding alternatives to be evaluated in detail in the NEPA analysis. In accordance with the SAFETEA-LU Section 6002, FHWA is in the process of identifying local, state, and federal agencies that may have an interest in the project. This same guidance is in the Memorandum of Understanding for Implementing One Federal Decision (issued April 9, 2018), as well as the One Federal Decision Working Agreement.

The FHWA, in coordination with your office, has determined that a Section 404 Permit will likely be required for the proposed improvements. Since your agency has legal jurisdiction over such permits, we are inviting you to become a Cooperating Agency along with the FHWA in the development of the EIS. Cooperating agencies are, by definition, participating agencies but they

have a higher degree of authority, responsibility and involvement in the environmental process. Areas of concern to be emphasized in the EIS will include potential environmental impacts upon existing ecological resources, wetlands, water resources, historic and archaeological resources, parks and recreation facilities, noise and air, social and community character, hazardous/contaminated materials, cumulative and indirect impacts, and potential impacts due to project construction.

Your agency's involvement in the proposed project would entail those areas under its jurisdiction. No direct writing or analysis by your agency will be necessary for this document unless you request to do so. We suggest that your agency's role in the development of the above project should include the following as they relate to your area of expertise:

1. Participate in coordination meetings as appropriate.
2. Consultation on any relevant technical studies that may be required for the project.
3. Timely review and comment on the EIS to reflect the views and concerns of your agency on the adequacy of the document, alternatives considered, and the anticipated impacts and mitigation.

In addition, based on the One Federal Decision MOU, we will be asking for written concurrence at three points:

- Purpose and Need Statement
- Range of alternatives/alternatives to be carried forward for further analysis
- Preferred Alternative

Per the One Federal Decision MOU that states that federal agencies should make use of one NEPA document, we want to ensure that the EIS that we are preparing will enable your agency to fulfill its jurisdictional responsibilities. Likewise, your agency has the obligation to tell us if, at any point in the process, your agency's needs are not being met. We will be coordinating with your agency throughout the project development and NEPA process to ensure that you have the information your agency needs to make comments on the EIS. In addition, we anticipate having a permit application submitted prior to the Draft EIS for your review. We plan on coordinating our public hearing comment period for the Draft EIS with your agency's Section 404 Joint Public Notice and running the comment periods concurrently. We expect that at the end of the NEPA process the Final EIS will satisfy your agency's NEPA requirements including those related to purpose and need, project alternatives, environmental consequences, and mitigation.

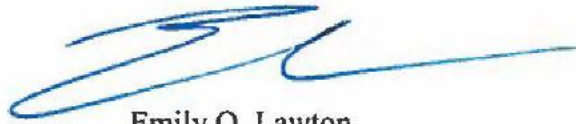
**To become a Cooperating Agency with the FHWA, please respond to this office in writing with an acceptance or denial of the invitation within 30 days.** If you accept, please identify the appropriate contact person within your organization for coordination. If your agency declines, please provide a written response that states your reason for declining the invitation, such as:

- Has no jurisdiction or authority with respect to the project;
- Has no expertise or information relevant to the project; and
- Does not intend to submit comments on the project.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or each agency's respective roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Ms. Michelle

Herrell at 803-765-5460 or by email at [michelle.herrell@dot.gov](mailto:michelle.herrell@dot.gov); or Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by e-mail at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,



Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

Enclosures

ec: Mr. Travis Hughes, USACE Regulatory Division Chief  
Ms. Amanda Heath, USACE Chief, Special Projects Branch  
Mr. Chad Long, SCDOT Environmental Division Manager  
Mr. David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Mr. Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design-Build NEPA/Permitting Coordinator  
Ms. Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
CHARLESTON DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
69A HAGOOD AVE  
CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA, 29403

26 April 2019

Regulatory Division

Ms. Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration  
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, SC 29201

Re: I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project Cooperating Agency  
Acceptance, Charleston County, South Carolina, Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Ms. Lawton:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has requested the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District (Corps), to participate as a cooperating agency in the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 West, Lowcountry Corridor Improvement project, in Charleston County, South Carolina. As stated in 40 CFR 1501.6, the FHWA as the lead federal action agency, may request any other agency having jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to an environmental issue to be a cooperating agency. In accordance with the above stated regulations, the Corps formally accepts your invitation to become a cooperating agency. As party to this cooperative effort, the Corps is willing to attend and participate in coordination meetings, to provide consultation on aspects of this project where we have legal oversight and expertise, and to review and provide comments on documents related to this project (alternatives considered, anticipated impacts, proposed mitigation, etc.).

The Corps applauds your effort to develop an EIS for this project that will satisfy both our jurisdictional responsibilities. However, we recognize some fundamental differences in the way our agencies conduct an environmental review. This difference is primarily due to the Corps' authority under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines require the Corps to define the project's basic and overall purpose, determine if the project is water dependent, and conduct an analysis of practicable alternatives. Therefore, we feel it paramount that FHWA, SCDOT, and the Corps continue meeting to ensure understanding of each other's missions and statutory requirements, and ultimately develop EIS documents addressing all of our jurisdictional responsibilities.

In closing, we appreciate your invitation and look forward to our continued collaboration with you on this project. Please be advised our concurrence is based upon the most current information available. If new information becomes available that requires further consideration, the concurrence may in turn be affected. Though we anticipate our participation and concurrence on this project will help facilitate the permit process, it can in

no way guarantee permit issuance. If you have any questions, please contact the Project Manager, Christopher Mims, at [Christopher.D.Mims@usace.army.mil](mailto:Christopher.D.Mims@usace.army.mil) or 843-329-8154.

Respectfully,



Digitally signed by Travis G.  
Hughes  
Date: 2019.04.30 13:30:44 -04'00'

for: Jeffrey S. Palazzini  
Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army  
Commander and District Engineer

Travis G. Hughes  
Chief, Regulatory Division

Copy furnished:

Mr. Chad Long  
Director, Environmental Services  
South Carolina Department of Transportation  
P.O. Box 191  
Columbia, SC 29202-0191





U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

March 29, 2019

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Commander  
U.S. Coast Guard Seventh District  
Attn: Bridge Administration (dpb)  
909 SE 1<sup>st</sup> Ave Suite 432  
Miami, FL 33131

**Subject:** Invitation to Become a Cooperating Agency for the Preparation of an  
Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry  
Corridor Improvements Project in Charleston County, South Carolina;  
Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Commander:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard (see study area map on enclosed project information sheet). The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline. Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it will adhere to the One Federal Decision guidance and tracked on the federal permitting dashboard.

Pursuant to Section 6002 of SAFETEA-LU, as amended by Section 1304 of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, cooperating and participating agencies are responsible for identifying, as early as possible, any issues of concern regarding the project's potential environmental, social, or economic impacts. Section 6002 is intended to assure that agencies are fully engaged in the scoping of the project and the decisions regarding alternatives to be evaluated in detail in the NEPA analysis. In accordance with the SAFETEA-LU Section 6002, FHWA is in the process of identifying local, state, and federal agencies that may have an interest in the project. This same guidance is in the Memorandum of Understanding for Implementing One Federal Decision (issued April 9, 2018), as well as the One Federal Decision Working Agreement.

The FHWA, in coordination with your office, has determined that a U.S. Coast Guard Bridge Permit will likely be required for the widening of the I-526 bridge over the Ashley River. Since your agency has legal jurisdiction over such permits, we are inviting you to become a Cooperating Agency along with the FHWA in the development of the EIS. Cooperating agencies are, by



definition, participating agencies but they have a higher degree of authority, responsibility and involvement in the environmental process. Areas of concern to be emphasized in the EIS will include potential environmental impacts upon existing ecological resources, wetlands, water resources, historic and archaeological resources, parks and recreation facilities, noise and air, social and community character, hazardous/contaminated materials, cumulative and indirect impacts, and potential impacts due to project construction.

Your agency's involvement in the proposed project would entail those areas under its jurisdiction. No direct writing or analysis by your agency will be necessary for this document unless you request to do so. We suggest that your agency's role in the development of the above project should include the following as they relate to your area of expertise:

1. Participate in coordination meetings as appropriate.
2. Consultation on any relevant technical studies that may be required for the project.
3. Timely review and comment on the EIS to reflect the views and concerns of your agency on the adequacy of the document, alternatives considered, and the anticipated impacts and mitigation.

In addition, based on the One Federal Decision MOU, we will be asking for written concurrence at three points:

- Purpose and Need Statement
- Range of alternatives/alternatives to be carried forward for further analysis
- Preferred Alternative

Per the One Federal Decision MOU that states that federal agencies should make use of one NEPA document, we want to ensure that the EIS that we are preparing will enable your agency to fulfill its jurisdictional responsibilities. Likewise, your agency has the obligation to tell us if, at any point in the process, your agency's needs are not being met. We will be coordinating with your agency throughout the project development and NEPA process to ensure that you have the information your agency needs to make comments on the EIS. In addition, we anticipate having a permit application submitted prior to the Draft EIS for your review. We plan on coordinating our public hearing comment period for the Draft EIS with your agency's Section 404 Joint Public Notice and running the comment periods concurrently. We expect that at the end of the NEPA process the Final EIS will satisfy your agency's NEPA requirements including those related to purpose and need, project alternatives, environmental consequences, and mitigation.

**To become a Cooperating Agency with the FHWA, please respond to this office in writing with an acceptance or denial of the invitation within 30 days.** If you accept, please identify the appropriate contact person within your organization for coordination. If your agency declines, please provide a written response that states your reason for declining the invitation, such as:

- Has no jurisdiction or authority with respect to the project;
- Has no expertise or information relevant to the project; and
- Does not intend to submit comments on the project.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or each agency's respective roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Ms. Michelle

Herrell at 803-765-5460 or by email at [michelle.herrell@dot.gov](mailto:michelle.herrell@dot.gov); or Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by e-mail at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,



Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

Enclosures

cc: Mr. Barry Dragon, USCG 7<sup>th</sup> District Director, Bridge Branch  
Mr. Randall Overton, USCG 7<sup>th</sup> District Permitting Agent  
Mr. Chad Long, SCDOT Environmental Division Manager  
Mr. David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Mr. Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design-Build NEPA/Permitting Coordinator  
Ms. Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager

**U.S. Department of  
Homeland Security**

**United States  
Coast Guard**



Commander  
United States Coast Guard  
Seventh District

909 SE 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. (Rm432)  
Miami, FL 33131  
Staff Symbol: (dpb)  
Phone: 305-415-6736  
Fax: 305-415-6763  
Email: [randall.d.overton@uscg.mil](mailto:randall.d.overton@uscg.mil)

16475/164  
April 10, 2019

Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration  
1835 Assembly Street (Suite 1270)  
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Division Administrator,

This letter is in response to your letter dated March 29, 2019 requesting the Coast Guard participate as a cooperating agency for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project in Charleston County, South Carolina. I, as the Coast Guard Seventh District Bridge Branch representative, acknowledge receipt of and accept the invitation to be a cooperating agency for this project.

The Coast Guard will be a cooperating agency on the I-526 Corridor Improvements Project in accordance with 40 CFR 1501.6 and as such provide comments concerning construction or modification of bridges over navigable waterways of within the project corridor.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate as a improvement project.

this infrastructure

If you have any questions or concerns please  
[Randall.D.Overton@uscg.mil](mailto:Randall.D.Overton@uscg.mil)

-6736 or email

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Randall D. Overton".

RANDALL D. OVERTON  
Chief, Permits Division  
District 7 Bridge Program  
U.S. Coast Guard

**From:** [Belcher, Jeffery - FHWA](#)  
**To:** [alexis\\_john@nps.gov](mailto:alexis_john@nps.gov); [Justin Hancock](#)  
**Cc:** [Long, Chad C.](#); [Kelly, David P.](#); [McGoldrick, Will](#); [Riley, Joy S.](#)  
**Subject:** I-526 West Corridor Improvements: NPS Participating Agency Invite  
**Date:** Thursday, July 11, 2019 8:52:50 AM  
**Attachments:** [NPS I-526 W. Corridor Participating Agency Invite Letter.pdf](#)  
**Importance:** High

---

\*\*\* This is an EXTERNAL email. Please do not click on a link or open any attachments unless you are confident it is from a trusted source. \*\*\*

Alexis and Justin,

Attached is the Participating Agency invite to NPS for the I-526 West Corridor project per our discussions. The letter will be going out via FedEx to Bob Vogel today. If there are any further questions regarding the request for your agency please do not hesitate to give me a call. We look forward to working with you regarding the 6(f) conversion process as part of our project development process.

Much thanks for all the assistance you have provided so far.

*J. Shane Belcher*  
*Environmental Coordinator*  
*Federal Highway Administration*  
*1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270*  
*Columbia, SC 29201*  
*Phone: 803-253-3187*  
*Fax: 803-253-3989*



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

July 11, 2019

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Mr. Bob Vogel  
Regional Director (Southeast)  
National Parks Service  
100 Alabama St., SW  
1924 Building  
Atlanta, GA 30303

Subject: Invitation to Become a Participating Agency for the Preparation of an  
Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry  
Corridor Improvements Project in Charleston County, South Carolina;  
Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Mr. Vogel:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard (see study area map on enclosed project information sheet). The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline. Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it will adhere to the One Federal Decision guidance and tracked on the federal permitting dashboard.

Pursuant to Section 6002 of SAFETEA-LU, as amended by Section 1304 of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, cooperating and participating agencies are responsible for identifying, as early as possible, any issues of concern regarding the project's potential environmental, social, or economic impacts. Section 6002 is intended to assure that agencies are fully engaged in the scoping of the project and the decisions regarding alternatives to be evaluated in detail in the NEPA analysis. In accordance with the SAFETEA-LU Section 6002, FHWA is in the process of identifying local, state, and federal agencies that may have an interest in the project. This same guidance is in the Memorandum of Understanding for Implementing One Federal Decision (issued April 9, 2018), as well as the One Federal Decision Working Agreement.

The FHWA, in coordination with your office has determined that your agency has special expertise regarding Section 6(f) resources that are within the project study area. Since your agency has special expertise in these matters, we are inviting you to become a Participating Agency in the development of the EIS. Areas of concern to be emphasized in the EIS will include potential

environmental impacts upon existing ecological resources, wetlands, water resources, historic and archaeological resources, parks and recreation facilities, noise and air, social and community character, hazardous/contaminated materials, cumulative and indirect impacts, and potential impacts due to project construction.

Your agency's involvement in the proposed project would entail those areas under its jurisdiction or areas of expertise. No direct writing or analysis by your agency will be necessary for this document unless you request to do so. We suggest that your agency's role in the development of the above project should include the following as they relate to your area of expertise:

1. Participate in coordination meetings as appropriate.
2. Consultation on any relevant technical studies that may be required for the project.
3. Timely review and comment on the environment document to reflect the views and concerns of your agency on the adequacy of the document, alternatives considered, and the anticipated impacts and mitigation.

**To become a Participating Agency with the FHWA, please respond to this office in writing with an acceptance or denial of the invitation within 30 days.** If you accept, please identify the appropriate contact person(s) within your organization for coordination. If your agency declines, please provide a written response that states your reason for declining the invitation, such as:

- Has no jurisdiction or authority with respect to the project;
- Has no expertise or information relevant to the project; and
- Does not intend to submit comments on the project.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or each agency's respective roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by e-mail at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,

**J. Shane  
Belcher**

(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

Digitally signed by J. Shane  
Belcher  
Date: 2019.07.11 08:33:21  
-04'00'

Enclosures

ec: Ms. Alexis John, National Parks Service, Recreation Programs Officer  
Mr. Justin Hancock, SCPRT, Director, Recreation, Grants and Policy  
Mr. Chad Long, SCDOT Environmental Division Manager  
Mr. David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Mr. Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design-Build NEPA/Permitting Coordinator  
Ms. Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager



## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The 526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST is between Paul Cantrell Boulevard and Virginia Avenue, approximately 11.4 miles long (refer to Figure 1). The project is a four-lane divided highway. SCDOT currently ranks the segment of I-526 between I-26 and Virginia Avenue as the most congested segment of interstate highway in the State. The remainder of the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST project, from I-26 to Paul Cantrell Boulevard, ranks among the top ten of the State's existing most congested corridors. Forecasts show that segments of that corridor will continue to be among the State's most congested in 2040. The interchange of I-526 and I-26 is the major source of the congestion. This is due to the high number of vehicles moving between I-26 and I-526, coupled with closely spaced interchanges with ramps that have steep grades and tight curves, and limited distances for vehicles to merge onto and off of I-526.

The I-526 and I-26 System-to-System interchange is a key interchange locally. It links downtown Charleston, Summerville, West Ashley, and Mount Pleasant. I-26 links the Charleston area with the other major cities to the west like Columbia, Spartanburg, and Asheville, North Carolina, as well as with I-95, I-77, I-20, I-85, I-40, and I-81. I-526 provides the only freeway access to two important port terminals- the North Charleston terminal and the Wando Welch terminal. Wando Welch is the busiest terminal in the region and has no access to rail. Not only is I-526 an important route for daily commuting traffic, it is also part of a network for transporting freight and commercial goods to and from the Port of Charleston and throughout the region.

To the west of I-26, the route crosses the Ashley River and provides a similar connection to the growing West Ashley area.

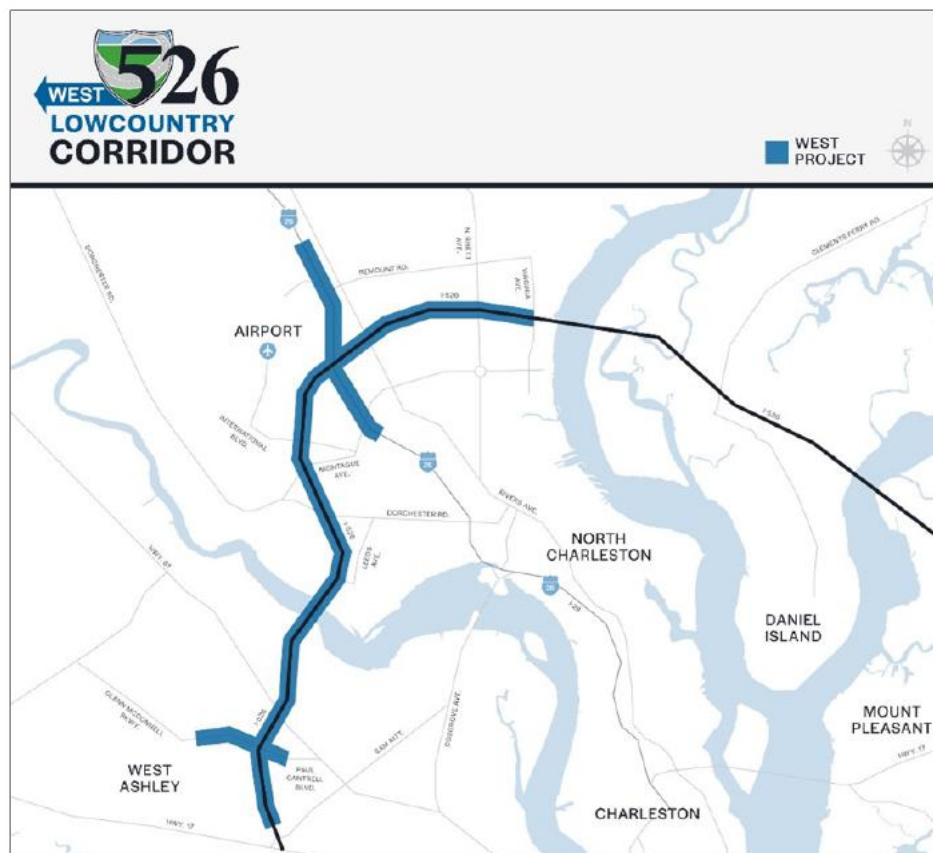


Figure 1 : 526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST Study Area

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## PURPOSE

The purpose of this project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/I-526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard.

## NEED

The need for this project was identified in several different documents. The I-526/I-26 interchange is listed as the #2 project in the 2035 CHATS Long Range Transportation Plan Ranked List of Candidate Transportation Projects, the #6 project on SCDOT's ACT 114 Interstate Capacity List, and it is listed in SCDOT's State Transportation Improvement Plan 2017-2022. Congestion was detailed in SCDOT's Corridor Analysis for I-526 Between North Charleston and West Ashley, and in the Interstate Plan portion of SCDOT's 2014 Multimodal Transportation Plan, where four segments within this project corridor are listed in the top 20 most congested Interstate segments.

## PROJECT PROGRESS

Since the project inception there have been many tasks completed for this project. These tasks included environmental studies, public outreach, surveying, traffic analysis, preliminary design and initial cost estimates. The efforts that have been completed to date for the project include:

- Field studies for cultural resources, natural resources, hazardous materials have been completed. This included additional underwater archaeology along the Ashley River bridge.
- Meetings have been held with local governments and elected officials.
- Community meetings were held in North Charleston and West Ashley.
- Stakeholders were identified and 4 stakeholder meetings have been held.
- Traffic counts have been performed and future traffic forecasts have been developed for 2043 and are being updated to 2050.
- Conceptual road alternatives have been developed based on the 2043 traffic modeling and will be updated based on 2050 traffic modeling.
- Hydrologic surveys have been completed and initial drainage designs have begun

## ONE FEDERAL DECISION

The project will follow One Federal Decision (OFD) in accordance with Executive Order 13807. Through a Memorandum of Understanding Implementing One Federal Decision Under Executive Order 13807 (MOU), federal agencies agree to actively participate in environmental reviews and communicate with one another in a structured process that starts early in the project development...." The MOU also calls for cooperation to accomplish these goals:

- Completion of all environmental reviews and permitting within two years;
- Active communication between agencies;
- Concurrent reviews;
- Development of a permitting timetable; and,
- A commitment to the process and improvements of the process.



In addition to the MOU, a Working Agreement between USCG, USACE, USEPA, USFWS, NOAA, and FHWA was reached for major infrastructure projects that require an EIS. This agreement calls for:

- a. Engaging the Parties in a collaborative and integrated approach to transportation decision-making that considers benefits and impacts of proposed transportation system improvements to the environment during the transportation planning process, and that uses the information, analysis or products developed during planning to inform the environmental review process;
- b. Concurrently conducting the environmental evaluation and processing of relevant environmental permit application materials; and,
- c. Preparing a coordinated EIS that satisfies NEPA requirements for all Parties and results in a shared, or joint, environmental impact decision document where practicable, and a concurrent environmental impact decision document to the extent allowable.

It also requires that each agency identify a main point of contact (POC) for this project review for the exchange of information and timely concurrence. Also, each POC will coordinate with their internal decisionmakers if issues arise that cannot be resolved at the agency coordination level.

In addition, the MOU and Working Agreement provide information for resolution of conflicts or issues in a timely manner. We have attached both the MOU and Working Agreement for your review.

All agencies must review and agree to the agency coordination plan and the permitting timetable, as it will be on the Federal Permitting Dashboard. Quarterly updates will be made to both the plan and the timetable, as needed, in accordance with the guidance in the MOU.

Both the MOU and the Working Agreement call for three major concurrence points by the participating and cooperating agencies:

1. Purpose and Need Statement
2. Range of Alternatives/Alternatives Carried Forward
3. Preferred Alternative

For this project, we will be setting up a monthly standing webinar/conference call and provide meeting materials at least two weeks in advance for review prior to the webinar/conference call. If for some reason we do not need to meet, then we will cancel the meeting in advance.

## Draft NEPA/Permitting Schedule

Milestones	Delivery
2019	
<i>Agency Project Kickoff and Scoping Meeting</i>	<i>March 14, 2019</i>
Send Letters Inviting Cooperating and Participating Agencies	March 2019
Agencies review draft Purpose and Need Statement	April 2019
Agencies review Agency Coordination Plan and Permitting Timetable	March-April 2019
<i>Agency Meeting to discuss ACP, Permitting Timetable, and P&amp;N Statement</i>	<i>April 2019</i>
<b>Concurrence Point for Agency Coordination Plan and Permitting Timetable</b>	<b>May 2019</b>
<b>Concurrence Point on Purpose and Need Statement</b>	<b>May 2019</b>
Project Initiation Letter and Navigation Report sent to USCG	May 2019
<i>Agency Meeting to discuss the Alternative Evaluation Criteria, Alternatives Analysis Process, and Preliminary Range of Alternatives</i>	<i>Summer 2019</i>
Agencies Review the Preliminary Range of Alternatives for Concurrence	Summer 2019
Submit Preliminary Jurisdictional Determination to USACE & Critical Area to SCDHEC-OCRM	July 2019
FHWA issues Notice of Intent (NOI)	August 2019
Community and Stakeholder Meetings	August-September 2019
Public Information Meeting	Fall 2019
<i>Agency Meeting to discuss initial Alternatives Analysis and Reasonable Range of Alternatives</i>	<i>Fall 2019</i>
<b>Concurrence Point for Reasonable Range of Alternatives/Alternatives Carried Forward by Agencies</b>	<b>Fall 2019</b>
Continued Coordination with Agencies on specific resources (i.e. Permitting, EFH, Section 106, Section 7, etc)	Fall/Winter 2019
<i>Agency Meeting to discuss potential mitigation options</i>	<i>Winter 2019</i>
2020	
<i>Agency Meeting to discuss Reasonable Alternatives</i>	<i>Late Spring 2020</i>
Preliminary Draft EIS section for review by Agencies	Spring/Summer 2020
<b>Concurrence Point for Preferred Alternative by Agencies</b>	<b>Summer 2020</b>
Pre-Application Meeting with USACE and SCDHEC	Summer 2020
Draft EIS issued; Joint USACE Individual Permit and USCG Public Notices	Fall 2020
Community and Stakeholder Meetings	Fall 2020
Public Hearing	Fall/Winter 2020
<i>Agency Meeting to discuss comments received during the public hearing comment periods and path forward to FEIS/ROD</i>	<i>Winter 2020-2021</i>
Response to Public and Agency Comments	Winter 2020-2021
2021	
Prepare Final EIS/Record of Decision	Spring 2021
FHWA Issues FEIS/ROD	Summer 2021
USACE and USCG Issue Permit Decisions	Summer/Fall 2021



## United States Department of the Interior



IN REPLY REFER TO:  
1.A.2. (SERO-PC)

### NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Southeast Regional Office  
Atlanta Federal Center  
1924 Building  
100 Alabama St., SW.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

AUG 12 2019

Jeffrey Belcher  
Federal Highway Administration  
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Dear Mr. Belcher:

The National Park Service (NPS) received your invitation to become a Participating Agency in the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project number P027507. The proposed project is to make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The development of the proposed project will adhere to the One Federal Decision guidance, and tracked on the federal permitting dashboard.

We request to be a cooperating agency for this proposal because there are areas under NPS jurisdiction or areas of expertise that are within the area of potential affect, which includes a Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) site, a Federal Lands to Parks (FLP) site, and two Heritage Areas. Potential impacts to these resources and potential mitigation will need to be addressed in the EIS.

#### **LWCF Site:**

Highland Terrace Park is located at 2401 Richardson Drive, North Charleston, SC 29406 and received LWCF assistance with grant number 45-00691. The proposed project has the potential to trigger a conversion regardless if there is no change to the recreational usefulness of the site. If it is determined that land is needed from the Highland Terrace Park boundary, in whole or in part, that converts the use of the park to other than public outdoor recreation, it would trigger a conversion of an LWCF protected facility under 54 U.S.C. §200305(f) (formerly Section 6(f)(3) of the LWCF Act). A conversion of use would include providing replacement property that not only is equal or greater in fair market value to the converted site, but also, is of reasonable equivalent usefulness. In addition, all requirements must be satisfactorily completed as outlined in the LWCF Act (36 C.F.R. §59.3). The South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism is responsible for administering the LWCF program for the State of South Carolina. Mr. Justin Hancock is the State Liaison and can be reached at (803) 734-1747, or via email

at jhancock @ scprt.com. The point of contact for the NPS LWCF Program is Alexis H. John, Compliance Program Officer and can be reached at (404) 507-5834 by email [alexis\\_john@nps.gov](mailto:alexis_john@nps.gov).

**FLP Site:**

Ralph M. Hendricks Park, 5250 Virginia Ave, North Charleston, SC 29405 is a FLP site within the area of potential effect. The park encompasses 13.75 acres and is owned and managed by the City of North Charleston. If it is determined that land is needed within the park boundary, in whole or in part, that converts the use of the park to other than public recreation, it would require mitigation in the form of a land exchange. A land exchange would include providing replacement property that is not only of equal or greater fair market value to the converted land, but is also of reasonable equivalent recreational usefulness. For more information contact Ed Barfield, City Parks and Recreation Director at (843) 740-5814, by email at [edbarfield@northcharleston.org](mailto:edbarfield@northcharleston.org) or John Barrett, FLP Program Manager, at (404) 507-5689 by email [john\\_barrett@nps.gov](mailto:john_barrett@nps.gov).

**National Heritage Areas:**

The Gullah Geechee Cultural National Heritage Corridor aims to recognize the culture and history of the Gullah Geechee people, descendants of West and Central Africans who were brought to America as slaves. Today, the area stretches 30 miles inland from North Carolina down to Florida. For additional information, contact Heather Hodges, Executive Director of the corridor at (843) 818-4587 ext. 101 by email [hhodges@gullahgeecheecorridor.org](mailto:hhodges@gullahgeecheecorridor.org)

The South Carolina National Heritage Corridor is tasked with preserving the natural and cultural resources of the area. The corridor is also rich in military history (including the Revolutionary War and Civil War), Native American history, African American history, and colonial History. It is composed of 17 counties and stretches 320 miles along the southwest region of South Carolina. For additional information contact Michelle McCollum, Executive Director of the corridor at (864) 617-7441 by email [michelle@scnhc.com](mailto:michelle@scnhc.com).

Thank you for the opportunity to review and provide comments. Please contact Anita Barnett, Planning and Compliance Division, Southeast Regional Office at (404) 507-5706, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Robert A. Vogel  
Regional Director





U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

March 29, 2019

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Ms. Amy Blinson  
Grants Manager – Recreation, Grants, and Policy  
SC Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism  
1205 Pendleton Street  
Columbia, SC 29201

**Subject:** Invitation to Become a Participating Agency for the Preparation of an  
Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry  
Corridor Improvements Project in Charleston County, South Carolina;  
Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Ms. Blinson:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard (see study area map on enclosed project information sheet). The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline. Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it will adhere to the One Federal Decision guidance and tracked on the federal permitting dashboard.

Pursuant to Section 6002 of SAFETEA-LU, as amended by Section 1304 of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, cooperating and participating agencies are responsible for identifying, as early as possible, any issues of concern regarding the project's potential environmental, social, or economic impacts. Section 6002 is intended to assure that agencies are fully engaged in the scoping of the project and the decisions regarding alternatives to be evaluated in detail in the NEPA analysis. In accordance with the SAFETEA-LU Section 6002, FHWA is in the process of identifying local, state, and federal agencies that may have an interest in the project. This same guidance is in the Memorandum of Understanding for Implementing One Federal Decision (issued April 9, 2018), as well as the One Federal Decision Working Agreement.

The FHWA, in coordination with your office has determined that your agency has special expertise and approvals regarding Section 6(f) resources in the project study area. Since your agency has special expertise in these matters, we are inviting you to become a Participating Agency in the development of the EIS. Areas of concern to be emphasized in the EIS will include potential

environmental impacts upon existing ecological resources, wetlands, water resources, historic and archaeological resources, parks and recreation facilities, noise and air, social and community character, hazardous/contaminated materials, cumulative and indirect impacts, and potential impacts due to project construction.

Your agency's involvement in the proposed project would entail those areas under its jurisdiction or areas of expertise. No direct writing or analysis by your agency will be necessary for this document unless you request to do so. We suggest that your agency's role in the development of the above project should include the following as they relate to your area of expertise:

1. Participate in coordination meetings as appropriate.
2. Consultation on any relevant technical studies that may be required for the project.
3. Timely review and comment on the environment document to reflect the views and concerns of your agency on the adequacy of the document, alternatives considered, and the anticipated impacts and mitigation.

**To become a Participating Agency with the FHWA, please respond to this office in writing with an acceptance or denial of the invitation within 30 days.** If you accept, please identify the appropriate contact person(s) within your organization for coordination. If your agency declines, please provide a written response that states your reason for declining the invitation, such as:

- Has no jurisdiction or authority with respect to the project;
- Has no expertise or information relevant to the project; and
- Does not intend to submit comments on the project.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or each agency's respective roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Ms. Michelle Herrell at 803-765-5460 or by email at [michelle.herrell@dot.gov](mailto:michelle.herrell@dot.gov); or Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by e-mail at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,



Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

#### Enclosures

ec: Mr. Chad Long, SCDOT Environmental Division Manager  
Mr. David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Mr. Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design-Build NEPA/Permitting Coordinator  
Ms. Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager



South Carolina Department of  
Parks, Recreation & Tourism

**Henry McMaster**  
Governor

**Duane N. Parrish**  
Director

May 21, 2019

Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator  
US Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration  
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, SC 29201

RE: HDA-SC

Dear Ms. Lawton:

The purpose of this letter is to confirm that the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism (SCPRT) agrees to serve as a Participating Agency in the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Improvements Project in Charleston County, South Carolina (Federal Project Number P027507). Specifically, SCPRT agrees to take part in discussions, review documentation, and provide pertinent information related to any areas with 6(f) restrictions of the Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) that may be impacted by this project. In addition, SCPRT will make itself available to provide any tourism or recreation data/ information the agency has that may be beneficial or relevant to the preparation of the EIS.

As the State Liaison Officer for South Carolina, I will serve as the primary contact and representative of SCPRT. We greatly appreciate the opportunity to provide input and look forward to working with you in the development of the EIS. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Justin Hancock  
Director - Recreation, Grants & Policy  
SCPRT  
1205 Pendleton Street, Suite 225  
Columbia, SC 29201  
(803) 734-1747  
jhancock@scprt.com

cc: Mr. Chad Long, SCDOT, Environmental Division Manager  
Mr. David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Mr. Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design-Build NEPA/Permitting Coordinator  
Ms. Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager  
Mr. J. Shane Belcher, Environmental Coordinator, Federal Highway Administration





U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

March 29, 2019

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Mr. Tom McCoy  
Field Supervisor  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
176 Croghan Spur Road, Suite 200  
Charleston, SC 29407

**Subject:** Invitation to Become a Participating Agency for the Preparation of an  
Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry  
Corridor Improvements Project in Charleston County, South Carolina;  
Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Mr. McCoy:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard (see study area map on enclosed project information sheet). The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline. Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it will adhere to the One Federal Decision guidance and tracked on the federal permitting dashboard.

Pursuant to Section 6002 of SAFETEA-LU, as amended by Section 1304 of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, cooperating and participating agencies are responsible for identifying, as early as possible, any issues of concern regarding the project's potential environmental, social, or economic impacts. Section 6002 is intended to assure that agencies are fully engaged in the scoping of the project and the decisions regarding alternatives to be evaluated in detail in the NEPA analysis. In accordance with the SAFETEA-LU Section 6002, FHWA is in the process of identifying local, state, and federal agencies that may have an interest in the project. This same guidance is in the Memorandum of Understanding for Implementing One Federal Decision (issued April 9, 2018), as well as the One Federal Decision Working Agreement.

The FHWA, in coordination with your office has determined that your agency has special expertise regarding threatened and endangered species that may be in the project study area for the project. Since your agency has special expertise in these matters, we are inviting you to become a



Participating Agency in the development of the EIS. Areas of concern to be emphasized in the EIS will include potential environmental impacts upon existing ecological resources, wetlands, water resources, historic and archaeological resources, parks and recreation facilities, noise and air, social and community character, hazardous/contaminated materials, cumulative and indirect impacts, and potential impacts due to project construction.

Your agency's involvement in the proposed project would entail those areas under its jurisdiction or areas of expertise. No direct writing or analysis by your agency will be necessary for this document unless you request to do so. We suggest that your agency's role in the development of the above project should include the following as they relate to your area of expertise:

1. Participate in coordination meetings as appropriate.
2. Consultation on any relevant technical studies that may be required for the project.
3. Timely review and comment on the environment document to reflect the views and concerns of your agency on the adequacy of the document, alternatives considered, and the anticipated impacts and mitigation.

**To become a Participating Agency with the FHWA, please respond to this office in writing with an acceptance or denial of the invitation within 30 days.** If you accept, please identify the appropriate contact person(s) within your organization for coordination. If your agency declines, please provide a written response that states your reason for declining the invitation, such as:

- Has no jurisdiction or authority with respect to the project;
- Has no expertise or information relevant to the project; and
- Does not intend to submit comments on the project.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or each agency's respective roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Ms. Michelle Herrell at 803-765-5460 or by email at [michelle.herrell@dot.gov](mailto:michelle.herrell@dot.gov); or Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by e-mail at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,



Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

Enclosures

cc: Mr. Mark Caldwell, USFWS Regulatory Team Leader  
Mr. Chad Long, SCDOT Environmental Division Manager  
Mr. David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Mr. Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design-Build NEPA/Permitting Coordinator  
Ms. Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager



## United States Department of the Interior

### FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

176 Croghan Spur Road, Suite 200  
Charleston, South Carolina 29407

April 9, 2019



Ms. Emily Lawton  
Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration  
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, SC 29201

Re: Participating Agency Invitation, I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements,  
Charleston County, South Carolina, FWS Log No. 2016-CPA-0062

Dear Ms. Lawton:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has received your letter requesting our involvement as a participating agency for the proposed I-526 corridor improvements in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the improvements is to increase capacity and operation of the I-526/I-26 interchange as well as the I-526 route from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard. Pursuant to executive Order 13807 signed by President Donald Trump on August 15, 2017, this project will adhere to the One Federal Decision guidance and will be tracked on the Federal permitting dashboard.

The Federal Highway Administration and the South Carolina Department of Transportation are initiating an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to address potential impacts the proposed improvements will have upon the surrounding environment. In accordance with Section 6002 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), the Service would be pleased to serve as a "participating agency" in developing the EIS. The Service's participation will be specifically limited to: (1) participating in coordination meetings; (2) consultation on any relevant technical studies that may be required for the project; and (3) provide timely review and comment on the environmental document to reflect the views and concerns of our agency on the adequacy of the document, alternatives considered, and the anticipated impacts and mitigation.

If the Service can be of further assistance to either the South Carolina Department of Transportation or the Federal Highway Administration in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me or the project's point of contact Mr. Mark Caldwell, who may be reached at (843) 727-4707 ext. 215, email: [mark\\_caldwell@fws.gov](mailto:mark_caldwell@fws.gov), and reference FWS Log No. 2016-CPA-0062.

Sincerely,

  
Thomas D. McCoy  
Field Supervisor





U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

March 29, 2019

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Ms. Elizabeth Johnson  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer  
SC Department of Archives and History  
8301 Parklane Road  
Columbia, SC 29223

**Subject:** Invitation to Become a Participating Agency for the Preparation of an  
Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry  
Corridor Improvements Project in Charleston County, South Carolina;  
Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Ms. Johnson:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard (see study area map on enclosed project information sheet). The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline. Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it will adhere to the One Federal Decision guidance and tracked on the federal permitting dashboard.

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The FHWA, in coordination with your office has determined that your agency has special expertise regarding cultural resources that may be in the project study area. Since your agency has special expertise in these matters, we are inviting you to become a Participating Agency in the development of the EIS. Areas of concern to be emphasized in the EIS will include potential

environmental impacts upon existing ecological resources, wetlands, water resources, historic and archaeological resources, parks and recreation facilities, noise and air, social and community character, hazardous/contaminated materials, cumulative and indirect impacts, and potential impacts due to project construction.

Your agency's involvement in the proposed project would entail those areas under its jurisdiction or areas of expertise. No direct writing or analysis by your agency will be necessary for this document unless you request to do so. We suggest that your agency's role in the development of the above project should include the following as they relate to your area of expertise:

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**To become a Participating Agency with the FHWA, please respond to this office in writing with an acceptance or denial of the invitation within 30 days.** If you accept, please identify the appropriate contact person(s) within your organization for coordination. If your agency declines, please provide a written response that states your reason for declining the invitation, such as:

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- Has no expertise or information relevant to the project; and
- Does not intend to submit comments on the project.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or each agency's respective roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Ms. Michelle Herrell at 803-765-5460 or by email at [michelle.herrell@dot.gov](mailto:michelle.herrell@dot.gov); or Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by e-mail at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,



Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

Enclosures

ec: Mr. Joe Wilkinson, SCDAH Transportation Liaison  
Mr. Chad Long, SCDOT Environmental Division Manager  
Mr. David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Mr. Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design-Build NEPA/Permitting Coordinator  
Ms. Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager



April 9, 2019

Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration  
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, SC 29201  
SENT VIA EMAIL

Re: **Invitation to Become Participating Agency for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507 (SHPO Project No. 19-JW0014)**

Dear Ms. Lawton:

Thank you for your letter of March 29, which we received on April 4, regarding the invitation to become a participating agency for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. We also received a copy of the ACE meeting handout with project details.

We accept the invitation to become a participating agency during the preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement for the above referenced project. Our agencies responsibility will be to review compliance with section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, as codified at 36 CFR 800.2(c), and provide federal agencies with advice and assistance to ensure historic properties are taken into consideration at all levels of planning and development.

For future coordination with our office regarding this project, we request that I, Joseph Wilkinson, be considered the primary contact.

If you have any questions about our participation, please contact me at (803) 896-6184, or by email at [jwilkinson@scdah.sc.gov](mailto:jwilkinson@scdah.sc.gov).

Sincerely,

---

Joseph E. Wilkinson  
Review Coordinator for Transportation Projects  
State Historic Preservation Office

cc. Mr. J. Shane Belcher, FHWA



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

March 29, 2019

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Mr. Alvin A. Taylor  
Director, SC Department of Natural Resources  
Attn: Lorianne Riggin  
Rembert C. Dennis Bldg.  
1000 Assembly Street  
Columbia, SC 29201

**Subject:** Invitation to Become a Participating Agency for the Preparation of an  
Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry  
Corridor Improvements Project in Charleston County, South Carolina;  
Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Mr. Taylor:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard (see study area map on enclosed project information sheet). The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline. Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it will adhere to the One Federal Decision guidance and tracked on the federal permitting dashboard.

Pursuant to Section 6002 of SAFETEA-LU, as amended by Section 1304 of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, cooperating and participating agencies are responsible for identifying, as early as possible, any issues of concern regarding the project's potential environmental, social, or economic impacts. Section 6002 is intended to assure that agencies are fully engaged in the scoping of the project and the decisions regarding alternatives to be evaluated in detail in the NEPA analysis. In accordance with the SAFETEA-LU Section 6002, FHWA is in the process of identifying local, state, and federal agencies that may have an interest in the project. This same guidance is in the Memorandum of Understanding for Implementing One Federal Decision (issued April 9, 2018), as well as the One Federal Decision Working Agreement.

The FHWA would like to formally invite you to become a Participating Agency in the development of the EIS. Areas of concern to be emphasized in the EIS will include potential environmental impacts upon existing ecological resources, wetlands, water resources, historic and



archaeological resources, parks and recreation facilities, noise and air, social and community character, hazardous/contaminated materials, cumulative and indirect impacts, and potential impacts due to project construction.

Your agency's involvement in the proposed project would entail those areas under its jurisdiction or area of expertise. No direct writing or analysis by your agency will be necessary for this document unless you request to do so. We suggest that your agency's role in the development of the above project should include the following as they relate to your area of expertise:

1. Participate in coordination meetings as appropriate.
2. Consultation on any relevant technical studies that may be required for the project.
3. Timely review and comment on the environment document to reflect the views and concerns of your agency on the adequacy of the document, alternatives considered, and the anticipated impacts and mitigation.

**To become a Participating Agency with the FHWA, please respond to this office in writing with an acceptance or denial of the invitation within 30 days.** If you accept, please identify the appropriate contact person(s) within your organization for coordination. If your agency declines, please provide a written response that states your reason for declining the invitation, such as:

- Has no jurisdiction or authority with respect to the project;
- Has no expertise or information relevant to the project; and
- Does not intend to submit comments on the project.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or each agency's respective roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Ms. Michelle Herrell at 803-765-5460 or by email at [michelle.herrell@dot.gov](mailto:michelle.herrell@dot.gov); or Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by e-mail at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,



Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

Enclosures

ec: Ms. Lorianne Riggin, SCDNR Director of Environmental Program  
Ms. Susan Davis, SCDNR  
Mr. Chad Long, SCDOT Environmental Division Manager  
Mr. David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Mr. Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design-Build NEPA/Permitting Coordinator  
Ms. Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager

# South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

PO Box 12559  
Charleston, SC 29422  
843.953.9003 Office  
843.953.9399 Fax  
[Daviss@dnr.sc.gov](mailto:Daviss@dnr.sc.gov)



Alvin A. Taylor  
Director  
Lorianne Riffin  
Director, Office of  
Environmental Programs

April 10, 2019

Ms. Michelle Herrell  
Federal Highway Administration  
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, SC 29201

RE: Invitation to Become a Participating Agency for the Preparation of a Draft  
Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor  
Improvements Project, Charleston County, SC; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Ms. Herrell:

Thank you for your invitation to become a participating agency in the preparation of a DEIS for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT). The purpose of this project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/I-526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard. The project will follow One Federal Decision (OFD) in accordance with Executive Order 13807.

As a participating agency, the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) will identify, as early as possible, any issues of concern regarding the project's potential environmental impacts. As decisions are made through the OFD process, SCDNR understands as a participating agency, we will have the ability to concur, abstain, or not concur at each concurrence point.

The SCDNR accepts the invitation to become a participating agency on the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project and looks forward to working with the FHWA and SCDOT in the development of the DEIS. The project leader for SCDNR on this project will be Susan Davis. Susan can be reached by email at [daviss@dnr.sc.gov](mailto:daviss@dnr.sc.gov) or via phone at 843-953-9003.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the review of this project and provide comments. Please feel free to contact me as you deem necessary regarding this project. I can be reached by email at [riffinl@dnr.sc.gov](mailto:riffinl@dnr.sc.gov) or by phone at 803-734-4199.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lorianne Riffin".

Lorianne Riffin  
Director, Office of Environmental Programs

cc: SCDOT, Chad Long, David Kelly & Will McGoldrick  
FHWA, J. Shane Belcher





U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

March 29, 2019

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Mr. Blair Williams  
Critical Area Permitting Section Manager  
SCDHEC-OCRM  
1362 McMillan Ave., Suite 400  
Charleston, SC 29405

**Subject:** Invitation to Become a Participating Agency for the Preparation of an  
Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry  
Corridor Improvements Project in Charleston County, South Carolina;  
Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Mr. Williams:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard (see study area map on enclosed project information sheet). The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline. Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it will adhere to the One Federal Decision guidance and tracked on the federal permitting dashboard.

Pursuant to Section 6002 of SAFETEA-LU, as amended by Section 1304 of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, cooperating and participating agencies are responsible for identifying, as early as possible, any issues of concern regarding the project's potential environmental, social, or economic impacts. Section 6002 is intended to assure that agencies are fully engaged in the scoping of the project and the decisions regarding alternatives to be evaluated in detail in the NEPA analysis. In accordance with the SAFETEA-LU Section 6002, FHWA is in the process of identifying local, state, and federal agencies that may have an interest in the project. This same guidance is in the Memorandum of Understanding for Implementing One Federal Decision (issued April 9, 2018), as well as the One Federal Decision Working Agreement.

The FHWA, in coordination with your office has determined that your agency would need to issue a coastal zone certification and critical area permit for the project. Since your agency has special expertise in these matters, we are inviting you to become a Participating Agency in the development of the EIS. Areas of concern to be emphasized in the EIS will include potential

environmental impacts upon existing ecological resources, wetlands, water resources, historic and archaeological resources, parks and recreation facilities, noise and air, social and community character, hazardous/contaminated materials, cumulative and indirect impacts, and potential impacts due to project construction.

Your agency's involvement in the proposed project would entail those areas under its jurisdiction or areas of expertise. No direct writing or analysis by your agency will be necessary for this document unless you request to do so. We suggest that your agency's role in the development of the above project should include the following as they relate to your area of expertise:

1. Participate in coordination meetings as appropriate.
2. Consultation on any relevant technical studies that may be required for the project.
3. Timely review and comment on the environment document to reflect the views and concerns of your agency on the adequacy of the document, alternatives considered, and the anticipated impacts and mitigation.

**To become a Participating Agency with the FHWA, please respond to this office in writing with an acceptance or denial of the invitation within 30 days.** If you accept, please identify the appropriate contact person(s) within your organization for coordination. If your agency declines, please provide a written response that states your reason for declining the invitation, such as:

- Has no jurisdiction or authority with respect to the project;
- Has no expertise or information relevant to the project; and
- Does not intend to submit comments on the project.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or each agency's respective roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Ms. Michelle Herrell at 803-765-5460 or by email at [michelle.herrell@dot.gov](mailto:michelle.herrell@dot.gov); or Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by e-mail at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,



Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

#### Enclosures

ec: Mr. Chris Stout, SCDHEC-OCRM Coastal Zone Consistency Section Manager  
Mr. Chuck Hightower, SCDHEC Water Quality Permitting & Certification Manager  
Mr. Chad Long, SCDOT Environmental Division Manager  
Mr. David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Mr. Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design-Build NEPA/Permitting Coordinator  
Ms. Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

March 29, 2019

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Mr. Chuck Hightower  
Water Quality Permitting and Certification Manager  
SC Department of Health and Environmental Control  
2600 Bull Street  
Columbia, SC 29201

**Subject:** Invitation to Become a Participating Agency for the Preparation of an  
Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry  
Corridor Improvements Project in Charleston County, South Carolina;  
Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Mr. Hightower:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard (see study area map on enclosed project information sheet). The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline. Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it will adhere to the One Federal Decision guidance and tracked on the federal permitting dashboard.

Pursuant to Section 6002 of SAFETEA-LU, as amended by Section 1304 of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, cooperating and participating agencies are responsible for identifying, as early as possible, any issues of concern regarding the project's potential environmental, social, or economic impacts. Section 6002 is intended to assure that agencies are fully engaged in the scoping of the project and the decisions regarding alternatives to be evaluated in detail in the NEPA analysis. In accordance with the SAFETEA-LU Section 6002, FHWA is in the process of identifying local, state, and federal agencies that may have an interest in the project. This same guidance is in the Memorandum of Understanding for Implementing One Federal Decision (issued April 9, 2018), as well as the One Federal Decision Working Agreement.

The FHWA, in coordination with your office has determined that your agency would need to issue a Section 401 water quality certification for the project. Since your agency has an approval, we would like to formally invite you to become a Participating Agency in the development of the EIS. Areas of concern to be emphasized in the EIS will include potential environmental impacts upon



existing ecological resources, wetlands, water resources, historic and archaeological resources, parks and recreation facilities, noise and air, social and community character, hazardous/contaminated materials, cumulative and indirect impacts, and potential impacts due to project construction.

Your agency's involvement in the proposed project would entail those areas under its jurisdiction or area of expertise. No direct writing or analysis by your agency will be necessary for this document unless you request to do so. We suggest that your agency's role in the development of the above project should include the following as they relate to your area of expertise:

1. Participate in coordination meetings as appropriate.
2. Consultation on any relevant technical studies that may be required for the project.
3. Timely review and comment on the environment document to reflect the views and concerns of your agency on the adequacy of the document, alternatives considered, and the anticipated impacts and mitigation.

**To become a Participating Agency with the FHWA, please respond to this office in writing with an acceptance or denial of the invitation within 30 days.** If you accept, please identify the appropriate contact person(s) within your organization for coordination. If your agency declines, please provide a written response that states your reason for declining the invitation, such as:

- Has no jurisdiction or authority with respect to the project;
- Has no expertise or information relevant to the project; and
- Does not intend to submit comments on the project.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or each agency's respective roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Ms. Michelle Herrell at 803-765-5460 or by email at [michelle.herrell@dot.gov](mailto:michelle.herrell@dot.gov); or Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by e-mail at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,



Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

#### Enclosures

ec: Mr. Blair Williams, SCDHEC-OCRM Critical Area Permitting Section Manager  
Mr. Chris Stout, SCDHEC-OCRM Coastal Zone Consistency Section Manager  
Mr. Chad Long, SCDOT Environmental Division Manager  
Mr. David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Mr. Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design-Build NEPA/Permitting Coordinator  
Ms. Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager



RECEIVED  
Federal Highway Administration

JUN 12 2019

Division Office  
Columbia S.C.

June 04, 2019

Ms. Emily O. Lawton  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration  
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Re: Invitation to Become a Participating Agency for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Ms. Lawton:

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) is in receipt of your invitation to become a participating agency for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement for the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase the capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard. In addition, the Ashely River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline.

DHEC accepts the invitation to become involved in the proposed project as a participating agency and agrees to the suggested roles as related to the agency's area of expertise including:

1. Participating in coordination meetings as appropriate
2. Consulting on any relevant technical studies that may be required for the project
3. Providing timely reviews and comments on the environmental document to reflect the views and concerns of our agency on the adequacy of the document, alternative considered, and the anticipated impacts and mitigation

DHEC anticipates involvement of staff from the Water Quality Certification and Wetland Section within the Bureau of Water and staff from DHEC's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management's Coastal Zone Consistency Certification Section and Critical Area Permitting Section. Chuck Hightower will be the point of contact for the Water Quality Certification and Wetland Section (803-898-0369; [hightocw@dhec.sc.gov](mailto:hightocw@dhec.sc.gov)), Chris Stout will be the point of contact for the Coastal Zone Consistency Section (843-953-0691; [stoutcm@dhec.sc.gov](mailto:stoutcm@dhec.sc.gov)), and Blair Williams will be the point of contact for the Critical Area Permitting Section (843-953-0232; [williabn@dhec.sc.gov](mailto:williabn@dhec.sc.gov)).

DHEC looks forward to working with the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration and the other involved participating agencies.

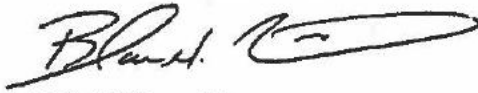
RECEIVED  
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION  
Sincerely,



Chuck Hightower, Manager  
Water Quality Certification and Wetland Section  
Bureau of Water



Chris Stout, Manager  
Coastal Zone Consistency Section  
Ocean and Coastal Resource Management



Blair Williams, Manager  
Critical Area Permitting Section  
Ocean and Coastal Resource Management

Enclosures

cc: Mr. J. Shane Belcher, USFHA Environmental Coordinator  
Mr. Chang Long, SCDOT Environmental Division Manager  
Mr. David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Mr. Will McGoldrick, SCOT Design-Build NEPA/Permitting Coordinator  
Ms. Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

March 29, 2019

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Mr. Pace Wilber  
South Atlantic Branch Supervisor  
NOAA Fisheries  
331 Fort Johnson Road  
Charleston, SC 29412

**Subject:** Invitation to Become a Participating Agency for the Preparation of an  
Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry  
Corridor Improvements Project in Charleston County, South Carolina;  
Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Mr. Wilber:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard (see study area map on enclosed project information sheet). The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline. Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it will adhere to the One Federal Decision guidance and tracked on the federal permitting dashboard.

Pursuant to Section 6002 of SAFETEA-LU, as amended by Section 1304 of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, cooperating and participating agencies are responsible for identifying, as early as possible, any issues of concern regarding the project's potential environmental, social, or economic impacts. Section 6002 is intended to assure that agencies are fully engaged in the scoping of the project and the decisions regarding alternatives to be evaluated in detail in the NEPA analysis. In accordance with the SAFETEA-LU Section 6002, FHWA is in the process of identifying local, state, and federal agencies that may have an interest in the project. This same guidance is in the Memorandum of Understanding for Implementing One Federal Decision (issued April 9, 2018), as well as the One Federal Decision Working Agreement.

The FHWA, in coordination with your office has determined that your agency has special expertise regarding essential fish habitat that may be in the project study area for the project. Since your agency has special expertise in these matters, we are inviting you to become a Participating Agency in the development of the EIS. Areas of concern to be emphasized in the EIS will include potential



environmental impacts upon existing ecological resources, wetlands, water resources, historic and archaeological resources, parks and recreation facilities, noise and air, social and community character, hazardous/contaminated materials, cumulative and indirect impacts, and potential impacts due to project construction.

Your agency's involvement in the proposed project would entail those areas under its jurisdiction or area of expertise. No direct writing or analysis by your agency will be necessary for this document unless you request to do so. We suggest that your agency's role in the development of the above project should include the following as they relate to your area of expertise:

1. Participate in coordination meetings as appropriate.
2. Consultation on any relevant technical studies that may be required for the project.
3. Timely review and comment on the environment document to reflect the views and concerns of your agency on the adequacy of the document, alternatives considered, and the anticipated impacts and mitigation.

**To become a Participating Agency with the FHWA, please respond to this office in writing with an acceptance or denial of the invitation within 30 days.** If you accept, please identify the appropriate contact person(s) within your organization for coordination. If your agency declines, please provide a written response that states your reason for declining the invitation, such as:

- Has no jurisdiction or authority with respect to the project;
- Has no expertise or information relevant to the project; and
- Does not intend to submit comments on the project.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or each agency's respective roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Ms. Michelle Herrell at 803-765-5460 or by email at [michelle.herrell@dot.gov](mailto:michelle.herrell@dot.gov); or Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by e-mail at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,



Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

#### Enclosures

ec: Ms. Cynthia Cooksey, NOAA Fisheries  
Mr. Chad Long, SCDOT Environmental Division Manager  
Mr. David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Mr. Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design-Build NEPA/Permitting Coordinator  
Ms. Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager





U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

March 29, 2019

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Dr. Roy E. Crabtree  
Regional Administrator SE Regional Office  
NOAA Fisheries  
Attn: Kelly Shotts  
263 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South  
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

**Subject:** Invitation to Become a Participating Agency for the Preparation of an  
Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry  
Corridor Improvements Project in Charleston County, South Carolina;  
Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Dr. Crabtree:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard (see study area map on enclosed project information sheet). The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline. Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it will adhere to the One Federal Decision guidance and tracked on the federal permitting dashboard.

Pursuant to Section 6002 of SAFETEA-LU, as amended by Section 1304 of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, cooperating and participating agencies are responsible for identifying, as early as possible, any issues of concern regarding the project's potential environmental, social, or economic impacts. Section 6002 is intended to assure that agencies are fully engaged in the scoping of the project and the decisions regarding alternatives to be evaluated in detail in the NEPA analysis. In accordance with the SAFETEA-LU Section 6002, FHWA is in the process of identifying local, state, and federal agencies that may have an interest in the project. This same guidance is in the Memorandum of Understanding for Implementing One Federal Decision (issued April 9, 2018), as well as the One Federal Decision Working Agreement.

The FHWA, in coordination with your office has determined that your agency has special expertise regarding threatened and endangered species that may be in the project study area for the project. Since your agency has special expertise in these matters, we are inviting you to become a

Participating Agency in the development of the EIS. Areas of concern to be emphasized in the EIS will include potential environmental impacts upon existing ecological resources, wetlands, water resources, historic and archaeological resources, parks and recreation facilities, noise and air, social and community character, hazardous/contaminated materials, cumulative and indirect impacts, and potential impacts due to project construction.

Your agency's involvement in the proposed project would entail those areas under its jurisdiction or area of expertise. No direct writing or analysis by your agency will be necessary for this document unless you request to do so. We suggest that your agency's role in the development of the above project should include the following as they relate to your area of expertise:

1. Participate in coordination meetings as appropriate.
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**To become a Participating Agency with the FHWA, please respond to this office in writing with an acceptance or denial of the invitation within 30 days.** If you accept, please identify the appropriate contact person(s) within your organization for coordination. If your agency declines, please provide a written response that states your reason for declining the invitation, such as:

- Has no jurisdiction or authority with respect to the project;
- Has no expertise or information relevant to the project; and
- Does not intend to submit comments on the project.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or each agency's respective roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Ms. Michelle Herrell at 803-765-5460 or by email at [michelle.herrell@dot.gov](mailto:michelle.herrell@dot.gov); or Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by e-mail at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,



Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

Enclosures

ec: Ms. Kelly Shotts, NOAA Fisheries  
Mr. Chad Long, SCDOT Environmental Division Manager  
Mr. David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Mr. Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design-Build NEPA/Permitting Coordinator  
Ms. Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

**NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE**

Southeast Regional Office

263 13th Avenue South

St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505

<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>

04/26/2019

F:SER/NS

Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator  
US Dept of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration  
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Attention: Michelle Herrell, and Shane Belcher

Dear Ms. Lawton:

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has received your letter dated April 02, 2019, requesting our participation as a participating agency on the 1-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements project, pursuant to section 6002 of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act. Given our special expertise and jurisdiction by law under the Endangered Species Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, and Magnuson Stevens Act, NMFS agrees to serve as a participating agency for this project. Due to staffing and travel constraints, our participation may be limited to our review and comment on draft National Environmental Policy Act documents, teleconferences, and occasional travel to meetings.

We appreciate your invitation to serve as a participating agency for the 1-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements project. Please direct project correspondence related to habitat impacts and/or Essential Fish Habitat consultation to Cynthia Cooksey at 219 Fort Johnson Rd., Charleston, SC 29412; by telephone at (843) 460-9922, or by e-mail at [cynthia.cooksey@noaa.gov](mailto:cynthia.cooksey@noaa.gov). Please direct project correspondence related to sturgeon and/or Endangered Species Act coordination to Andy Herndon, at the letterhead address; by telephone (727) 824-5312, or by email at [Andrew.herndon@noaa.gov](mailto:Andrew.herndon@noaa.gov). Please direct project correspondence related to dolphins and/or the Marine Mammal Protection Act to Jaclyn Daly, 1315 East-West Hwy, Silver Spring, MD 20910; by telephone at (301) 427-8438, or by email at [Jaclyn.daly@noaa.gov](mailto:Jaclyn.daly@noaa.gov).

Sincerely,

CRABTREE.ROY. Digitally signed by  
E.DR.1365849559 559  
Date: 2019.04.26 12:53:07 -04'00'

Roy E. Crabtree, Ph.D.  
Regional Administrator





**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

**NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE**

Southeast Regional Office

263 13th Avenue South

St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505

<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>

cc:

GCERC, Renshaw, Lipsy

F/SER, Strelcheck, Blough, Silverman,

F/SER3, Bernhart,

F/SER4, Fay, Dale

F/SER45, Wilber, Cooksey







U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

March 29, 2019

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Ms. Corain Lowe-Zepeda  
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer  
Muscogee (Creek) Nation of OK  
1008 East Eufaula Street  
Okmulgee, OK 74447

**Subject:** Invitation to Become a Participating Agency for the Preparation of an  
Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry  
Corridor Improvements Project in Charleston County, South Carolina;  
Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Ms. Lowe-Zepeda:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard (see study area map on enclosed project information sheet). The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline. Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it will adhere to the One Federal Decision guidance and tracked on the federal permitting dashboard.

Pursuant to Section 6002 of SAFETEA-LU, as amended by Section 1304 of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, cooperating and participating agencies are responsible for identifying, as early as possible, any issues of concern regarding the project's potential environmental, social, or economic impacts. Section 6002 is intended to assure that agencies are fully engaged in the scoping of the project and the decisions regarding alternatives to be evaluated in detail in the NEPA analysis. In accordance with the SAFETEA-LU Section 6002, FHWA is in the process of identifying local, state, and federal agencies that may have an interest in the project. This same guidance is in the Memorandum of Understanding for Implementing One Federal Decision (issued April 9, 2018), as well as the One Federal Decision Working Agreement.

The FHWA would like to take this opportunity to formally invite you to become a Participating Agency in the development of the EIS. Areas of concern to be emphasized in the EIS will include potential environmental impacts upon existing ecological resources, wetlands, water resources,

historic and archaeological resources, parks and recreation facilities, noise and air, social and community character, hazardous/contaminated materials, cumulative and indirect impacts, and potential impacts due to project construction.

Your involvement in the proposed project would entail those areas under its jurisdiction or area of expertise. No direct writing or analysis by your agency will be necessary for this document unless you request to do so. We suggest that your agency's role in the development of the above project should include the following as they relate to your area of expertise:

1. Participate in coordination meetings as appropriate.
2. Consultation on any relevant technical studies that may be required for the project.
3. Timely review and comment on the environment document to reflect the views and concerns of your agency on the adequacy of the document, alternatives considered, and the anticipated impacts and mitigation.

**To become a Participating Agency with the FHWA, please respond to this office in writing with an acceptance or denial of the invitation within 30 days.** If you accept, please identify the appropriate contact person(s) within your organization for coordination. If your agency declines, please provide a written response that states your reason for declining the invitation, such as:

- Has no jurisdiction or authority with respect to the project;
- Has no expertise or information relevant to the project; and
- Does not intend to submit comments on the project.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or each agency's respective roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Ms. Michelle Herrell at 803-765-5460 or by email at [michelle.herrell@dot.gov](mailto:michelle.herrell@dot.gov); or Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by e-mail at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,



Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

Enclosures

ec: Ms. LeeAnne Wendt, Muscogee (Creek) Nation  
Mr. Chad Long, SCDOT Environmental Division Manager  
Mr. David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Mr. Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design-Build NEPA/Permitting Coordinator  
Ms. Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

March 29, 2019

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Mr. Chris Militscher  
Chief, NEPA Program Office  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
61 Forsyth Street, SW 9T25  
Atlanta, GA 30303-8960

**Subject:** Invitation to Become a Participating Agency for the Preparation of an  
Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry  
Corridor Improvements Project in Charleston County, South Carolina;  
Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Mr. Militscher:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard (see study area map on enclosed project information sheet). The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline. Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it will adhere to the One Federal Decision guidance and tracked on the federal permitting dashboard.

Pursuant to Section 6002 of SAFETEA-LU, as amended by Section 1304 of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, cooperating and participating agencies are responsible for identifying, as early as possible, any issues of concern regarding the project's potential environmental, social, or economic impacts. Section 6002 is intended to assure that agencies are fully engaged in the scoping of the project and the decisions regarding alternatives to be evaluated in detail in the NEPA analysis. In accordance with the SAFETEA-LU Section 6002, FHWA is in the process of identifying local, state, and federal agencies that may have an interest in the project. This same guidance is in the Memorandum of Understanding for Implementing One Federal Decision (issued April 9, 2018), as well as the One Federal Decision Working Agreement.

The FHWA is inviting you to become a Participating Agency in the development of the EIS. Areas of concern to be emphasized in the EIS will include potential environmental impacts upon existing ecological resources, wetlands, water resources, historic and archaeological resources, parks and



recreation facilities, noise and air, social and community character, hazardous/contaminated materials, cumulative and indirect impacts, and potential impacts due to project construction.

Your agency's involvement in the proposed project would entail those areas under its jurisdiction or area of expertise. No direct writing or analysis by your agency will be necessary for this document unless you request to do so. We suggest that your agency's role in the development of the above project should include the following as they relate to your area of expertise:

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2. Consultation on any relevant technical studies that may be required for the project.
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**To become a Participating Agency with the FHWA, please respond to this office in writing with an acceptance or denial of the invitation within 30 days.** If you accept, please identify the appropriate contact person(s) within your organization for coordination. If your agency declines, please provide a written response that states your reason for declining the invitation, such as:

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- Has no expertise or information relevant to the project; and
- Does not intend to submit comments on the project.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or each agency's respective roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Ms. Michelle Herrell at 803-765-5460 or by email at [michelle.herrell@dot.gov](mailto:michelle.herrell@dot.gov); or Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by e-mail at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,



Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

#### Enclosures

ec: Ms. Alya Singh-White, U.S. EPA  
Mr. Kelly Laycock, U.S. EPA  
Mr. Chad Long, SCDOT Environmental Division Manager  
Mr. David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Mr. Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design-Build NEPA/Permitting Coordinator  
Ms. Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager



**From:** [Riley, Joy S.](#)  
**To:** [Heather Robbins](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Participating Agency - I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvement Project  
**Date:** Monday, May 20, 2019 10:08:26 AM

---

Joy Riley  
SCDOT Lowcountry RPG  
Sent from my iPhone

Safety 1st - Live by it!  
Let 'em Work, Let 'em Live!

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Herrell, Michelle (FHWA)" <[michelle.herrell@dot.gov](mailto:michelle.herrell@dot.gov)>  
**Date:** May 6, 2019 at 1:47:21 PM EDT  
**To:** "Long, Chad C." <[LongCC@scdot.org](mailto:LongCC@scdot.org)>, "Kelly, David P." <[KellyDP@scdot.org](mailto:KellyDP@scdot.org)>, "McGoldrick, Will" <[McGoldriWR@scdot.org](mailto:McGoldriWR@scdot.org)>  
**Cc:** "Riley, Joy S." <[RileyJ@scdot.org](mailto:RileyJ@scdot.org)>, "Belcher, Jeffrey (FHWA)" <[Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov)>  
**Subject:** FW: Participating Agency - I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvement Project

\*\*\* This is an EXTERNAL email. Please do not click on a link or open any attachments unless you are confident it is from a trusted source. \*\*\*

FYI

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**From:** Singh-White, Alya [<mailto:Singh-White.Alya@epa.gov>]  
**Sent:** Monday, May 06, 2019 1:41 PM  
**To:** Herrell, Michelle (FHWA) <[michelle.herrell@dot.gov](mailto:michelle.herrell@dot.gov)>  
**Cc:** Militscher, Chris <[Militscher.Chris@epa.gov](mailto:Militscher.Chris@epa.gov)>  
**Subject:** Participating Agency - I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvement Project

Dear Michelle,  
It is understood that SCDOT, in conjunction with FHWA, is in the process of developing an EIS for the proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvement Project in Charleston, SC. The EPA is willing to be a participating agency on this project. I look forward to working with you moving forward.

Sincerely,

Alya Singh-White  
Life Scientist / Biologist

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Section  
Strategic Programs Office  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency | Region 4  
61 Forsyth St SW  
Atlanta, GA 30303  
(404)-562-9339 | [singh-white.alya@epa.gov](mailto:singh-white.alya@epa.gov)





U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

March 29, 2019

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Mr. Brett Barnes  
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer  
Eastern Shawnee Tribe of OK  
127 W. Oneida St.  
Seneca, MO 64865

**Subject:** Invitation to Become a Participating Agency for the Preparation of an  
Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry  
Corridor Improvements Project in Charleston County, South Carolina;  
Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Mr. Barnes:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard (see study area map on enclosed project information sheet). The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline. Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it will adhere to the One Federal Decision guidance and tracked on the federal permitting dashboard.

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The FHWA would like to take this opportunity to formally invite you to become a Participating Agency in the development of the EIS. Areas of concern to be emphasized in the EIS will include potential environmental impacts upon existing ecological resources, wetlands, water resources,

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- Does not intend to submit comments on the project.

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Sincerely,



Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

#### Enclosures

ec: Mr. Chad Long, SCDOT Environmental Division Manager  
Mr. David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Mr. Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design-Build NEPA/Permitting Coordinator  
Ms. Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

March 29, 2019

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Ms. Wenonah Haire  
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer  
Catawba Indian Nation  
1536 Tom Steven Road  
Rock Hill, SC 29730

**Subject:** Invitation to Become a Participating Agency for the Preparation of an  
Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry  
Corridor Improvements Project in Charleston County, South Carolina;  
Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Ms. Haire:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard (see study area map on enclosed project information sheet). The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline. Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it will adhere to the One Federal Decision guidance and tracked on the federal permitting dashboard.

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The FHWA would like to take this opportunity to formally invite you to become a Participating Agency in the development of the EIS. Areas of concern to be emphasized in the EIS will include potential environmental impacts upon existing ecological resources, wetlands, water resources,



historic and archaeological resources, parks and recreation facilities, noise and air, social and community character, hazardous/contaminated materials, cumulative and indirect impacts, and potential impacts due to project construction.

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**To become a Participating Agency with the FHWA, please respond to this office in writing with an acceptance or denial of the invitation within 30 days.** If you accept, please identify the appropriate contact person(s) within your organization for coordination. If your agency declines, please provide a written response that states your reason for declining the invitation, such as:

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- Has no expertise or information relevant to the project; and
- Does not intend to submit comments on the project.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or each agency's respective roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Ms. Michelle Herrell at 803-765-5460 or by email at [michelle.herrell@dot.gov](mailto:michelle.herrell@dot.gov); or Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by e-mail at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,



Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

#### Enclosures

cc: Ms. Caitlin Totherow, Catawba Indian Nation  
Mr. Chad Long, SCDOT Environmental Division Manager  
Mr. David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Mr. Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design-Build NEPA/Permitting Coordinator  
Ms. Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager

**From:** [Belcher, Jeffrey \(FHWA\)](#)  
**To:** [Kelly, David P. \(KellyDP@scdot.org\)](#); [Herrell, Michelle \(FHWA\)](#)  
**Cc:** [Heather Robbins](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Consulting Party for I-526 West and US 278  
**Date:** Monday, May 6, 2019 7:18:35 AM

---

For your files. Since the Catawba Indian Nation did not provide a letter please keep this e-mail for your official record for both projects.

Thanks,

*J. Shane Belcher*

*Environmental Coordinator*

*Federal Highway Administration*

*1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270*

*Columbia, SC 29201*

*Phone: 803-253-3187*

*Fax: 803-253-3989*

**From:** Caitlin Rogers [mailto:caitlinh@ccppcrafts.com]

**Sent:** Friday, May 03, 2019 2:35 PM

**To:** Belcher, Jeffrey (FHWA) <Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov>

**Subject:** Consulting Party

Mr. Belcher,

The Catawba wish to be a consulting party for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements and the Proposed US 278 Corridor Improvements. If you need anything else from us let me know. Thanks

Caitlin

--

Caitlin Rogers

Catawba Indian Nation

Tribal Historic Preservation Office

1536 Tom Steven Road

Rock Hill, SC 29730

803-328-2427 ext. 226

[Caitlinh@ccppcrafts.com](mailto:Caitlinh@ccppcrafts.com)

**\*Please Note: We CANNOT accept Section 106 forms via e-mail, unless requested. Please send us hard copies. Thank you for your understanding\***



**From:** [McGoldrick, Will](#)  
**To:** [Heather Robbins](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Agency Concurrence Points on I-526 West Project USACE  
**Date:** Thursday, May 30, 2019 1:13:14 PM  
**Attachments:** [I-526 WEST - Draft Agency Coordination Plan with Permitting Timetable an....pdf](#)  
[I-526 ACE Meeting Handout 03012019.pdf](#)  
[USACE I-526 W. Concurrence Letter P&N-Coord Plan-Timetable.pdf](#)

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**From:** Herrell, Michelle (FHWA) [mailto:michelle.herrell@dot.gov]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 30, 2019 1:12 PM  
**To:** Heath, Amanda L CIV USARMY CESAC (US); Mims, Christopher D CIV USARMY CESAC (US)  
**Cc:** Long, Chad C.; Riley, Joy S.; Belcher, Jeffery - FHWA; McGoldrick, Will; Kelly, David P.  
**Subject:** Agency Concurrence Points on I-526 West Project USACE

\*\*\* This is an EXTERNAL email. Please do not click on a link or open any attachments unless you are confident it is from a trusted source. \*\*\*

Hi Amanda,

Attached is a letter requesting agency concurrence on the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor West project on the agency coordination plan, permitting timetable, and the purpose and need statement. The most updated agency coordination plan (with dispute resolution process) and permitting timetable are attached for your review. The purpose statement has stayed the same that is in the attached I-526 ACE meeting handout:

*The purpose of this project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/I-526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard. The need for this project was identified in several different documents. The I-526/I-26 interchange is listed as the #2 project in the 2035 CHATS Long Range Transportation Plan Ranked List of Candidate Transportation Projects, the #6 project on SCDOT's ACT 114 Interstate Capacity List, and it is listed in SCDOT's State Transportation Improvement Plan 2017-2022. Congestion was detailed in SCDOT's Corridor Analysis for I-526 Between North Charleston and West Ashley, and in the Interstate Plan portion of SCDOT's 2014 Multimodal Transportation Plan, where four segments within this project corridor are listed in the top 20 most congested Interstate segments.*

If you have any questions about this information or concurrence, please feel free to contact me, Shane Belcher, Chad Long, or Will McGoldrick.

Note, if we don't receive any comments/concerns by June 7 from the agencies, we will be canceling the June 12<sup>th</sup> monthly agency call for this project.

Thanks,

Michelle Herrell  
Environmental Protection Specialist  
Federal Highway Administration | South Carolina Division Office  
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270 | Columbia, SC 29201

P: (803) 765-5460 | F: (803) 253-3787  
[michelle.herrell@dot.gov](mailto:michelle.herrell@dot.gov)



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

May 30, 2019

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Ms. Amanda Heath  
Chief, Special Projects Branch  
Charleston District  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
ATTN: Mr. Christopher Mims  
69A Hagood Avenue  
Charleston, SC 29403

Subject: Request for Concurrence on Agency Coordination Plan, Purpose & Need Statement, and Permitting Timetable for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Ms. Heath:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), plans to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard. The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline.

Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it will adhere to the One Federal Decision guidance and tracked on the federal permitting dashboard. Based on the One Federal Decision Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) issued April 9, 2018, we are asking for written concurrence on the following three enclosed documents:

1. Agency Coordination Plan (ACP)
2. Purpose & Need Statement
3. Permitting Timetable

While Cooperating Agencies are the only agencies required to concur or not concur, we are also extending the opportunity to Participating Agencies. Participating agencies can either concur, not concur, or abstain.

These documents were previously provided to you on March 1, 2019. In addition, this information was discussed at the Agency Coordination Effort (ACE) meeting on March 14, 2019, and at the

subsequent monthly agency meeting held on April 23, 2019. Per the One Federal Decision MOU, we want to ensure that your agency's needs are being met and to continue coordination throughout the project development and NEPA process to ensure that you have the information your agency needs to make comments on the EIS. **Please provide your written concurrence to this office within 30 days.** If you would like to discuss these items in more detail prior to the deadline, please let us know by Friday, June 7, 2019, and we will hold the June 12, 2019 monthly agency meeting for that discussion. If no discussions are needed, the June 12, 2019 meeting will not be held. All agencies will be notified regarding the status of the June meeting.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or your agency's roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Ms. Michelle Herrell at 803-765-5460 or by email at [michelle.herrell@dot.gov](mailto:michelle.herrell@dot.gov) or Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by email at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,

**MICHELLE**  
**L HERRELL**

Digitally signed by  
MICHELLE L HERRELL  
Date: 2019.05.30  
09:32:38 -04'00'

(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

Enclosures

ec: Christopher Mims, USACE Charleston District  
Chad Long, SCDOT Director of Environmental Services  
Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager  
David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design Build Environmental Coordinator

**From:** [Kelly, David P.](#)  
**To:** [Heather Robbins](#)  
**Cc:** [Long, Chad C.](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Agency Concurrence Points on I-526 West Project USACE  
**Date:** Friday, June 7, 2019 9:53:55 AM  
**Attachments:** [Lowcountry Corridor West P&N Concurrence.pdf](#)

---

FYI--see attachment. This didn't go through to you first time.

-----Original Message-----

From: Herrell, Michelle (FHWA) [<mailto:michelle.herrell@dot.gov>]  
Sent: Friday, June 07, 2019 9:39 AM  
To: Kelly, David P.; McGoldrick, Will; Long, Chad C.  
Subject: Agency Concurrence Points on I-526 West Project USACE

\*\*\* This is an EXTERNAL email. Please do not click on a link or open any attachments unless you are confident it is from a trusted source. \*\*\*

I took the & out of the subject line, maybe it'll get through your spam block over there

-----Original Message-----

From: Heath, Amanda L CIV USARMY CESAC (USA) [<mailto:Amanda.L.Heath@usace.army.mil>]  
Sent: Friday, June 07, 2019 8:12 AM  
To: Herrell, Michelle (FHWA) <michelle.herrell@dot.gov>  
Cc: Long, Chad C. <LongCC@scdot.org>; Mims, Christopher D CIV USARMY CESAC (US) <Christopher.D.Mims@usace.army.mil>  
Subject: Agency Concurrence Points on I-526 West Project USACE (P&N)

Ms. Herrell,

Please see the letter concerning the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District's concurrence on the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor West project on the agency coordination plan, permitting timetable, and the purpose and need statement. Please note that we would like to confirm that the Federal Highways Administration will lead the consultations for the Endangered Species Act, Essential Fish Habitat, and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act concurrent with the NEPA process to ensure the timeliness of our respective records of decision.

If you would like to have further discussion about this letter, please feel free to contact me or Mr. Christopher Mims.

Thank you,

Amanda L. Heath  
Chief, Special Projects Branch  
Regulatory Division  
Charleston District  
843-329-8025



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, CHARLESTON DISTRICT  
69A HAGOOD AVENUE  
CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA 29403-5107

7 June 2019

Regulatory Division

U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Highways Administration  
Attn: Ms. Michelle L. Herrell  
1835 Assembly Street Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Re: Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements, Charleston County, South Carolina, Federal Project Number P027507, DA#: SAC-2019-00593

Dear Ms. Herrell:

This letter constitutes the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District's (Corps) response to the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) electronically mailed request dated May 30, 2019, for concurrence with the purpose and need statement for the above referenced project. Additionally you requested concurrence on the draft Agency Coordination Plan, and the draft permitting timetable. The Memorandum of Understanding Implementing One Federal Decision under Executive Order 13807 (MOU) establishes concurrence points for the lead agency, in this case FHWA, to request written concurrence from the cooperating agencies whose authorizations are required for the project. The first concurrence point is the purpose and need statement (statement) to be used in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Per the MOU, the cooperating agency will "either confirm its concurrence or inform the lead agency that it cannot yet concur."

We appreciate the opportunity to review these important project elements. The Corps concurs with the following documents:

1. Agency Coordination Plan (ACP)
2. Purpose and Need Statement
3. Permitting Timetable

We note that while the draft permitting time table addresses the NEPA process, it does not include timelines for other required consultations, such as Endangered Species Act, Essential Fish Habitat, and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Each of the Federal cooperating agencies relies on these consultations to complete their respective records of decision. On this basis, we would like to discuss and confirm that the FHWA will lead these consultations concurrent with the NEPA process to facilitate our respective records of decision.

We remain committed to working with your staff in our role as a cooperating agency so that we may successfully fulfill our responsibilities under both NEPA and the Clean



Water Act. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Mr. Christopher D. Mims. He can be reached at (843) 329-8154 or christopher.d.mims@usace.army.mil.

Respectfully,



2019.06.07

07:47:35 -04'00'

Amanda L. Heath  
Chief, Special Projects Branch

Copy Furnished:

South Carolina Department of Transportation  
Attn: Mr. Chad Long  
Post Office Box 191  
Columbia, South Carolina 29202-0191

**From:** [McGoldrick, Will](#)  
**To:** [Heather Robbins](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Agency Concurrence Points on I-526 West Project USCG  
**Date:** Thursday, May 30, 2019 6:06:07 PM  
**Attachments:** [I-526 WEST - Draft Agency Coordination Plan with Permitting Timetable an....pdf](#)  
[ATT00001.htm](#)  
[I-526 ACE Meeting Handout 03012019.pdf](#)  
[ATT00002.htm](#)  
[USCG I-526 W. Concurrence Letter P&N-Coord Plan-Timetable.pdf](#)  
[ATT00003.htm](#)

---

Will McGoldrick | DB Env. Coordinator  
SCDOT Environmental Services Office  
Mobile Reply

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Herrell, Michelle (FHWA)" <[michelle.herrell@dot.gov](mailto:michelle.herrell@dot.gov)>  
**To:** "Overton, Randall D CIV" <[Randall.D.Overton@uscg.mil](mailto:Randall.D.Overton@uscg.mil)>  
**Cc:** "Belcher, Jeffery - FHWA" <[Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov)>, "Long, Chad C." <[LongCC@scdot.org](mailto:LongCC@scdot.org)>, "Riley, Joy S." <[RileyJ@scdot.org](mailto:RileyJ@scdot.org)>, "McGoldrick, Will" <[McGoldriWR@scdot.org](mailto:McGoldriWR@scdot.org)>, "Kelly, David P." <[KellyDP@scdot.org](mailto:KellyDP@scdot.org)>  
**Subject:** Agency Concurrence Points on I-526 West Project USCG

\*\*\* This is an EXTERNAL email. Please do not click on a link or open any attachments unless you are confident it is from a trusted source. \*\*\*

Hi Randall,

Attached is a letter requesting agency concurrence on the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor West project on the agency coordination plan, permitting timetable, and the purpose and need statement. The most updated agency coordination plan (with dispute resolution process) and permitting timetable are attached for your review. The purpose statement has stayed the same that is in the attached I-526 ACE meeting handout:

*The purpose of this project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/I-526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard. The need for this project was identified in several different documents. The I-526/I-26 interchange is listed as the #2 project in the 2035 CHATS Long Range Transportation Plan Ranked List of Candidate Transportation Projects, the #6 project on SCDOT's ACT 114 Interstate Capacity List, and it is listed in SCDOT's State Transportation Improvement Plan 2017-2022. Congestion was detailed in SCDOT's Corridor Analysis for I-526 Between North Charleston and West Ashley, and in the Interstate Plan portion of SCDOT's 2014 Multimodal Transportation Plan, where four segments within this project*

*corridor are listed in the top 20 most congested Interstate segments.*

If you have any questions about this information or concurrence, please feel free to contact me, Shane Belcher, Chad Long, or Will McGoldrick.

Note, if we don't receive any comments/concerns by June 7 from the agencies, we will be canceling the June 12<sup>th</sup> monthly agency call for this project.

Thanks,

Michelle Herrell  
Environmental Protection Specialist  
Federal Highway Administration | South Carolina Division Office  
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270 | Columbia, SC 29201  
P: (803) 765-5460 | F: (803) 253-3787  
[michelle.herrell@dot.gov](mailto:michelle.herrell@dot.gov)



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

May 30, 2019

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Mr. Randall D. Overton  
Chief, Permits Division  
U.S. Coast Guard, District 7  
909 SE 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Suite 432  
Miami, FL 33131

Subject: Request for Concurrence on Agency Coordination Plan, Purpose & Need Statement, and Permitting Timetable for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Mr. Overton:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), plans to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard. The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline.

Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it will adhere to the One Federal Decision guidance and tracked on the federal permitting dashboard. Based on the One Federal Decision Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) issued April 9, 2018, we are asking for written concurrence on the following three enclosed documents:

1. Agency Coordination Plan (ACP)
2. Purpose & Need Statement
3. Permitting Timetable

While Cooperating Agencies are the only agencies required to concur or not concur, we are also extending the opportunity to Participating Agencies. Participating agencies can either concur, not concur, or abstain.

These documents were previously provided to you on March 1, 2019. In addition, this information was discussed at the Agency Coordination Effort (ACE) meeting on March 14, 2019, and at the subsequent monthly agency meeting held on April 23, 2019. Per the One Federal Decision MOU, we want to ensure that your agency's needs are being met and to continue coordination throughout

the project development and NEPA process to ensure that you have the information your agency needs to make comments on the EIS. **Please provide your written concurrence to this office within 30 days.** If you would like to discuss these items in more detail prior to the deadline, please let us know by Friday, June 7, 2019, and we will hold the June 12, 2019 monthly agency meeting for that discussion. If no discussions are needed, the June 12, 2019 meeting will not be held. All agencies will be notified regarding the status of the June meeting.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or your agency's roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Ms. Michelle Herrell at 803-765-5460 or by email at [michelle.herrell@dot.gov](mailto:michelle.herrell@dot.gov) or Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by email at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,

**MICHELLE  
L HERRELL** Digitally signed by  
MICHELLE L HERRELL  
Date: 2019.05.30  
09:33:30 -04'00'

(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

Enclosures

cc: Chad Long, SCDOT Director of Environmental Services  
Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager  
David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design Build Environmental Coordinator

**From:** [Kelly, David P.](#)  
**To:** [Heather Robbins](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Agency Concurrence Points on I-526 West Project USCG (One Federal Decision Project)  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 4, 2019 2:12:40 PM  
**Attachments:** [I-526 WEST Corridor- Revised Draft Agency Coordination Plan 06032019.pdf](#)  
[USCG I-526 W. Concurrence Letter P&N-Coord Plan-Timetable.pdf](#)  
[I-526 ACE Meeting Handout 03012019.pdf](#)

---

FYI

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**From:** Overton, Randall D CIV [mailto:Randall.D.Overton@uscg.mil]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 04, 2019 10:35 AM  
**To:** Herrell, Michelle; Belcher, Jeffery - FHWA  
**Cc:** Long, Chad C.; Riley, Joy S.; McGoldrick, Will; Kelly, David P.; D07-DG-DISTRICTSTAFF-DPB; Scholzen, Jamie L CIV  
**Subject:** Agency Concurrence Points on I-526 West Project USCG (One Federal Decision Project)

\*\*\* This is an EXTERNAL email. Please do not click on a link or open any attachments unless you are confident it is from a trusted source. \*\*\*

Michelle and Shane,

Thank you for the opportunity to review the attached agency coordination plan, the permitting timetable (included in the agency coordination plan), and the purpose and need statement (included in ACE Meeting Handout attachment and copied below) for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor West project (One Federal Decision project). As requested please find Coast Guard concurrence on the aforementioned documents. Please let know if you have any questions or concerns regarding our concurrence.

Purpose and Need Statement:

*The purpose of this project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/I-526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard. The need for this project was identified in several different documents. The I-526/I-26 interchange is listed as the #2 project in the 2035 CHATS Long Range Transportation Plan Ranked List of Candidate Transportation Projects, the #6 project on SCDOT's ACT 114 Interstate Capacity List, and it is listed in SCDOT's State Transportation Improvement Plan 2017-2022. Congestion was detailed in SCDOT's Corridor Analysis for I-526 Between North Charleston and West Ashley, and in the Interstate Plan portion of SCDOT's 2014 Multimodal Transportation Plan, where four segments within this project corridor are listed in the top 20 most congested Interstate segments.*

Thank you,  
Randy

Randall Overton, M.P.A.  
Chief, Permits Division  
Coast Guard Seventh District Bridge Administration  
909 SE 1st Ave Suite 432  
Miami, FL 33131  
(305) 205-0795 Cell



(305) 415-6736 Office

**From:** [Overton, Randall D CIV](#)  
**To:** [Long, Chad C.](#)  
**Cc:** [Heather Robbins](#); [Belcher, Jeffery - FHWA](#); [Christopher.D.Mims \("Christopher.D.Mims@usace.army.mil"\)](#); [Chuck Hightower \(hightocw@dhec.sc.gov\)](#); [Cynthia Cooksey \("cynthia.cooksey@noaa.gov"\)](#); [Daniel, Tom \(DanielT@dnr.sc.gov\)](#); [Elizabeth Johnson \(ejohnson@scdah.sc.gov\)](#); E-mail: [jwilkinson@scdah.sc.gov](#); [kamara holmes \("kamara.holmes@sc.usda.gov"\)](#); [Laycock, Kelly \("Laycock.Kelly@epa.gov"\)](#); [mark caldwell \("mark\\_caldwell@fws.gov"\)](#); [Mary Trumbu \("trumbumt@dhec.sc.gov"\)](#); [Michelle Herrell \("michelle.herrell@dot.gov"\)](#); [MixonG@dnr.sc.gov](#); [Riggin Lori Ann \("RigginL@dnr.sc.gov"\)](#); [Singh-White, Alya](#); [Stacie Crowe](#); [stout, christpoher \(stoutcm@dhec.sc.gov\)](#); [Susan Davis](#); [williams, Blair \("williabn@dhec.sc.gov"\)](#); [Russell Chandler](#); [Riley, Joy S.](#); [Amanda Chandler](#); [Lee, Lyle H.](#); [Day, Rick](#); [Williams, Blair N.](#); [Kelly, David P.](#); [Hoke, Joshua D.](#); [Connolly, Sean](#); [Martin, Jim - FHWA](#); [McGoldrick, Will](#); [Amanda.L.Heath \("Amanda.L.Heath@usace.army.mil"\)](#); [Polomski, Cameron \(cameromp@dhec.sc.gov\)](#); [roy.crabtree@noaa.gov](#); [kelly.shotts@noaa.gov](#); [wenonahh@ccppcrafts.com](#); [caitlinh@ccppcrafts.com](#); [bbarnes@estoo.net](#); [clowe@mcn-nsn.gov](#); [lwendt@mcn-nsn.gov](#); [alexis\\_john@nps.gov](#)  
**Subject:** RE: I-526 West Permitting Timetable & Agency Milestones  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 3, 2019 10:59:30 AM  
**Attachments:** [-----](#)

---

Chad,

Thank you for the updated Permitting Timeline for the I-526 West project. The timetable for Agency Milestones looks fine and is acceptable for the Coast Guard.

Thank you again,  
Randy

**Randall Overton, M.P.A.**  
Chief, Permits Division  
Coast Guard Seventh District Bridge Administration  
909 SE 1st Ave Suite 432  
Miami, FL 33131  
(305) 205-0795 Cell  
(305) 415-6736 Office

---

**From:** Long, Chad C. <LongCC@scdot.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 27, 2019 1:54 PM  
**To:** Heather Robbins <heather.robbs@threeoaksengineering.com>; Belcher, Jeffery - FHWA <Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov>; Christopher.D.Mims ('Christopher.D.Mims@usace.army.mil') <'Christopher.D.Mims@usace.army.mil'>; Chuck Hightower (hightocw@dhec.sc.gov) <hightocw@dhec.sc.gov>; Cynthia Cooksey ('cynthia.cooksey@noaa.gov') <'cynthia.cooksey@noaa.gov'>; Daniel, Tom (DanielT@dnr.sc.gov) <DanielT@dnr.sc.gov>; Elizabeth Johnson (ejohnson@scdah.sc.gov) <ejohnson@scdah.sc.gov>; E-mail: <'kkelly@slcog.org'>; [jwilkinson@scdah.sc.gov](#); [kamara holmes \("kamara.holmes@sc.usda.gov"\)](#) <'kamara.holmes@sc.usda.gov'>; [Laycock, Kelly \("Laycock.Kelly@epa.gov"\)](#) <'Laycock.Kelly@epa.gov'>; [mark caldwell \("mark\\_caldwell@fws.gov"\)](#) <'mark\_caldwell@fws.gov'>; [Mary Trumbu \("trumbumt@dhec.sc.gov"\)](#) <'trumbumt@dhec.sc.gov'>; [Michelle Herrell \("michelle.herrell@dot.gov"\)](#) <'michelle.herrell@dot.gov'>; [MixonG@dnr.sc.gov](#); [Riggin Lori Ann \("RigginL@dnr.sc.gov"\)](#) <'RigginL@dnr.sc.gov'>; [Singh-White, Alya](#) <singh-white.alya@epa.gov>; [Stacie Crowe](#) <'CroweS@dnr.sc.gov'>; [stout, christpoher \(stoutcm@dhec.sc.gov\)](#) <stoutcm@dhec.sc.gov>; [Susan Davis](#) <daviss@dnr.sc.gov>; [williams, Blair \("williabn@dhec.sc.gov"\)](#) <'williabn@dhec.sc.gov'>; [Overton, Randall D CIV](#) <Randall.D.Overton@uscg.mil>; [Russell Chandler](#)

<russell.chandler@threeoaksengineering.com>; Riley, Joy S. <RileyJ@scdot.org>; Amanda Chandler <amanda.chandler@threeoaksengineering.com>; Lee, Lyle H. <LeeLH@scdot.org>; Day, Rick <Rick.Day@stantec.com>; Williams, Blair N. <WILLIABN@dhec.sc.gov>; Kelly, David P. <KellyDP@scdot.org>; Hoke, Joshua D. <HokeJD@dhec.sc.gov>; Connolly, Sean <ConnollyMS@scdot.org>; Martin, Jim - FHWA <james.martin@dot.gov>; McGoldrick, Will <McGoldriWR@scdot.org>; Amanda.L.Heath ('Amanda.L.Heath@usace.army.mil') <'Amanda.L.Heath@usace.army.mil'>; Polomski, Cameron (cameropm@dhec.sc.gov) <cameropm@dhec.sc.gov>; roy.crabtree@noaa.gov; kelly.shotts@noaa.gov; wenonahh@ccppcrafts.com; caitlinh@ccppcrafts.com; bbarnes@estoo.net; clowe@mcn-nsn.gov; lwendt@mcn-nsn.gov; alexis\_john@nps.gov

**Subject:** [Non-DoD Source] RE: I-526 West Permitting Timetable & Agency Milestones

Good afternoon,

I wanted to update everyone on why you received a revised permitting timetable and new milestone chart earlier this morning.

SCDOT and FHWA recently received updated guidance on what needs to be included in a Permitting Timetable developed under the One Federal Decision (OFD) process. As described in the OFD Memorandum of Understanding (see attached), the lead agency is required to develop a “Permitting Timetable that identifies ***the actions and associated milestones for applicable environmental reviews and authorizations***” (Page A-4 Section VII.A.1). Because the previous timetable we developed for the project only included anticipated milestones for permitting and NEPA-related actions, we were required to update the timetable to include other “actions and associated milestones” that will be required to complete the NEPA and permitting process for the I-526 West Project.

The attached Agency Milestone Table includes all associated actions and environmental review milestones that are required to be a part of the Permitting Timetable for the I-526 West Project. It is very important that you review the proposed milestones that are applicable to your agency’s jurisdiction or role in the environmental review process. If any changes are needed, please let us know as soon as possible. We are reserving July 10<sup>th</sup> for an agency discussion regarding the review milestones. However, please feel free to contact us with any questions or revisions prior to that date. After we have received all comments, we will submit the final proposed Permitting Timetable to participating and cooperating agencies for concurrence in accordance with the One Federal Decision MOU (Page A-5 Section VII.A.2).

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Regards,

Chad C. Long | Director  
Environmental Services Office  
South Carolina Department of Transportation  
955 Park Street | Room 509  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201



*Safety 1<sup>st</sup> – Live By It!*  
*Let 'em Work, Let 'em Live!*

---

**From:** Heather Robbins [<mailto:heather.robbins@threeoaksengineering.com>]

**Sent:** Thursday, June 27, 2019 9:43 AM

**To:** Belcher, Jeffery - FHWA; Christopher.D.Mims ('Christopher.D.Mims@usace.army.mil'); Chuck Hightower ([hightocw@dhec.sc.gov](mailto:hightocw@dhec.sc.gov)); Cynthia Cooksey ('cynthia.cooksey@noaa.gov'); Daniel, Tom ([DanielT@dnr.sc.gov](mailto:DanielT@dnr.sc.gov)); Elizabeth Johnson ([ejohnson@scdah.sc.gov](mailto:ejohnson@scdah.sc.gov)); E-mail:; [jwilkinson@scdah.sc.gov](mailto:jwilkinson@scdah.sc.gov); kamara holmes ('kamara.holmes@sc.usda.gov'); Laycock, Kelly ('Laycock.Kelly@epa.gov'); mark caldwell ('mark\_caldwell@fws.gov'); Mary Trumbu ('trumbumt@dhec.sc.gov'); Michelle Herrell ('michelle.herrell@dot.gov'); [MixonG@dnr.sc.gov](mailto:MixonG@dnr.sc.gov); Riggini Lori Ann ('RigginiL@dnr.sc.gov'); Singh-White, Alya; Stacie Crowe; stout, christopher ([stoutcm@dhec.sc.gov](mailto:stoutcm@dhec.sc.gov)); Susan Davis; williams, Blair ('williabn@dhec.sc.gov'); Overton, Randall D CIV; Russell Chandler; Riley, Joy S.; Amanda Chandler; Lee, Lyle H.; Day, Rick; Williams, Blair N.; Kelly, David P.; Hoke, Joshua D.; Connolly, Sean; Long, Chad C.; Martin, Jim - FHWA; McGoldrick, Will; Amanda.L.Heath ('Amanda.L.Heath@usace.army.mil'); Polomski, Cameron ([camerompm@dhec.sc.gov](mailto:camerompm@dhec.sc.gov)); [roy.crabtree@noaa.gov](mailto:roy.crabtree@noaa.gov); [kelly.shotts@noaa.gov](mailto:kelly.shotts@noaa.gov); [wenonahh@ccppcrafts.com](mailto:wenonahh@ccppcrafts.com); [caitlinh@ccppcrafts.com](mailto:caitlinh@ccppcrafts.com); [bbarnes@estoo.net](mailto:bbarnes@estoo.net); [clowe@mcn-nsn.gov](mailto:clowe@mcn-nsn.gov); [lwendt@mcn-nsn.gov](mailto:lwendt@mcn-nsn.gov); [alexis\\_john@nps.gov](mailto:alexis_john@nps.gov)

**Subject:** I-526 West Permitting Timetable & Agency Milestones

\*\*\* This is an EXTERNAL email. Please do not click on a link or open any attachments unless you are confident it is from a trusted source. \*\*\*

Good Morning,

Attached is the revised Permitting Timetable and Draft Agency Milestones for your review.

Concurrence on the revised Permitting Timetable and the Agency Milestones will be requested in July.

Our next Agency Coordination Call is scheduled for Wednesday July 10<sup>th</sup> at 10AM. We have reserved this call to discuss any questions or concerns you may have. Please let me know by COB Monday July 8<sup>th</sup> if your agency has items to discuss. If I do not receive any requests then I will cancel

the conference call on the 10<sup>th</sup>.

Thank you!

Heather M. Robbins, AICP

Principal, Three Oaks Engineering

803.600.3787





**From:** [Herrell, Michelle](#)  
**To:** [Justin Hancock](#)  
**Cc:** [Belcher, Jeffery - FHWA](#); [Long, Chad C.](#); [Riley, Joy S.](#); [McGoldrick, Will](#); [Kelly, David P.](#)  
**Subject:** Agency Concurrence Points on I-526 West Project SCPRT  
**Date:** Thursday, May 30, 2019 10:51:43 AM  
**Attachments:** [I-526 WEST - Draft Agency Coordination Plan with Permitting Timetable an....pdf](#)  
[I-526 ACE Meeting Handout 03012019.pdf](#)  
[SCPRT I-526 W. Concurrence Letter P&N-Coord Plan-Timetable.pdf](#)

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\*\*\* This is an EXTERNAL email. Please do not click on a link or open any attachments unless you are confident it is from a trusted source. \*\*\*

Hi Justin,

Attached is a letter requesting agency concurrence on the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor West project on the agency coordination plan, permitting timetable, and the purpose and need statement. The most updated agency coordination plan (with dispute resolution process) and permitting timetable are attached for your review. The purpose statement has stayed the same that is in the attached I-526 ACE meeting handout:

*The purpose of this project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/I-526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard. The need for this project was identified in several different documents. The I-526/I-26 interchange is listed as the #2 project in the 2035 CHATS Long Range Transportation Plan Ranked List of Candidate Transportation Projects, the #6 project on SCDOT's ACT 114 Interstate Capacity List, and it is listed in SCDOT's State Transportation Improvement Plan 2017-2022. Congestion was detailed in SCDOT's Corridor Analysis for I-526 Between North Charleston and West Ashley, and in the Interstate Plan portion of SCDOT's 2014 Multimodal Transportation Plan, where four segments within this project corridor are listed in the top 20 most congested Interstate segments.*

If you are a participating agency, concurrence is not required, but we would like concurrence from the participating agencies so that we know everyone is comfortable with the information we have developed thus far and due to our compressed time schedule for this project. I know that we have a call scheduled next week to discuss this project in detail, but if you have any questions or concerns prior to that, please feel free to give Shane or myself a call.

Note, if we don't receive any comments/concerns by June 7 from the agencies, we will be canceling the June 12<sup>th</sup> monthly agency call for this project.

Thanks,

Michelle Herrell  
Environmental Protection Specialist  
Federal Highway Administration | South Carolina Division Office  
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270 | Columbia, SC 29201  
P: (803) 765-5460 | F: (803) 253-3787  
[michelle.herrell@dot.gov](mailto:michelle.herrell@dot.gov)





U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

May 30, 2019

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Mr. Justin Hancock  
Director, Recreation, Grants and Policy  
SC Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism  
1205 Pendleton Street  
Columbia, SC 29201

Subject: Request for Concurrence on Agency Coordination Plan, Purpose & Need Statement, and Permitting Timetable for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Mr. Hancock:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), plans to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard. The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline.

Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it will adhere to the One Federal Decision guidance and tracked on the federal permitting dashboard. Based on the One Federal Decision Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) issued April 9, 2018, we are asking for written concurrence on the following three enclosed documents:

1. Agency Coordination Plan (ACP)
2. Purpose & Need Statement
3. Permitting Timetable

While Cooperating Agencies are the only agencies required to concur or not concur, we are also extending the opportunity to Participating Agencies. Participating agencies can either concur, not concur, or abstain.

These documents were previously provided to you on March 1, 2019. In addition, this information was discussed at the Agency Coordination Effort (ACE) meeting on March 14, 2019, and at the subsequent monthly agency meeting held on April 23, 2019. Per the One Federal Decision MOU, we want to ensure that your agency's needs are being met and to continue coordination throughout

the project development and NEPA process to ensure that you have the information your agency needs to make comments on the EIS. **Please provide your written concurrence to this office within 30 days.** If you would like to discuss these items in more detail prior to the deadline, please let us know by Friday, June 7, 2019, and we will hold the June 12, 2019 monthly agency meeting for that discussion. If no discussions are needed, the June 12, 2019 meeting will not be held. All agencies will be notified regarding the status of the June meeting.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or your agency's roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Ms. Michelle Herrell at 803-765-5460 or by email at [michelle.herrell@dot.gov](mailto:michelle.herrell@dot.gov) or Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by email at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,

**MICHELLE**  
**L HERRELL**

Digitally signed by  
MICHELLE L HERRELL  
Date: 2019.05.30  
09:30:39 -04'00'

(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

Enclosures

cc: Chad Long, SCDOT Director of Environmental Services  
Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager  
David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design Build Environmental Coordinator



South Carolina Department of  
Parks, Recreation & Tourism

**Henry McMaster**  
Governor

**Duane N. Parrish**  
Director

June 6, 2019

Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator  
c/o Michelle L Herrell  
US Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration  
1835 Assembly Street  
Suite 1270  
Columbia, SC 29201


Subject: SCPRT Concurrence on Agency Coordination Plan, Purpose & Need State, and Permitting Timetable for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Mrs. Lawton:

By copy of this letter, I am affirming the concurrence of the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism (SCPRT) for the Agency Coordination Plan, Purpose & Need Statement, and Permitting Timetable for Federal Project Number P027507. SCPRT believes that the justification, scope and timeline of activities in these documents is both appropriate and reasonable.

Based on our most current research, SCPRT estimates that 85% of domestic visitors to South Carolina travel to the state by car. The agency believes that this project will provide significant benefit to alleviate increasing traffic congestion and difficulties at the I-26 and I-526 interchange – a benefit to both visitors to South Carolina and area residents. To that end, SCPRT looks forward to working with the FHWA and other parties to facilitate conversions of the 6(f) park properties impacted by this project as expeditiously as possible.

Sincerely,



Justin Hancock  
Director – Office of Recreation, Grants & Policy

**From:** [Belcher, Jeffery - FHWA](#)  
**To:** [Mark Caldwell](#)  
**Cc:** [Herrell, Michelle](#); [Long, Chad C.](#); [Riley, Joy S.](#); [McGoldrick, Will](#); [Kelly, David P.](#)  
**Subject:** Agency Concurrence Points on I-526 West Corridor USFWS  
**Date:** Friday, May 31, 2019 9:42:02 AM  
**Attachments:** [USFWS I-526 W. Concurrence Letter P&N-Coord Plan-Timetable.pdf](#)  
[I-526 WEST - Draft Agency Coordination Plan with Permitting Timetable an....pdf](#)  
[I-526 ACE Meeting Handout 03012019.pdf](#)  
**Importance:** High

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\*\*\* This is an EXTERNAL email. Please do not click on a link or open any attachments unless you are confident it is from a trusted source. \*\*\*

Mark,

Attached is a letter requesting agency concurrence on the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor West project on the agency coordination plan, permitting timetable, and the purpose and need statement. The most updated agency coordination plan (with dispute resolution process) and permitting timetable are attached for your review. The purpose statement has stayed the same that is in the attached I-526 ACE meeting handout:

*The purpose of this project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/I-526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard. The need for this project was identified in several different documents. The I-526/I-26 interchange is listed as the #2 project in the 2035 CHATS Long Range Transportation Plan Ranked List of Candidate Transportation Projects, the #6 project on SCDOT's ACT 114 Interstate Capacity List, and it is listed in SCDOT's State Transportation Improvement Plan 2017-2022. Congestion was detailed in SCDOT's Corridor Analysis for I-526 Between North Charleston and West Ashley, and in the Interstate Plan portion of SCDOT's 2014 Multimodal Transportation Plan, where four segments within this project corridor are listed in the top 20 most congested Interstate segments.*

If you are a participating agency, concurrence is not required, but we would like concurrence from the participating agencies so that we know everyone is comfortable with the information we have developed thus far and due to our compressed time schedule for this project. If you have any questions about this information or concurrence, please feel free to contact me, Shane Belcher, Chad Long, or Will McGoldrick.

Note, if we don't receive any comments/concerns by June 7 from the agencies, we will be canceling the June 12<sup>th</sup> monthly agency call for this project.

Much thanks,



*J. Shane Belcher*

*Environmental Coordinator*

*Federal Highway Administration*

*1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270*

*Columbia, SC 29201*

*Phone: 803-253-3187*

*Fax: 803-253-3989*



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

May 31, 2019

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Mr. Mark Caldwell  
Deputy Field Supervisor  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services  
176 Croghan Spur Road, Suite 200  
Charleston, SC 29407

Subject: Request for Concurrence on Agency Coordination Plan, Purpose & Need Statement, and Permitting Timetable for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Mr. Caldwell:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), plans to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard. The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline.

Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it will adhere to the One Federal Decision guidance and tracked on the federal permitting dashboard. Based on the One Federal Decision Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) issued April 9, 2018, we are asking for written concurrence on the following three enclosed documents:

1. Agency Coordination Plan (ACP)
2. Purpose & Need Statement
3. Permitting Timetable

While Cooperating Agencies are the only agencies required to concur or not concur, we are also extending the opportunity to Participating Agencies. Participating agencies can either concur, not concur, or abstain.

These documents were previously provided to you on March 1, 2019. In addition, this information was discussed at the Agency Coordination Effort (ACE) meeting on March 14, 2019, and at the subsequent monthly agency meeting held on April 23, 2019. Per the One Federal Decision MOU, we want to ensure that your agency's needs are being met and to continue coordination throughout

the project development and NEPA process to ensure that you have the information your agency needs to make comments on the EIS. **Please provide your written concurrence to this office within 30 days.** If you would like to discuss these items in more detail prior to the deadline, please let us know by Friday, June 7, 2019, and we will hold the June 12, 2019 monthly agency meeting for that discussion. If no discussions are needed, the June 12, 2019 meeting will not be held. All agencies will be notified regarding the status of the June meeting.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or your agency's roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Ms. Michelle Herrell at 803-765-5460 or by email at [michelle.herrell@dot.gov](mailto:michelle.herrell@dot.gov) or Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by email at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,

**J. Shane  
Belcher**

Digitally signed by J.  
Shane Belcher  
Date: 2019.05.31  
09:25:22 -04'00'

(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

Enclosures

ec: Chad Long, SCDOT Director of Environmental Services  
Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager  
David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design Build Environmental Coordinator



## United States Department of the Interior

### FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

176 Croghan Spur Road, Suite 200  
Charleston, South Carolina 29407



June 3, 2019

Ms. Emily Lawton  
Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration  
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, SC 29201

Re: Concurrence Points, I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements, Charleston County,  
South Carolina, FWS Log No. 2016-CPA-0062

Dear Ms. Lawton:

Pursuant to the Federal Highway Administration's request the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) provides concurrence on the agency coordination plan, permitting timetable, and the purpose and need statement for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor West project.

If the Service can be of further assistance to either the South Carolina Department of Transportation or the Federal Highway Administration in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me or the project's point of contact Mr. Mark Caldwell, who may be reached at (843) 727-4707 ext. 215, email: [mark\\_caldwell@fws.gov](mailto:mark_caldwell@fws.gov), and reference FWS Log No. 2016-CPA-0062.

Sincerely,

Thomas D. McCoy  
Field Supervisor

TDM/MAC

**From:** [Herrell, Michelle](#)  
**To:** [jwilkinson@scdah.sc.gov](mailto:jwilkinson@scdah.sc.gov)  
**Cc:** [Belcher, Jeffery - FHWA](#); [Long, Chad C.](#); [Riley, Joy S.](#); [McGoldrick, Will](#); [Kelly, David P.](#)  
**Subject:** Agency Concurrence Points on I-526 West Project SCDAH  
**Date:** Thursday, May 30, 2019 11:05:58 AM  
**Attachments:** [I-526 WEST - Draft Agency Coordination Plan with Permitting Timetable an....pdf](#)  
[I-526 ACE Meeting Handout 03012019.pdf](#)  
[SHPO I-526 W. Concurrence Letter P&N-Coord Plan-Timetable.pdf](#)

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\*\*\* This is an EXTERNAL email. Please do not click on a link or open any attachments unless you are confident it is from a trusted source. \*\*\*

Hi Joseph,

Attached is a letter requesting agency concurrence on the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor West project on the agency coordination plan, permitting timetable, and the purpose and need statement. The most updated agency coordination plan (with dispute resolution process) and permitting timetable are attached for your review. The purpose statement has stayed the same that is in the attached I-526 ACE meeting handout:

*The purpose of this project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/I-526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard. The need for this project was identified in several different documents. The I-526/I-26 interchange is listed as the #2 project in the 2035 CHATS Long Range Transportation Plan Ranked List of Candidate Transportation Projects, the #6 project on SCDOT's ACT 114 Interstate Capacity List, and it is listed in SCDOT's State Transportation Improvement Plan 2017-2022. Congestion was detailed in SCDOT's Corridor Analysis for I-526 Between North Charleston and West Ashley, and in the Interstate Plan portion of SCDOT's 2014 Multimodal Transportation Plan, where four segments within this project corridor are listed in the top 20 most congested Interstate segments.*

If you are a participating agency, concurrence is not required, but we would like concurrence from the participating agencies so that we know everyone is comfortable with the information we have developed thus far and due to our compressed time schedule for this project. We understand based on previous email (5/2/2019) that your agency will be providing a customized response with regards to the concurrence points. If you have any questions about this information or concurrence, please feel free to contact me, Shane Belcher, Chad Long, or David Kelly.

Note, if we don't receive any comments/concerns by June 7 from the agencies, we will be canceling the June 12<sup>th</sup> monthly agency call for this project.

Thanks,

Michelle Herrell  
Environmental Protection Specialist  
Federal Highway Administration | South Carolina Division Office  
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270 | Columbia, SC 29201  
P: (803) 765-5460 | F: (803) 253-3787  
[michelle.herrell@dot.gov](mailto:michelle.herrell@dot.gov)







U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

May 30, 2019

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Mr. Joseph Wilkerson  
Review Coordinator for Transportation Projects  
SC Department of Archives and History  
8301 Parklane Road  
Columbia, SC 29223

Subject: Request for Concurrence on Agency Coordination Plan, Purpose & Need Statement, and Permitting Timetable for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Mr. Wilkerson:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), plans to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard. The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline.

Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it will adhere to the One Federal Decision guidance and tracked on the federal permitting dashboard. Based on the One Federal Decision Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) issued April 9, 2018, we are asking for written concurrence on the following three enclosed documents:

1. Agency Coordination Plan (ACP)
2. Purpose & Need Statement
3. Permitting Timetable

While Cooperating Agencies are the only agencies required to concur or not concur, we are also extending the opportunity to Participating Agencies. Participating agencies can either concur, not concur, or abstain.

These documents were previously provided to you on March 1, 2019. In addition, this information was discussed at the Agency Coordination Effort (ACE) meeting on March 14, 2019, and at the subsequent monthly agency meeting held on April 23, 2019. Per the One Federal Decision MOU, we want to ensure that your agency's needs are being met and to continue coordination throughout

the project development and NEPA process to ensure that you have the information your agency needs to make comments on the EIS. **Please provide your written concurrence to this office within 30 days.** If you would like to discuss these items in more detail prior to the deadline, please let us know by Friday, June 7, 2019, and we will hold the June 12, 2019 monthly agency meeting for that discussion. If no discussions are needed, the June 12, 2019 meeting will not be held. All agencies will be notified regarding the status of the June meeting.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or your agency's roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Ms. Michelle Herrell at 803-765-5460 or by email at [michelle.herrell@dot.gov](mailto:michelle.herrell@dot.gov) or Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by email at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,

**MICHELLE**  
**L HERRELL**  
Digitally signed by  
MICHELLE L HERRELL  
Date: 2019.05.30  
09:31:56 -04'00'

(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

Enclosures

ec: Chad Long, SCDOT Director of Environmental Services  
Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager  
David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design Build Environmental Coordinator

**From:** [Kelly, David P.](#)  
**To:** [Heather Robbins](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Agency Concurrence Points on I-526 West Project SCDAH  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 4, 2019 2:35:01 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[SHPO Purpose and Need Concurrence Reponse.pdf](#)

---

FYI

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**From:** Wilkinson, Joseph E. [mailto:JWilkinson@scdah.sc.gov]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 04, 2019 2:23 PM  
**To:** Herrell, Michelle  
**Cc:** Belcher, Jeffery - FHWA; Long, Chad C.; Riley, Joy S.; McGoldrick, Will; Kelly, David P.  
**Subject:** RE: Agency Concurrence Points on I-526 West Project SCDAH

\*\*\* This is an EXTERNAL email. Please do not click on a link or open any attachments unless you are confident it is from a trusted source. \*\*\*

Ms. Herrell,

Please see attached our agency's letter response.

Thanks,



Joseph E. Wilkinson  
Review Coordinator for Transportation Projects  
State Historic Preservation Office  
SC Department of Archives & History  
8301 Parklane Road  
Columbia, SC 29223  
Ph: 803.896.6184 Fax: 803.896.6167 <https://scdah.sc.gov/historic-preservation>  
[jwilkinson@scdah.sc.gov](mailto:jwilkinson@scdah.sc.gov)

---

**From:** Herrell, Michelle (FHWA) [mailto:michelle.herrell@dot.gov]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 30, 2019 10:55 AM  
**To:** Wilkinson, Joseph E. <JWilkinson@scdah.sc.gov>  
**Cc:** Belcher, Jeffery (FHWA) <Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov>; Long, Chad C. <LongCC@scdot.org>; Riley, Joy S. <RileyJ@scdot.org>; McGoldrick, Will <McGoldriWR@scdot.org>; Kelly, David P. <KellyDP@scdot.org>  
**Subject:** Agency Concurrence Points on I-526 West Project SCDAH

Hi Joseph,

Attached is a letter requesting agency concurrence on the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor West project on the agency coordination plan, permitting timetable, and the purpose and need statement. The most updated agency coordination plan (with dispute resolution process) and permitting timetable are attached for your review. The purpose statement has stayed the same

that is in the attached I-526 ACE meeting handout:

*The purpose of this project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/I-526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard. The need for this project was identified in several different documents. The I-526/I-26 interchange is listed as the #2 project in the 2035 CHATS Long Range Transportation Plan Ranked List of Candidate Transportation Projects, the #6 project on SCDOT's ACT 114 Interstate Capacity List, and it is listed in SCDOT's State Transportation Improvement Plan 2017-2022. Congestion was detailed in SCDOT's Corridor Analysis for I-526 Between North Charleston and West Ashley, and in the Interstate Plan portion of SCDOT's 2014 Multimodal Transportation Plan, where four segments within this project corridor are listed in the top 20 most congested Interstate segments.*

If you are a participating agency, concurrence is not required, but we would like concurrence from the participating agencies so that we know everyone is comfortable with the information we have developed thus far and due to our compressed time schedule for this project. We understand based on previous email (5/2/2019) that your agency will be providing a customized response with regards to the concurrence points. If you have any questions about this information or concurrence, please feel free to contact me, Shane Belcher, Chad Long, or David Kelly.

Note, if we don't receive any comments/concerns by June 7 from the agencies, we will be canceling the June 12<sup>th</sup> monthly agency call for this project.

Thanks,

Michelle Herrell  
Environmental Protection Specialist  
Federal Highway Administration | South Carolina Division Office  
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270 | Columbia, SC 29201  
P: (803) 765-5460 | F: (803) 253-3787  
[michelle.herrell@dot.gov](mailto:michelle.herrell@dot.gov)



June 4, 2019

Michelle L. Herrell  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration  
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Re: Request for Concurrence on Agency Coordination Plan, Purpose & Need Statement, and Permitting Timetable for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507; SHPO Project No. 19-JW0014

Dear Ms. Herrell:

Our Office has received the documentation dated May 30<sup>th</sup>, that you submitted for review by our office for the project referenced above, including the Agency Coordination Plan, the Purpose & Need Statement, and the Permitting Timetable. Thank you for involving us in this process as a Participating Agency.

We have reviewed the Agency Coordination Plan, the Purpose & Need Statement, and the Permitting Timetable. Our official role within this process is the review of identified historic resources, their recommended eligibility status for the National Register of Historic Places, and effects of this project on those resources. While we do not have the expertise to evaluate the data supporting, or arguments within, the Purpose and Need statement, we believe the agencies that do have this expertise will sufficiently review and concur with the Purpose and Need. The Agency Coordination Plan and the Permitting Timetable are agreeable to us per our involvement, and we concur with both.

We are aware of documented historic properties that are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places adjacent to the proposed project area, and have appreciated the continued coordination with the SCDOT per our review of these resources. We look forward to further coordination as to potential effects of this project on these resources as this project progresses per the proposed timetable.

We appreciate being included in this process and look forward to further consultation regarding historic resources. Please refer to SHPO Project Number 19-JW0014 in any future correspondence regarding this project. If you have any questions, please contact me at (803) 896-6184 or at [jwilkinson@scdah.sc.gov](mailto:jwilkinson@scdah.sc.gov).

Sincerely,

Joseph E. Wilkinson  
Review Coordinator for Transportation Projects  
State Historic Preservation Office

**From:** [Herrell, Michelle](#)  
**To:** [Susan Davis](#)  
**Cc:** [Belcher, Jeffery - FHWA](#); [Long, Chad C.](#); [McGoldrick, Will](#); [Riley, Joy S.](#); [Kelly, David P.](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Agency Concurrence Points on I-526 West Project  
**Date:** Thursday, May 30, 2019 10:46:00 AM  
**Attachments:** [I-526 ACE Meeting Handout 03012019.pdf](#)

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\*\*\* This is an EXTERNAL email. Please do not click on a link or open any attachments unless you are confident it is from a trusted source. \*\*\*

Hi Susan,

I realize I didn't attach the handout from the March ACE meeting with the purpose and need. My apologies.

Michelle Herrell  
Environmental Protection Specialist  
Federal Highway Administration | South Carolina Division Office  
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270 | Columbia, SC 29201  
P: (803) 765-5460 | F: (803) 253-3787  
[michelle.herrell@dot.gov](mailto:michelle.herrell@dot.gov)

---

**From:** Herrell, Michelle (FHWA)  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 30, 2019 10:32 AM  
**To:** Susan Davis <DavisS@dnr.sc.gov>  
**Cc:** Belcher, Jeffrey (FHWA) <Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov>; Long, Chad C. <LongCC@scdot.org>; McGoldrick, Will <McGoldriWR@scdot.org>; Riley, Joy S. <RileyJ@scdot.org>; Kelly, David P. <KellyDP@scdot.org>  
**Subject:** Agency Concurrence Points on I-526 West Project

Hi Susan,

Attached is a letter requesting agency concurrence on the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor West project on the agency coordination plan, permitting timetable, and the purpose and need statement. The most updated agency coordination plan (with dispute resolution process) and permitting timetable are attached for your review. The purpose statement has stayed the same that is in the attached I-526 ACE meeting handout:

*The purpose of this project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/I-526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard. The need for this project was identified in several different documents. The I-526/I-26 interchange is listed as the #2 project in the 2035 CHATS Long Range Transportation Plan Ranked List of Candidate Transportation Projects, the #6 project on SCDOT's ACT 114 Interstate Capacity List, and it is listed in SCDOT's State Transportation Improvement Plan 2017-2022. Congestion was detailed in SCDOT's Corridor Analysis for I-526 Between North Charleston and West Ashley, and in the Interstate Plan portion of SCDOT's 2014 Multimodal Transportation Plan, where four segments within this project corridor are listed in the top 20 most congested Interstate segments.*



If you are a participating agency, concurrence is not required, but we would like concurrence from the participating agencies so that we know everyone is comfortable with the information we have developed thus far and due to our compressed time schedule for this project. If you have any questions about this information or concurrence, please feel free to contact me, Shane Belcher, Chad Long, or Will McGoldrick.

Note, if we don't receive any comments/concerns by June 7 from the agencies, we will be canceling the June 12<sup>th</sup> monthly agency call for this project.

Thanks,

Michelle Herrell  
Environmental Protection Specialist  
Federal Highway Administration | South Carolina Division Office  
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270 | Columbia, SC 29201  
P: (803) 765-5460 | F: (803) 253-3787  
[michelle.herrell@dot.gov](mailto:michelle.herrell@dot.gov)

# South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

PO Box 12559  
Charleston, SC 29422  
843.953.9003 Office  
843.953.9399 Fax  
[Daviss@dnr.sc.gov](mailto:Daviss@dnr.sc.gov)



Robert H. Boyles, Jr.  
Interim Director  
Lorianne Riggan  
Director, Office of  
Environmental Programs

June 3, 2019

Ms. Michelle Herrell  
Federal Highway Administration  
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, SC 29201

Re: Request for Concurrence on Agency Coordination Plan, Purpose & Need Statement, and Permitting Timetable for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Ms. Herrell:

According to the Agency Coordination Plan, the purpose of this project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/I-526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard. We understand the need for this project is documented in the 2035 CHATS Long Range Transportation Plan, the SCDOT's ACT 114 Interstate Capacity List, and SCDOT's State Transportation Improvement Plan 2017-2022.

As a participating agency, the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources has reviewed the revised Agency Coordination Plan dated May 2019, the Purpose & Need Statement, and the Permitting Timetable. We offer no specific comments or concerns regarding these documents and concur with these documents as currently stated. As a part of the Dispute Resolution Procedure, we recommend that a date of request for submission of a complaint is specified. We also ask that all reference to Alvin Taylor as the DNR Director be deleted as he is recently retired. Robert H. Boyles, Jr. is serving as interim DNR Director.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the review of this project and provide comments. Please feel free to contact me as you deem necessary regarding this project. I can be reached at [daviss@dnr.sc.gov](mailto:daviss@dnr.sc.gov) or 843.953.9003.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan F. Davis".

Susan F. Davis  
Coastal Environmental Coordinator

**From:** [Herrell, Michelle](#)  
**To:** [Chuck Hightower \(hightocw@dhec.sc.gov\)](#); [williabn@dhec.sc.gov](#)  
**Cc:** [Belcher, Jeffery - FHWA](#); [Long, Chad C.](#); [Riley, Joy S.](#); [Kelly, David P.](#); [McGoldrick, Will](#); [stout, christpoher \(stoutcm@dhec.sc.gov\)](#)  
**Subject:** Agency Concurrence Points on I-526 West Project  
**Date:** Thursday, May 30, 2019 10:31:22 AM  
**Attachments:** [I-526 WEST - Draft Agency Coordination Plan with Permitting Timetable an....pdf](#)  
[DHEC-401 I-526 W. Concurrence Letter P&N-Coord Plan-Timetable.pdf](#)  
[I-526 ACE Meeting Handout 03012019.pdf](#)  
[DHEC-OCRM I-526 W. Concurrence Letter P&N-Coord Plan-Timetable.pdf](#)

---

\*\*\* This is an EXTERNAL email. Please do not click on a link or open any attachments unless you are confident it is from a trusted source. \*\*\*

Hi Chuck and Blair,

Attached is a letter requesting agency concurrence on the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor West project on the agency coordination plan, permitting timetable, and the purpose and need statement. The most updated agency coordination plan (with dispute resolution process) and permitting timetable are attached for your review. The purpose statement has stayed the same that is in the attached I-526 ACE meeting handout:

*The purpose of this project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/I-526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard. The need for this project was identified in several different documents. The I-526/I-26 interchange is listed as the #2 project in the 2035 CHATS Long Range Transportation Plan Ranked List of Candidate Transportation Projects, the #6 project on SCDOT's ACT 114 Interstate Capacity List, and it is listed in SCDOT's State Transportation Improvement Plan 2017-2022. Congestion was detailed in SCDOT's Corridor Analysis for I-526 Between North Charleston and West Ashley, and in the Interstate Plan portion of SCDOT's 2014 Multimodal Transportation Plan, where four segments within this project corridor are listed in the top 20 most congested Interstate segments.*

If you are a participating agency, concurrence is not required, but we would like concurrence from the participating agencies so that we know everyone is comfortable with the information we have developed thus far and due to our compressed time schedule for this project. If you cannot provide concurrence for legal/statutory reasons, we would appreciate a response that you are, at the least, okay with the agency coordination plan and permitting timetable, given your agency's role in the permitting process for this project. If you have any questions about this information or concurrence, please feel free to contact me, Shane Belcher, Chad Long, or Will McGoldrick.

Note, if we don't receive any comments/concerns by June 7 from the agencies, we will be canceling the June 12<sup>th</sup> monthly agency call for this project.

Thanks,

Michelle Herrell  
Environmental Protection Specialist  
Federal Highway Administration | South Carolina Division Office  
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270 | Columbia, SC 29201

P: (803) 765-5460 | F: (803) 253-3787

[michelle.herrell@dot.gov](mailto:michelle.herrell@dot.gov)



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

May 30, 2019

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Mr. Chuck Hightower  
Water Quality Permitting & Certification Manager  
SC Department of Health and Environmental Control  
2600 Bull Street  
Columbia, SC 29201

Subject: Request for Concurrence on Agency Coordination Plan, Purpose & Need Statement, and Permitting Timetable for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Mr. Hightower:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), plans to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard. The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline.

Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it will adhere to the One Federal Decision guidance and tracked on the federal permitting dashboard. Based on the One Federal Decision Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) issued April 9, 2018, we are asking for written concurrence on the following three enclosed documents:

1. Agency Coordination Plan (ACP)
2. Purpose & Need Statement
3. Permitting Timetable

While Cooperating Agencies are the only agencies required to concur or not concur, we are also extending the opportunity to Participating Agencies. Participating agencies can either concur, not concur, or abstain.

These documents were previously provided to you on March 1, 2019. In addition, this information was discussed at the Agency Coordination Effort (ACE) meeting on March 14, 2019, and at the subsequent monthly agency meeting held on April 23, 2019. Per the One Federal Decision MOU, we want to ensure that your agency's needs are being met and to continue coordination throughout

the project development and NEPA process to ensure that you have the information your agency needs to make comments on the EIS. **Please provide your written concurrence to this office within 30 days.** If you would like to discuss these items in more detail prior to the deadline, please let us know by Friday, June 7, 2019, and we will hold the June 12, 2019 monthly agency meeting for that discussion. If no discussions are needed, the June 12, 2019 meeting will not be held. All agencies will be notified regarding the status of the June meeting.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or your agency's roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Ms. Michelle Herrell at 803-765-5460 or by email at [michelle.herrell@dot.gov](mailto:michelle.herrell@dot.gov) or Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by email at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,

**MICHELLE**  
**L HERRELL**

Digitally signed by  
MICHELLE L HERRELL  
Date: 2019.05.30  
09:25:56 -04'00'

(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

Enclosures

ec: Blair Williams, SCDHEC-OCRM Critical Area Permitting Section Manager  
Christ Stout, SCDHEC-OCRM Coastal Zone Consistency Section Manager  
Chad Long, SCDOT Director of Environmental Services  
Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager  
David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design Build Environmental Coordinator





U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

May 30, 2019

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Mr. Blair Williams  
Critical Area Permitting Section Manager  
SCDHEC-OCRM  
1362 McMillan Ave., Suite 400  
Charleston, SC 29045

Subject: Request for Concurrence on Agency Coordination Plan, Purpose & Need Statement, and Permitting Timetable for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Mr. Williams:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), plans to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard. The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline.

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Sincerely,

**MICHELLE  
L HERRELL**  
Digitally signed by  
MICHELLE L  
HERRELL  
Date: 2019.05.30  
09:27:41 -04'00'

(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

Enclosures

ec: Christ Stout, SCDHEC-OCRM Coastal Zone Consistency Section Manager  
Chuck Hightower, SCDHEC Water Quality Permitting & Certification Manager  
Chad Long, SCDOT Director of Environmental Services  
Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager  
David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design Build Environmental Coordinator

**From:** [Williams, Blair N.](#)  
**To:** [Herrell, Michelle](#); [Hightower, Charles](#)  
**Cc:** [Belcher, Jeffery - FHWA](#); [Long, Chad C.](#); [Riley, Joy S.](#); [Kelly, David P.](#); [McGoldrick, Will](#); [Stout, Christopher](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Agency Concurrence Points on I-526 West Project  
**Date:** Thursday, May 30, 2019 11:46:37 AM  
**Attachments:** [Outlook-1469734846.png](#)

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\*\*\* This is an EXTERNAL email. Please do not click on a link or open any attachments unless you are confident it is from a trusted source. \*\*\*

Looping in Josh Hoke, Major activities project manager for OCRM. Please include Josh Hoke on all emails re: this project. Thanks.

Blair N. Williams  
Manager, Critical Area Permitting Section  
Ocean and Coastal Resource Management  
SC Dept. of Health and Environmental Control  
1362 McMillan Avenue, Suite 400  
Charleston, SC 29405  
(843) 953-0232 *office*  
(843) 953-0201 *fax*  
(843) 592-0200 *cell*  
williabn@dhec.sc.gov



---

**From:** Herrell, Michelle (FHWA) <michelle.herrell@dot.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 30, 2019 10:27:29 AM  
**To:** Hightower, Charles; Williams, Blair N.  
**Cc:** jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov; Long, Chad C.; Riley, Joy S.; Kelly, David P.; McGoldrick, Will; Stout, Christopher  
**Subject:** Agency Concurrence Points on I-526 West Project

\*\*\* Caution. This is an EXTERNAL email. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email. \*\*\*

Hi Chuck and Blair,

Attached is a letter requesting agency concurrence on the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor West project on the agency coordination plan, permitting timetable, and the purpose and need statement. The most updated agency coordination plan (with dispute resolution process) and permitting timetable are attached for your review. The purpose statement has stayed the same that is in the attached I-526 ACE meeting handout:

*The purpose of this project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/I-526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard.*

*The need for this project was identified in several different documents. The I-526/I-26 interchange is listed as the #2 project in the 2035 CHATS Long Range Transportation Plan Ranked List of Candidate Transportation Projects, the #6 project on SCDOT's ACT 114 Interstate Capacity List, and it is listed in SCDOT's State Transportation Improvement Plan 2017-2022. Congestion was detailed in SCDOT's Corridor Analysis for I-526 Between North Charleston and West Ashley, and in the Interstate Plan portion of SCDOT's 2014 Multimodal Transportation Plan, where four segments within this project corridor are listed in the top 20 most congested Interstate segments.*

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Note, if we don't receive any comments/concerns by June 7 from the agencies, we will be canceling the June 12<sup>th</sup> monthly agency call for this project.

Thanks,

Michelle Herrell  
Environmental Protection Specialist  
Federal Highway Administration | South Carolina Division Office  
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270 | Columbia, SC 29201  
P: (803) 765-5460 | F: (803) 253-3787  
[michelle.herrell@dot.gov](mailto:michelle.herrell@dot.gov)

**From:** [Herrell, Michelle](#)  
**To:** [roy.crabtree@noaa.gov](mailto:roy.crabtree@noaa.gov)  
**Cc:** [Belcher, Jeffery - FHWA](#); [Long, Chad C.](#); [Riley, Joy S.](#); [McGoldrick, Will](#); [Kelly, David P.](#); [Cynthia Cooksey](#) ([cynthia.cooksey@noaa.gov](mailto:cynthia.cooksey@noaa.gov)); [kelly.shotts@noaa.gov](mailto:kelly.shotts@noaa.gov); [andrew.herndon@noaa.gov](mailto:andrew.herndon@noaa.gov); [richard.fickley@noaa.gov](mailto:richard.fickley@noaa.gov); [noah.silverman@noaa.gov](mailto:noah.silverman@noaa.gov)  
**Subject:** Agency Concurrence Points on I-526 West Project  
**Date:** Thursday, May 30, 2019 10:42:37 AM  
**Attachments:** [I-526 WEST - Draft Agency Coordination Plan with Permitting Timetable an....pdf](#)  
[I-526 ACE Meeting Handout 03012019.pdf](#)  
[NOAA NMFS I-526 W. Concurrence Letter\\_P&N-Coord Plan-Timetable.pdf](#)

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\*\*\* This is an EXTERNAL email. Please do not click on a link or open any attachments unless you are confident it is from a trusted source. \*\*\*

Hi Dr. Crabtree,

Attached is a letter requesting agency concurrence on the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor West project on the agency coordination plan, permitting timetable, and the purpose and need statement. The most updated agency coordination plan (with dispute resolution process) and permitting timetable are attached for your review. The purpose statement has stayed the same that is in the attached I-526 ACE meeting handout:

*The purpose of this project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/I-526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard. The need for this project was identified in several different documents. The I-526/I-26 interchange is listed as the #2 project in the 2035 CHATS Long Range Transportation Plan Ranked List of Candidate Transportation Projects, the #6 project on SCDOT's ACT 114 Interstate Capacity List, and it is listed in SCDOT's State Transportation Improvement Plan 2017-2022. Congestion was detailed in SCDOT's Corridor Analysis for I-526 Between North Charleston and West Ashley, and in the Interstate Plan portion of SCDOT's 2014 Multimodal Transportation Plan, where four segments within this project corridor are listed in the top 20 most congested Interstate segments.*

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Thanks,

Michelle Herrell  
Environmental Protection Specialist  
Federal Highway Administration | South Carolina Division Office

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270 | Columbia, SC 29201  
P: (803) 765-5460 | F: (803) 253-3787  
[michelle.herrell@dot.gov](mailto:michelle.herrell@dot.gov)





U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

May 30, 2019

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Dr. Roy E. Crabtree  
Regional Administrator SE Regional Office  
NOAA Fisheries  
263 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South  
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

**Subject:** Request for Concurrence on Agency Coordination Plan, Purpose & Need Statement, and Permitting Timetable for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Dr. Crabtree:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), plans to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard. The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline.

Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it will adhere to the One Federal Decision guidance and tracked on the federal permitting dashboard. Based on the One Federal Decision Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) issued April 9, 2018, we are asking for written concurrence on the following three enclosed documents:

1. Agency Coordination Plan (ACP)
2. Purpose & Need Statement
3. Permitting Timetable

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Sincerely,

**MICHELLE L HERRELL**  
 Digitally signed by  
 MICHELLE L  
 HERRELL  
 Date: 2019.05.30  
 09:29:55 -04'00'

(for) Emily O. Lawton  
 Division Administrator

Enclosures

ec: Cynthia Cooksey, NOAA Fisheries Charleston  
 Kelly Shotts, NOAA Fisheries SE Regional Office  
 Andrew Herndon, NOAA Fisheries  
 Richard Fickley, NOAA Fisheries SE Regional Office  
 Noah Silverman, NOAA Fisheries SE Regional Office  
 Chad Long, SCDOT Director of Environmental Services  
 Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager  
 David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
 Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design Build Environmental Coordinator



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

May 31, 2019

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Ms. Alya Singh-White  
Life Scientist/Biologist  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
61 Forsyth Street, SW 9T25  
Atlanta, GA 30303-8960

Subject: Request for Concurrence on Agency Coordination Plan, Purpose & Need Statement, and Permitting Timetable for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Ms. Singh-White:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), plans to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard. The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline.

Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it will adhere to the One Federal Decision guidance and tracked on the federal permitting dashboard. Based on the One Federal Decision Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) issued April 9, 2018, we are asking for written concurrence on the following three enclosed documents:

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3. Permitting Timetable

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If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or your agency's roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Ms. Michelle Herrell at 803-765-5460 or by email at [michelle.herrell@dot.gov](mailto:michelle.herrell@dot.gov) or Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by email at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov)

Sincerely,

**J. Shane  
Belcher**

Digitally signed by J.  
Shane Belcher  
Date: 2019.05.31  
09:26:14 -04'00'

(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

Enclosures

cc: Chad Long, SCDOT Director of Environmental Services  
Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager  
David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design Build Environmental Coordinator

**From:** [Belcher, Jeffery - FHWA](#)  
**To:** [Singh-White, Alya](#)  
**Cc:** [Long, Chad C.](#); [Riley, Joy S.](#); [McGoldrick, Will](#); [Kelly, David P.](#); [Herrell, Michelle](#)  
**Subject:** Agency Concurrence Points on I-526 West Corridor Project  
**Date:** Friday, May 31, 2019 9:36:16 AM  
**Attachments:** [EPA I-526 W. Concurrence Letter P&N-Coord Plan-Timetable.pdf](#)  
[I-526 WEST - Draft Agency Coordination Plan with Permitting Timetable an....pdf](#)  
[I-526 ACE Meeting Handout 03012019.pdf](#)  
**Importance:** High

---

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Alya,

Attached is a letter requesting agency concurrence on the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor West project on the agency coordination plan, permitting timetable, and the purpose and need statement. The most updated agency coordination plan (with dispute resolution process) and permitting timetable are attached for your review. The purpose statement has stayed the same that is in the attached I-526 ACE meeting handout:

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Note, if we don't receive any comments/concerns by June 7 from the agencies, we will be canceling the June 12<sup>th</sup> monthly agency call for this project.

Much thanks,

*J. Shane Belcher*

*Environmental Coordinator*

*Federal Highway Administration*

*1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270*

*Columbia, SC 29201*

*Phone: 803-253-3187*

*Fax: 803-253-3989*



**From:** [Belcher, Jeffery - FHWA](#)  
**To:** [Singh-White, Alya](#)  
**Cc:** [Long, Chad C.](#); [Riley, Joy S.](#); [McGoldrick, Will](#); [Kelly, David P.](#); [Herrell, Michelle](#)  
**Subject:** Agency Concurrence Points on I-526 West Corridor Project  
**Date:** Friday, May 31, 2019 9:36:16 AM  
**Attachments:** [EPA I-526 W. Concurrence Letter P&N-Coord Plan-Timetable.pdf](#)  
[I-526 WEST - Draft Agency Coordination Plan with Permitting Timetable an....pdf](#)  
[I-526 ACE Meeting Handout 03012019.pdf](#)  
**Importance:** High

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Much thanks,

*J. Shane Belcher*

*Environmental Coordinator*

*Federal Highway Administration*

*1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270*

*Columbia, SC 29201*

*Phone: 803-253-3187*

*Fax: 803-253-3989*

**From:** [Heather Robbins](#)  
**To:** [Geni Theriot](#)  
**Subject:** FW: I-526 West Corridor Draft EJ Outreach Plan  
**Date:** Monday, August 19, 2019 11:44:47 AM  
**Attachments:** [image003.png](#)

---

Geni,

Can you please PDF the response below and save it in the project folder?

Heather M. Robbins, AICP  
Principal, Three Oaks Engineering  
803.600.3787



---

**From:** Belcher, Jeffrey (FHWA) <Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 19, 2019 7:55 AM  
**To:** 'LongCC@scdot.org' <LongCC@scdot.org>; Kelly, David P. (KellyDP@scdot.org) <KellyDP@scdot.org>; McGoldrick, Will (McGoldriWR@scdot.org) <McGoldriWR@scdot.org>  
**Cc:** Heather Robbins <heather.robbsins@threeoaksengineering.com>  
**Subject:** FW: I-526 West Corridor Draft EJ Outreach Plan

Response from EPA regarding P&N and the ACP. Please save to your project file.

*J. Shane Belcher*  
*Environmental Coordinator*  
*Federal Highway Administration*  
*1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270*  
*Columbia, SC 29201*  
*Phone: 803-253-3187*  
*Fax: 803-253-3989*

*The content of this email is confidential and intended for the recipient specified in message only.*

---

**From:** Singh-White, Alya [<mailto:Singh-White.Alya@epa.gov>]  
**Sent:** Monday, August 19, 2019 7:52 AM  
**To:** Belcher, Jeffrey (FHWA) <[Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov)>  
**Cc:** Militscher, Chris <[Militscher.Chris@epa.gov](mailto:Militscher.Chris@epa.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: I-526 West Corridor Draft EJ Outreach Plan

The EPA has no objection to the I-526 corridor improvement project purpose and need or agency coordination plan.  
Alya

Alya Singh-White  
Life Scientist / Biologist  
National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Section  
Strategic Programs Office  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency | Region 4  
61 Forsyth St SW  
Atlanta, GA 30303  
(404)-562-9339 | [singh-white.alya@epa.gov](mailto:singh-white.alya@epa.gov)



---

**From:** Belcher, Jeffrey (FHWA) <[Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov)>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 19, 2019 7:44 AM  
**To:** Singh-White, Alya <[Singh-White.Alya@epa.gov](mailto:Singh-White.Alya@epa.gov)>  
**Cc:** Militscher, Chris <[Militscher.Chris@epa.gov](mailto:Militscher.Chris@epa.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: I-526 West Corridor Draft EJ Outreach Plan

Much thanks Alya for the quick review. I'll make sure your comments are passed on to SCDOT. As for the permitting timeline, FHWA will be sending the revised timeline out for concurrence to all cooperating and participating agencies this week. We understand that EPA does not have an immediate decision regarding the EIS, but would like EPA's blessing on the overall timetable/milestones as part of the OFD process. This would also include concurrence on the P&N and Agency Coordination Plan (ACP). We didn't hear back from EPA regarding the initial concurrence request (attached). If EPA would prefer just to provide a "no objection" response at this time, that is also acceptable. Please let me know if you have any further questions.

*J. Shane Belcher*  
*Environmental Coordinator*  
*Federal Highway Administration*  
*1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270*  
*Columbia, SC 29201*  
*Phone: 803-253-3187*  
*Fax: 803-253-3989*

*The content of this email is confidential and intended for the recipient specified in message only.*

---

**From:** Singh-White, Alya [<mailto:Singh-White.Alya@epa.gov>]  
**Sent:** Friday, August 16, 2019 5:02 PM  
**To:** Belcher, Jeffrey (FHWA) <[Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov)>  
**Cc:** Militscher, Chris <[Militscher.Chris@epa.gov](mailto:Militscher.Chris@epa.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: I-526 West Corridor Draft EJ Outreach Plan

Hi Shane,

The EJ outreach plan is a good starting point. As you mentioned, it's fluid and will likely go through several iterations as the project progresses. Below are some things to consider. Let me know if you'd like to discuss.

Also, I understand there was concern regarding EPA's concurrence on the permitting/milestones table. The EPA is not the lead on any permits for the I-526 project nor is the Agency listed on the permitting timeline/milestone table; therefore, there is no action to really concur on at this time. There will, I'm sure, be some collaboration/discussions with other agencies (ex: 404 permit). If I missed a request for concurrence on anything else (ie. purpose and need, alternatives, etc), please let me know so that I can rectify the issue. Thanks.

Alya

1. Minority and low income neighborhoods (and some businesses) are located in the vicinity of the I-526/I-26 interchange. The roadway expansion will likely result in property acquisition, property and business relocations, increased noise and roadway vibration, construction detours and travel pattern disruptions, increased traffic volumes and impacts to air quality. The document should address the above-mentioned concerns and specify (1) the position of the center line of the roadway (post expansion) and (2) where the right of way (ROW) would be placed.
2. Minority populations and low-income populations in the affected areas may hold an opposing technical or scientific view (which can be based on several sources, including the community) regarding specific impacts and/or methods of analysis. Opposing views may warrant discussion in a NEPA document. It is understood that FHWA, in conjunction with SCDOT, is currently developing a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS); however, in instances of a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), NEPA requires agencies to discuss any responsible opposing view raised by the community which was not adequately discussed in the draft statement and indicate the agency's response to the issues raised (40 CFR §1502.9(b)).
3. When developing mitigation measures, consider engaging minority populations and low-income populations early and throughout the process.

Alya Singh-White

Life Scientist / Biologist

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Section

Strategic Programs Office

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency | Region 4

61 Forsyth St SW

Atlanta, GA 30303

(404)-562-9339 | [singh-white.alya@epa.gov](mailto:singh-white.alya@epa.gov)



---

**From:** Belcher, Jeffrey (FHWA) <[Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 8, 2019 9:30 AM  
**To:** Singh-White, Alya <[Singh-White.Alya@epa.gov](mailto:Singh-White.Alya@epa.gov)>  
**Subject:** FW: I-526 West Corridor Draft EJ Outreach Plan  
**Importance:** High

Alya,

In case my previous e-mail didn't go through with the Word version (it was 20+ MB). Here's a PDF version.

*J. Shane Belcher*  
*Environmental Coordinator*  
*Federal Highway Administration*  
*1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270*  
*Columbia, SC 29201*  
*Phone: 803-253-3187*  
*Fax: 803-253-3989*

---

**From:** Belcher, Jeffrey (FHWA)  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 08, 2019 9:23 AM  
**To:** Singh-White, Alya <[Singh-White.Alya@epa.gov](mailto:Singh-White.Alya@epa.gov)>  
**Cc:** 'LongCC@scdot.org' <[LongCC@scdot.org](mailto:LongCC@scdot.org)>; McGoldrick, Will ([McGoldriWR@scdot.org](mailto:McGoldriWR@scdot.org)) <[McGoldriWR@scdot.org](mailto:McGoldriWR@scdot.org)>; Kelly, David P. ([KellyDP@scdot.org](mailto:KellyDP@scdot.org)) <[KellyDP@scdot.org](mailto:KellyDP@scdot.org)>  
**Subject:** I-526 West Corridor Draft EJ Outreach Plan  
**Importance:** High

Alya,

Wanted to pass this along to get your input since the EJ/Community impacts on this project is a huge driver of the project development process. Attached is the draft EJ Outreach Strategy along with a presentation that was used during one of our internal workshops. Please take a look and let me know if this initial plan is a good start. This document is fluid and will be revised as we get deeper into project development and as we find out more what the communities wishes are. Any questions, please let me know.

Much thanks,

*J. Shane Belcher*



*Environmental Coordinator  
Federal Highway Administration  
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, SC 29201  
Phone: 803-253-3187  
Fax: 803-253-3989*

**From:** [Belcher, Jeffrey \(FHWA\)](#)  
**To:** [Christopher.D.Mims@usace.army.mil](#)  
**Cc:** [Heath, Amanda L CIV USARMY CESAC \(USA\)](#); ["LongCC@scdot.org"](#); [Riley, Joy S.](#); [Kelly, David P. \(KellyDP@scdot.org\)](#); [McGoldrick, Will \(McGoldriWR@scdot.org\)](#); [Martin, James](#)  
**Subject:** I-526 West Corridor: Revised Permitting Timetable/Agency Milestones Concurrence Request  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 20, 2019 3:54:30 PM  
**Attachments:** [USACE I-526 W. Concurrence Letter Permitting Timetable.pdf](#)  
[I-526 WEST Revised Permitting Table.pdf](#)  
[I-526 WEST Revised Agency Milestones.pdf](#)  
[I-526 W Corridor Coop-Participating Agency List.xlsx](#)  
[July 2019 I-526 Agency Coordination Meeting 7.10.2019 Notes.pdf](#)  
[DRAFT Agency Coordination Meeting Notes August 14 2019.pdf](#)  
**Importance:** High

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Christopher,

Per our agency call last week attached is FHWA's request for concurrence on the revised permitting timetable and agency milestones for the I-526 West Corridor Project. Also per your request, attached is the list of contacts for the Cooperating & Participating Agencies. This list is also included as an appendix to the Agency Coordination Plan previously sent, but wanted to provide you with an updated version as the ACP is currently being updated. Finally, the final agency meeting minutes for July, and the draft agency meeting minutes for August are attached for your review.

Any questions, please let me know.

Much thanks,

*J. Shane Belcher*  
*Environmental Coordinator*  
*Federal Highway Administration*  
*1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270*  
*Columbia, SC 29201*  
*Phone: 803-253-3187*  
*Fax: 803-253-3989*

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**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, CHARLESTON DISTRICT  
69A HAGOOD AVENUE  
CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA 29403-5107

7 June 2019

Regulatory Division

U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Highways Administration  
Attn: Ms. Michelle L. Herrell  
1835 Assembly Street Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Re: Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements, Charleston County, South Carolina, Federal Project Number P027507, DA#: SAC-2019-00593

Dear Ms. Herrell:

This letter constitutes the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District's (Corps) response to the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) electronically mailed request dated May 30, 2019, for concurrence with the purpose and need statement for the above referenced project. Additionally you requested concurrence on the draft Agency Coordination Plan, and the draft permitting timetable. The Memorandum of Understanding Implementing One Federal Decision under Executive Order 13807 (MOU) establishes concurrence points for the lead agency, in this case FHWA, to request written concurrence from the cooperating agencies whose authorizations are required for the project. The first concurrence point is the purpose and need statement (statement) to be used in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Per the MOU, the cooperating agency will "either confirm its concurrence or inform the lead agency that it cannot yet concur."

We appreciate the opportunity to review these important project elements. The Corps concurs with the following documents:

1. Agency Coordination Plan (ACP)
2. Purpose and Need Statement
3. Permitting Timetable

We note that while the draft permitting time table addresses the NEPA process, it does not include timelines for other required consultations, such as Endangered Species Act, Essential Fish Habitat, and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Each of the Federal cooperating agencies relies on these consultations to complete their respective records of decision. On this basis, we would like to discuss and confirm that the FHWA will lead these consultations concurrent with the NEPA process to facilitate our respective records of decision.

We remain committed to working with your staff in our role as a cooperating agency so that we may successfully fulfill our responsibilities under both NEPA and the Clean

Water Act. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Mr. Christopher D. Mims. He can be reached at (843) 329-8154 or christopher.d.mims@usace.army.mil.

Respectfully,



2019.06.07

07:47:35 -04'00'

Amanda L. Heath  
Chief, Special Projects Branch

Copy Furnished:

South Carolina Department of Transportation  
Attn: Mr. Chad Long  
Post Office Box 191  
Columbia, South Carolina 29202-0191

**From:** [Belcher, Jeffrey \(FHWA\)](#)  
**To:** [Overton, Randall D CIV](#)  
**Cc:** ["LongCC@scdot.org"; Riley, Joy S.; Kelly, David P. \(KellyDP@scdot.org\); McGoldrick, Will \(McGoldriWR@scdot.org\); Martin, James](#)  
**Subject:** I-526 West Corridor: Revised Permitting Timetable/Agency Milestones Concurrence Request  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 20, 2019 3:54:54 PM  
**Attachments:** [USCG I-526 W. Concurrence Letter Permitting Timetable.pdf](#)  
[I-526 WEST Revised Permitting Table.pdf](#)  
[I-526 WEST Revised Agency Milestones.pdf](#)  
[July 2019 I-526 Agency Coordination Meeting 7.10.2019 Notes.pdf](#)  
[DRAFT Agency Coordination Meeting Notes August 14 2019.pdf](#)  
**Importance:** High

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Randall,

Per our agency call last week attached is FHWA's request for concurrence on the revised permitting timetable and agency milestones for the I-526 West Corridor Project. USCG had previously provided concurrence on the permitting timetable, but due to revisions needed to include other agency milestones, FHWA is requesting concurrence on the revised version of the permitting timetable and agency milestones. The final agency meeting minutes for July, and the draft agency meeting minutes for August are also attached for your review.

Any questions, please let me know.

Much thanks,

*J. Shane Belcher*  
*Environmental Coordinator*  
*Federal Highway Administration*  
*1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270*  
*Columbia, SC 29201*  
*Phone: 803-253-3187*  
*Fax: 803-253-3989*

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**U.S. Department of  
Homeland Security**  
**United States  
Coast Guard**



Commander  
United States Coast Guard  
Seventh District

909 SE 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. (Rm432)  
Miami, FL 33131  
Staff Symbol: (dpb)  
Phone: 305-415-6736  
Fax: 305-415-6763  
Email: [randall.d.overton@uscg.mil](mailto:randall.d.overton@uscg.mil)

16475/164  
September 5, 2019

Mr. J. Shane Belcher  
(for Division Administrator)  
Federal Highway Administration  
1835 Assembly Street (Suite 1270)  
Columbia, SC 29201  
Via email: [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov)

Dear Division Administrator,

This letter is in response to your letter dated August 19, 2019 and email dated August 20, 2019 requesting Coast Guard concurrence on the revised Permitting Timetable and Agency Milestones for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507.

Based on an independent review of the Permitting Timetable and Agency Milestones (revised August 19, 2019), please accept this letter as Coast Guard concurrence with the aforementioned documents.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate as a cooperating agency for this major infrastructure improvement project.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact the District 7 Bridge Program at 415-6736 or email [Randall.D.Overton@uscg.mil](mailto:Randall.D.Overton@uscg.mil)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Randall D. Overton".

RANDALL D. OVERTON  
Chief, Permits Division  
District 7 Bridge Program  
U.S. Coast Guard



**From:** [Belcher, Jeffrey \(FHWA\)](#)  
**To:** [Justin Hancock](#)  
**Cc:** ["LongCC@scdot.org"](#); [Kelly, David P. \(KellyDP@scdot.org\)](#); [McGoldrick, Will \(McGoldriWR@scdot.org\)](#); [Riley, Joy S.](#); [Martin, James](#)  
**Subject:** I-526 West Corridor: Revised Permitting Timetable/Agency Milestones Concurrence Request  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 20, 2019 3:59:33 PM  
**Attachments:** [SCPRT I-526 W. Concurrence Letter Permitting Timetable.pdf](#)  
[I-526 WEST Revised Permitting Table.pdf](#)  
[I-526 WEST Revised Agency Milestones.pdf](#)  
[July 2019 I-526 Agency Coordination Meeting 7.10.2019 Notes.pdf](#)  
[DRAFT Agency Coordination Meeting Notes August 14 2019.pdf](#)  
**Importance:** High

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Justin,

Per our agency call last week attached is FHWA's request for concurrence on the revised permitting timetable and agency milestones for the I-526 West Corridor Project. The final agency meeting minutes for July, and the draft agency meeting minutes for August are also attached for your review.

Any questions, please let me know.

Much thanks,

*J. Shane Belcher*  
*Environmental Coordinator*  
*Federal Highway Administration*  
*1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270*  
*Columbia, SC 29201*  
*Phone: 803-253-3187*  
*Fax: 803-253-3989*

*The content of this email is confidential and intended for the recipient specified in message only.*

**From:** [Belcher, Jeffrey \(FHWA\)](#)  
**To:** [John, Alexis](#)  
**Cc:** ["Anita\\_Barnett@nps.gov"; "LongCC@scdot.org"; Kelly, David P. \(KellyDP@scdot.org\); McGoldrick, Will \(McGoldriWR@scdot.org\); Riley, Joy S.; Martin, James](#)  
**Subject:** I-526 West Corridor: Revised Permitting Timetable/Agency Milestones Concurrence Request  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 20, 2019 3:55:38 PM  
**Attachments:** [NPS\\_I-526\\_W\\_Concurrence\\_Letter\\_P&N-Coord\\_Plan-Timetable.pdf](#)  
[I-526 WEST Revised Permitting Table.pdf](#)  
[I-526 WEST Revised Agency Milestones.pdf](#)  
[I-526 ACE Meeting Handout 03012019.pdf](#)  
[I-526 WEST Corridor- Revised Draft Agency Coordination Plan 06032019.pdf](#)  
[July 2019\\_I-526 Agency Coordination Meeting 7.10.2019 Notes.pdf](#)  
[DRAFT Agency Coordination Meeting Notes August 14 2019.pdf](#)

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Alexis,

Per our agency call last week attached is FHWA's request for concurrence on the revised permitting timetable and agency milestones for the I-526 West Corridor Project. Since the NPS is a newly added Cooperating Agency we are also requesting concurrence on the project's Purpose and Need (included on the attached project handout), and the Agency Coordination Plan. The final agency meeting minutes for July, and the draft agency meeting minutes for August are also attached for your review.

I know this is a lot for you to take in and since NPS is coming in later to the project, so please let me know if you have any questions. We look forward to working with NPS on this One Federal Decision (EO 13807) project.

Much thanks,

*J. Shane Belcher*  
*Environmental Coordinator*  
*Federal Highway Administration*  
*1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270*  
*Columbia, SC 29201*  
*Phone: 803-253-3187*  
*Fax: 803-253-3989*

*The content of this email is confidential and intended for the recipient specified in message only.*

**From:** [Belcher, Jeffrey \(FHWA\)](#)  
**To:** [mark caldwell \("mark\\_caldwell@fws.gov"\)](#)  
**Cc:** ["LongCC@scdot.org"; Riley, Joy S.; McGoldrick, Will \(McGoldriWR@scdot.org\); Kelly, David P. \(KellyDP@scdot.org\); Martin, James](#)  
**Subject:** I-526 West Corridor: Revised Permitting Timetable/Agency Milestones Concurrence Request  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 20, 2019 3:56:28 PM  
**Attachments:** [USFWS I-526 W. Concurrence Letter Permitting Timetable.pdf](#)  
[USFWS I-526 West Corridor Revised Permitting Timeline and Consultation Milestones.pdf](#)  
[I-526 WEST Revised Permitting Table.pdf](#)  
[I-526 WEST Revised Agency Milestones.pdf](#)  
[July 2019 I-526 Agency Coordination Meeting 7.10.2019 Notes.pdf](#)  
[DRAFT Agency Coordination Meeting Notes August 14 2019.pdf](#)  
**Importance:** High

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Mark,

Per our agency call last week attached is FHWA's request for concurrence on the revised permitting timetable and agency milestones for the I-526 West Corridor Project. I know that you had stated already via e-mail that you were OK with the revised timetable (attached) but during the monthly call last week a consensus was that we send out a formal request via e-mail. The final agency meeting minutes for July, and the draft agency meeting minutes for August are also attached for your review.

Any questions, please let me know.

Much thanks,

*J. Shane Belcher*  
*Environmental Coordinator*  
*Federal Highway Administration*  
*1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270*  
*Columbia, SC 29201*  
*Phone: 803-253-3187*  
*Fax: 803-253-3989*

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## Geni Theriot

---

**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] I-526 West Corridor: Revised Permitting Timetable/Agency Milestones Concurrence Request

---

**From:** Belcher, Jeffrey (FHWA) <[Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2019 4:23 PM

**To:** 'LongCC@scdot.org' <[LongCC@scdot.org](mailto:LongCC@scdot.org)>; McGoldrick, Will (<[McGoldriWR@scdot.org](mailto:McGoldriWR@scdot.org)> <[McGoldriWR@scdot.org](mailto:McGoldriWR@scdot.org)>; Kelly, David P. (<[KellyDP@scdot.org](mailto:KellyDP@scdot.org)> <[KellyDP@scdot.org](mailto:KellyDP@scdot.org)>

**Cc:** Heather Robbins <[heather.robbs@threeoaksengineering.com](mailto:heather.robbs@threeoaksengineering.com)>

**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] I-526 West Corridor: Revised Permitting Timetable/Agency Milestones Concurrence Request

USFWS' concurrence for your files.

*J. Shane Belcher*

*Environmental Coordinator*

*Federal Highway Administration*

*1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270*

*Columbia, SC 29201*

*Phone: 803-253-3187*

*Fax: 803-253-3989*

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---

**From:** Mark Caldwell [[mailto:mark\\_caldwell@fws.gov](mailto:mark_caldwell@fws.gov)]

**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2019 4:18 PM

**To:** Belcher, Jeffrey (FHWA) <[Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] I-526 West Corridor: Revised Permitting Timetable/Agency Milestones Concurrence Request

Shane,

Please accept this email to serve as the Service's concurrence on the revised permitting timetable and agency milestones for the I-526 West Corridor Project.

P dñD #dj

Gh\$xxw| #lj #Vxsjuylru

X V#l#k#qj #z l jli#Vhjl fhj

Vrxwk#djr jld#Hfr jrj lfdj#W uylfhj

4:9#jur jkdq#wsxu#Jrdj#xlw#533

kjdujv wrq #VF #5<73:

;760:5:07:3:#{ w#548

;76063308759#luhfj#lqhj

;760633084;<# #dfvp l j

**This email correspondence and any attachments to and from this sender is subject to the Freedom of Information Act and may be disclosed to third parties.**

---

**From:** Belcher, Jeffrey (FHWA) <[Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2019 3:56 PM

**To:** mark caldwell ('[mark\\_caldwell@fws.gov](mailto:mark_caldwell@fws.gov)') <'[mark\\_caldwell@fws.gov](mailto:mark_caldwell@fws.gov)'>

**Cc:** '[LongCC@scdot.org](mailto:LongCC@scdot.org)' <[LongCC@scdot.org](mailto:LongCC@scdot.org)>; Riley, Joy S. <[RileyJ@scdot.org](mailto:RileyJ@scdot.org)>; McGoldrick, Will ([McGoldriWR@scdot.org](mailto:McGoldriWR@scdot.org)) <[McGoldriWR@scdot.org](mailto:McGoldriWR@scdot.org)>; Kelly, David P. ([KellyDP@scdot.org](mailto:KellyDP@scdot.org)) <[KellyDP@scdot.org](mailto:KellyDP@scdot.org)>; Martin, James <[James.Martin@dot.gov](mailto:James.Martin@dot.gov)>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] I-526 West Corridor: Revised Permitting Timetable/Agency Milestones Concurrence Request

**Importance:** High

Mark,

Per our agency call last week attached is FHWA's request for concurrence on the revised permitting timetable and agency milestones for the I-526 West Corridor Project. I know that you had stated already via e-mail that you were OK with the revised timetable (attached) but during the monthly call last week a consensus was that we send out a formal request via e-mail. The final agency meeting minutes for July, and the draft agency meeting minutes for August are also attached for your review.

Any questions, please let me know.

Much thanks,

*J. Shane Belcher*

*Environmental Coordinator*

*Federal Highway Administration*

*1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270*

*Columbia, SC 29201*

*Phone: 803-253-3187*

*Fax: 803-253-3989*

*The content of this email is confidential and intended for the recipient specified in message only.*

**From:** [Belcher, Jeffrey \(FHWA\)](#)  
**To:** [Wilkinson, Joseph E.](#)  
**Cc:** ["LongCC@scdot.org"; Kelly, David P. \(KellyDP@scdot.org\); McGoldrick, Will \(McGoldriWR@scdot.org\); Riley, Joy S.; Martin, James](#)  
**Subject:** I-526 West Corridor: Revised Permitting Timetable/Agency Milestones Concurrence Request  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 20, 2019 3:58:55 PM  
**Attachments:** [SHPO I-526 W. Concurrence Letter Permitting Timetable.pdf](#)  
[I-526 WEST Revised Permitting Table.pdf](#)  
[I-526 WEST Revised Agency Milestones.pdf](#)  
[July 2019 I-526 Agency Coordination Meeting 7.10.2019 Notes.pdf](#)  
[DRAFT Agency Coordination Meeting Notes August 14 2019.pdf](#)  
**Importance:** High

---

Joe,

Per our agency call last week attached is FHWA's request for concurrence on the revised permitting timetable and agency milestones for the I-526 West Corridor Project. The final agency meeting minutes for July, and the draft agency meeting minutes for August are also attached for your review.

Any questions, please let me know.

Much thanks,

*J. Shane Belcher*  
*Environmental Coordinator*  
*Federal Highway Administration*  
*1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270*  
*Columbia, SC 29201*  
*Phone: 803-253-3187*  
*Fax: 803-253-3989*

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August 21, 2019

J. Shane Belcher  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration  
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Re: Request for Concurrence on Permitting Timetable/Agency Milestones for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507; SHPO Project No. 19-JW0014

Dear Mr. Belcher:

Our Office has received the documentation dated August 19th, that you submitted for review by our office for the project referenced above, including the Permitting Timetable and the Agency Milestones Table. Thank you for involving us in this project as a Participating Agency.

We have reviewed the Permitting Timetable and the Agency Milestones Table. Our official role within this process is the review of identified historic resources, their recommended eligibility status for the National Register of Historic Places, and effects of this project on those resources. The Permitting Timetable and the Agency Milestones Table are agreeable to us per our involvement, and we concur with both.

We are aware of documented historic properties that are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places adjacent to the proposed project area, and have appreciated the continued coordination with the SCDOT per our review of these resources. We look forward to further coordination as to potential effects of this project on these resources as this project progresses per the proposed timetable.

We appreciate being included in this process and look forward to further consultation regarding historic resources. Please refer to SHPO Project Number 19-JW0014 in any future correspondence regarding this project. If you have any questions, please contact me at (803) 896-6184 or at [jwilkinson@scdah.sc.gov](mailto:jwilkinson@scdah.sc.gov).

Sincerely,

Joseph E. Wilkinson  
Review Coordinator for Transportation Projects  
State Historic Preservation Office



**From:** [Belcher, Jeffrey \(FHWA\)](#)  
**To:** [Hightower, Charles](#); [williams, Blair \("williabn@dhec.sc.gov"\)](#)  
**Cc:** [stout, christopher \(stoutcm@dhec.sc.gov\)](#); [hokejd@dhec.sc.gov](#); [prestohs@dhec.sc.gov](#); ["LongCC@scdot.org"](#); [McGoldrick, Will \(McGoldriWR@scdot.org\)](#); [Kelly, David P. \(KellyDP@scdot.org\)](#); [Riley, Joy S.](#); [Martin, James](#)  
**Subject:** I-526 West Corridor: Revised Permitting Timetable/Agency Milestones Concurrence Request  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 20, 2019 4:03:51 PM  
**Attachments:** [DHEC I-526 W. Concurrence Letter Permitting Timetable.pdf](#)  
[DHEC-401 I-526 W. Concurrence Letter P&N-Coord Plan-Timetable.pdf](#)  
[DHEC-OCRM I-526 W. Concurrence Letter P&N-Coord Plan-Timetable.pdf](#)  
[I-526 WEST Revised Permitting Table.pdf](#)  
[I-526 WEST Revised Agency Milestones.pdf](#)  
[July 2019 I-526 Agency Coordination Meeting 7.10.2019 Notes.pdf](#)  
[DRAFT Agency Coordination Meeting Notes August 14 2019.pdf](#)  
[I-526 WEST Corridor- Revised Draft Agency Coordination Plan 06032019.pdf](#)  
[I-526 ACE Meeting Handout 03012019.pdf](#)  
**Importance:** High

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Chuck and Blair,

Per our agency call last week attached is FHWA's request for concurrence on the revised permitting timetable and agency milestones for the I-526 West Corridor Project. We are also requesting concurrence on the project's Purpose and Need (included on the attached project handout), and the Agency Coordination Plan as previously requested on 5-30-19. The final agency meeting minutes for July, and the draft agency meeting minutes for August are also attached for your review.

I know this is a lot of attachments, so any questions, please let me know.

Much thanks,

*J. Shane Belcher*  
*Environmental Coordinator*  
*Federal Highway Administration*  
*1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270*  
*Columbia, SC 29201*  
*Phone: 803-253-3187*  
*Fax: 803-253-3989*

*The content of this email is confidential and intended for the recipient specified in message only.*

**From:** [Belcher, Jeffrey \(FHWA\)](#)  
**To:** [Susan Davis](#)  
**Cc:** [Lorianne Rigglin \(RigglinL@dnr.sc.gov\)](#) ([RigglinL@dnr.sc.gov](#)); ["LongCC@scdot.org"](#); [McGoldrick, Will \(McGoldriWR@scdot.org\)](#); [Kelly, David P. \(KellyDP@scdot.org\)](#); [Riley, Joy S.](#); [Martin, James](#)  
**Subject:** I-526 West Corridor: Revised Permitting Timetable/Agency Milestones Concurrence Request  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 20, 2019 3:58:23 PM  
**Attachments:** [DNR I-526 W. Concurrence Letter Permitting Timetable.pdf](#)  
[I-526 WEST Revised Permitting Table.pdf](#)  
[I-526 WEST Revised Agency Milestones.pdf](#)  
[DNR I-526 West Corridor Revised Permitting Timeline and Consultation Milestones.pdf](#)  
[July 2019 I-526 Agency Coordination Meeting 7.10.2019 Notes.pdf](#)  
[DRAFT Agency Coordination Meeting Notes August 14 2019.pdf](#)  
**Importance:** High

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Susan,

Per our agency call last week attached is FHWA's request for concurrence on the revised permitting timetable and agency milestones for the I-526 West Corridor Project. I know that you had stated already via e-mail that you were OK with the revised timetable (attached) but during the monthly call last week a consensus was that we send out a formal request via e-mail. The final agency meeting minutes for July, and the draft agency meeting minutes for August are also attached for your review.

Any questions, please let me know.

Much thanks,

*J. Shane Belcher*  
*Environmental Coordinator*  
*Federal Highway Administration*  
*1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270*  
*Columbia, SC 29201*  
*Phone: 803-253-3187*  
*Fax: 803-253-3989*

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# South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

PO Box 12559  
Charleston, SC 29422  
843.953.9003 Office  
843.953.9399 Fax  
[Daviss@dnr.sc.gov](mailto:Daviss@dnr.sc.gov)



Robert H. Boyles, Jr.  
Interim Director  
Lorianne Riffin  
Director, Office of  
Environmental Programs

August 22, 2019

Mr. J. Shane Belcher  
Federal Highway Administration  
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, SC 29201

Re: Request for Concurrence on Permitting Timetable/Agency Milestones for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Mr. Belcher:

We understand that because this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it will adhere to the One Federal Decision guidance and your agency is requesting concurrence on the revised permitting timetable and agency milestones.

We have reviewed the revised permitting timetable and accompanying agency coordination milestones and offer no comments or concerns regarding these documents. We appreciate your agency coordinating with us on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan F. Davis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "S" at the beginning.

Susan F. Davis  
Coastal Environmental Coordinator

**From:** [Belcher, Jeffrey \(FHWA\)](#)  
**To:** [Singh-White, Alya](#)  
**Cc:** [Laycock, Kelly \("Laycock.Kelly@epa.gov"\)](#); ["LongCC@scdot.org"](#); [Riley, Joy S.](#); [Kelly, David P. \(KellyDP@scdot.org\)](#); [McGoldrick, Will \(McGoldriWR@scdot.org\)](#); [Martin, James](#)  
**Subject:** I-526 West Corridor: Revised Permitting Timetable/Agency Milestones Concurrence Request  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 20, 2019 3:57:12 PM  
**Attachments:** [EPA I-526 W. Concurrence Letter Permitting Timetable.pdf](#)  
[I-526 WEST Revised Permitting Table.pdf](#)  
[I-526 WEST Revised Agency Milestones.pdf](#)  
[July 2019 I-526 Agency Coordination Meeting 7.10.2019 Notes.pdf](#)  
[DRAFT Agency Coordination Meeting Notes August 14 2019.pdf](#)  
**Importance:** High

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Alya,

Per our agency call last week attached is FHWA's request for concurrence on the revised permitting timetable and agency milestones for the I-526 West Corridor Project. You had previously mentioned that EPA really didn't have a permitting decision to make but we ask that your agency look at the timetable to ensure EPA is OK with the overall timetable for the EIS. The final agency meeting minutes for July, and the draft agency meeting minutes for August are also attached for your review.

Any questions, please let me know.

Much thanks,

*J. Shane Belcher*  
*Environmental Coordinator*  
*Federal Highway Administration*  
*1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270*  
*Columbia, SC 29201*  
*Phone: 803-253-3187*  
*Fax: 803-253-3989*

*The content of this email is confidential and intended for the recipient specified in message only.*

**From:** [Singh-White, Alya](#)  
**To:** [Belcher, Jeffrey \(FHWA\)](#)  
**Cc:** [Laycock, Kelly](#); [Militscher, Chris](#)  
**Subject:** RE: I-526 West Corridor: Revised Permitting Timetable/Agency Milestones Concurrence Request  
**Date:** Wednesday, August 21, 2019 7:24:50 AM

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Good Morning Shane,  
The EPA has no objections to the revised permitting timetable and agency milestones for the I-526 Corridor Improvement Project. Thanks.  
Alya

Alya Singh-White  
Life Scientist / Biologist  
National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Section  
Strategic Programs Office  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency | Region 4  
61 Forsyth St SW  
Atlanta, GA 30303  
(404)-562-9339 | [singh-white.alya@epa.gov](mailto:singh-white.alya@epa.gov)



---

**From:** Belcher, Jeffrey (FHWA) <Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2019 3:57 PM  
**To:** Singh-White, Alya <Singh-White.Alya@epa.gov>  
**Cc:** Laycock, Kelly ('Laycock.Kelly@epa.gov') <'Laycock.Kelly@epa.gov'; 'LongCC@scdot.org' <LongCC@scdot.org>; Riley, Joy S. <RileyJ@scdot.org>; Kelly, David P. (KellyDP@scdot.org) <KellyDP@scdot.org>; McGoldrick, Will (McGoldriWR@scdot.org) <McGoldriWR@scdot.org>; Martin, James <James.Martin@dot.gov>  
**Subject:** I-526 West Corridor: Revised Permitting Timetable/Agency Milestones Concurrence Request  
**Importance:** High

Alya,

Per our agency call last week attached is FHWA's request for concurrence on the revised permitting timetable and agency milestones for the I-526 West Corridor Project. You had previously mentioned that EPA really didn't have a permitting decision to make but we ask that your agency look at the timetable to ensure EPA is OK with the overall timetable for the EIS. The final agency meeting minutes for July, and the draft agency meeting minutes for August are also attached for your review.

Any questions, please let me know.

Much thanks,

*J. Shane Belcher*

*Environmental Coordinator*

*Federal Highway Administration*

*1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270*

*Columbia, SC 29201*

*Phone: 803-253-3187*

*Fax: 803-253-3989*

*The content of this email is confidential and intended for the recipient specified in message only.*

**From:** [Belcher, Jeffrey \(FHWA\)](#)  
**To:** [Noah Silverman - NOAA Federal](#)  
**Cc:** [Cynthia Cooksey - NOAA Federal](#); [Andrew Herndon - NOAA Federal](#); [Kelly Shotts - NOAA Federal](#); [Richard Fickley - NOAA Federal](#); [Jaclyn Daly \(Jaclyn.Daly@noaa.gov\) \(Jaclyn.Daly@noaa.gov\)](#); ["LongCC@scdot.org"](#); [Riley, Joy S.](#); [Kelly, David P. \(KellyDP@scdot.org\)](#); [McGoldrick, Will \(McGoldriWR@scdot.org\)](#); [Martin, James](#)  
**Subject:** I-526 West Corridor: Revised Permitting Timetable/Agency Milestones Concurrence Request  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 20, 2019 3:57:44 PM  
**Attachments:** [NOAA I-526 W. Concurrence Letter Permitting Timetable.pdf](#)  
[I-526 WEST Revised Permitting Table.pdf](#)  
[I-526 WEST Revised Agency Milestones.pdf](#)  
[July 2019 I-526 Agency Coordination Meeting 7.10.2019 Notes.pdf](#)  
[DRAFT Agency Coordination Meeting Notes August 14 2019.pdf](#)  
**Importance:** High

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Noah,

Per our agency call last week attached is FHWA's request for concurrence on the revised permitting timetable and agency milestones for the I-526 West Corridor Project. The final agency meeting minutes for July, and the draft agency meeting minutes for August are also attached for your review.

Any questions, please let me know.

Much thanks,

*J. Shane Belcher*  
*Environmental Coordinator*  
*Federal Highway Administration*  
*1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270*  
*Columbia, SC 29201*  
*Phone: 803-253-3187*  
*Fax: 803-253-3989*

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## Amanda Welch

---

**Subject:** NOAA-NMFS Permitting Timetable/Agency Milestones Concurrence Response

**Importance:** High

---

**From:** Belcher, Jeffrey (FHWA) <[Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, September 3, 2019 11:32 AM

**To:** Heather Robbins <[heather.robbs@threeoaksengineering.com](mailto:heather.robbs@threeoaksengineering.com)>

**Cc:** McGoldrick, Will ([McGoldriWR@scdot.org](mailto:McGoldriWR@scdot.org)) <[McGoldriWR@scdot.org](mailto:McGoldriWR@scdot.org)>; Kelly, David P. ([KellyDP@scdot.org](mailto:KellyDP@scdot.org)) <[KellyDP@scdot.org](mailto:KellyDP@scdot.org)>

**Subject:** FW: I-526 West Corridor: Revised Permitting Timetable/Agency Milestones Concurrence Request

**Importance:** High

Heather,

NOAA-NMFS concurrence for your project record and update to the ACP.

Thanks,

*J. Shane Belcher*

*Environmental Coordinator*

*Federal Highway Administration*

*1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270*

*Columbia, SC 29201*

*Phone: 803-253-3187*

*Fax: 803-253-3989*

*The content of this email is confidential and intended for the recipient specified in message only.*

**From:** Noah Silverman - NOAA Federal [<mailto:noah.silverman@noaa.gov>]

**Sent:** Tuesday, September 03, 2019 10:57 AM

**To:** Belcher, Jeffrey (FHWA) <[Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov)>

**Cc:** Andrew Herndon - NOAA Federal <[andrew.herndon@noaa.gov](mailto:andrew.herndon@noaa.gov)>; Cynthia Cooksey - NOAA Federal <[cynthia.cooksey@noaa.gov](mailto:cynthia.cooksey@noaa.gov)>; Jaclyn Daly - NOAA Federal <[jaclyn.daly@noaa.gov](mailto:jaclyn.daly@noaa.gov)>; Helen Chabot - NOAA Federal <[helen.chabot@noaa.gov](mailto:helen.chabot@noaa.gov)>; Dale Youngkin - NOAA Federal <[dale.youngkin@noaa.gov](mailto:dale.youngkin@noaa.gov)>; McGoldrick, Will ([McGoldriWR@scdot.org](mailto:McGoldriWR@scdot.org)) <[McGoldriWR@scdot.org](mailto:McGoldriWR@scdot.org)>; LongCC@scdot.org; Kelly, David P. ([KellyDP@scdot.org](mailto:KellyDP@scdot.org)) <[KellyDP@scdot.org](mailto:KellyDP@scdot.org)>; Pace Wilber <[pace.wilber@noaa.gov](mailto:pace.wilber@noaa.gov)>; Virginia Fay <[virginia.fay@noaa.gov](mailto:virginia.fay@noaa.gov)>; Andy Strelcheck <[andy.strelcheck@noaa.gov](mailto:andy.strelcheck@noaa.gov)>; David Bernhart <[david.bernhart@noaa.gov](mailto:david.bernhart@noaa.gov)>; Katherine Renshaw - NOAA Federal <[katherine.renshaw@noaa.gov](mailto:katherine.renshaw@noaa.gov)>; Heather Blough - NOAA Federal <[heather.blough@noaa.gov](mailto:heather.blough@noaa.gov)>

**Subject:** Re: I-526 West Corridor: Revised Permitting Timetable/Agency Milestones Concurrence Request

Hello Shane,

NOAA NMFS concurs with the dates for our agency's milestones for this project. We look forward to continuing to work with you.

Thank you,  
-Noah

On Tue, Aug 27, 2019 at 1:28 PM Belcher, Jeffrey (FHWA) <[Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov)> wrote:

Noah,

Attached is the revised Permitting Timeline and Agency Milestones. Any questions, please let me know.

Much thanks for the assistance,

*J. Shane Belcher*

*Environmental Coordinator*

*Federal Highway Administration*

*1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270*

*Columbia, SC 29201*

*Phone: 803-253-3187*

*Fax: 803-253-3989*

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---

**From:** Belcher, Jeffrey (FHWA)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 27, 2019 11:19 AM  
**To:** Noah Silverman - NOAA Federal <[noah.silverman@noaa.gov](mailto:noah.silverman@noaa.gov)>  
**Cc:** Andrew Herndon - NOAA Federal <[andrew.herndon@noaa.gov](mailto:andrew.herndon@noaa.gov)>; Cynthia Cooksey - NOAA Federal <[cynthia.cooksey@noaa.gov](mailto:cynthia.cooksey@noaa.gov)>; Jaclyn Daly - NOAA Federal <[jaclyn.daly@noaa.gov](mailto:jaclyn.daly@noaa.gov)>; Helen Chabot - NOAA Federal <[helen.chabot@noaa.gov](mailto:helen.chabot@noaa.gov)>; Dale Youngkin - NOAA Federal <[dale.youngkin@noaa.gov](mailto:dale.youngkin@noaa.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: I-526 West Corridor: Revised Permitting Timetable/Agency Milestones Concurrence Request

Noah,

Good timing. Everything is getting updated today and I'll send out to you today. I had a discussion with our FHWA-HQ yesterday, who reached out to Dale and the decision was made to remove MMPA from the milestones table. That way, there are no issues with the dashboard.

*J. Shane Belcher*

*Environmental Coordinator*

*Federal Highway Administration*

*1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270*

*Columbia, SC 29201*

*Phone: 803-253-3187*

*Fax: 803-253-3989*

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**From:** Noah Silverman - NOAA Federal [<mailto:noah.silverman@noaa.gov>]

**Sent:** Tuesday, August 27, 2019 11:11 AM

**To:** Belcher, Jeffrey (FHWA) <[Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov)>

**Cc:** Andrew Herndon - NOAA Federal <[andrew.herndon@noaa.gov](mailto:andrew.herndon@noaa.gov)>; Cynthia Cooksey - NOAA Federal <[cynthia.cooksey@noaa.gov](mailto:cynthia.cooksey@noaa.gov)>; Jaclyn Daly - NOAA Federal <[jaclyn.daly@noaa.gov](mailto:jaclyn.daly@noaa.gov)>; Helen Chabot - NOAA Federal <[helen.chabot@noaa.gov](mailto:helen.chabot@noaa.gov)>; Dale Youngkin - NOAA Federal <[dale.youngkin@noaa.gov](mailto:dale.youngkin@noaa.gov)>

**Subject:** Re: I-526 West Corridor: Revised Permitting Timetable/Agency Milestones Concurrence Request

Hi Jeffrey,

Thanks, that sounds good. Are you all planning to make the changes requested by our Marine Mammal folks - (Jaclyn 8/23 email), as well?

NMFS is standing by, waiting for the revised agency milestones and CPP from FHWA.

Thank you,

-Noah

On Fri, Aug 23, 2019 at 2:13 PM Belcher, Jeffrey (FHWA) <[Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov)> wrote:

Noah,

I had a discussion with SCDOT and I believe we are good. We are going to move out the conclusion date to November 13, 2020. I asked them to update the milestone table and timeline to reflect the change. As soon as I get that back, I will forward it to NMFS. If you think we should still have a discussion just let me know, but I believe we are all in sync on the milestone dates.

Thanks again,

*J. Shane Belcher*

*Environmental Coordinator*

*Federal Highway Administration*

*1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270*

*Columbia, SC 29201*

*Phone: 803-253-3187*

*Fax: 803-253-3989*

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**From:** Noah Silverman - NOAA Federal [mailto:[noah.silverman@noaa.gov](mailto:noah.silverman@noaa.gov)]

**Sent:** Friday, August 23, 2019 9:35 AM

**To:** Belcher, Jeffrey (FHWA) <[Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov)>

**Cc:** Andrew Herndon - NOAA Federal <[andrew.herndon@noaa.gov](mailto:andrew.herndon@noaa.gov)>

**Subject:** Re: I-526 West Corridor: Revised Permitting Timetable/Agency Milestones Concurrence Request

Hi Shane,

Looks like Andy and I are both available today at 1:30 or 2 for a quick 30 minute conversation..... do either of those times work for you?

Thank you,

-Noah

On Fri, Aug 23, 2019 at 8:45 AM Belcher, Jeffrey (FHWA) <[Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov)> wrote:

Thanks Noah. We based these dates off of previous conversations with Andrew as we wanted to have the Section 7 consultations with USFWS and NOAA-NMFS to run in parallel. We also wanted to have all consultations complete by the time we issue the DEIS, which would be in Oct. 2020. If the 135 days is a set in stone timeframe, we would prefer to back the July date up and keep the September conclusion date. I think this warrants some additional discussion between NMFS, FHWA, and SCDOT. Just to be clear on my end, once NOAA-NMFS deems a consultation package complete, you would need 135 days to render a decision?

Thanks again for the assistance,

*J. Shane Belcher*

*Environmental Coordinator*

*Federal Highway Administration*

*1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270*

Columbia, SC 29201

Phone: 803-253-3187

Fax: 803-253-3989

*The content of this email is confidential and intended for the recipient specified in message only.*

**From:** Noah Silverman - NOAA Federal [mailto:[noah.silverman@noaa.gov](mailto:noah.silverman@noaa.gov)]

**Sent:** Friday, August 23, 2019 8:25 AM

**To:** Belcher, Jeffrey (FHWA) <[Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov)>

**Cc:** Cynthia Cooksey - NOAA Federal <[cynthia.cooksey@noaa.gov](mailto:cynthia.cooksey@noaa.gov)>; Andrew Herndon - NOAA Federal <[andrew.herndon@noaa.gov](mailto:andrew.herndon@noaa.gov)>; Kelly Shotts - NOAA Federal <[kelly.shotts@noaa.gov](mailto:kelly.shotts@noaa.gov)>; Richard Fickley - NOAA Federal <[richard.fickley@noaa.gov](mailto:richard.fickley@noaa.gov)>; Jaclyn Daly ([Jaclyn.Daly@noaa.gov](mailto:Jaclyn.Daly@noaa.gov)) ([Jaclyn.Daly@noaa.gov](mailto:Jaclyn.Daly@noaa.gov)) <[Jaclyn.Daly@noaa.gov](mailto:Jaclyn.Daly@noaa.gov)>; Dale Youngkin - NOAA Federal <[dale.youngkin@noaa.gov](mailto:dale.youngkin@noaa.gov)>; Helen Chabot - NOAA Federal <[helen.chabot@noaa.gov](mailto:helen.chabot@noaa.gov)>; David Bernhart <[david.bernhart@noaa.gov](mailto:david.bernhart@noaa.gov)>; Virginia Fay <[virginia.fay@noaa.gov](mailto:virginia.fay@noaa.gov)>

**Subject:** Re: I-526 West Corridor: Revised Permitting Timetable/Agency Milestones Concurrence Request

Hello,

Thank you for sending this to us for review. NOAA has the following comments on the revised Agency Milestones:

The NMFS' section 7 ESA consultation milestone "Conclusion of consultation" date should be at least 135 days after the "Consultation deemed complete" milestone. Your schedule has the date of July 1, 2020 listed for the Consultation deemed complete milestone. Therefore the date for the Conclusion of consultation milestone should be no sooner than November 13, 2020.

If FHWA is in agreement, please make this change to the agency milestones and resend so that we may get our agency's clearance. If not, please give us a call so we can discuss.

Thank you,

-Noah

On Tue, Aug 20, 2019 at 3:57 PM Belcher, Jeffrey (FHWA) <[Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov)> wrote:

Noah,

Per our agency call last week attached is FHWA's request for concurrence on the revised permitting timetable and agency milestones for the I-526 West Corridor Project. The final agency meeting minutes for July, and the draft agency meeting minutes for August are also attached for your review.

Any questions, please let me know.

Much thanks,

*J. Shane Belcher*

*Environmental Coordinator*

*Federal Highway Administration*

*1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270*

*Columbia, SC 29201*

*Phone: 803-253-3187*

*Fax: 803-253-3989*

*The content of this email is confidential and intended for the recipient specified in message only.*



--

Noah Silverman

NEPA Coordinator, Southeast Region

National Marine Fisheries Service

263 13th Avenue South  
St. Petersburg, FL 33701-5505  
Phone: (727) 824-5353

Cell: (727) 612-0258

Fax: (727) 824-5309

Email: [noah.silverman@noaa.gov](mailto:noah.silverman@noaa.gov)

Web: <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>



--

Noah Silverman

NEPA Coordinator, Southeast Region

National Marine Fisheries Service

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St. Petersburg, FL 33701-5505  
Phone: (727) 824-5353

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Email: [noah.silverman@noaa.gov](mailto:noah.silverman@noaa.gov)

Web: <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>



--

Noah Silverman

NEPA Coordinator, Southeast Region

National Marine Fisheries Service

263 13th Avenue South  
St. Petersburg, FL 33701-5505  
Phone: (727) 824-5353

Cell: (727) 612-0258  
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Email: [noah.silverman@noaa.gov](mailto:noah.silverman@noaa.gov)  
Web: <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>



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Noah Silverman

NEPA Coordinator, Southeast Region

National Marine Fisheries Service

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St. Petersburg, FL 33701-5505  
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Cell: (727) 612-0258  
Fax: (727) 824-5309  
Email: [noah.silverman@noaa.gov](mailto:noah.silverman@noaa.gov)  
Web: <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>





U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

March 12, 2020

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Ms. Amanda Heath  
Chief, Special Projects Branch  
Charleston District  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
ATTN: Mr. Christopher Mims  
69A Hagood Avenue  
Charleston, SC 29403

Subject: Request for Concurrence on the Proposed Alternatives to be Carried Forward for Detailed Evaluation for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Ms. Heath:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), plans to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard. The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline.

In 2013, SCDOT commissioned a study to develop a long-range plan to address the existing and future congestion and operational issues of the Interstate 526 (I-526) corridor in Charleston County. The purpose of the study was to look at potential improvement strategies for the corridor in a holistic manner and not just wholesale widening. Four categories of improvement strategies were considered, consisting of: Travel Demand Management (TDM) strategies, Modal strategies including Transit and Freight improvements, Traffic Operations strategies, and Capacity Improvement strategies.

The study concluded that capacity improvements along the I-526 corridor could be pushed back 5-10 years with implementation of all TDM and Modal strategies but capacity improvements

would still be necessary. Project grouping strategies included the widening of I-526 from Paul Cantrell Boulevard to Rivers Avenue, as well as improving the I-26/I-526 interchange.

As part of the Lowcountry Corridor West project, SCDOT conducted a traffic analysis to determine the level of capacity improvements that were necessary to fulfill the purpose and need for the project using a design year of 2050. Two mainline widening alternatives (6-lane and 8-lane) were evaluated as part of the study (see attachment). The analysis shows that the 8-lane widening alternative would result in the greatest improvement to traffic flow along the I-526 mainline. Based on these results, SCDOT is proposing to carry the 8-lane mainline widening alternative forward for detailed analysis in the EIS.

Traffic analysis conducted for the Lowcountry Corridor West project has also concluded that improvements to the I-26/I-526 interchange and the following service interchanges are needed to improve operations on the interstate:

- North Rhett Avenue: extensive queues currently occur back onto the interstate
- Rivers Avenue: this interchange is closely spaced to the I-26/526 interchange and has an effect on its operation
- Paul Cantrell Boulevard: the intersection of Paul Cantrell and Magwood causes traffic to queue back on to the interstate during PM peak hour.

Based on the results of traffic analysis, SCDOT is proposing to evaluate improvements at the following interchanges for detailed evaluation in the EIS: I-26/I-526, North Rhett Avenue, Rivers Avenue, and Paul Cantrell Boulevard.

Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it will adhere to the One Federal Decision guidance and will be tracked on the federal permitting dashboard. Based on the One Federal Decision Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) issued April 9, 2018, we are asking for concurrence on the proposed alternatives to be carried forward for detailed analysis in the EIS. The proposed alternatives were presented at an agency alternatives workshop held on February 12, 2020 and Google Earth kmz files were provided for agency review via e-mail. The workshop presentation along with the kmz files are enclosed for your reference.

Per the One Federal Decision MOU, we want to ensure that your agency's needs are being met and that continued coordination throughout the project development and NEPA process facilitates your agency's ability to make timely and informed comments on the EIS. **Per the One Federal Decision MOU, please provide your response to this office within 10 business days, via electronic mail to Mr. J. Shane Belcher at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).** We ask that you contact FHWA as early as possible if you find that your agency will not be able to concur with or has issues with the proposed alternatives. This will allow FHWA to work out any issues with your agency prior to moving forward with detailed analysis.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or your agency's roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by email at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,

**J. Shane Belcher**

Digitally signed by J. Shane  
Belcher  
Date: 2020.03.12 17:03:23 -04'00'

(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

Enclosures

ec: Chad Long, SCDOT Director of Environmental Services  
Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager  
David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design Build Environmental Coordinator  
Jim Martin, FHWA Major Projects Engineer



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
CHARLESTON DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
69A HAGOOD AVE  
CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA, 29403

Regulatory Division

U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration  
Attn: Ms. Emily O. Lawton  
1835 Assembly Street Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov

Re: Concurrence on the Proposed Alternatives to be Carried Forward for Detailed Evaluation for the proposed I-526 Lowcountry Corridor West Improvements Environmental Impacts Statement (EIS), Charleston County, South Carolina, Federal Project Number P027507, DA#: SAC 2019-00593

Dear Ms. Lawton:

This letter constitutes the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District's (Corps) response to the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) electronically mailed request dated March 12, 2020, wherein your office requested concurrence within 10 business days on the provided alternatives to be carried forward for detailed Evaluation for the proposed I-526 Lowcountry Corridor West Improvements Environmental Impacts Statement (EIS). On March 26, 2020, your office extended the response time, for this concurrence, an additional week, to April 1, 2020. The Memorandum of Understanding Implementing One Federal Decision under Executive Order 13807 (MOU) establishes concurrence points at which the lead agency, in this case FHWA, must request written concurrence from the cooperating agencies whose authorizations are required for the project. Per the MOU, the cooperating agency will "either confirm its concurrence or inform the lead agency that it cannot yet concur."

We appreciate the opportunity to review these important project elements. **The Corps concurs with the proposed alternatives to be carried forward for additional evaluation** as presented in your above referenced communication and presentation on February 12, 2020.

We remain committed to working with your staff in our role as a cooperating agency so that we may successfully fulfill our responsibilities under both NEPA and the Clean Water Act. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Mr. Christopher D. Mims at (843) 329-8154 or [christopher.d.mims@usace.army.mil](mailto:christopher.d.mims@usace.army.mil).

Respectfully,

  
Digitally signed by  
HUGHES, TRAVIS G.1228867748  
Date: 2020.03.27 15:14:28 -04'00'

for: Rachel A. Honderd, PMP  
Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army  
Commander and District Engineer

Travis G. Hughes

Chief, Regulatory Division

Copy Furnished:

South Carolina Department of Transportation  
Attn: Mr. Chad Long  
PO Box 191  
Columbia, SC 29202-0191  
LongCC@scdot.org

South Carolina Department of Transportation  
Attn: Mr. Will McGoldrick  
PO Box 191  
Columbia, SC 29202-0191  
McGoldriWR@scdot.org





U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

March 12, 2020

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Mr. Randall D. Overton  
Chief, Permits Division  
U.S. Coast Guard, District 7  
909 SE 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Suite 432  
Miami, FL 33131

Subject: Request for Concurrence on the Proposed Alternatives to be Carried Forward for Detailed Evaluation for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Mr. Overton:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), plans to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard. The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline.

In 2013, SCDOT commissioned a study to develop a long-range plan to address the existing and future congestion and operational issues of the Interstate 526 (I-526) corridor in Charleston County. The purpose of the study was to look at potential improvement strategies for the corridor in a holistic manner and not just wholesale widening. Four categories of improvement strategies were considered, consisting of: Travel Demand Management (TDM) strategies, Modal strategies including Transit and Freight improvements, Traffic Operations strategies, and Capacity Improvement strategies.

The study concluded that capacity improvements along the I-526 corridor could be pushed back 5-10 years with implementation of all TDM and Modal strategies but capacity improvements would still be necessary. Project grouping strategies included the widening of I-526 from Paul Cantrell Boulevard to Rivers Avenue, as well as improving the I-26/I-526 interchange.

As part of the Lowcountry Corridor West project, SCDOT conducted a traffic analysis to determine the level of capacity improvements that were necessary to fulfill the purpose and need for the project using a design year of 2050. Two mainline widening alternatives (6-lane and 8-lane) were evaluated as part of the study (see attachment). The analysis shows that the 8-lane widening alternative would result in the greatest improvement to traffic flow along the I-526

mainline. Based on these results, SCDOT is proposing to carry the 8-lane mainline widening alternative forward for detailed analysis in the EIS.

Traffic analysis conducted for the Lowcountry Corridor West project has also concluded that improvements to the I-26/I-526 interchange and the following service interchanges are needed to improve operations on the interstate:

- North Rhett Avenue: extensive queues currently occur back onto the interstate
- Rivers Avenue: this interchange is closely spaced to the I-26/I-526 interchange and has an effect on its operation
- Paul Cantrell Boulevard: the intersection of Paul Cantrell and Magwood causes traffic to queue back on to the interstate during PM peak hour.

Based on the results of traffic analysis, SCDOT is proposing to evaluate improvements at the following interchanges for detailed evaluation in the EIS: I-26/I-526, North Rhett Avenue, Rivers Avenue, and Paul Cantrell Boulevard.

Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it will adhere to the One Federal Decision guidance and will be tracked on the federal permitting dashboard. Based on the One Federal Decision Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) issued April 9, 2018, we are asking for concurrence on the proposed alternatives to be carried forward for detailed analysis in the EIS. The proposed alternatives were presented at an agency alternatives workshop held on February 12, 2020 and Google Earth kmz files were provided for agency review via e-mail. The workshop presentation along with the kmz files are enclosed for your reference.

Per the One Federal Decision MOU, we want to ensure that your agency's needs are being met and that continued coordination throughout the project development and NEPA process facilitates your agency's ability to make timely and informed comments on the EIS. **Per the One Federal Decision MOU, please provide your response to this office within 10 business days, via electronic mail to Mr. J. Shane Belcher at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).** We ask that you contact FHWA as early as possible if you find that your agency will not be able to concur with or has issues with the proposed alternatives. This will allow FHWA to work out any issues with your agency prior to moving forward with detailed analysis.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or your agency's roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by email at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,

**J. Shane Belcher**

Digitally signed by J. Shane  
Belcher  
Date: 2020.03.12 17:03:57 -04'00'

(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

Enclosures

ec: Chad Long, SCDOT Director of Environmental Services  
Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager  
David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design Build Environmental Coordinator  
Jim Martin, FHWA Major Projects Engineer

**U.S. Department of  
Homeland Security**

**United States  
Coast Guard**



Commander  
United States Coast Guard  
Seventh District

909 SE 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. (Rm432)  
Miami, FL 33131  
Staff Symbol: (dpb)  
Phone: 305-415-6736  
Fax: 305-415-6763  
Email: [randall.d.overton@uscg.mil](mailto:randall.d.overton@uscg.mil)

16475/164  
March 26, 2020

Mr. J. Shane Belcher  
Federal Highway Administration  
1835 Assembly Street (Suite 1270)  
Columbia, SC 29201  
Via email: [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov)

Dear Mr. Belcher,

This letter is in response to your email and letter dated March 12, 2020 requesting Coast Guard concurrence on the proposed alternatives to be carried forward for detailed analysis for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507.

I have reviewed the project alternatives presented during the agency alternatives workshop held on February 12, 2020. The Coast Guard concurs with the proposed alternatives to be carried forward for detailed analysis in the EIS during the February 12<sup>th</sup> workshop.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate as a cooperative partner in the development of this major infrastructure improvement project.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact me at 305-415-6736 or email [Randall.D.Overton@uscg.mil](mailto:Randall.D.Overton@uscg.mil)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Randall D. Overton".

RANDALL D. OVERTON  
Chief, Permits Division  
District 7 Bridge Program  
U.S. Coast Guard



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

March 12, 2020

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Mr. Justin Hancock  
Director, Recreation, Grants and Policy  
SC Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism  
1205 Pendleton Street  
Columbia, SC 29201

Subject: Request for Concurrence on the Proposed Alternatives to be Carried Forward for Detailed Evaluation for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Mr. Hancock:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), plans to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard. The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline.

In 2013, SCDOT commissioned a study to develop a long-range plan to address the existing and future congestion and operational issues of the Interstate 526 (I-526) corridor in Charleston County. The purpose of the study was to look at potential improvement strategies for the corridor in a holistic manner and not just wholesale widening. Four categories of improvement strategies were considered, consisting of: Travel Demand Management (TDM) strategies, Modal strategies including Transit and Freight improvements, Traffic Operations strategies, and Capacity Improvement strategies.

The study concluded that capacity improvements along the I-526 corridor could be pushed back 5-10 years with implementation of all TDM and Modal strategies but capacity improvements would still be necessary. Project grouping strategies included the widening of I-526 from Paul Cantrell Boulevard to Rivers Avenue, as well as improving the I-26/I-526 interchange.

As part of the Lowcountry Corridor West project, SCDOT conducted a traffic analysis to determine the level of capacity improvements that were necessary to fulfill the purpose and need for the project using a design year of 2050. Two mainline widening alternatives (6-lane and 8-lane) were evaluated as part of the study (see attachment). The analysis shows that the 8-lane widening alternative would result in the greatest improvement to traffic flow along the I-526 mainline. Based on these results, SCDOT is proposing to carry the 8-lane mainline widening alternative forward for detailed analysis in the EIS.

Traffic analysis conducted for the Lowcountry Corridor West project has also concluded that improvements to the I-26/I-526 interchange and the following service interchanges are needed to improve operations on the interstate:

- North Rhett Avenue: extensive queues currently occur back onto the interstate
- Rivers Avenue: this interchange is closely spaced to the I-26/I-526 interchange and has an effect on its operation
- Paul Cantrell Boulevard: the intersection of Paul Cantrell and Magwood causes traffic to queue back on to the interstate during PM peak hour.

Based on the results of traffic analysis, SCDOT is proposing to evaluate improvements at the following interchanges for detailed evaluation in the EIS: I-26/I-526, North Rhett Avenue, Rivers Avenue, and Paul Cantrell Boulevard.

Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it will adhere to the One Federal Decision guidance and will be tracked on the federal permitting dashboard. Based on the One Federal Decision Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) issued April 9, 2018, we are asking for concurrence on the proposed alternatives to be carried forward for detailed analysis in the EIS. The proposed alternatives were presented at an agency alternatives workshop held on February 12, 2020 and Google Earth kmz files were provided for agency review via e-mail. The workshop presentation along with the kmz files are enclosed for your reference.

Per the One Federal Decision MOU, we want to ensure that your agency's needs are being met and that continued coordination throughout the project development and NEPA process facilitates your agency's ability to make timely and informed comments on the EIS. **Per the One Federal Decision MOU, please provide your response to this office within 10 business days, via electronic mail to Mr. J. Shane Belcher at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).** We ask that you contact FHWA as early as possible if you find that your agency will not be able to concur with or has issues with the proposed alternatives. This will allow FHWA to work out any issues with your agency prior to moving forward with detailed analysis.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or your agency's roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by email at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,

**J. Shane Belcher**

Digitally signed by J. Shane Belcher  
Date: 2020.03.12 17:02:17 -04'00'

(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

Enclosures

ec: Chad Long, SCDOT Director of Environmental Services  
Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager  
David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design Build Environmental Coordinator  
Jim Martin, FHWA Major Projects Engineer





U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

March 12, 2020

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Mr. Robert Vogel  
Regional Director (Southeast)  
National Parks Service  
ATTN: Ms. Alexis John  
100 Alabama St., SW  
1924 Building  
Atlanta, GA 30303

Subject: Request for Concurrence on the Proposed Alternatives to be Carried Forward for Detailed Evaluation for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Mr. Vogel:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), plans to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard. The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline.

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would still be necessary. Project grouping strategies included the widening of I-526 from Paul Cantrell Boulevard to Rivers Avenue, as well as improving the I-26/I-526 interchange.

As part of the Lowcountry Corridor West project, SCDOT conducted a traffic analysis to determine the level of capacity improvements that were necessary to fulfill the purpose and need for the project using a design year of 2050. Two mainline widening alternatives (6-lane and 8-lane) were evaluated as part of the study (see attachment). The analysis shows that the 8-lane widening alternative would result in the greatest improvement to traffic flow along the I-526 mainline. Based on these results, SCDOT is proposing to carry the 8-lane mainline widening alternative forward for detailed analysis in the EIS.

Traffic analysis conducted for the Lowcountry Corridor West project has also concluded that improvements to the I-26/I-526 interchange and the following service interchanges are needed to improve operations on the interstate:

- North Rhett Avenue: extensive queues currently occur back onto the interstate
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- Paul Cantrell Boulevard: the intersection of Paul Cantrell and Magwood causes traffic to queue back on to the interstate during PM peak hour.

Based on the results of traffic analysis, SCDOT is proposing to evaluate improvements at the following interchanges for detailed evaluation in the EIS: I-26/I-526, North Rhett Avenue, Rivers Avenue, and Paul Cantrell Boulevard.

Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it will adhere to the One Federal Decision guidance and will be tracked on the federal permitting dashboard. Based on the One Federal Decision Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) issued April 9, 2018, we are asking for concurrence on the proposed alternatives to be carried forward for detailed analysis in the EIS. The proposed alternatives were presented at an agency alternatives workshop held on February 12, 2020 and Google Earth kmz files were provided for agency review via e-mail. The workshop presentation along with the kmz files are enclosed for your reference.

Per the One Federal Decision MOU, we want to ensure that your agency's needs are being met and that continued coordination throughout the project development and NEPA process facilitates your agency's ability to make timely and informed comments on the EIS. **Per the One Federal Decision MOU, please provide your response to this office within 10 business days, via electronic mail to Mr. J. Shane Belcher at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).** We ask that you contact FHWA as early as possible if you find that your agency will not be able to concur with or has issues with the proposed alternatives. This will allow FHWA to work out any issues with your agency prior to moving forward with detailed analysis.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or your agency's roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by email at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,

**J. Shane Belcher**

Digitally signed by J. Shane  
Belcher  
Date: 2020.03.12 17:01:41 -04'00'

(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

Enclosures

ec: Chad Long, SCDOT Director of Environmental Services  
Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager  
David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design Build Environmental Coordinator  
Jim Martin, FHWA Major Projects Engineer



# United States Department of the Interior



## NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Atlanta Federal Center  
1924 Building  
100 Alabama Street, SW  
Atlanta, GA 30303

IN REPLY REFER TO:

8.B. (SER-RPB)  
45-00691

April 6, 2020

Jeffrey Belcher  
Federal Highway Administration  
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Mr. Belcher:

This letter is in response to the March 12, 2020, correspondence from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT). In that correspondence you requested the National Park Service's (NPS) concurrence on the proposed alternatives to be carried forward for detailed evaluation for the proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina (Federal Project Number P027507).

As per the guidelines set forth in the Fast 41/One Federal Decision Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) issued on April 9, 2018, the NPS has completed our review of the documentation provided. We agree with SCDOT's proposed alternative to evaluate improvements at the following interchanges for detailed evaluation in the EIS: I-26/I-526, North Rhett Avenue, Rivers Avenue, and Paul Cantrell Boulevard.

In accordance with our August 12, 2019, letter, we continue to request that any potential impacts to areas under NPS jurisdiction or areas of expertise that are within the area of potential affect be addressed in the EIS. These areas include a Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) site (Highland Terrace Park), a Federal Lands to Parks (FLP) site (Ralph M. Hendricks Park), and two Heritage Areas (Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor and South Carolina National Heritage Corridor).

Thank you for the opportunity to review and provide comments. If you have questions or need additional information regarding LWCF, please contact Ms. Alexis H. John at (404) 507-5834 or at [alexis\\_john@nps.gov](mailto:alexis_john@nps.gov). If you have any other NPS questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Ms. Anita Barnett, Planning and Compliance Division, at (404) 507-5706 or [anita\\_barnett@nps.gov](mailto:anita_barnett@nps.gov).

Sincerely,

Robert A. Vogel  
Regional Director

INTERIOR REGION 2 • SOUTH ATLANTIC-GULF

ALABAMA, FLORIDA, GEORGIA, KENTUCKY, LOUISIANA, MISSISSIPPI

NORTH CAROLINA, PUERTO RICO, SOUTH CAROLINA, TENNESSEE, U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

cc:

Justin Hancock, Director, State Liaison Officer  
South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism

Anita Barnett, Planning and Compliance Division  
NPS Interior Region 2



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

March 12, 2020

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Mr. Mark Caldwell  
Deputy Field Supervisor  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services  
176 Croghan Spur Road, Suite 200  
Charleston, SC 29407

Subject: Request for Concurrence on the Proposed Alternatives to be Carried Forward for Detailed Evaluation for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Mr. Caldwell:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), plans to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard. The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline.

In 2013, SCDOT commissioned a study to develop a long-range plan to address the existing and future congestion and operational issues of the Interstate 526 (I-526) corridor in Charleston County. The purpose of the study was to look at potential improvement strategies for the corridor in a holistic manner and not just wholesale widening. Four categories of improvement strategies were considered, consisting of: Travel Demand Management (TDM) strategies, Modal strategies including Transit and Freight improvements, Traffic Operations strategies, and Capacity Improvement strategies.

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As part of the Lowcountry Corridor West project, SCDOT conducted a traffic analysis to determine the level of capacity improvements that were necessary to fulfill the purpose and need for the project using a design year of 2050. Two mainline widening alternatives (6-lane and 8-lane) were evaluated as part of the study (see attachment). The analysis shows that the 8-lane widening alternative would result in the greatest improvement to traffic flow along the I-526 mainline. Based on these results, SCDOT is proposing to carry the 8-lane mainline widening alternative forward for detailed analysis in the EIS.

Traffic analysis conducted for the Lowcountry Corridor West project has also concluded that improvements to the I-26/I-526 interchange and the following service interchanges are needed to improve operations on the interstate:

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Based on the results of traffic analysis, SCDOT is proposing to evaluate improvements at the following interchanges for detailed evaluation in the EIS: I-26/I-526, North Rhett Avenue, Rivers Avenue, and Paul Cantrell Boulevard.

Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it will adhere to the One Federal Decision guidance and will be tracked on the federal permitting dashboard. Based on the One Federal Decision Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) issued April 9, 2018, we are asking for concurrence on the proposed alternatives to be carried forward for detailed analysis in the EIS. The proposed alternatives were presented at an agency alternatives workshop held on February 12, 2020 and Google Earth kmz files were provided for agency review via e-mail. The workshop presentation along with the kmz files are enclosed for your reference.

Per the One Federal Decision MOU, we want to ensure that your agency's needs are being met and that continued coordination throughout the project development and NEPA process facilitates your agency's ability to make timely and informed comments on the EIS. **Per the One Federal Decision MOU, please provide your response to this office within 10 business days, via electronic mail to Mr. J. Shane Belcher at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).** We ask that you contact FHWA as early as possible if you find that your agency will not be able to concur with or has issues with the proposed alternatives. This will allow FHWA to work out any issues with your agency prior to moving forward with detailed analysis.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or your agency's roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by email at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,

**J. Shane Belcher**  
Digitally signed by J. Shane Belcher  
Date: 2020.03.12 17:04:33 -04'00'

(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

Enclosures



ec: Mr. Chad Long, SCDOT Director of Environmental Services  
Ms. Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager  
Mr. David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Mr. Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design Build Environmental Coordinator  
Mr. Jim Martin, FHWA Major Projects Engineer



# United States Department of the Interior



**FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE**  
176 Croghan Spur Road, Suite 200  
Charleston, South Carolina 29407

March 16, 2020

Ms. Emily Lawton  
Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration  
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, SC 29201

Attn: Jeffery Belcher

Re: Concurrence Points, I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Alternatives, Charleston County,  
South Carolina, FWS Log No. 2016-CPA-0062

Dear Ms. Lawton:

Pursuant to the Federal Highway Administration's request the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) provides concurrence on the selection of the proposed eight lane alternatives to be carried forward and analyzed in the Environmental Impact Statement for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor West project.

If the Service can be of further assistance to either the South Carolina Department of Transportation or the Federal Highway Administration in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me or the project's point of contact Mr. Mark Caldwell, who may be reached at (843) 300-0426, or by email: [mark\\_caldwell@fws.gov](mailto:mark_caldwell@fws.gov). Please reference FWS Log No. 2016-CPA-0062.

Sincerely,

  
Thomas D. McCoy  
Field Supervisor

TDM/MAC



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

March 12, 2020

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Mr. Joseph Wilkinson  
Review Coordinator for Transportation Projects  
SC Department of Archives and History  
8301 Parklane Road  
Columbia, SC 29223

Subject: Request for Concurrence on the Proposed Alternatives to be Carried Forward for Detailed Evaluation for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Mr. Wilkinson:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), plans to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard. The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline.

In 2013, SCDOT commissioned a study to develop a long-range plan to address the existing and future congestion and operational issues of the Interstate 526 (I-526) corridor in Charleston County. The purpose of the study was to look at potential improvement strategies for the corridor in a holistic manner and not just wholesale widening. Four categories of improvement strategies were considered, consisting of: Travel Demand Management (TDM) strategies, Modal strategies including Transit and Freight improvements, Traffic Operations strategies, and Capacity Improvement strategies.

The study concluded that capacity improvements along the I-526 corridor could be pushed back 5-10 years with implementation of all TDM and Modal strategies but capacity improvements would still be necessary. Project grouping strategies included the widening of I-526 from Paul Cantrell Boulevard to Rivers Avenue, as well as improving the I-26/I-526 interchange.

As part of the Lowcountry Corridor West project, SCDOT conducted a traffic analysis to determine the level of capacity improvements that were necessary to fulfill the purpose and need for the project using a design year of 2050. Two mainline widening alternatives (6-lane and 8-lane) were evaluated as part of the study (see attachment). The analysis shows that the 8-lane widening alternative would result in the greatest improvement to traffic flow along the I-526 mainline. Based on these results, SCDOT is proposing to carry the 8-lane mainline widening alternative forward for detailed analysis in the EIS.

Traffic analysis conducted for the Lowcountry Corridor West project has also concluded that improvements to the I-26/I-526 interchange and the following service interchanges are needed to improve operations on the interstate:

- North Rhett Avenue: extensive queues currently occur back onto the interstate
- Rivers Avenue: this interchange is closely spaced to the I-26/I-526 interchange and has an effect on its operation
- Paul Cantrell Boulevard: the intersection of Paul Cantrell and Magwood causes traffic to queue back on to the interstate during PM peak hour.

Based on the results of traffic analysis, SCDOT is proposing to evaluate improvements at the following interchanges for detailed evaluation in the EIS: I-26/I-526, North Rhett Avenue, Rivers Avenue, and Paul Cantrell Boulevard.

Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it will adhere to the One Federal Decision guidance and will be tracked on the federal permitting dashboard. Based on the One Federal Decision Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) issued April 9, 2018, we are asking for concurrence on the proposed alternatives to be carried forward for detailed analysis in the EIS. The proposed alternatives were presented at an agency alternatives workshop held on February 12, 2020 and Google Earth kmz files were provided for agency review via e-mail. The workshop presentation along with the kmz files are enclosed for your reference.

Per the One Federal Decision MOU, we want to ensure that your agency's needs are being met and that continued coordination throughout the project development and NEPA process facilitates your agency's ability to make timely and informed comments on the EIS. **Per the One Federal Decision MOU, please provide your response to this office within 10 business days, via electronic mail to Mr. J. Shane Belcher at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).** We ask that you contact FHWA as early as possible if you find that your agency will not be able to concur with or has issues with the proposed alternatives. This will allow FHWA to work out any issues with your agency prior to moving forward with detailed analysis.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or your agency's roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by email at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,

**J. Shane Belcher**  Digitally signed by J. Shane Belcher  
Date: 2020.03.12 17:45:32 -04'00'

(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

Enclosures

ec: Chad Long, SCDOT Director of Environmental Services  
Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager  
David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design Build Environmental Coordinator  
Jim Martin, FHWA Major Projects Engineer



April 2, 2020

Mr. Shane Belcher  
Federal Highways Administration  
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, SC 29201

Subject: Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements, Alternatives for  
Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)  
Charleston County, South Carolina  
SHPO Project No.:19-JW0014 Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Shane Belcher:

We received your letter of March 12 requesting concurrence with the proposed alternatives to be carried forward for detailed evaluation in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements. Thank you for providing a time extension for a response. We previously received a cultural resources survey as supporting documentation for this undertaking, as well as participated in regular agency coordination efforts over the past year. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) is providing comments to the Federal Highways Administration pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and its implementing regulations, 36 CFR 800. Consultation with the SHPO is not a substitution for consultation with Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, other Native American tribes, local governments, or the public.

The proposed project as described in your letter “would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard. The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline.”

We concur with the proposed alternatives to be carried forward in the EIS for this project.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. Please refer to SHPO Project No. 19-JW0014 in future correspondence regarding this project. If you have any questions about our comments please contact me at [ejohnson@scdah.sc.gov](mailto:ejohnson@scdah.sc.gov), 803-896-6168.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth M. Johnson  
Director, Historical Services, D-SHPO  
State Historic Preservation Office



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

March 16, 2020

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Ms. Heather Preston  
Director, Water Quality  
SC Department of Health & Environmental Control  
ATTN: Chuck Hightower  
2600 Bull Street  
Columbia, SC 29201

**Subject:** Request for Concurrence on the Proposed Alternatives to be Carried Forward for Detailed Evaluation for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Ms. Preston:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), plans to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard. The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline.

In 2013, SCDOT commissioned a study to develop a long-range plan to address the existing and future congestion and operational issues of the Interstate 526 (I-526) corridor in Charleston County. The purpose of the study was to look at potential improvement strategies for the corridor in a holistic manner and not just wholesale widening. Four categories of improvement strategies were considered, consisting of: Travel Demand Management (TDM) strategies, Modal strategies including Transit and Freight improvements, Traffic Operations strategies, and Capacity Improvement strategies.

The study concluded that capacity improvements along the I-526 corridor could be pushed back 5-10 years with implementation of all TDM and Modal strategies but capacity improvements would still be necessary. Project grouping strategies included the widening of I-526 from Paul Cantrell Boulevard to Rivers Avenue, as well as improving the I-26/I-526 interchange.

As part of the Lowcountry Corridor West project, SCDOT conducted a traffic analysis to determine the level of capacity improvements that were necessary to fulfill the purpose and need for the project using a design year of 2050. Two mainline widening alternatives (6-lane and 8-lane) were evaluated as part of the study (see attachment). The analysis shows that the 8-lane widening alternative would result in the greatest improvement to traffic flow along the I-526



mainline. Based on these results, SCDOT is proposing to carry the 8-lane mainline widening alternative forward for detailed analysis in the EIS.

Traffic analysis conducted for the Lowcountry Corridor West project has also concluded that improvements to the I-26/I-526 interchange and the following service interchanges are needed to improve operations on the interstate:

- North Rhett Avenue: extensive queues currently occur back onto the interstate
- Rivers Avenue: this interchange is closely spaced to the I-26/I-526 interchange and has an effect on its operation
- Paul Cantrell Boulevard: the intersection of Paul Cantrell and Magwood causes traffic to queue back on to the interstate during PM peak hour.

Based on the results of traffic analysis, SCDOT is proposing to evaluate improvements at the following interchanges for detailed evaluation in the EIS: I-26/I-526, North Rhett Avenue, Rivers Avenue, and Paul Cantrell Boulevard.

Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it will adhere to the One Federal Decision guidance and will be tracked on the federal permitting dashboard. Based on the One Federal Decision Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) issued April 9, 2018, we are asking for concurrence on the proposed alternatives to be carried forward for detailed analysis in the EIS. The proposed alternatives were presented at an agency alternatives workshop held on February 12, 2020 and Google Earth kmz files were provided for agency review via e-mail. The workshop presentation along with the kmz files are enclosed for your reference.

Per the One Federal Decision MOU, we want to ensure that your agency's needs are being met and that continued coordination throughout the project development and NEPA process facilitates your agency's ability to make timely and informed comments on the EIS. **Per the One Federal Decision MOU, please provide your response to this office within 10 business days, via electronic mail to Mr. J. Shane Belcher at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).** We ask that you contact FHWA as early as possible if you find that your agency will not be able to concur with or has issues with the proposed alternatives. This will allow FHWA to work out any issues with your agency prior to moving forward with detailed analysis.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or your agency's roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by email at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,

**J. Shane Belcher**

Digitally signed by J. Shane  
Belcher  
Date: 2020.03.16 10:28:28 -04'00'

(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

Enclosures

ec: Chad Long, SCDOT Director of Environmental Services  
Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager  
David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design Build Environmental Coordinator  
Jim Martin, FHWA Major Projects Engineer



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

March 12, 2020

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Mr. Blair Williams  
Critical Area Permitting Mgr.  
SCDHEC-OCRM  
1362 McMillan Ave., Suite 400  
Charleston, SC 29405

Subject: Request for Concurrence on the Proposed Alternatives to be Carried Forward for Detailed Evaluation for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Mr. Williams:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), plans to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard. The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline.

In 2013, SCDOT commissioned a study to develop a long-range plan to address the existing and future congestion and operational issues of the Interstate 526 (I-526) corridor in Charleston County. The purpose of the study was to look at potential improvement strategies for the corridor in a holistic manner and not just wholesale widening. Four categories of improvement strategies were considered, consisting of: Travel Demand Management (TDM) strategies, Modal strategies including Transit and Freight improvements, Traffic Operations strategies, and Capacity Improvement strategies.

The study concluded that capacity improvements along the I-526 corridor could be pushed back 5-10 years with implementation of all TDM and Modal strategies but capacity improvements would still be necessary. Project grouping strategies included the widening of I-526 from Paul Cantrell Boulevard to Rivers Avenue, as well as improving the I-26/I-526 interchange.

As part of the Lowcountry Corridor West project, SCDOT conducted a traffic analysis to determine the level of capacity improvements that were necessary to fulfill the purpose and need for the project using a design year of 2050. Two mainline widening alternatives (6-lane and 8-lane) were evaluated as part of the study (see attachment). The analysis shows that the 8-lane widening alternative would result in the greatest improvement to traffic flow along the I-526 mainline. Based on these results, SCDOT is proposing to carry the 8-lane mainline widening alternative forward for detailed analysis in the EIS.

Traffic analysis conducted for the Lowcountry Corridor West project has also concluded that improvements to the I-26/I-526 interchange and the following service interchanges are needed to improve operations on the interstate:

- North Rhett Avenue: extensive queues currently occur back onto the interstate
- Rivers Avenue: this interchange is closely spaced to the I-26/I-526 interchange and has an effect on its operation
- Paul Cantrell Boulevard: the intersection of Paul Cantrell and Magwood causes traffic to queue back on to the interstate during PM peak hour.

Based on the results of traffic analysis, SCDOT is proposing to evaluate improvements at the following interchanges for detailed evaluation in the EIS: I-26/I-526, North Rhett Avenue, Rivers Avenue, and Paul Cantrell Boulevard.

Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it will adhere to the One Federal Decision guidance and will be tracked on the federal permitting dashboard. Based on the One Federal Decision Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) issued April 9, 2018, we are asking for concurrence on the proposed alternatives to be carried forward for detailed analysis in the EIS. The proposed alternatives were presented at an agency alternatives workshop held on February 12, 2020 and Google Earth kmz files were provided for agency review via e-mail. The workshop presentation along with the kmz files are enclosed for your reference.

Per the One Federal Decision MOU, we want to ensure that your agency's needs are being met and that continued coordination throughout the project development and NEPA process facilitates your agency's ability to make timely and informed comments on the EIS. **Per the One Federal Decision MOU, please provide your response to this office within 10 business days, via electronic mail to Mr. J. Shane Belcher at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).** We ask that you contact FHWA as early as possible if you find that your agency will not be able to concur with or has issues with the proposed alternatives. This will allow FHWA to work out any issues with your agency prior to moving forward with detailed analysis.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or your agency's roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by email at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,

**J. Shane Belcher**

Digitally signed by J. Shane  
Belcher  
Date: 2020.03.12 17:38:59 -04'00'

(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

Enclosures

ec: Chad Long, SCDOT Director of Environmental Services  
Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager  
David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design Build Environmental Coordinator  
Jim Martin, FHWA Major Projects Engineer



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

March 12, 2020

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Ms. Susan Davis  
Coastal Environmental Coordinator  
SC Department of Natural Resources  
217 Fort Johnson Road  
Charleston, SC 29412-9110

Subject: Request for Concurrence on the Proposed Alternatives to be Carried Forward for Detailed Evaluation for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Ms. Davis:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), plans to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard. The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline.

In 2013, SCDOT commissioned a study to develop a long-range plan to address the existing and future congestion and operational issues of the Interstate 526 (I-526) corridor in Charleston County. The purpose of the study was to look at potential improvement strategies for the corridor in a holistic manner and not just wholesale widening. Four categories of improvement strategies were considered, consisting of: Travel Demand Management (TDM) strategies, Modal strategies including Transit and Freight improvements, Traffic Operations strategies, and Capacity Improvement strategies.

The study concluded that capacity improvements along the I-526 corridor could be pushed back 5-10 years with implementation of all TDM and Modal strategies but capacity improvements would still be necessary. Project grouping strategies included the widening of I-526 from Paul Cantrell Boulevard to Rivers Avenue, as well as improving the I-26/I-526 interchange.

As part of the Lowcountry Corridor West project, SCDOT conducted a traffic analysis to determine the level of capacity improvements that were necessary to fulfill the purpose and need for the project using a design year of 2050. Two mainline widening alternatives (6-lane and 8-lane) were evaluated as part of the study (see attachment). The analysis shows that the 8-lane widening alternative would result in the greatest improvement to traffic flow along the I-526 mainline. Based on these results, SCDOT is proposing to carry the 8-lane mainline widening alternative forward for detailed analysis in the EIS.

Traffic analysis conducted for the Lowcountry Corridor West project has also concluded that improvements to the I-26/I-526 interchange and the following service interchanges are needed to improve operations on the interstate:

- North Rhett Avenue: extensive queues currently occur back onto the interstate
- Rivers Avenue: this interchange is closely spaced to the I-26/I-526 interchange and has an effect on its operation
- Paul Cantrell Boulevard: the intersection of Paul Cantrell and Magwood causes traffic to queue back on to the interstate during PM peak hour.

Based on the results of traffic analysis, SCDOT is proposing to evaluate improvements at the following interchanges for detailed evaluation in the EIS: I-26/I-526, North Rhett Avenue, Rivers Avenue, and Paul Cantrell Boulevard.

Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it will adhere to the One Federal Decision guidance and will be tracked on the federal permitting dashboard. Based on the One Federal Decision Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) issued April 9, 2018, we are asking for concurrence on the proposed alternatives to be carried forward for detailed analysis in the EIS. The proposed alternatives were presented at an agency alternatives workshop held on February 12, 2020 and Google Earth kmz files were provided for agency review via e-mail. The workshop presentation along with the kmz files are enclosed for your reference.

Per the One Federal Decision MOU, we want to ensure that your agency's needs are being met and that continued coordination throughout the project development and NEPA process facilitates your agency's ability to make timely and informed comments on the EIS. **Per the One Federal Decision MOU, please provide your response to this office within 10 business days, via electronic mail to Mr. J. Shane Belcher at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).** We ask that you contact FHWA as early as possible if you find that your agency will not be able to concur with or has issues with the proposed alternatives. This will allow FHWA to work out any issues with your agency prior to moving forward with detailed analysis.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or your agency's roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by email at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,

**J. Shane Belcher**

Digitally signed by J. Shane  
Belcher  
Date: 2020.03.12 16:59:57 -04'00'

(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

Enclosures



ec: Chad Long, SCDOT Director of Environmental Services  
Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager  
David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design Build Environmental Coordinator  
Jim Martin, FHWA Major Projects Engineer

# South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

PO Box 12559  
Charleston, SC 29422  
843.953.9003 Office  
843.953.9399 Fax  
[Daviss@dnr.sc.gov](mailto:Daviss@dnr.sc.gov)



Robert H. Boyles, Jr.  
Director  
Lorianne Riffin  
Director, Office of  
Environmental Programs

March 19, 2020

Mr. J. Shane Belcher  
USDOT  
Federal Highway Administration  
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, SC 29201

Re: Request for Concurrence on the Proposed Alternatives to be Carried Forward for Detailed Evaluation for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Mr. Belcher:

The SCDNR understands that as part of the Lowcountry Corridor West project, SCDOT conducted a traffic analysis to determine the level of capacity improvements that were necessary to fulfill the purpose and need for the project using a design year of 2050. SCDOT is proposing to carry the 8-lane mainline widening alternative forward for detailed analysis in the EIS. SCDOT is also proposing to evaluate improvements at the following interchanges for detailed evaluation in the EIS: I-26/I-526, North Rhett Avenue, Rivers Avenue, and Paul Cantrell Boulevard.

Based on the One Federal Decision Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) issued April 9, 2018, the SCDNR is providing concurrence on the proposed alternatives. After a thorough review, the SCDNR concurs that the proposed alternatives represent a reasonable set of alternatives to be carried forward for detailed analysis in the EIS.

The SCDNR appreciates the opportunity to participate in the review of this project and provide comments. Please feel free to contact me as you deem necessary regarding this project. I can be reached by email at [daviss@dnr.sc.gov](mailto:daviss@dnr.sc.gov) or by phone at 843-953-9003.

Sincerely,

*Susan F. Davis*

Susan F. Davis  
Coastal Environmental Coordinator



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

March 12, 2020

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Ms. Alya Singh-White  
Life Scientist/Biologist  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
61 Forsyth Street, SW 9T25  
Atlanta, GA 30303-8960

Subject: Request for Concurrence on the Proposed Alternatives to be Carried Forward for Detailed Evaluation for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Ms. Singh-White:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), plans to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard. The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline.

In 2013, SCDOT commissioned a study to develop a long-range plan to address the existing and future congestion and operational issues of the Interstate 526 (I-526) corridor in Charleston County. The purpose of the study was to look at potential improvement strategies for the corridor in a holistic manner and not just wholesale widening. Four categories of improvement strategies were considered, consisting of: Travel Demand Management (TDM) strategies, Modal strategies including Transit and Freight improvements, Traffic Operations strategies, and Capacity Improvement strategies.

The study concluded that capacity improvements along the I-526 corridor could be pushed back 5-10 years with implementation of all TDM and Modal strategies but capacity improvements would still be necessary. Project grouping strategies included the widening of I-526 from Paul Cantrell Boulevard to Rivers Avenue, as well as improving the I-26/I-526 interchange.

As part of the Lowcountry Corridor West project, SCDOT conducted a traffic analysis to determine the level of capacity improvements that were necessary to fulfill the purpose and need for the project using a design year of 2050. Two mainline widening alternatives (6-lane and 8-lane) were evaluated as part of the study (see attachment). The analysis shows that the 8-lane widening alternative would result in the greatest improvement to traffic flow along the I-526 mainline. Based on these results, SCDOT is proposing to carry the 8-lane mainline widening alternative forward for detailed analysis in the EIS.

Traffic analysis conducted for the Lowcountry Corridor West project has also concluded that improvements to the I-26/I-526 interchange and the following service interchanges are needed to improve operations on the interstate:

- North Rhett Avenue: extensive queues currently occur back onto the interstate
- Rivers Avenue: this interchange is closely spaced to the I-26/I-526 interchange and has an effect on its operation
- Paul Cantrell Boulevard: the intersection of Paul Cantrell and Magwood causes traffic to queue back on to the interstate during PM peak hour.

Based on the results of traffic analysis, SCDOT is proposing to evaluate improvements at the following interchanges for detailed evaluation in the EIS: I-26/I-526, North Rhett Avenue, Rivers Avenue, and Paul Cantrell Boulevard.

Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it will adhere to the One Federal Decision guidance and will be tracked on the federal permitting dashboard. Based on the One Federal Decision Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) issued April 9, 2018, we are asking for concurrence on the proposed alternatives to be carried forward for detailed analysis in the EIS. The proposed alternatives were presented at an agency alternatives workshop held on February 12, 2020 and Google Earth kmz files were provided for agency review via e-mail. The workshop presentation along with the kmz files are enclosed for your reference.

Per the One Federal Decision MOU, we want to ensure that your agency's needs are being met and that continued coordination throughout the project development and NEPA process facilitates your agency's ability to make timely and informed comments on the EIS. **Per the One Federal Decision MOU, please provide your response to this office within 10 business days, via electronic mail to Mr. J. Shane Belcher at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).** We ask that you contact FHWA as early as possible if you find that your agency will not be able to concur with or has issues with the proposed alternatives. This will allow FHWA to work out any issues with your agency prior to moving forward with detailed analysis.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or your agency's roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by email at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,

**J. Shane Belcher**

Digitally signed by J. Shane  
Belcher  
Date: 2020.03.12 17:00:33 -04'00'

(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

Enclosures

ec: Chad Long, SCDOT Director of Environmental Services  
Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager  
David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design Build Environmental Coordinator  
Jim Martin, FHWA Major Projects Engineer

**From:** [Singh-White, Alya](#)  
**To:** [Belcher, Jeffrey \(FHWA\)](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Follow up to Agency Workshop  
**Date:** Wednesday, April 08, 2020 3:40:40 PM

---

Shane,

My apologies, for the confusion on my part. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has reviewed the proposed alternatives to be carried forward for additional screening/evaluation for the proposed I-526 West Lowcountry EIS. The Agency understands the presented alternatives and has been vocal regarding direct Environmental Justice Community impacts. Due to ROW relocation impacts, the following EJ impacts are anticipated: 27-51 Apartment Units, 18-30 Duplexes, 38 Single-family Homes, 47 Mobile Homes, 2 Community Centers, and 1-2 Churches, totaling 133-170 relocations.

FHWA has kept a running log of EJ related activities/outreach, and provides monthly updates to that log that is shared with EPA. I look forward to continuing our work together.

Sincerely,

Alya Singh-White  
Life Scientist / Biologist  
National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Section  
Strategic Programs Office  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency | Region 4  
61 Forsyth St SW  
Atlanta, GA 30303  
(404)-562-9339 | [singh-white.alya@epa.gov](mailto:singh-white.alya@epa.gov)



---

**From:** Belcher, Jeffrey (FHWA) <Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 8, 2020 12:07 PM  
**To:** Singh-White, Alya <Singh-White.Alya@epa.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Follow up to Agency Workshop

Alya,

I couldn't open your attachment, but I attached what I believe you sent. I believe what you are referring to was your review of the P&N chapter for the DEIS. That review was not a concurrence but just an opportunity for agencies to review draft portions of the DEIS as it's being written. It only contained the project introduction and the info to support the need for the project, no alternatives analysis. As a follow-up to our alternatives workshop that was held for the agencies on Feb 12, we asked for concurrence on the reasonable alternatives to move forward for detailed study in the EIS. That went out on 3/12/20 and is attached. I also sent out an extension for concurrence on 3/26/20 (attached).

We have 4 concurrence points built into our process. Permitting/Milestone Timetable, P&N, Reasonable Alternatives, and Preferred Alternative. We are at concurrence point 3. EPA has

provided concurrence on the Permitting Timetable and the P&N.

Give me a call if you need to discuss.

*J. Shane Belcher*

*Environmental Specialist*

*Federal Highway Administration*

*1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270*

*Columbia, SC 29201*

*Phone: 803-253-3187*

*Fax: 803-253-3989*

*The content of this email is confidential and intended for the recipient specified in message only.*

---

**From:** Singh-White, Alya [<mailto:Singh-White.Alya@epa.gov>]

**Sent:** Wednesday, April 08, 2020 11:12 AM

**To:** Belcher, Jeffrey (FHWA) <[Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov)>

**Subject:** FW: Follow up to Agency Workshop

Hi Shane,

I should have cc'd you on this last month when I sent it, as I presumed it served as concurrence on the Chapter 1 and 2 (P&N) including the alternatives which are detailed in the document. Does this not suffice as concurrence?

Alya Singh-White

Life Scientist / Biologist

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Section

Strategic Programs Office

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency | Region 4

61 Forsyth St SW

Atlanta, GA 30303

(404)-562-9339 | [singh-white.alya@epa.gov](mailto:singh-white.alya@epa.gov)



---

**From:** McGoldrick, Will <[McGoldriWR@scdot.org](mailto:McGoldriWR@scdot.org)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, March 10, 2020 11:33 AM

**To:** Singh-White, Alya <[Singh-White.Alya@epa.gov](mailto:Singh-White.Alya@epa.gov)>

**Subject:** Re: Follow up to Agency Workshop

Thank you Alya. Have a pleasant day.

Will McGoldrick | DB Env. Coordinator



SCDOT Environmental Services Office  
Mobile Reply

On Mar 10, 2020, at 11:19 AM, Singh-White, Alya <[singh-white.alya@epa.gov](mailto:singh-white.alya@epa.gov)> wrote:

\*\*\* This is an EXTERNAL email. Please do not click on a link or open any attachments unless you are confident it is from a trusted source. \*\*\*

Good Morning Will,  
The EPA has no objections to Chapter 1 (Introduction) and 2 (Purpose and Need) of the I-526 DEIS.

Sincerely,  
Alya Singh-White  
Life Scientist / Biologist  
National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Section  
Strategic Programs Office  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency | Region 4  
61 Forsyth St SW  
Atlanta, GA 30303  
(404)-562-9339 | [singh-white.alya@epa.gov](mailto:singh-white.alya@epa.gov)

<image001.jpg>

---

**From:** McGoldrick, Will <[McGoldriWR@scdot.org](mailto:McGoldriWR@scdot.org)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 20, 2020 11:54 AM  
**To:** [alexis\\_john@nps.gov](mailto:alexis_john@nps.gov); Amanda Chandler  
<[amanda.chandler@threeoaksengineering.com](mailto:amanda.chandler@threeoaksengineering.com)>; Amanda.L.Heath  
([Amanda.L.Heath@usace.army.mil](mailto:Amanda.L.Heath@usace.army.mil)) <[Amanda.L.Heath@usace.army.mil](mailto:Amanda.L.Heath@usace.army.mil)>; Andrew  
Herndon ([andrew.herndon@noaa.gov](mailto:andrew.herndon@noaa.gov)) <[andrew.herndon@noaa.gov](mailto:andrew.herndon@noaa.gov)>;  
[bbarnes@estoo.net](mailto:bbarnes@estoo.net); [bob\\_vogel@nps.gov](mailto:bob_vogel@nps.gov); [BoylesR@dnr.sc.gov](mailto:BoylesR@dnr.sc.gov);  
[caitlinh@ccppcrafts.com](mailto:caitlinh@ccppcrafts.com); Chris Stout ([stoutcm@dhec.sc.gov](mailto:stoutcm@dhec.sc.gov)) <[stoutcm@dhec.sc.gov](mailto:stoutcm@dhec.sc.gov)>;  
[clowe@mcn-nsn.gov](mailto:clowe@mcn-nsn.gov); Cynthia Cooksey ([cynthia.cooksey@noaa.gov](mailto:cynthia.cooksey@noaa.gov))  
<[cynthia.cooksey@noaa.gov](mailto:cynthia.cooksey@noaa.gov)>; [daviss@dnr.sc.gov](mailto:daviss@dnr.sc.gov); Elizabeth Johnson  
([ejohnson@scdah.sc.gov](mailto:ejohnson@scdah.sc.gov)) ([ejohnson@scdah.sc.gov](mailto:ejohnson@scdah.sc.gov)) <[ejohnson@scdah.sc.gov](mailto:ejohnson@scdah.sc.gov)>; Geni  
Theriot <[geni.theriot@threeoaksengineering.com](mailto:geni.theriot@threeoaksengineering.com)>;  
[Heather.Robbins@threeoaksengineering.com](mailto:Heather.Robbins@threeoaksengineering.com); [hightocw@dhec.sc.gov](mailto:hightocw@dhec.sc.gov); Hoke, Joshua D.  
([HokeJD@dhec.sc.gov](mailto:HokeJD@dhec.sc.gov)) <[HokeJD@dhec.sc.gov](mailto:HokeJD@dhec.sc.gov)>; [jaclyn.daly@noaa.gov](mailto:jaclyn.daly@noaa.gov);  
[jhancock@scprt.com](mailto:jhancock@scprt.com); Laycock, Kelly <[Laycock.Kelly@epa.gov](mailto:Laycock.Kelly@epa.gov)>; Kelly, David P.  
<[KellyDP@scdot.org](mailto:KellyDP@scdot.org)>; [kelly.shotts@noaa.gov](mailto:kelly.shotts@noaa.gov); Long, Chad C. <[LongCC@scdot.org](mailto:LongCC@scdot.org)>;  
[lwendt@mcn-nsn.gov](mailto:lwendt@mcn-nsn.gov); [Mark\\_Caldwell@fws.gov](mailto:Mark_Caldwell@fws.gov); Martin, Jim - FHWA  
<[james.martin@dot.gov](mailto:james.martin@dot.gov)>; Mims, Christopher D SAC  
<[Christopher.D.Mims@usace.army.mil](mailto:Christopher.D.Mims@usace.army.mil)>; [mixong@dnr.sc.gov](mailto:mixong@dnr.sc.gov);  
[noah.silverman@noaa.gov](mailto:noah.silverman@noaa.gov); [pace.wilber@noaa.gov](mailto:pace.wilber@noaa.gov); Randall Overton  
([Randall.D.Overton@uscg.mil](mailto:Randall.D.Overton@uscg.mil)) <[Randall.D.Overton@uscg.mil](mailto:Randall.D.Overton@uscg.mil)>;  
[richard.fickley@noaa.gov](mailto:richard.fickley@noaa.gov); Riggin Lori Ann ([RigginL@dnr.sc.gov](mailto:RigginL@dnr.sc.gov))

<'RigginL@dnr.sc.gov'; Riley, Joy S. <[RileyJ@scdot.org](mailto:RileyJ@scdot.org)>; Russell Chandler  
<[russell.chandler@threeoaksengineering.com](mailto:russell.chandler@threeoaksengineering.com)>; Shane Belcher - US FHWA  
([Jeffrey.Belcher@fhwa.dot.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.Belcher@fhwa.dot.gov)) <[Jeffrey.Belcher@fhwa.dot.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.Belcher@fhwa.dot.gov)>; Singh-White, Alya  
<[Singh-White.Alya@epa.gov](mailto:Singh-White.Alya@epa.gov)>; Stacie Crowe <'CroweS@dnr.sc.gov'; Tess Trumbull  
[trumbumt@dhc.sc.gov](mailto:trumbumt@dhc.sc.gov) <[trumbumt@dhc.sc.gov](mailto:trumbumt@dhc.sc.gov)>; [thomas\\_mccoy@fws.gov](mailto:thomas_mccoy@fws.gov); Tom  
Daniel ([danielt@dnr.sc.gov](mailto:danielt@dnr.sc.gov)) <[danielt@dnr.sc.gov](mailto:danielt@dnr.sc.gov)>; [wenonahh@ccppcrafts.com](mailto:wenonahh@ccppcrafts.com);  
[jwilkinson@scdah.sc.gov](mailto:jwilkinson@scdah.sc.gov); [williabn@dhc.sc.gov](mailto:williabn@dhc.sc.gov)

**Subject:** Follow up to Agency Workshop

All,

There were several action items from the Agency Workshop to be completed. I've sent out Chapters 1 and 2 drafts for comment and kmzs as requested. Please find attached the remaining items: workshop attendance and summary, copy of the updated presentation, and the comment log containing a list of all comments received from the public information meeting. There are several tabs in the spreadsheet so be sure to peruse carefully. This should complete the action items as listed in the summary PDF. Please let me know if you have any comments or questions.

Respectfully,

Will McGoldrick  
Design-Build Environmental Coordinator  
SCDOT  
955 Park St Rm 506  
Columbia SC 29202-0191  
(o) 803-737-1326



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

March 12, 2020

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Dr. Roy E. Crabtree  
Regional Administrator SERO  
NOAA Fisheries  
ATTN: Mr. Noah Silverman  
263 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South  
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

**Subject:** Request for Concurrence on the Proposed Alternatives to be Carried Forward for Detailed Evaluation for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Dr. Crabtree:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), plans to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard. The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline.

In 2013, SCDOT commissioned a study to develop a long-range plan to address the existing and future congestion and operational issues of the Interstate 526 (I-526) corridor in Charleston County. The purpose of the study was to look at potential improvement strategies for the corridor in a holistic manner and not just wholesale widening. Four categories of improvement strategies were considered, consisting of: Travel Demand Management (TDM) strategies, Modal strategies including Transit and Freight improvements, Traffic Operations strategies, and Capacity Improvement strategies.

The study concluded that capacity improvements along the I-526 corridor could be pushed back 5-10 years with implementation of all TDM and Modal strategies but capacity improvements would still be necessary. Project grouping strategies included the widening of I-526 from Paul Cantrell Boulevard to Rivers Avenue, as well as improving the I-26/I-526 interchange.

As part of the Lowcountry Corridor West project, SCDOT conducted a traffic analysis to determine the level of capacity improvements that were necessary to fulfill the purpose and need for the project using a design year of 2050. Two mainline widening alternatives (6-lane and 8-lane) were evaluated as part of the study (see attachment). The analysis shows that the 8-lane widening alternative would result in the greatest improvement to traffic flow along the I-526

mainline. Based on these results, SCDOT is proposing to carry the 8-lane mainline widening alternative forward for detailed analysis in the EIS.

Traffic analysis conducted for the Lowcountry Corridor West project has also concluded that improvements to the I-26/I-526 interchange and the following service interchanges are needed to improve operations on the interstate:

- North Rhett Avenue: extensive queues currently occur back onto the interstate
- Rivers Avenue: this interchange is closely spaced to the I-26/526 interchange and has an effect on its operation
- Paul Cantrell Boulevard: the intersection of Paul Cantrell and Magwood causes traffic to queue back on to the interstate during PM peak hour.

Based on the results of traffic analysis, SCDOT is proposing to evaluate improvements at the following interchanges for detailed evaluation in the EIS: I-26/I-526, North Rhett Avenue, Rivers Avenue, and Paul Cantrell Boulevard.

Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it will adhere to the One Federal Decision guidance and will be tracked on the federal permitting dashboard. Based on the One Federal Decision Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) issued April 9, 2018, we are asking for concurrence on the proposed alternatives to be carried forward for detailed analysis in the EIS. The proposed alternatives were presented at an agency alternatives workshop held on February 12, 2020 and Google Earth kmz files were provided for agency review via e-mail. The workshop presentation along with the kmz files are enclosed for your reference.

Per the One Federal Decision MOU, we want to ensure that your agency's needs are being met and that continued coordination throughout the project development and NEPA process facilitates your agency's ability to make timely and informed comments on the EIS. **Per the One Federal Decision MOU, please provide your response to this office within 10 business days, via electronic mail to Mr. J. Shane Belcher at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).** We ask that you contact FHWA as early as possible if you find that your agency will not be able to concur with or has issues with the proposed alternatives. This will allow FHWA to work out any issues with your agency prior to moving forward with detailed analysis.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or your agency's roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by email at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,

**J. Shane Belcher**

Digitally signed by J. Shane  
Belcher  
Date: 2020.03.12 17:01:10 -04'00'

(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

Enclosures

ec: Chad Long, SCDOT Director of Environmental Services  
Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager  
David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design Build Environmental Coordinator  
Jim Martin, FHWA Major Projects Engineer



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
**NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE**  
Southeast Regional Office  
263 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South  
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505  
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/region/southeast>

03/23/2020

F:SER/NS

Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator  
US Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration  
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Attention: J. Shane Belcher, Chad Long, Joy Riley, David Kelly, Will McGoldrick, Jim Martin

**Re: Request for Concurrence on the Proposed Alternatives to be carried forward for detailed evaluation for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507**

Dear Ms. Lawton:

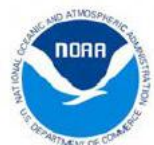
NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has received your letter dated March 12, 2020, requesting our concurrence pursuant to the One Federal Decision Memorandum of Understanding on the alternatives to be carried forward for analysis in the EIS on the proposed on the proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. After reviewing the information you've provided, including details provided during inter-agency meetings and conference calls, we do not have any concerns with your range of alternatives, and as such we concur. If the project scope, and/or new alternatives are added then we would appreciate the opportunity to review those changes/additions.

Sincerely,

**CRABTREE.ROY.** Digitally signed by  
**E.DR.1365849559** CRABTREE.ROY.E.DR.1365849  
559  
Date: 2020.03.23 11:38:28 -0400

Roy E. Crabtree, Ph.D.  
Regional Administrator

cc: NOAA: NOAA NEPA  
F: NMFS HQ NEPA  
F/SER: Strelcheck, Blough, Silverman  
F/SER3: Bernhart, Shotts, Herndon  
F/SER4: Fay, Dale, Wilber, Cooksey





U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

June 3, 2020

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Ms. Amanda Heath  
Chief, Special Projects Branch  
Charleston District  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
ATTN: Dr. Richard L. Darden  
69A Hagood Avenue  
Charleston, SC 29403

Subject: Request for Concurrence on the Proposed Preferred Alternative to be Carried Forward for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Ms. Heath:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor West Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Paul Cantrell Boulevard to Virginia Avenue in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Paul Cantrell Boulevard to Virginia Avenue. The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline.

Reasonable alternatives for detailed study in the Draft EIS were developed and presented to the cooperating and participating agencies in February 2020 during an agency alternatives workshop. The Reasonable Alternatives were then further evaluated based on their ability to meet the project's Purpose and Need and project impacts. Concurrence or lack of objection on the Reasonable Alternatives was received from the cooperating and participating agencies in April 2020.

Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it is adhering to the One Federal Decision guidance and is being tracked on the federal permitting dashboard. Based on the One Federal Decision Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) issued April 9, 2018, we are asking for concurrence on the proposed preferred alternative to be carried forward in the Draft EIS. "Concurrence" for purposes of the MOU means confirmation by the agency that the

information is sufficient for that stage, and the environmental review process may proceed to the next stage of the NEPA process. The proposed preferred alternative was presented at the monthly agency meeting held on May 14, 2020. A presentation outlining the decision-making process for the preferred alternative and a Google Earth kmz file depicting the proposed preferred alternative were provided for review in advance of and after the meeting. The presentation along with the kmz file are enclosed for your reference.

Per the One Federal Decision MOU, we want to ensure that your agency's needs are being met and that continued coordination throughout the project development and NEPA process facilitates your agency's ability to make timely and informed comments on the EIS. **Per the One Federal Decision MOU, please provide your response to this office within 10 business days, via electronic mail to Mr. J. Shane Belcher at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).** We ask that you contact FHWA as early as possible if you find that your agency will not be able to concur with or has issues with the proposed alternative. This will allow FHWA to work out any issues with your agency prior to moving forward.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or your agency's roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by email at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,

**J. Shane Belcher**

Digitally signed by J. Shane  
Belcher  
Date: 2020.06.04 11:01:25 -04'00'

(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

Enclosures

ec: Chad Long, SCDOT Director of Environmental Services  
Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager  
David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design Build Environmental Coordinator  
Jim Martin, FHWA Major Projects Engineer





**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
CHARLESTON DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
69A HAGOOD AVENUE  
CHARLESTON, SC 29403

19 June 2020

Regulatory Division

U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration  
Attn: Ms. Emily O. Lawton  
1835 Assembly Street Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
[jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov)

Re: Concurrence on the Lead Agency Preferred Alternative  
I-526 Lowcountry Corridor West Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)  
Charleston County, South Carolina  
Federal Project Number P027507; SAC 2019-00593

Dear Ms. Lawton:

This letter constitutes the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District's (Corps) response to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) electronically mailed request dated June 3, 2020, and received on June 4, 2020, requesting concurrence within 10 business days on the preferred alternative for the proposed I-526 Lowcountry Corridor West Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The multi-agency Memorandum of Understanding Implementing One Federal Decision under Executive Order 13807 (MOU) establishes three concurrence points at which the lead agency, in this case FHWA, must request written concurrence from the cooperating agencies whose federal authorizations are required for the project. Per the MOU, the cooperating agency will "either confirm its concurrence or inform the lead agency that it cannot yet concur."

We appreciate the opportunity to review this important project element. **The Corps concurs with the preferred alternative to be carried forward for additional evaluation** as presented in your above referenced letter. Please note that while FHWA has identified a preferred alternative pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Corps regulations at 33 C.F.R. Part 325 Appendix B clarify that the Corps is neither an opponent nor proponent of the applicant's proposal; therefore the applicant's final proposal will be identified by the Corps as the 'applicant's preferred alternative' or 'applicant's proposed alternative.' Since the Corps evaluates each permit application to determine whether the applicant's proposed alternative represents the "Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA)," the Corps does not have a need to determine a preferred alternative as part of the Corps NEPA process. On this basis, the Corps concurs with the FHWA preferred alternative with the clarification that the LEDPA will form the basis for a Corps permit decision.

We remain committed to working with your staff in our role as a cooperating agency so we may successfully fulfill our responsibilities under both NEPA and the Clean Water Act. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Dr. Richard L. Darden at (843) 329-8043 or [richard.l.darden@usace.army.mil](mailto:richard.l.darden@usace.army.mil).

Respectfully,

 Digitally signed by  
HUGHES, TRAVIS G. 1228867748  
Date: 2020.06.19 10:35:02 -04'00'

for: Rachel A. Honderd, PMP  
Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army  
Commander and District Engineer

Travis G. Hughes  
Chief, Regulatory Division

Copy Furnished:

South Carolina Department of Transportation  
Attn: Mr. Chad Long  
PO Box 191  
Columbia, SC 29202-0191  
[LongCC@scdot.org](mailto:LongCC@scdot.org)

South Carolina Department of Transportation  
Attn: Mr. Will McGoldrick  
PO Box 191  
Columbia, SC 29202-0191  
[McGoldriWR@scdot.org](mailto:McGoldriWR@scdot.org)



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

June 3, 2020

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Mr. Randall D. Overton  
Chief, Permits Division  
U.S. Coast Guard, District 7  
909 SE 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Suite 432  
Miami, FL 33131

Subject: Request for Concurrence on the Proposed Preferred Alternative to be Carried Forward for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Mr. Overton:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor West Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Paul Cantrell Boulevard to Virginia Avenue in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Paul Cantrell Boulevard to Virginia Avenue. The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline.

Reasonable alternatives for detailed study in the Draft EIS were developed and presented to the cooperating and participating agencies in February 2020 during an agency alternatives workshop. The Reasonable Alternatives were then further evaluated based on their ability to meet the project's Purpose and Need and project impacts. Concurrence or lack of objection on the Reasonable Alternatives was received from the cooperating and participating agencies in April 2020.

Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it is adhering to the One Federal Decision guidance and is being tracked on the federal permitting dashboard. Based on the One Federal Decision Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) issued April 9, 2018, we are asking for concurrence on the proposed preferred alternative to be carried forward in the Draft EIS. "Concurrence" for purposes of the MOU means confirmation by the agency that the information is sufficient for that stage, and the environmental review process may proceed to the next stage of the NEPA process. The proposed preferred alternative was presented at the monthly agency meeting held on May 14, 2020. A presentation outlining the decision-making process for the preferred alternative and a Google Earth kmz file depicting the proposed preferred alternative were provided for review in advance of and after the meeting. The presentation along with the kmz file are enclosed for your reference.

Per the One Federal Decision MOU, we want to ensure that your agency's needs are being met and that continued coordination throughout the project development and NEPA process facilitates your agency's ability to make timely and informed comments on the EIS. **Per the One Federal Decision MOU, please provide your response to this office within 10 business days, via electronic mail to Mr. J. Shane Belcher at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).** We ask that you contact FHWA as early as possible if you find that your agency will not be able to concur with or has issues with the proposed alternative. This will allow FHWA to work out any issues with your agency prior to moving forward.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or your agency's roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by email at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,

**J. Shane  
Belcher**

Digitally signed by J. Shane  
Belcher  
Date: 2020.06.04 10:59:37  
-04'00'

(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

Enclosures

cc: Chad Long, SCDOT Director of Environmental Services  
Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager  
David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design Build Environmental Coordinator  
Jim Martin, FHWA Major Projects Engineer

**U.S. Department of  
Homeland Security**

**United States  
Coast Guard**



Commander  
United States Coast Guard  
Seventh District

909 SE 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. (Rm432)  
Miami, FL 33131  
Staff Symbol: (dpb)  
Phone: 305-415-6736  
Fax: 305-415-6763  
Email: [randall.d.overton@uscg.mil](mailto:randall.d.overton@uscg.mil)

16475/164  
June 8, 2020

Mr. J. Shane Belcher  
Federal Highway Administration  
1835 Assembly Street (Suite 1270)  
Columbia, SC 29201  
Via email: [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov)

Dear Mr. Belcher,

This letter is in response to your letter dated June 3, 2020 requesting Coast Guard concurrence regarding the preferred alternatives to be carried forward in the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507.

We have reviewed the proposed preferred alternative which was presented at the monthly agency meeting held on May 14, 2020. The Coast Guard concurs with the proposed preferred alternative to be carried in the Draft EIS.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate as a cooperating agency for this major infrastructure improvement project.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact me at (305) 415-6736 or email [Randall.D.Overton@uscg.mil](mailto:Randall.D.Overton@uscg.mil)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Randall D. Overton".

RANDALL D. OVERTON  
Chief, Permits Division  
District 7 Bridge Program  
U.S. Coast Guard



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

June 3, 2020

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Mr. Robert Vogel  
Regional Director (Southeast)  
National Parks Service  
ATTN: Ms. Alexis John  
100 Alabama St., SW  
1924 Building  
Atlanta, GA 30303

Subject: Request for Concurrence on the Proposed Preferred Alternative to be Carried Forward for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Mr. Vogel:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor West Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Paul Cantrell Boulevard to Virginia Avenue in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Paul Cantrell Boulevard to Virginia Avenue. The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline.

Reasonable alternatives for detailed study in the Draft EIS were developed and presented to the cooperating and participating agencies in February 2020 during an agency alternatives workshop. The Reasonable Alternatives were then further evaluated based on their ability to meet the project's Purpose and Need and project impacts. Concurrence or lack of objection on the Reasonable Alternatives was received from the cooperating and participating agencies in April 2020.

Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it is adhering to the One Federal Decision guidance and is being tracked on the federal permitting dashboard. Based on the One Federal Decision Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) issued April 9, 2018, we are asking for concurrence on the proposed preferred alternative to be carried forward in the Draft EIS. "Concurrence" for purposes of the MOU means confirmation by the agency that the

information is sufficient for that stage, and the environmental review process may proceed to the next stage of the NEPA process. The proposed preferred alternative was presented at the monthly agency meeting held on May 14, 2020. A presentation outlining the decision-making process for the preferred alternative and a Google Earth kmz file depicting the proposed preferred alternative were provided for review in advance of and after the meeting. The presentation along with the kmz file are enclosed for your reference.

Per the One Federal Decision MOU, we want to ensure that your agency's needs are being met and that continued coordination throughout the project development and NEPA process facilitates your agency's ability to make timely and informed comments on the EIS. **Per the One Federal Decision MOU, please provide your response to this office within 10 business days, via electronic mail to Mr. J. Shane Belcher at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).** We ask that you contact FHWA as early as possible if you find that your agency will not be able to concur with or has issues with the proposed alternative. This will allow FHWA to work out any issues with your agency prior to moving forward.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or your agency's roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by email at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,

**J. Shane Belcher**

Digitally signed by J. Shane  
Belcher  
Date: 2020.06.04 11:05:03  
-04'00'

(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

Enclosures

ec: Chad Long, SCDOT Director of Environmental Services  
Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager  
David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design Build Environmental Coordinator  
Jim Martin, FHWA Major Projects Engineer



# United States Department of the Interior

## NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Atlanta Federal Center  
1924 Building  
100 Alabama Street, SW  
Atlanta, GA 30303



IN REPLY REFER TO:

8.B. (IR2-RPB)  
45-00691

Jeffrey Belcher  
Federal Highway Administration  
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Mr. Belcher:

This letter is in response to the correspondence dated June 3, 2020, from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT). In that correspondence you requested **the National Park Service's (NPS) concurrence** that the proposed preferred alternative be carried forward in the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements in Charleston County, South Carolina (Federal Project Number P027507).

As per the guidelines set forth in the Fast 41/One Federal Decision Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) issued on April 9, 2018, the NPS has completed our review of the documentation provided in the monthly agency meeting held on May 14, 2020. We agree that the information is sufficient for this stage, and the environmental review process may proceed to the next stage of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

In accordance with our letter dated August 12, 2019, we continue to request that any potential impacts to areas under NPS jurisdiction or areas of expertise that are within the area of potential affect be addressed in the EIS. These areas include a Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) site (Highland Terrace Park), a Federal Lands to Parks (FLP) site (Ralph M. Hendricks Park), and two Heritage Areas (Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor and South Carolina National Heritage Corridor).

Thank you for the opportunity to review and provide comments. If you have questions or need additional information regarding LWCF, please contact Ms. Alexis H. John at (404) 507-5834 or at [alexis\\_john@nps.gov](mailto:alexis_john@nps.gov). If you have any other NPS questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Ms. Anita Barnett, Planning and Compliance Division, at (404) 507-5706 or [anita\\_barnett@nps.gov](mailto:anita_barnett@nps.gov).

Sincerely,

**KAREN CUCURULLO**

Digitally signed by KAREN  
CUCURULLO  
Date: 2020.06.18 17:55:14 -04'00'

Karen L. Cucurullo  
Acting Regional Director

Interior Region 2 • South Atlantic–Gulf

Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi  
North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, U.S. Virgin Islands



cc:

Justin Hancock, Director, State Liaison Officer  
South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism

Anita Barnett, Planning and Compliance Division  
NPS Interior Region 2



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

June 3, 2020

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Mr. Justin Hancock  
Director, Recreation, Grants and Policy  
SC Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism  
1205 Pendleton Street  
Columbia, SC 29201

Subject: Request for Concurrence on the Proposed Preferred Alternative to be Carried Forward for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Mr. Hancock:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor West Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Paul Cantrell Boulevard to Virginia Avenue in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Paul Cantrell Boulevard to Virginia Avenue. The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline.

Reasonable alternatives for detailed study in the Draft EIS were developed and presented to the cooperating and participating agencies in February 2020 during an agency alternatives workshop. The Reasonable Alternatives were then further evaluated based on their ability to meet the project's Purpose and Need and project impacts. Concurrence or lack of objection on the Reasonable Alternatives was received from the cooperating and participating agencies in April 2020.

Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it is adhering to the One Federal Decision guidance and is being tracked on the federal permitting dashboard. Based on the One Federal Decision Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) issued April 9, 2018, we are asking for concurrence on the proposed preferred alternative to be carried forward in the Draft EIS. "Concurrence" for purposes of the MOU means confirmation by the agency that the information is sufficient for that stage, and the environmental review process may proceed to the next stage of the NEPA process. The proposed preferred alternative was presented at the monthly agency meeting held on May 14, 2020. A presentation outlining the decision-making process for the preferred alternative and a Google Earth kmz file depicting the proposed preferred alternative were provided for review in advance of and after the meeting. The presentation along with the kmz file are enclosed for your reference.

Per the One Federal Decision MOU, we want to ensure that your agency's needs are being met and that continued coordination throughout the project development and NEPA process facilitates

your agency's ability to make timely and informed comments on the EIS. **Per the One Federal Decision MOU, please provide your response to this office within 10 business days, via electronic mail to Mr. J. Shane Belcher at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).** We ask that you contact FHWA as early as possible if you find that your agency will not be able to concur with or has issues with the proposed alternative. This will allow FHWA to work out any issues with your agency prior to moving forward.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or your agency's roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by email at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,

**J. Shane Belcher**

Digitally signed by J. Shane  
Belcher  
Date: 2020.06.04 11:03:50 -04'00'

(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

Enclosures

ec: Chad Long, SCDOT Director of Environmental Services  
Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager  
David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design Build Environmental Coordinator  
Jim Martin, FHWA Major Projects Engineer



South Carolina Department of  
Parks, Recreation & Tourism

**Henry McMaster**  
Governor

**Duane N. Parrish**  
Director

June 24, 2020

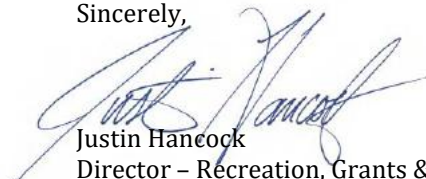
Mr. Shane Belcher  
Environmental Specialist  
Federal Highway Administration  
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Mr. Belcher:

The South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism (SCPRT) has reviewed the most recent project update for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor project. By copy of this letter, I am confirming SCPRT's concurrence with the proposed preferred alternative to be carried forward in the Draft EIS.

Thank you for keeping SCPRT well-informed of this project's progress and for providing ongoing opportunities to provide feedback during the planning phase.

Sincerely,



Justin Hancock  
Director – Recreation, Grants & Policy  
State Liaison Officer - LWCF



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

June 3, 2020

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Mr. Mark Caldwell  
Deputy Field Supervisor  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services  
176 Croghan Spur Road, Suite 200  
Charleston, SC 29407

Subject: Request for Concurrence on the Proposed Preferred Alternative to be Carried Forward for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Mr. Caldwell:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor West Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Paul Cantrell Boulevard to Virginia Avenue in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Paul Cantrell Boulevard to Virginia Avenue. The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline.

Reasonable alternatives for detailed study in the Draft EIS were developed and presented to the cooperating and participating agencies in February 2020 during an agency alternatives workshop. The Reasonable Alternatives were then further evaluated based on their ability to meet the project's Purpose and Need and project impacts. Concurrence or lack of objection on the Reasonable Alternatives was received from the cooperating and participating agencies in April 2020.

Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it is adhering to the One Federal Decision guidance and is being tracked on the federal permitting dashboard. Based on the One Federal Decision Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) issued April 9, 2018, we are asking for concurrence on the proposed preferred alternative to be carried forward in the Draft EIS. "Concurrence" for purposes of the MOU means confirmation by the agency that the information is sufficient for that stage, and the environmental review process may proceed to the next stage of the NEPA process. The proposed preferred alternative was presented at the monthly agency meeting held on May 14, 2020. A presentation outlining the decision-making process for the preferred alternative and a Google Earth kmz file depicting the proposed preferred alternative were provided for review in advance of and after the meeting. The presentation along with the kmz file are enclosed for your reference.

Per the One Federal Decision MOU, we want to ensure that your agency's needs are being met and that continued coordination throughout the project development and NEPA process facilitates

your agency's ability to make timely and informed comments on the EIS. **Per the One Federal Decision MOU, please provide your response to this office within 10 business days, via electronic mail to Mr. J. Shane Belcher at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).** We ask that you contact FHWA as early as possible if you find that your agency will not be able to concur with or has issues with the proposed alternative. This will allow FHWA to work out any issues with your agency prior to moving forward.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or your agency's roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by email at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,

**J. Shane Belcher**

Digitally signed by J. Shane  
Belcher

Date: 2020.06.04 10:58:21 -04'00'

(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

Enclosures

ec: Mr. Chad Long, SCDOT Director of Environmental Services  
Ms. Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager  
Mr. David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Mr. Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design Build Environmental Coordinator  
Mr. Jim Martin, FHWA Major Projects Engineer



# United States Department of the Interior



**FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE**  
176 Croghan Spur Road, Suite 200  
Charleston, South Carolina 29407

June 8, 2020

Ms. Emily Lawton  
Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration  
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, SC 29201

Attn: Jeffery Belcher

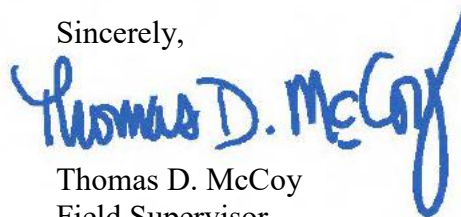
Re: Concurrence Point, I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Alternative, Charleston County,  
South Carolina, FWS Log No. 2016-CPA-0062

Dear Ms. Lawton:

Pursuant to the Federal Highway Administration's request the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) provides concurrence on the selection of proposed alternative to be carried forward and analyzed in the draft Environmental Impact Statement for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor West project. The proposed preferred alternative was presented at the monthly agency meeting held on May 14, 2020.

If the Service can be of further assistance to either the South Carolina Department of Transportation or the Federal Highway Administration in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me or the project's point of contact Mr. Mark Caldwell, who may be reached at (843) 300-0426, or by email: [mark\\_caldwell@fws.gov](mailto:mark_caldwell@fws.gov). Please reference FWS Log No. 2016-CPA-0062.

Sincerely,

  
Thomas D. McCoy  
Field Supervisor

TDM/MAC  
cc: Jane Ledwin, USFWS HQ



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

June 3, 2019

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Ms. Heather Preston  
Director, Water Quality  
SC Department of Health & Environmental Control  
ATTN: Chuck Hightower and Blair Williams  
2600 Bull Street  
Columbia, SC 29201

Subject: Request for Concurrence on the Proposed Preferred Alternative to be Carried Forward for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Ms. Preston:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor West Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Paul Cantrell Boulevard to Virginia Avenue in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Paul Cantrell Boulevard to Virginia Avenue. The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline.

Reasonable alternatives for detailed study in the Draft EIS were developed and presented to the cooperating and participating agencies in February 2020 during an agency alternatives workshop. The Reasonable Alternatives were then further evaluated based on their ability to meet the project's Purpose and Need and project impacts. Concurrence or lack of objection on the Reasonable Alternatives was received from the cooperating and participating agencies in April 2020.

Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it is adhering to the One Federal Decision guidance and is being tracked on the federal permitting dashboard. Based on the One Federal Decision Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) issued April 9, 2018, we are asking for concurrence on the proposed preferred alternative to be carried forward in the Draft EIS. "Concurrence" for purposes of the MOU means confirmation by the agency that the information is sufficient for that stage, and the environmental review process may proceed to the next stage of the NEPA process. The proposed preferred alternative was presented at the monthly agency meeting held on May 14, 2020. A presentation outlining the decision-making process for the preferred alternative and a Google Earth kmz file depicting the proposed preferred alternative



were provided for review in advance of and after the meeting. The presentation along with the kmz file are enclosed for your reference.

Per the One Federal Decision MOU, we want to ensure that your agency's needs are being met and that continued coordination throughout the project development and NEPA process facilitates your agency's ability to make timely and informed comments on the EIS. **Per the One Federal Decision MOU, please provide your response to this office within 10 business days, via electronic mail to Mr. J. Shane Belcher at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).** We ask that you contact FHWA as early as possible if you find that your agency will not be able to concur with or has issues with the proposed alternative. This will allow FHWA to work out any issues with your agency prior to moving forward.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or your agency's roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by email at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,

**J. Shane Belcher**

Digitally signed by J. Shane  
Belcher  
Date: 2020.06.04 11:10:15 -04'00'

(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

Enclosures

ec: Chuck Hightower, SCDHEC Water Quality Permitting & Certification Mgr.  
Blair Williams, SCDHEC-OCRM Critical Area Permitting Mgr.  
Chris Stout, SCDHEC-OCRM Coastal Zone Consistency Section Mgr.  
Josh Hoke, SCDHEC-OCRM Critical Area Permitting Project Mgr.  
Chad Long, SCDOT Director of Environmental Services  
Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager  
David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design Build Environmental Coordinator  
Jim Martin, FHWA Major Projects Engineer



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

June 3, 2019

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Ms. Susan Davis  
Coastal Environmental Coordinator  
SC Department of Natural Resources  
217 Fort Johnson Road  
Charleston, SC 29412-9110

Subject: Request for Concurrence on the Proposed Preferred Alternative to be Carried Forward for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Ms. Davis:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor West Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Paul Cantrell Boulevard to Virginia Avenue in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Paul Cantrell Boulevard to Virginia Avenue. The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline.

Reasonable alternatives for detailed study in the Draft EIS were developed and presented to the cooperating and participating agencies in February 2020 during an agency alternatives workshop. The Reasonable Alternatives were then further evaluated based on their ability to meet the project's Purpose and Need and project impacts. Concurrence or lack of objection on the Reasonable Alternatives was received from the cooperating and participating agencies in April 2020.

Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it is adhering to the One Federal Decision guidance and is being tracked on the federal permitting dashboard. Based on the One Federal Decision Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) issued April 9, 2018, we are asking for concurrence on the proposed preferred alternative to be carried forward in the Draft EIS. "Concurrence" for purposes of the MOU means confirmation by the agency that the information is sufficient for that stage, and the environmental review process may proceed to the next stage of the NEPA process. The proposed preferred alternative was presented at the monthly agency meeting held on May 14, 2020. A presentation outlining the decision-making process for the preferred alternative and a Google Earth kmz file depicting the proposed preferred alternative were provided for review in advance of and after the meeting. The presentation along with the kmz file are enclosed for your reference.

Per the One Federal Decision MOU, we want to ensure that your agency's needs are being met and that continued coordination throughout the project development and NEPA process facilitates your agency's ability to make timely and informed comments on the EIS. **Per the One Federal Decision MOU, please provide your response to this office within 10 business days, via electronic mail to Mr. J. Shane Belcher at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).** We ask that you contact FHWA as early as possible if you find that your agency will not be able to concur with or has issues with the proposed alternative. This will allow FHWA to work out any issues with your agency prior to moving forward.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or your agency's roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by email at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,

**J. Shane Belcher**

Digitally signed by J. Shane  
Belcher  
Date: 2020.06.04 11:08:50 -04'00'

(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

Enclosures

ec: Lorianne Riggan, SCDNR Director of Environmental Programs  
Chad Long, SCDOT Director of Environmental Services  
Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager  
David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design Build Environmental Coordinator  
Jim Martin, FHWA Major Projects Engineer

# South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

PO Box 12559  
Charleston, SC 29422  
843.953.9003 Office  
843.953.9399 Fax  
[Daviss@dnr.sc.gov](mailto:Daviss@dnr.sc.gov)



Robert H. Boyles, Jr.  
Director  
Lorianne Riggan  
Director, Office of  
Environmental Programs

June 8, 2020

Mr. J. Shane Belcher  
USDOT  
Federal Highway Administration  
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, SC 29201

Re: Request for Concurrence on the Proposed Preferred Alternative to be Carried Forward for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Mr. Belcher:

The SCDNR understands that a set of reasonable alternatives were developed for detailed study in the Draft EIS. These alternatives were presented to the cooperating and participating agencies in February 2020 during an agency alternatives workshop and further evaluated based on their ability to meet the project's Purpose and Need and project impacts. Concurrence or lack of objection on the Reasonable Alternatives was received from the cooperating and participating agencies in April 2020, including the SCDNR.

Based on the One Federal Decision Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) issued April 9, 2018, the SCDNR is providing concurrence on the proposed preferred alternative to be carried forward in the Draft EIS. After a thorough review, the SCDNR concurs that the proposed preferred alternative represents a reasonable alternative to be carried forward for detailed analysis in the EIS.

The SCDNR appreciates the opportunity to participate in the review of this project and provide comments. Please feel free to contact me as you deem necessary regarding this project. I can be reached by email at [daviss@dnr.sc.gov](mailto:daviss@dnr.sc.gov) or by phone at 843-953-9003.

Sincerely,

*Susan F. Davis*

Susan F. Davis  
Coastal Environmental Coordinator



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

June 3, 2019

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Ms. Alya Singh-White  
Life Scientist/Biologist  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
61 Forsyth Street, SW 9T25  
Atlanta, GA 30303-8960

Subject: Request for Concurrence on the Proposed Preferred Alternative to be Carried Forward for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Ms. Singh-White:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor West Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Paul Cantrell Boulevard to Virginia Avenue in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Paul Cantrell Boulevard to Virginia Avenue. The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline.

Reasonable alternatives for detailed study in the Draft EIS were developed and presented to the cooperating and participating agencies in February 2020 during an agency alternatives workshop. The Reasonable Alternatives were then further evaluated based on their ability to meet the project's Purpose and Need and project impacts. Concurrence or lack of objection on the Reasonable Alternatives was received from the cooperating and participating agencies in April 2020.

Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it is adhering to the One Federal Decision guidance and is being tracked on the federal permitting dashboard. Based on the One Federal Decision Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) issued April 9, 2018, we are asking for concurrence on the proposed preferred alternative to be carried forward in the Draft EIS. "Concurrence" for purposes of the MOU means confirmation by the agency that the information is sufficient for that stage, and the environmental review process may proceed to the next stage of the NEPA process. The proposed preferred alternative was presented at the monthly agency meeting held on May 14, 2020. A presentation outlining the decision-making process for the preferred alternative and a Google Earth kmz file depicting the proposed preferred alternative were provided for review in advance of and after the meeting. The presentation along with the kmz file are enclosed for your reference.

Per the One Federal Decision MOU, we want to ensure that your agency's needs are being met and that continued coordination throughout the project development and NEPA process facilitates your agency's ability to make timely and informed comments on the EIS. **Per the One Federal Decision MOU, please provide your response to this office within 10 business days, via electronic mail to Mr. J. Shane Belcher at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).** We ask that you contact FHWA as early as possible if you find that your agency will not be able to concur with or has issues with the proposed alternative. This will allow FHWA to work out any issues with your agency prior to moving forward.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or your agency's roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by email at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,

**J. Shane  
Belcher**

(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

Digitally signed by J. Shane  
Belcher  
Date: 2020.06.04 11:07:47  
-04'00'

Enclosures

ec: Chad Long, SCDOT Director of Environmental Services  
Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager  
David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design Build Environmental Coordinator  
Jim Martin, FHWA Major Projects Engineer

**From:** [Singh-White, Alya](#)  
**To:** [Belcher, Jeffrey \(FHWA\)](#)  
**Cc:** [Kajumba, Ntale](#)  
**Subject:** RE: I-526 Low Country Corridor: Concurrence Request Proposed Preferred Alternative  
**Date:** Friday, June 26, 2020 7:25:26 PM

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**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the Department of Transportation (DOT). Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Mr. J. Shane Belcher  
Environmental Specialist  
Federal Highway Administration  
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, SC 29201

Re: EPA Response on the Request for Concurrence on the Proposed Preferred Alternative for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Mr. Belcher,

It is understood that the proposed I-526 Lowcountry Corridor West Improvement Project will make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Paul Cantrell Boulevard to Virginia Avenue in Charleston County, South Carolina. This would include widening the existing corridor from four to eight lanes, for a distance of approximately 9.7 miles. Screening of preliminary alternatives led to the selection of proposed reasonable alternatives (identified below) for corridor improvements and the following interchanges:

I-526/Paul Cantrell Boulevard to International Boulevard  
I-526 at I-26 including Rivers Avenue (Alternatives 1, 1A, 2, and 2A)  
I-526 at North Rhett Avenue/Virginia Avenue (Alternatives 1, 2, 2A, 5, and 6).

The proposed reasonable alternatives were presented to the public in November 2019. Concurrence or lack of objection on the reasonable alternatives was requested by FHWA from cooperating and participating agencies in April 2020. A detailed impact evaluation/analysis was conducted on the reasonable alternatives to identify a proposed preferred alternative. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the impact analysis and has no objections on the proposed preferred alternative selected for each interchange as follows:

I-526/Paul Cantrell Boulevard to International Boulevard  
I-526 at I-26 including Rivers Avenue (Alternative 2)  
I-526 at North Rhett Avenue/Virginia Avenue (Alternative 2A).

Based on the screening matrix, the preferred alternative selected for each interchange has a combination of the least environmental impacts, property relocations and/or EJ impacts. Overall, 97.7 acres of wetlands and 18,631 feet of stream will be impacted. Wetland and streams losses should be mitigated under a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Clean Water Act Section 404 permit. The mitigation can be designed and implemented by the applicant or wetland mitigation credits can be purchased from an approved commercial wetland mitigation bank. EJ outreach/coordination and housing mitigation activities are ongoing.

Please contact me if you have any questions or would like to discuss anything further.

Sincerely,

**ALYA SINGH-WHITE**

Life Scientist / Biologist  
National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Section  
Strategic Programs Office  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency | Region 4  
61 Forsyth St SW  
Atlanta, GA 30303  
(404)-562-9339 | [singh-white.alya@epa.gov](mailto:singh-white.alya@epa.gov)



---

**From:** Belcher, Jeffrey (FHWA) <Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 4, 2020 1:44 PM  
**To:** Singh-White, Alya <Singh-White.Alya@epa.gov>  
**Cc:** 'LongCC@scdot.org' <LongCC@scdot.org>; Riley, Joy S. <RileyJ@scdot.org>; Martin, James (FHWA) <James.Martin@dot.gov>; McGoldrick, Will (McGoldriWR@scdot.org) <McGoldriWR@scdot.org>; Kelly, David P. (KellyDP@scdot.org) <KellyDP@scdot.org>  
**Subject:** I-526 Low Country Corridor: Concurrence Request Proposed Preferred Alternative  
**Importance:** High

Alya,

Per the conversation during last month's agency meeting, attached is the request for concurrence regarding the proposed preferred alternative for the I-526 LCC West project. This request falls in line with the concurrence point included on the permitting dashboard. Attached are all the materials used during May 14 agency meeting for your reference. Any questions, please let us know.

Much thanks,

*J. Shane Belcher*

*Environmental Specialist  
Federal Highway Administration  
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, SC 29201  
Phone: 803-253-3187  
Fax: 803-253-3989*

*The content of this email is confidential and intended for the recipient specified in message only.*







U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

June 3, 2020

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

Dr. Roy E. Crabtree  
Regional Administrator SERO  
NOAA Fisheries  
ATTN: Mr. Noah Silverman  
263 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South  
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

Subject: Request for Concurrence on the Proposed Preferred Alternative to be Carried Forward for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Dr. Crabtree:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor West Improvements Project. The proposed project would make improvements to the I-526 corridor from Paul Cantrell Boulevard to Virginia Avenue in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Paul Cantrell Boulevard to Virginia Avenue. The Ashley River bridge crossing would be widened to accommodate the improvements on the I-526 mainline.

Reasonable alternatives for detailed study in the Draft EIS were developed and presented to the cooperating and participating agencies in February 2020 during an agency alternatives workshop. The Reasonable Alternatives were then further evaluated based on their ability to meet the project's Purpose and Need and project impacts. Concurrence or lack of objection on the Reasonable Alternatives was received from the cooperating and participating agencies in April 2020.

Since this is a major infrastructure project that is starting after August 15, 2017, it is adhering to the One Federal Decision guidance and is being tracked on the federal permitting dashboard. Based on the One Federal Decision Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) issued April 9, 2018, we are asking for concurrence on the proposed preferred alternative to be carried forward in the Draft EIS. "Concurrence" for purposes of the MOU means confirmation by the agency that the information is sufficient for that stage, and the environmental review process may proceed to the next stage of the NEPA process. The proposed preferred alternative was presented at the monthly agency meeting held on May 14, 2020. A presentation outlining the decision-making process for the preferred alternative and a Google Earth kmz file depicting the proposed preferred alternative were provided for review in advance of and after the meeting. The presentation along with the kmz file are enclosed for your reference.

Per the One Federal Decision MOU, we want to ensure that your agency's needs are being met and that continued coordination throughout the project development and NEPA process facilitates your agency's ability to make timely and informed comments on the EIS. **Per the One Federal Decision MOU, please provide your response to this office within 10 business days, via electronic mail to Mr. J. Shane Belcher at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).** We ask that you contact FHWA as early as possible if you find that your agency will not be able to concur with or has issues with the proposed alternative. This will allow FHWA to work out any issues with your agency prior to moving forward.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or your agency's roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by email at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,

**J. Shane Belcher**

Digitally signed by J. Shane  
Belcher  
Date: 2020.06.04 11:06:35 -04'00'

(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

Enclosures

ec: Chad Long, SCDOT Director of Environmental Services  
Joy Riley, SCDOT Program Manager  
David Kelly, SCDOT RPG 1 NEPA Coordinator  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design Build Environmental Coordinator  
Jim Martin, FHWA Major Projects Engineer  
Cynthia Cooksey, NOAA Fisheries Charleston  
Andrew Herndon, NOAA Fisheries SERO  
Kelly Shotts, NOAA Fisheries SERO  
Richard Fickley, NOAA Fisheries SERO



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
**NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE**  
Southeast Regional Office  
263 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South  
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505  
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/region/southeast>

06/12/2020

Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration  
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Attention: J. Shane Belcher, Chad Long, Joy Riley, David Kelly, Will McGoldrick, Jim Martin

**Re: Request for Concurrence on the Proposed Preferred Alternative to be Carried Forward for the Proposed I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Charleston County, South Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507**

Dear Ms. Lawton:

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has received your letter dated June 3, 2020, requesting our concurrence pursuant to the One Federal Decision Memorandum of Understanding on the proposed preferred alternative to be carried forward for analysis in the EIS on the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements Project. After reviewing the information, including details provided during inter-agency meetings and conference calls, we concur. However, if the project scope, and/or preferred alternative change, NMFS must be notified with sufficient time to review and comment on any changes.

Sincerely,

**CRABTREE.ROY.** Digitally signed by  
**E.DR.1365849559** CRABTREE.ROY.E.DR.1365849  
559  
Date: 2020.06.12 11:31:02 -0400

Roy E. Crabtree, Ph.D.  
Regional Administrator

cc: NOAA: NOAA NEPA  
F: NMFS HQ NEPA  
F/SER: Strelcheck, Blough, Silverman, Rosegger  
F/SER3: Bernhart, Farmer, Herndon  
F/SER4: Fay, Dale, Wilber, Cooksey





U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

October 22, 2020

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

**ELECTRONIC CORRESPONDENCE ONLY**

Dr. Wenonah Haire  
THPO, Catawba Indian Nation  
1536 Tom Steven Road  
Rock Hill, SC 29730

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation  
for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST Project, Charleston County, South  
Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Dr. Haire:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST Project. The public comment period will begin on October 30, 2020, when the Notice of Availability is published, and conclude on January 15, 2021, for a period of 77 days. The extended comment period is due to holidays falling within the comment period. In an effort to be environmentally friendly, in lieu of printing a hard copy, the DEIS and Appendices are currently available for download at <https://scdot.sharefile.com/share/view/sf4663ef49964c468> and at the project website beginning **October 30, 2020:** [www.526LowcountryCorridor.com/WEST/DEIS/](http://www.526LowcountryCorridor.com/WEST/DEIS/).

The public is encouraged to participate online by visiting [www.526lowcountrycorridor.com/WESTPH](http://www.526lowcountrycorridor.com/WESTPH) between Thursday, November 12 and January 15, 2021. One-on-one, live chat sessions with the project team will be held on;

- Thursday, November 19, 2020 from 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM
- Saturday, December 5, 2020 from 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- Tuesday, December 8, 2020 from 9:00 AM – 6:00 PM
- Wednesday, December 9, 2020 from 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM

An in-person, appointment only option for individuals that are unable or do not wish to participate online will be made available. Appointments can be made by calling or texting 843-258-1135 between the hours of 9:00 AM and 6:00 PM Monday through Friday. Appointments can also be made by visiting the project website, [www.526LowcountryCorridor.com/WESTPH](http://www.526LowcountryCorridor.com/WESTPH). The in-person sessions will be held at the I-526 LCC Community Office located at 5627 Rivers Avenue on:

- Thursday, November 19, 2020 from 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM

- Saturday, December 5, 2020 from 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- Tuesday, December 8, 2020 from 9:00 AM – 6:00 PM
- Wednesday, December 9, 2020 from 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM

Verbal comments may be left by phone at 843-258-1135 from November 19, 2020 through January 15, 2021. Additionally, one live verbal comment session will be made available online on **Tuesday, December 15, 2020 from 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM.**

Please provide any comments on the DEIS or if you would like to discuss the project in more detail, to Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by e-mail at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,



(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

cc: Caitlin Totherow, Catawba Indian Nation  
Chad Long, SCDOT Director, Environmental Services Office  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design-Build NEPA/Permits Coordinator  
Jim Martin, FHWA Major Projects Engineer



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

October 22, 2020

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

**ELECTRONIC CORRESPONDENCE ONLY**

Ms. Heather Preston  
Director, Water Quality  
SC Department of Health & Environmental Control  
ATTN: Chuck Hightower  
2600 Bull Street  
Columbia, SC 29201

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation  
for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST Project, Charleston County, South  
Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Ms. Preston:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST Project. The public comment period will begin on October 30, 2020, when the Notice of Availability is published, and conclude on January 15, 2021, for a period of 77 days. The extended comment period is due to holidays falling within the comment period. In an effort to be environmentally friendly, in lieu of printing a hard copy, the DEIS and Appendices are currently available for download at <https://scdot.sharefile.com/share/view/sf4663ef49964c468> and at the project website beginning **October 30, 2020: [www.526LowcountryCorridor.com/WEST/DEIS/](http://www.526LowcountryCorridor.com/WEST/DEIS/)**.

The public is encouraged to participate online by visiting [www.526lowcountrycorridor.com/WESTPH](http://www.526lowcountrycorridor.com/WESTPH) between Thursday, November 12 and January 15, 2021. One-on-one, live chat sessions with the project team will be held on;

- Thursday, November 19, 2020 from 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM
- Saturday, December 5, 2020 from 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
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- Thursday, November 19, 2020 from 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM
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Please provide any comments on the DEIS or if you would like to discuss the project in more detail, to Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by e-mail at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,



(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

cc: Chad Long, SCDOT Director, Environmental Services Office  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design-Build NEPA/Permits Coordinator  
Jim Martin, FHWA Major Projects Engineer





U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

October 22, 2020

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

**ELECTRONIC CORRESPONDENCE ONLY**

Mr. Blair Williams  
Critical Area Permitting Mgr.  
SCDHEC-OCRM  
1362 McMillan Ave., Suite 400  
Charleston, SC 29405

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation  
for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST Project, Charleston County, South  
Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Mr. Williams:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST Project. The public comment period will begin on October 30, 2020, when the Notice of Availability is published, and conclude on January 15, 2021, for a period of 77 days. The extended comment period is due to holidays falling within the comment period. In an effort to be environmentally friendly, in lieu of printing a hard copy, the DEIS and Appendices are currently available for download at <https://scdot.sharefile.com/share/view/sf4663ef49964c468> and at the project website beginning **October 30, 2020: [www.526LowcountryCorridor.com/WEST/DEIS/](http://www.526LowcountryCorridor.com/WEST/DEIS/)**.

The public is encouraged to participate online by visiting [www.526lowcountrycorridor.com/WESTPH](http://www.526lowcountrycorridor.com/WESTPH) between Thursday, November 12 and January 15, 2021. One-on-one, live chat sessions with the project team will be held on;

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Please provide any comments on the DEIS or if would like to discuss the project in more detail, to Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by e-mail at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,



(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

ec: Christ Stout, SCDHEC-OCRM Coastal Zone Consistency Section Mgr.  
Josh Hoke, SCDHEC-OCRM Critical Area Permitting Project Mgr.  
Chad Long, SCDOT Director, Environmental Services Office  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design-Build NEPA/Permits Coordinator  
Jim Martin, FHWA Major Projects Engineer



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

October 22, 2020

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

**ELECTRONIC CORRESPONDENCE ONLY**

Ms. Susan Davis  
Coastal Environmental Coordinator  
SC Department of Natural Resources  
217 Fort Johnson Road  
Charleston, SC 29412-9110

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation  
for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST Project, Charleston County, South  
Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Ms. Davis:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST Project. The public comment period will begin on October 30, 2020, when the Notice of Availability is published, and conclude on January 15, 2021, for a period of 77 days. The extended comment period is due to holidays falling within the comment period. In an effort to be environmentally friendly, in lieu of printing a hard copy, the DEIS and Appendices are currently available for download at <https://scdot.sharefile.com/share/view/sf4663ef49964c468> and at the project website beginning **October 30, 2020: [www.526LowcountryCorridor.com/WEST/DEIS/](http://www.526LowcountryCorridor.com/WEST/DEIS/)**.

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Please provide any comments on the DEIS or if would like to discuss the project in more detail, to Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by e-mail at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,



(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

cc: Lorianne Riggan, SCDNR Director of Environmental Programs  
Chad Long, SCDOT Director, Environmental Services Office  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design-Build NEPA/Permits Coordinator  
Jim Martin, FHWA Major Projects Engineer



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

October 22, 2020

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

**ELECTRONIC CORRESPONDENCE ONLY**

Ms. Carol Braegelmann  
Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW (MS 2462-MIB)  
Washington, DC 20240

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation  
for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST Project, Charleston County, South  
Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Ms. Braegelmann:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST Project. The public comment period will begin on October 30, 2020, when the Notice of Availability is published, and conclude on January 15, 2021, for a period of 77 days. The extended comment period is due to holidays falling within the comment period. In an effort to be environmentally friendly, in lieu of printing a hard copy, the DEIS and Appendices are currently available for download at <https://scdot.sharefile.com/share/view/sf4663ef49964c468> and at the project website beginning **October 30, 2020: [www.526LowcountryCorridor.com/WEST/DEIS/](http://www.526LowcountryCorridor.com/WEST/DEIS/)**.

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Please provide any comments on the DEIS or if would like to discuss the project in more detail, to Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by e-mail at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,



(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

cc: Ryan Hathaway, DOI Major Infrastructure Projects  
Shawn Alam, DOI FHWA Review Contact  
Joyce Stanley, DOI Regional Environmental Protection Specialist  
Chad Long, SCDOT Director, Environmental Services Office  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design-Build NEPA/Permits Coordinator  
Jim Martin, FHWA Major Projects Engineer



# United States Department of the Interior

**OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**  
**Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance**  
Richard B. Russell Federal Building  
75 Ted Turner Drive S.W., Suite 1144  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

ER 20/0460  
9043.1

January 12, 2021

Jeffrey Belcher  
Federal Highway Administration  
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, SC 29201

Re: Comments and Recommendations on the Draft Impact Statement for I-526 Lowcountry Corridor (LCC) West Improvements in Charleston County, South Carolina (Federal Project Number P027507)

Dear Mr. Belcher:

The US Department of the Interior (Department) has reviewed the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Section 4(f) Evaluation for the proposed I-526 Lowcountry Corridor (LCC) West Improvements in Charleston County, South Carolina (Federal Project Number P027507).

We welcome this opportunity to cooperate with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT). We offer the following comments and recommendations for your consideration.

The proposed project consists of  $\pm 3.5$  miles of work on I-26 and  $\pm 9.2$  miles of work on I-526 for a total of  $\pm 12.7$  miles. The purpose of the project is to increase capability and improve operations at the I-26/I-526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Paul Cantrell Boulevard to Virginia Avenue. This segment of I-526 is identified as one of South Carolina's top ten most congested corridors due to the high number of vehicles moving between I-26 and I-526, closely spaced interchanges with ramps that have steep grades, tight curves, and limited distances for vehicles to merge onto and off of I-526. Four alternatives were evaluated in the EIS and all four alternatives would impact the Russelldale Community Center and Highland Terrace-Liberty Park and Community Center. Alternative 2 is identified as the "Recommended Preferred Alternative".

## Section 4(f)

The draft EIS and Section 4(f) evaluation describe a range of avoidance alternatives, the affected Section 4(f) resources, and disclose potential project impacts to those resources.

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### INTERIOR REGION 2 • SOUTH ATLANTIC-GULF

ALABAMA, FLORIDA, GEORGIA, NORTH CAROLINA, PUERTO RICO, SOUTH CAROLINA,  
TENNESSEE, U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

## I-526 Lowcountry Corridor (LCC) West Improvements in Charleston County, SC – ER 20-0460

On June 1, 2020, the State Historic Preservation Office concurred with the FHWA and the SCDOT that although there are four resources that fall within the area of potential effect, none would be significantly affected or compromised by the proposed project.

The proposed project would displace  $\pm 0.27$ -acres of the Highland Terrace Liberty Park and Community Center and would also displace  $\pm 0.83$  acres of the Russelldale Community Center. Section 4(f) mitigation measures are being developed through extensive and ongoing coordination with the I-526 LCC West Community Advisory Council, the public, and the city of North Charleston.

### **Land and Water Conservation Fund**

The proposed project would require the westward realignment of Taylor Street, which would encroach on Highland Terrace-Liberty Park and Community Center, located at 2401 Richardson Drive. This resource received federal financial funding assistance under the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act (54 U.S.C. § 2003) grant number 45-00691. This proposal would convert a portion of the Highland Terrace-Liberty Park and Community Center property to allow for a permanent right-of-way acquisition, which would be mitigated with the acquisition and development of replacement property. Coordination is currently ongoing to satisfy the LWCF conversion regulations at 36 C.F.R § 59.3. The LWCF conversion package is currently under concurrent review with no issues anticipated that would prevent the NPS approval of the draft EIS. If you have questions or need additional information regarding the LWCF conversion process, please contact Ms. Alexis H. John at (404) 507-5834 or at [alexis\\_john@nps.gov](mailto:alexis_john@nps.gov).

### **Summary Comments**

The Section 4(f) and LWCF mitigation measures are being developed through extensive and ongoing coordination with the I-526 LCC West Community Advisory Council, the public, and the City of North Charleston. The DOI has no objection to the Section 4(f) approval, provided that all measures to minimize harm, including an acceptable LWCF conversion amendment are included in the project plans.

The DOI has a continuing interest in working with the FHWA and SCDOT to ensure that impacts to resources of concern to the Department are adequately addressed. I can be reached on (404) 331-4524 or via email at [joyce\\_stanley@ios.doi.gov](mailto:joyce_stanley@ios.doi.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Stanley", with a stylized, flowing script.

Joyce Stanley, MPA  
Regional Environmental Officer



I-526 Lowcountry Corridor (LCC) West Improvements in Charleston County, SC – ER 20-0460

cc: Christine Willis - FWS  
Anita Barnett – NPS  
Michael Norris – USGS  
OPEC - WASH



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

October 22, 2020

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

**ELECTRONIC CORRESPONDENCE ONLY**

Mr. Brett Barnes  
THPO, Eastern Shawnee  
70500 E. 128 Road  
Wyandotte, OK 74370

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation  
for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST Project, Charleston County, South  
Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Mr. Barnes:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST Project. The public comment period will begin on October 30, 2020, when the Notice of Availability is published, and conclude on January 15, 2021, for a period of 77 days. The extended comment period is due to holidays falling within the comment period. In an effort to be environmentally friendly, in lieu of printing a hard copy, the DEIS and Appendices are currently available for download at <https://scdot.sharefile.com/share/view/sf4663ef49964c468> and at the project website beginning **October 30, 2020:** [www.526LowcountryCorridor.com/WEST/DEIS/](http://www.526LowcountryCorridor.com/WEST/DEIS/).

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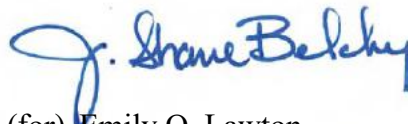
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Sincerely,



(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

cc: Chad Long, SCDOT Director, Environmental Services Office  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design-Build NEPA/Permits Coordinator  
Jim Martin, FHWA Major Projects Engineer



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

October 22, 2020

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Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
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803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

**ELECTRONIC CORRESPONDENCE ONLY**

Ms. Alya Singh-White  
Life Scientist/Biologist  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
61 Forsyth Street, SW 9T25  
Atlanta, GA 30303-8960

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation  
for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST Project, Charleston County, South  
Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Ms. Singh-White:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST Project. The public comment period will begin on October 30, 2020, when the Notice of Availability is published, and conclude on January 15, 2021, for a period of 77 days. The extended comment period is due to holidays falling within the comment period. In an effort to be environmentally friendly, in lieu of printing a hard copy, the DEIS and Appendices are currently available for download at <https://scdot.sharefile.com/share/view/sf4663ef49964c468> and at the project website beginning **October 30, 2020: [www.526LowcountryCorridor.com/WEST/DEIS/](http://www.526LowcountryCorridor.com/WEST/DEIS/)**.

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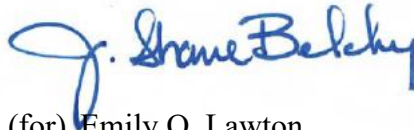
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Sincerely,



(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

cc: Chad Long, SCDOT Director, Environmental Services Office  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design-Build NEPA/Permits Coordinator  
Jim Martin, FHWA Major Projects Engineer



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**Federal Highway  
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October 22, 2020

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In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

**ELECTRONIC CORRESPONDENCE ONLY**

Ms. Kristine G. Foye  
Strom Thurmond Federal Building  
1835 Assembly Street, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Columbia, SC 29201-2480

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation  
for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST Project, Charleston County, South  
Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Ms. Foye:

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Sincerely,



(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

cc: Chad Long, SCDOT Director, Environmental Services Office  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design-Build NEPA/Permits Coordinator  
Jim Martin, FHWA Major Projects Engineer



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In Reply Refer To:  
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**ELECTRONIC CORRESPONDENCE ONLY**

Ms. Corain Lowe-Zepeda  
THPO, Muscogee (Creek) Nation  
1008 East Eufala Street  
Okmulgee, OK 74447

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation  
for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST Project, Charleston County, South  
Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Ms. Lowe-Zepeda:

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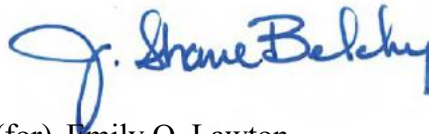


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Sincerely,



(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

cc: LeeAnne Wendt, Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Section 106 Lead  
Chad Long, SCDOT Director, Environmental Services Office  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design-Build NEPA/Permits Coordinator  
Jim Martin, FHWA Major Projects Engineer



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HDA-SC

**ELECTRONIC CORRESPONDENCE ONLY**

Dr. Roy E. Crabtree  
Regional Administrator SERO  
NOAA Fisheries  
ATTN: Mr. Noah Silverman  
263 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South  
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation  
for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST Project, Charleston County, South  
Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Dr. Crabtree:

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Sincerely,



(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

cc: Cynthia Cooksey, NOAA Fisheries Charleston  
Noah Silverman, NOAA NEPA Coordinator Southeast Region  
Andrew Herndon, NOAA Fisheries SERO  
Kelly Shotts, NOAA Fisheries SERO  
Richard Fickley, NOAA Fisheries SERO  
Chad Long, SCDOT Director, Environmental Services Office  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design-Build NEPA/Permits Coordinator  
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U.S. Department  
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In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

**ELECTRONIC CORRESPONDENCE ONLY**

Mr. Robert Vogel  
Regional Director (Southeast)  
National Parks Service  
ATTN: Ms. Alexis John  
100 Alabama St., SW  
1924 Building  
Atlanta, GA 30303

**Subject:** Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation  
for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST Project, Charleston County, South  
Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Mr. Vogel:

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Verbal comments may be left by phone at 843-258-1135 from November 19, 2020 through January 15, 2021. Additionally, one live verbal comment session will be made available online on **Tuesday, December 15, 2020 from 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM.**

Please provide any comments on the DEIS or if would like to discuss the project in more detail, to Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by e-mail at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,



(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

ec: Alexis John, NPS Compliance/Program Officer  
Anita Barnett, NPS Planning & Compliance Division Southeast Region  
Chad Long, SCDOT Director, Environmental Services Office  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design-Build NEPA/Permits Coordinator  
Jim Martin, FHWA Major Projects Engineer



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

October 22, 2020

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

**ELECTRONIC CORRESPONDENCE ONLY**

Mr. Justin Hancock  
Director, Recreation, Grants and Policy  
SC Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism  
1205 Pendleton Street  
Columbia, SC 29201

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation  
for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST Project, Charleston County, South  
Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Mr. Hancock:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST Project. The public comment period will begin on October 30, 2020, when the Notice of Availability is published, and conclude on January 15, 2021, for a period of 77 days. The extended comment period is due to holidays falling within the comment period. In an effort to be environmentally friendly, in lieu of printing a hard copy, the DEIS and Appendices are currently available for download at <https://scdot.sharefile.com/share/view/sf4663ef49964c468> and at the project website beginning **October 30, 2020: [www.526LowcountryCorridor.com/WEST/DEIS/](http://www.526LowcountryCorridor.com/WEST/DEIS/).**

The public is encouraged to participate online by visiting [www.526lowcountrycorridor.com/WESTPH](http://www.526lowcountrycorridor.com/WESTPH) between Thursday, November 12 and January 15, 2021. One-on-one, live chat sessions with the project team will be held on;

- Thursday, November 19, 2020 from 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM
- Saturday, December 5, 2020 from 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
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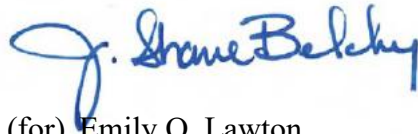
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- Thursday, November 19, 2020 from 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM
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Please provide any comments on the DEIS or if would like to discuss the project in more detail, to Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by e-mail at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,



(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

cc: Chad Long, SCDOT Director, Environmental Services Office  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design-Build NEPA/Permits Coordinator  
Jim Martin, FHWA Major Projects Engineer



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

October 22, 2020

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

**ELECTRONIC CORRESPONDENCE ONLY**

Ms. Elizabeth Johnson  
Deputy SHPO  
SC Department of Archives and History  
8301 Parklane Road  
Columbia, SC 29223

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation  
for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST Project, Charleston County, South  
Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Ms. Johnson:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST Project. The public comment period will begin on October 30, 2020, when the Notice of Availability is published, and conclude on January 15, 2021, for a period of 77 days. The extended comment period is due to holidays falling within the comment period. In an effort to be environmentally friendly, in lieu of printing a hard copy, the DEIS and Appendices are currently available for download at <https://scdot.sharefile.com/share/view/sf4663ef49964c468> and at the project website beginning **October 30, 2020: [www.526LowcountryCorridor.com/WEST/DEIS/](http://www.526LowcountryCorridor.com/WEST/DEIS/).**

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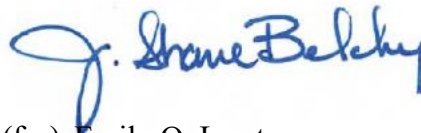


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Sincerely,



(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

cc: Chad Long, SCDOT Director, Environmental Services Office  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design-Build NEPA/Permits Coordinator  
Jim Martin, FHWA Major Projects Engineer



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

October 22, 2020

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

**ELECTRONIC CORRESPONDENCE ONLY**

Ms. Amanda Heath  
Chief, Special Projects Branch  
Charleston District  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
ATTN: Dr. Richard L. Darden  
69A Hagood Avenue  
Charleston, SC 29403

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation  
for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST Project, Charleston County, South  
Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Ms. Heath:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST Project. The public comment period will begin on October 30, 2020, when the Notice of Availability is published, and conclude on January 15, 2021, for a period of 77 days. The extended comment period is due to holidays falling within the comment period. In an effort to be environmentally friendly, in lieu of printing a hard copy, the DEIS and Appendices are currently available for download at <https://scdot.sharefile.com/share/view/sf4663ef49964c468> and at the project website beginning **October 30, 2020: [www.526LowcountryCorridor.com/WEST/DEIS/](http://www.526LowcountryCorridor.com/WEST/DEIS/)**.

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Please provide any comments on the DEIS or if would like to discuss the project in more detail, to Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by e-mail at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,



(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

cc: Dr. Richard Darden, USACE Charleston  
Chad Long, SCDOT Director, Environmental Services Office  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design-Build NEPA/Permits Coordinator  
Jim Martin, FHWA Major Projects Engineer

March 31, 2021

Mr. Richard Darden, Ph.D.  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District  
69A Hagood Avenue  
Charleston, South Carolina 29403-5107

**Re: Comment Responses for SAC 2019-00593 Individual Permit Application for  
I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor Improvements; SCDOT PIN: P027507**

Dr. Darden,

The South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) is in receipt of your letter dated January 27, 2021 requesting additional information to make a final decision on compliance with the guidelines under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act. This letter identifies ongoing and outstanding U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) requirements related to Sections 404 or 10, or common to both, to which response is required by SCDOT. Questions include those raised by the USACE, Charleston District's review of the application pursuant to law and policy, as well as those stemming from comments received in response to the October 30, 2020 Public Notice SAC 2019-00593. The following provides a copy of the USACE comments and SCDOT's response.

In addition to this response letter, SCDOT has enclosed revised permit drawings and compensatory mitigation calculations, agency consultation letters issued since the submittal of the permit application, and SCDOT's response letter to the Southern Environmental Law Center.

**Our understanding from pre-application discussions is that the project's horizontal and vertical alignments have already been established and are reflected on the plan set in this application; however, the project description materials characterize the project design as "conceptual" until a design/build contractor is retained, and that ultimately the "overall project impacts are anticipated to be reduced." This office requests that you carefully review your design and alternatives analysis to confirm whether the proposed project represents the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative and respond to this office with such confirmation. If the proposed project plans do not represent the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative, please revise the design to achieve the maximum avoidance and/or minimization practicable and provide the revised plans in response to this request.**

SCDOT considered various location and design alternatives in the process of developing the currently proposed "build" alternative. SCDOT identified and developed alternatives through information derived from previous traffic studies, agency coordination meetings, stakeholder working groups, public meetings and comments. Alternate alignments and multimodal options were considered and evaluated as part of the Alternative Analysis. The analysis is summarized in the *Alternatives Development Technical Memorandum* in [Appendix C of the Draft EIS](#). The Recommend Preferred Alternative represents the best performing practicable alternative that satisfied the purpose and need of the project.

Since submittal of the permit application in October 2020, project design continued and design refinements have been made in response to public comments on the Draft EIS. A bicycle and



pedestrian bridge over an existing railroad in North Charleston has been incorporated into the project as a result of community mitigation measures. A retaining wall and noise wall have been incorporated into the design near the Ashley Harbor community in West Ashley, and mitigation barriers were also added to the I-26 collector-distributor roads. Agency comments received during the public notice were also considered and temporary fill impacts were adjusted to reflect actual impacts more accurately. Fill side slopes and minor updates to stormwater design also occurred since submittal of the permit application, which affected the depicted impacts. A pipe and armor impact to a non-wetland water near the I-26 and Aviation Avenue interchange has been included on Sheet 6 of the updated permit drawings. Small areas of wetlands that would be isolated by construction fill were also captured as permanent impacts. As a result of these changes and agency comments, SCDOT prepared a revised set of permit drawings to reflect the preferred alternative.

SCDOT has refined design to demonstrate avoidance and minimization of wetlands and waters of the US. The boundaries of permitted impacts will be conveyed to SCDOT's contractors as each phase of construction begins. Impacts to waters of the US have changed as noted below. Both freshwater and Critical Area wetland impacts were reduced compared to the October 2020 permit application; the increase in Critical Area impact acreage is a result of including temporary shading impacts from bridge construction access, which was not included in the initial permit application.

	October 2020 Permit Application	March 2021 404b1 Response Letter
	Acres	
Freshwater Wetland Permanent	23.5	23.8
Freshwater Wetland Temporary Fill	1.5	0.0
Freshwater Wetland Clearing	15.9	15.8
	<b>40.9</b>	<b>39.6</b>
Critical Area Permanent	2.6	3.5
Critical Area Non-Wetland Waters Permanent <sup>1</sup>	0.1	0.15
Critical Area Temporary Fill	0.8	0.0
Critical Area Permanent Shading <sup>2</sup>	3.9	3.2
Critical Area Temporary Shading <sup>2</sup>		4.0
	<b>7.4</b>	<b>10.8</b>
	Linear Feet	Linear Feet
Non-Wetland Waters Pipe	3,230	3,481
Non-Wetland Waters Armor	404	589
	<b>3,634</b>	<b>4,070</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes pipe, armor, and permanent impacts in Critical Area Non-Wetland Waters.

<sup>2</sup>Acres derived from Essential Fish Habitat Assessment.

**Note that the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources comments recommend no permitted use of temporary fills, long term timber mats, or barge grounding because of the greater impacts that can result in ecologically valuable and/or sensitive areas. Please evaluate and discuss alternative construction methods/alternatives that could be used in lieu of these methods and/or clearly discuss why alternative methods cannot be used.**



It is anticipated construction access along the mainline for widening would be limited to mainly upland areas with minor access needs in ecologically valuable and sensitive areas. Design revisions and updates to the permit drawings have been made to help clarify these activities and impact areas.

Bridge construction access (BCA) methods were discussed in detail in the DEIS (INSERT REF) and the SCDOT has made an environmental commitment in the DEIS that “the contractor will be responsible for ensuring causeways on temporary fill will not be utilized as the sole method of construction access for the proposed project.”

Due to the nature of constructing elevated structure over open water, wetlands, or tidal marsh, some means of equipment and material access must be granted. The DEIS discusses multiple options for BCA including barges, mats, and trestles. It may be possible for a contractor to construct portions of overpasses and ramps utilizing a top-down approach; however, top down construction would result in logistical challenges, increase the overall project timeline, and increase project costs. Specifically, regarding the widening of the I-526 bridges over the Ashley River and Bull Creek, maintenance of traffic, worker and traveling public safety is a major factor in consideration of construction access. Since these structures will have newly constructed widened bridges attached to them, it would be very dangerous to have a work zone immediately adjacent to traveling public which also serves as the construction access corridor. There would be little to no room for workers or equipment to maneuver necessary components or materials without potentially endangering themselves or motorists. Having access to the side of the new construction area presents the most reasonable and feasible option.

In other areas of the project, installing support structure for elevated ramps, collector distributor roads and bridges would be best done near ground level versus up on top of the structure as they continually rise. Material delivery and installation would be much safer using mats, barges or trestles closer to the location of installation versus from atop a structure. For these reasons, the use of mats and barges would be the most practicable options.

The SCDOT will work with contractors to limit installation of BCA methods to the maximum extent practicable.

**While there is a discussion of the intent to provide mitigation bank credits for unavoidable impacts to waters of the U.S., the permit application does not include a mitigation plan, including any proposed compensatory mitigation for available credits at approved mitigation banks, for purposes of a permit decision. Note that processing of this permit application cannot be completed without a complete mitigation plan.**

SCDOT is acquiring freshwater wetland and stream mitigation credits from the Palmetto Umbrella Mitigation Bank: Big Run Site located in the Cooper River watershed, the primary service area for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor project. Tidal mitigation credits will be acquired from SCDOT's approved Huspa Creek mitigation bank that serves the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor project area.

**Based on Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs), portions of the project are located within the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). Please provide confirmation of appropriate modeling to insure there will be no flooding impacts to upstream, downstream or adjacent properties consistent with FEMA requirements.**



SCDOT was made aware that a new set of FEMA FIRMs for Charleston County became effective on 1/29/2021. Changes in maps and FEMA's establishment of SFHAs has been and will continue to be monitored. Modeling performed in SFHAs will be appropriate to demonstrate that there will be no adverse impacts to existing flood stages upstream, downstream, or adjacent properties consistent with FEMA requirements.

**All existing pipe crossings should be evaluated to insure there is no increase in headwater due to the longer proposed pipes, thus insuring no increase in flood risk on upstream, downstream or adjacent properties.**

All existing pipe crossings impacted by the project will be evaluated and designed to demonstrate there are no increases in headwater due to pipe extensions, thus resulting in no increases in flood stages outside of state rights-of-way.

**All new pipe crossings should be designed to insure there is no increase in flood elevation on upstream, downstream or adjacent properties, including no increase in runoff or erosion outside the project limits.**

All new pipe crossings and connecting channels within right-of-way will be evaluated and designed for no increases in flood elevation on upstream, downstream or adjacent properties, including no increase in runoff rates or other flood hazard impacts or erosion outside of state rights-of-way.

**Roadside drainage features should be designed to accommodate the increased runoff volume after adding additional impervious area such that there is no increase in flood risk on upstream, downstream or adjacent properties.**

Roadside drainage features will be evaluated and designed to accommodate the increased runoff volume after adding additional impervious area such that there is no increase in flood stages upstream, downstream, or within adjacent properties outside of state rights-of-way.

**The loss of wetland storage due to the placement of widened roadway embankment should be evaluated and/or compensated to insure there is no increase in flood risk on upstream, downstream or adjacent properties due to the reduction in flood storage volume.**

The loss of wetland storage due to the placement of new and widened roadway embankments will be evaluated and/or compensated within the project footprint to demonstrate there is no increase in flood stages upstream, downstream, or within adjacent properties outside of state rights-of-way.

**There are several instances of non-wetland waters being permanently impacted and it appears that an excavated alternate conveyance is intended (i.e., FS-H3 on sheets 62-64 of 68). These alternate conveyances must be designed to provide the same conveyance capacity as the existing streams, thereby insuring there is no increase in flood risk on upstream, downstream or adjacent properties.**

In areas where non-wetland waters will be permanently impacted and alternate conveyances are intended, the alternate conveyances will be designed to provide adequate conveyance capacity in place of the existing streams, thereby resulting in no increase in flood stages upstream,





downstream, or within adjacent properties outside of state rights-of-way (i.e., FS-H3 on sheets 62-64 of 68).

**All water crossings should be designed such that there is no increase in flood risk on upstream, downstream or adjacent properties.**

All water crossings will be designed such that there is no increase in flood stages upstream, downstream, or within adjacent properties outside of state rights-of-way.

### **USFWS**

Since submittal of the permit application, additional Section 7 Endangered Species Act consultation has occurred with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to account for the addition of the 14-foot-wide shared use path on the westbound lanes of I-526 over the Ashley River. The updated consultation also accounted for the recent listing of the Black rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis*) as federally threatened. USFWS maintained a *May Effect, Not Likely to Adversely Effect* determination for the project. A copy of the updated concurrence is attached.

**There remains a significant amount of wetland resource impacts proposed by the project. We recommend that the Department incorporate conditions in any issued permit requiring the applicant to seek further reduction of impacts. Such measures may include narrow medians, steep side slopes on roadways, lengthening of bridges, etc.**

Since submittal of the permit application in October 2020, project design refinements have been made in response to public comments on the Draft EIS. For example, side slopes have been adjusted to incorporate a retaining wall and noise wall near the Ashley Harbor community in West Ashley and mitigation barriers on the I-26 collector-distributor roads. While the design plans remain conceptual, SCDOT has refined design to demonstrate avoidance and minimization of wetlands and waters of the US.

**Mitigation for the proposed stream and wetland impacts has been calculated for compensation however, no final plan has been approved. The Department must require an approved mitigation plan be submitted by SCDOT prior to taking action on the public notice. In addition, compensation for the stream and wetland impacts should occur concurrent or prior to the proposed impacts taking place.**

SCDOT is acquiring freshwater wetland and stream mitigation credits from the Palmetto Umbrella Mitigation Bank: Big Run Site located in the Cooper River watershed, the primary service area for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor project. Tidal mitigation credits will be acquired from SCDOT's approved Huspa Creek mitigation bank that serves the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor project area.

### **US EPA**

**EPA's only comment at this time is to note a complete mitigation plan has not been provided. When the plan is proposed, we would like the opportunity to review and comment.**

SCDOT is acquiring freshwater wetland and stream mitigation credits from the Palmetto Umbrella Mitigation Bank: Big Run Site located in the Cooper River watershed, the primary service area for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor project. Tidal mitigation credits will be acquired





from SCDOT's approved Huspa Creek mitigation bank that serves the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor project area.

### **SCDNR**

**The proposed project will result in permanent and temporary impacts to a significant area of sensitive estuarine and freshwater aquatic resources. The SCDNR recommends every effort is made to avoid and minimize impacts to these important resources, including utilizing construction methods that minimize disturbance to the aquatic environment.**

**While not specifically referenced in the project description of impacts, project drawings specify the use of temporary fill in both freshwater and tidal wetlands, the purpose of which has not been identified.**

Since preparation of the permit application, design adjustments have been made in response to public comments on the Draft EIS. Agency comments received during the public notice were also considered and temporary fill impacts were adjusted to better reflect actual impacts. Minor updates to stormwater design have also occurred since submittal of the permit application. As a result of these changes and agency comments, SCDOT prepared a revised set of permit drawings to reflect the preferred alternative.

**SCDNR recommends that the use of temporary fill causeways, timber mats and barge grounding for construction not be permitted, and that the applicant pursues less damaging construction methods, such as top-down construction, temporary trestles, floating barges and low ground bearing pressure tract equipment.**

It is anticipated construction access along the mainline for widening would be limited to mainly upland areas with minor access needs in ecologically valuable and sensitive areas. Design revisions and updates to the permit drawings have been made to help clarify these activities and impact areas.

Bridge construction access (BCA) methods were discussed in detail in the DEIS (INSERT REF) and the SCDOT has made an environmental commitment in the DEIS that "the contractor will be responsible for ensuring causeways on temporary fill will not be utilized as the sole method of construction access for the proposed project."

Due to the nature of constructing elevated structure over open water, wetlands, or tidal marsh, some means of equipment and material access must be granted. The DEIS discusses multiple options for BCA including barges, mats, and trestles. It may be possible for a contractor to construct portions of overpasses and ramps utilizing a top-down approach; however, top down construction would result in logistical challenges, increase the overall project timeline, and increase project costs. Specifically, regarding the widening of the I-526 bridges over the Ashley River and Bull Creek, maintenance of traffic, worker and traveling public safety is a major factor in consideration of construction access. Since these structures will have newly constructed widened bridges attached to them, it would be very dangerous to have a work zone immediately adjacent to traveling public which also serves as the construction access corridor. There would be little to no room for workers or equipment to maneuver necessary components or materials without potentially endangering themselves or motorists. Having access to the side of the new construction area presents the most reasonable and feasible option.



In other areas of the project, installing support structure for elevated ramps, collector distributor roads and bridges would be best done near ground level versus up on top of the structure as they continually rise. Material delivery and installation would be much safer using mats, barges or trestles closer to the location of installation versus from atop a structure. For these reasons, the use of mats and barges would be the most practicable options. The SCDOT will work with contractors to limit installation of BCA methods to the maximum extent practicable.

**In addition, the following efforts should be put in place to minimize impacts to the aquatic environment:**

- (1) Prior to the beginning of any construction activities, a silt fence, silt barrier or other suitable control device should be placed between the construction area and the affected waterway and/or wetland and maintained in a functioning capacity until the area is permanently stabilized upon project completion.**

An application will be prepared that includes a project specific stormwater pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) and for obtaining a Section 402 NPDES permit for the project before ground disturbing construction activities begin.

- (2) All tributary crossings should be made with appropriately sized bridges and/or culverts to prevent alteration of natural stream flows. The use of arched or bottomless culverts with floodplain culverts is recommended. When using standard box culverts or pipes, the bottom elevation of the culvert or pipe should be at or below the stream bed elevation to allow for the natural migration of aquatic organisms.**

All new pipe crossings and connecting channels within right-of-way will be evaluated and designed to prevent alteration of natural stream flows. Since the proposed project primarily involves widening I-526 along its existing alignment, most box culverts and pipes will be extended instead of fully replaced under the highway. Installation of new bottomless culverts or floodplain culverts would result in greater disruptions to existing traffic on I-526. The proposed project would bridge the Ashley River and many areas associated with Filbin Creek and its tributaries, allowing for connectivity and natural migration of aquatic organisms.

- (3) All necessary measures should be taken to prevent oil, tar, trash, debris and other pollutants from entering the adjacent waterway and/or wetland.**

This effort will be part of the development of a project specific stormwater pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) and for obtaining a Section 402 NPDES permit.

- (4) Once project construction is initiated, it should be carried to completion in an expeditious manner in order to minimize the period of disturbance to the environment.**

It is agreed that the project should be completed in an expeditious manner to minimize the period of disturbance on the environment.

- (5) Upon completion of construction activities, all disturbed areas should be immediately restored to pre-project elevations. Restored wetland areas should be monitored to ensure the reestablishment of native vegetation.**



Disturbed areas will be stabilized upon completion of construction activities in accordance with the Section 402 NPDES permit.

**(6) To reduce potential construction-related impacts to the West Indian manatee, the SCDNR recommends implementing the following US Fish & Wildlife Service Standard Manatee Construction Conditions to all projects affecting the coastal waters of South Carolina:**

- The permittee shall instruct all personnel associated with the project of the potential presence of manatees and the need to avoid collisions with manatees. All construction personnel must monitor water-related activities for the presence of manatee(s) during May 1 - November 15. Construction personnel are requested to monitor outside of that timeframe as manatees may be in the area before or after the above dates.
- The permittee shall advise all construction personnel that there are civil and criminal penalties for harming, harassing, or killing manatees which are protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 and the Endangered Species Act of 1973.
- Any siltation barriers used during the project shall be made of material in which manatees cannot become entangled and must be properly secured, and regularly monitored to avoid manatee entrapment.
- All vessels associated with the project shall operate at “no wake/idle” speeds at all times while in the construction area and while in water where the draft of the vessel provides less than a four-foot clearance from the bottom. All vessels will follow routes of deep water whenever possible.
- If manatee(s) are seen within 100 yards of the active construction area all appropriate precautions shall be implemented to ensure protection of the manatee. These precautions shall include the operation of all moving equipment no closer than 50 feet to a manatee. Operation of any equipment closer than 50 feet to a manatee shall necessitate immediate shutdown of that equipment. Activities will not resume until the manatee(s) has departed the project area of its own volition.
- The permittee understands and agrees that all in-water lines (rope, chain, and cable, including the lines to secure turbidity curtains) must be stiff, taut, and non-looping. Examples of such lines are heavy metal chains or heavy cables that do not readily loop and tangle. Flexible in-water lines, such as nylon rope or any lines that could loop or tangle, must be enclosed in a plastic or rubber sleeve/tube to add rigidity and prevent the line from looping and tangling. In all instances, no excess line is allowed in the water.
- Where appropriate in water wires, cables, should be fitted with PVC sleeve from the surface to the bottom to prevent any potential scraping of the passing manatees.
- Any collision with and/or injury to a manatee shall be reported immediately to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service contacts: Melanie Olds, South Carolina Manatee Lead, Charleston Field Office, at 843-727-4707 ext. 205; or Terri Calleson, Manatee Recovery Coordinator, North Florida Field Office, at 904-731-3286. Reports to injured manatees may also be reported to the SCDNR at (800) 922-5431.

As the permittee, SCDOT shall comply with the recommended Standard Manatee Construction Conditions.



- (7) Cavity- and tree-roosting bat species have been known to occur in Charleston County including the federally-threatened northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) and the state-endangered Rafinesque's big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus rafinesquii*). As a conservation measure, it is recommended that any tree clearing activities be conducted during the inactive season for northern long-eared bat (November 15th through March 31st) to avoid negative impacts to the species. If any of the above species are found on-site, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and SCDNR should be contacted. Please note the take of the state listed Rafinesque's big-eared bat is prohibited under S.C. Code of Laws §50-15-30.
- (8) Incidental take of northern long-eared bats is allowed for actions outside of the WNS Buffer Zone<sup>18</sup>. An incidental take permit from the USFWS, under Section 10(a)(1)(B) of the ESA, may be required if activities are occurring within the WNS Buffer Zone and they are not related to specific forest management, native prairie management, minimal and hazardous tree removal, or maintenance/expansion of existing right-of-ways and transmission corridors, as outlined in the 4(d) rule as exemptions. Minimal tree removal only refers to an impact of one acre or less of contiguous habitat or one-acre total within a larger tract. Additionally, an incidental take permit would be needed, under Section 10(a)(1)(B) of the ESA, if activities were:
- occurring at any time of year within a cave or mine where northern long-eared bats hibernate (i.e., hibernaculum) or could alter the entrance or the environment (physical or other alteration) of a hibernaculum;
  - occurring at any time of year within ¼ mile of a known hibernaculum;
  - cutting or destroying an occupied maternity roost tree from June 1 to July 31 (during the pup season); or
  - removing any trees within 150 feet of a known occupied maternity roost tree from June 1 to July 31.

Again, if the project activities were related to specific forest management, native prairie management, minimal and hazardous tree removal, or maintenance/expansion of existing right-of-ways and transmission corridors, as outlined in the 4(d) rule, an incidental permit would not be needed.

SCDOT has concluded consultation under ESA regulations. No northern long-eared bats were identified during pedestrian field surveys and there are no known populations or hibernacula within the project study area. USFWS concurred with SCDOT's determination of "may effect, not likely to adversely affect" for the northern long-eared bat. The SCDOT will coordinate with SCDNR if state species are determined to be onsite.

- (9) The proposed project area provides habitat for two endangered species, shortnose sturgeon (*Acipenser brevirostrum*) and Atlantic sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus*). While the Ashely River has not been designated as critical habitat for sturgeon species, telemetry data indicates that the river appears to be crucial to the Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon populations. This area is a known migratory corridor for both Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon. Additionally, advanced life stage fish (juveniles and sub-adults) may use this area during fall and winter months. SCDNR recommends consultation with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to determine if construction activities are likely to negatively impact spawning or foraging sturgeon.



**The SCDNR also has concerns regarding the use of an impact hammer for pile driving. Noise impacts from percussive pile driving can result in a range of effects from mortality to hearing loss to behavioral effects. SCDNR recommends the use of a water jet or vibratory hammer to install piles. In the event standard pile driving (impact hammer) is utilized, SCDNR recommends a soft-strike procedure (three strikes at 40%-60% energy level once a minute for 3 minutes) be conducted prior to beginning pile driving activities and after any pile driving interruptions of more than 30 minutes. Pile driving activities should be limited to 12 hours per day with a 12-hour rest period between pile driving activities to avoid potential cumulative noise impacts to Federally listed Threatened and Endangered (T&E) species.**

SCDOT has concluded consultation with National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) on project impacts to Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. Since submittal of the permit application, additional Section 7 Endangered Species Act consultation has occurred with NOAA NMFS to account for the addition of the 14-foot-wide shared use path on the westbound lanes of I-526 over the Ashley River. NOAA NMFS maintained a *May Effect, Not Likely to Adversely Effect* determination for Atlantic and shortnose surgeon. A copy of the updated concurrence is attached.

As part of the SCDOT NEPA Environmental Commitments, SCDOT has already committed to the following that would minimize impacts to shortnose and Atlantic sturgeon.

Drilled shafts should be used in place of driven piles where possible. Equipment and materials used during the construction of the bridge would not obstruct or impede passage through more than 50 percent of the channel. Underwater noise impacts would also be minimized through the use of “slow starts”, where pile-driving ramps up slowly in an effort to deter marine species from the work area.

As stated in the February 16, 2021 consultation letter, “the contractor will be required to use sediment fences, turbidity curtains, and other best management practices to mitigate increases in turbidity during construction and demolition. Bridge removal and placement will be conducted in accordance with SCDOT standard specifications.”

### **Southern Environmental Law Center**

SCDOT has prepared a response to a letter received from Southern Environmental Law Center (SELC) on January 15, 2021. The SELC response letter is attached for reference.

### **Public Comments**

**Purpose of letter is to express strong opposition to the project because of detrimental and damaging effects on home and property.**

- **Flooding and erosion on property; concerns about mildew and mold**
- **Noise**
- **Poor air quality from increased vehicle emissions**
- **Litter**
- **Request for eminent domain purchase of property**

*Commenter: Dr. Maurice Weintraub*



Flooding – The project website includes a map that shows the approximate limits of new right of way that would be acquired by SCDOT. This additional space is needed not only for the widening I-526, but also for stormwater facilities, including ditches or ponds to store runoff. These storage facilities would allow water to be released at or below the current rate and allow sediments to settle out before the water leaves the right of way. Any fills in the floodplain would be offset by additional storage to maintain floodwater levels at or below existing conditions. The map showing the additional right of way is located at: [CDM Map Series](#).

Noise – A detailed study of anticipated changes in noise resulting from the project was conducted to determine if and where potential noise mitigation strategies were needed. SCDOT evaluated noise impacts within the corridor in accordance with federal guidelines and the Department's noise abatement policy. As a result of this evaluation, noise barriers are proposed at the following locations:

- West side of I-526 between Paul Cantrell Boulevard and Ashley River Road in West Ashley
- West side of I-526 from Ashley River Road to north of Middletown Cove Apartments in West Ashley
- East side of I-526 and between Paul Cantrell Boulevard and Ashley River Road in West Ashley
- East side of I-526 between Ashley River Road and the Ashley River in West Ashley
- I-526 Eastbound between International Boulevard and I-26

Mitigation barriers are also proposed on:

- I-26 Westbound on proposed collector-distributor road between I-526/I-26 interchange and Remount Road
- I-26 Eastbound on proposed collector-distributor road between Air Park Road and I-526/I-26 interchange

The wall on the east side of I-526 between Ashley River Road and the Ashley River in West Ashley should benefit the commenter's home. Final recommendations on noise wall construction will be made upon completion of the project's final design and the public involvement process.

Air Quality – The Glenn McConnell Parkway corridor is projected to be one of the highest growth areas located in the study area. Currently, traffic backs up during the afternoon commute from the intersection of Glenn McConnell Parkway and Magwood Drive onto I-526 across the Ashley River to Dorchester Road. The vehicles in this backup sit idling or travel at less than 5 mph. Growth in the Glenn McConnell Parkway corridor will cause this condition to worsen. The capacity improvements along the I-526 Mainline in addition to a bridge on Glenn McConnell Parkway over Magwood Drive, would provide the means for traffic to move more freely through the area, thereby reducing idling time and particulate emissions from slow moving or stopped vehicles.

The effects of maintaining free flow conditions at design speeds (for I-526 that is 60 mph and for Glenn McConnell that is 40 mph), versus vehicles sitting in congested conditions, have been well-documented. As an example, a diesel-powered truck traveling under 2.5 mph produces fine particulate emissions at a rate of 0.34 grams per mile. By comparison, that truck traveling at 35 mph produces 0.055 grams per mile, an 84% decrease in the emission rate. This rule of "higher speed = lower emission rate" generally holds for all vehicle types and emission pollutants, with very few exceptions.





**Runoff – We want to know what will be done preventatively to ensure that our homes and property are not overwhelmed with water from the Paul Cantrell and I-526 expansion project.** *Commenter: Roxanne Johnson*

SCDOT recognizes that additional pavement means rainwater accumulates faster and has the potential to adversely impact property along or downstream of the highway and is designing stormwater management facilities to address this concern. The project website includes a map that shows the approximate limits of new right of way that would be acquired by SCDOT. Much of this additional space is needed for stormwater facilities, including larger ditches or ponds to store the additional rainwater runoff generated by the additional pavement. These storage facilities would allow water to be released at or below the current rate and allow sediments to settle out before the water leaves the right of way. The map showing the additional right of way (shaded in orange) is located at [CDM Map Series](#).

**Air Pollution – What developing strategies have you implemented to reduce the impact of traffic emissions on public health in our community?** *Commenter: Roxanne Johnson, Rosalie Brown Foster*

The Glenn McConnell Parkway corridor is projected to be one of the highest growth areas located in the study area. Currently, traffic backs up during the afternoon commute from the intersection of Glenn McConnell Parkway and Magwood Drive onto I-526 across the Ashley River to Dorchester Road. The vehicles in this backup sit idling or travel at less than 5 mph. Growth in the Glenn McConnell Parkway corridor will cause this condition to worsen. The capacity improvements along the I-526 Mainline in addition to a bridge on Glenn McConnell Parkway over Magwood Drive, would provide the means for traffic to move more freely through the area, thereby reducing idling time and particulate emissions from slow moving or stopped vehicles.

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**Can you give me your proposals for keeping families together in affordable housing and consider building a wall of protection for this community?** *Commenter: Roxanne Johnson, Rosalie Brown Foster*

SCDOT has worked hard to minimize impacts to the surrounding communities and to work with community members to develop a robust DRAFT community mitigation plan. Section 4.3 through 4.5 of the [Draft EIS](#) discuss the project’s potential environmental consequences on communities, socioeconomics, and environmental justice communities. It is important to understand that the right-of-way was minimized in the original construction of I-526 to such an extent that there are existing homes and apartments immediately adjacent to the interstate structures. As it stands, SCDOT currently does not have enough room to replace the current bridges without impacting the first row of homes along I-526 between I-26 and Rivers Avenue. Minimization of right-of-way impacts in this area has been implement to maximum extent practicable for surrounding communities. In recognition of these impacts, mitigation for unavoidable community impacts in a fair and equitable manner has been a priority.



The SCDOT established a Community Advisory Council (CAC) in a coordinated effort to partner with and hear community wants, needs, and desires and to develop a comprehensive community mitigation plan. The proposed community mitigation plan focuses on mitigating for direct impacts (such as relocations) and indirect impacts, such as impacts to quality of life, for those remaining in the community. SCDOT also does not want to minimize the rights of way so much that it creates a lower quality of life for those homes closest to the interstate. Thus, a balance must be found that considers these decisions in order to preserve the character of the community for those remain. SCDOT has worked with community members to formulate the proposed DRAFT Environmental Justice Community Mitigation Plan outlined on our website: [Community Commitments](#).

This plan includes 100 affordable rental housing units in the City of North Charleston (88% of the relocations are currently rentals). Additionally, 12 single-family lots have been secured within the potentially impacted communities for affordable, single-family housing. Efforts will continue to secure vacant lots within the potentially impacted communities over the next year to provide replacement housing options. As the final Community Mitigation Plan is developed, a more detailed plan will be formulated on how these lots will be developed into replacement housing. The DRAFT Community Mitigation Plan currently represents over \$30 million dollars in commitments to the potentially impacted communities. The draft Environmental Justice Community Mitigation Plan is [Appendix H of the Draft EIS](#) and will be a component of the Final Environmental Impact Statement, and thus will be required to be funded and implemented by SCDOT as part of the project.

Additionally, there will be another opportunity for the potentially impacted communities of Ferndale, Highland Terrace, Liberty Park and Russelldale to review and comment on the specifics of the Environmental Justice Community Infrastructure Enhancement Plan this spring. If the commenter has additional questions or concerns regarding community impacts, please contact the project Community Office at (843) 258-1135 or 5627 Rivers Avenue in North Charleston, SC.

**Noise Disturbance: I strongly believe a solution to both issues of concern can be resolved by constructing a Roadside barrier wall built alongside the roadway to reduce traffic noise, and vegetation made up of trees and bushes that are along the barrier on the resident side. The vegetation placed behind the wall would reduce noise and downwind pollution concentrations from the nearby roadway. This would not only look aesthetically pleasing but it protects and afford privacy to the residents versus the drivers on Paul Cantrell won't be distracted looking at the neighborhood before existing to the on-ramp to I-526 East.**

*Commenter: Rosalie Brown Foster*

A [detailed study](#) of anticipated changes in noise resulting from the project was conducted to determine if and where potential noise mitigation strategies were needed. SCDOT evaluated noise impacts within the corridor in accordance with federal guidelines and the Department's noise abatement policy. As a result of this evaluation, noise barriers are proposed at the following locations:

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- I-526 Eastbound between International Boulevard and I-26

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- I-26 Westbound on proposed collector-distributor road between I-526/I-26 interchange and Remount Road
- I-26 Eastbound on proposed collector-distributor road between Air Park Road and I-526/I-26 interchange

Final recommendations on noise wall construction will be made upon completion of the project's final design and the public involvement process.

**My Dad is 81 with health issues. He and I are concern in what way SAC-2019-00593 (526 Expansion) will affect him personally. Such as, environmentally, noise and will he need to relocate? Your notice is not clear about that. If you could send any information on how his neighborhood is affected by the project above I would greatly appreciate it.** *Commenter: Mary Jamison*

SCDOT provided the USACE with a response to comments provided by Ms. Jamison regarding Parcel Number 4710100145, and the USACE responded to Ms. Jamison via email on December 10, 2021. USACE forwarded the following response from SCDOT:

No right-of-way acquisition or relocation is proposed at this parcel. A new 2-lane elevated roadway, or Collector-Distributor route, will be constructed between existing I-526 and the railroad track. A noise barrier was evaluated to provide abatement for noise impacts in this area. The barrier was proposed for construction on the new elevated roadway and was found to be feasible in reducing noise impacts. However, the barrier was not found to be reasonable based on cost-effectiveness to meet safety standards and constructability concerns on the elevated roadway. SCDOT and/or the contractor will make every reasonable effort to minimize construction noise through abatement measures such as work-hour controls and proper maintenance of muffler systems. SCDOT has also committed to minimizing air quality impacts by requiring contractor(s) to implement dust control measures. Provisions will be included in project plans and specifications requiring contractors to make every reasonable effort to minimize construction air quality impacts through abatement measures such as limiting construction equipment idling and other emission limitation techniques, as appropriate.

In addition to the previously provided response, SCDOT notes that final recommendations on noise wall construction will be made upon completion of the project's final design and the public involvement process.

**I live on Bull Creek in West Ashley, north of the I-526 bridge. When they originally built the bridge, they dumped a truck load (literally) of concrete under the bridges into Bull Creek. Whenever anyone takes out their boat at low tide, we have to trim the engine full up to avoid prop damage. We in the neighborhood have damaged several! Is there any way we can get Bull Creek cleaned out now or when the I526 expansion happens? My prop and fellow boaters will thank you!! Do you know if we are going to lose clearance when the expansion is finished?** *Commenter: Jason Haywood*

SCDOT provided an email response to Mr. Haywood on February 26, 2021 requesting additional details on the specific location of the concrete materials. SCDOT also indicated it is their intent to



maintain/match the existing clearances as set by the existing bridges. Per coordination with the US Coast Guard, the SCDOT has committed to maintaining those elevations.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at [mcgoldrwr@scdot.org](mailto:mcgoldrwr@scdot.org) or (803) 737-1326 or the agent for this permit, Blair Wade at HDR, Inc. at [blair.wade@hdrinc.com](mailto:blair.wade@hdrinc.com) or (843) 414-3740.

Sincerely,



Will McGoldrick  
SCDOT Design Build Environmental  
Coordinator

Attachments: Revised Permit Drawings  
Shading Mitigation Memo and Updated Compensatory Mitigation Calculations  
USFWS Section 7 Consultation, updated December 3, 2020  
NOAA-NMFS Section 7 ESA Consultation Letter, updated February 16, 2021  
NOAA-NMFS EFH Consultation Letter, updated February 26, 2021  
Response to Southern Environmental Law Center

CC: Joy Riley, SCDOT  
Logan Ress, SCDHEC Bureau of Water  
Christopher Stout, SCDHEC—OCRM, Coastal Zone Consistency  
Joshua Hoke, SCDHEC – OCRM, Critical Area Permitting  
Rick Day, Stantec  
Sean Connolly, SCDOT





U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

October 22, 2020

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

**ELECTRONIC CORRESPONDENCE ONLY**

Mr. Randall D. Overton  
Chief, Permits Division  
U.S. Coast Guard, District 7  
909 SE 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Suite 432  
Miami, FL 33131

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation  
for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST Project, Charleston County, South  
Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Mr. Overton:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST Project. The public comment period will begin on October 30, 2020, when the Notice of Availability is published, and conclude on January 15, 2021, for a period of 77 days. The extended comment period is due to holidays falling within the comment period. In an effort to be environmentally friendly, in lieu of printing a hard copy, the DEIS and Appendices are currently available for download at <https://scdot.sharefile.com/share/view/sf4663ef49964c468> and at the project website beginning **October 30, 2020: [www.526LowcountryCorridor.com/WEST/DEIS/](http://www.526LowcountryCorridor.com/WEST/DEIS/).**

The public is encouraged to participate online by visiting [www.526lowcountrycorridor.com/WESTPH](http://www.526lowcountrycorridor.com/WESTPH) between Thursday, November 12 and January 15, 2021. One-on-one, live chat sessions with the project team will be held on;

- Thursday, November 19, 2020 from 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM
- Saturday, December 5, 2020 from 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- Tuesday, December 8, 2020 from 9:00 AM – 6:00 PM
- Wednesday, December 9, 2020 from 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM

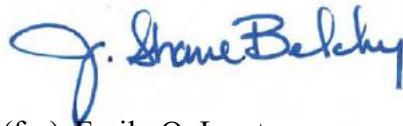
An in-person, appointment only option for individuals that are unable or do not wish to participate online will be made available. Appointments can be made by calling or texting 843-258-1135 between the hours of 9:00 AM and 6:00 PM Monday through Friday. Appointments can also be made by visiting the project website, [www.526LowcountryCorridor.com/WESTPH](http://www.526LowcountryCorridor.com/WESTPH). The in-person sessions will be held at the I-526 LCC Community Office located at 5627 Rivers Avenue on:

- Thursday, November 19, 2020 from 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM
- Saturday, December 5, 2020 from 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- Tuesday, December 8, 2020 from 9:00 AM – 6:00 PM
- Wednesday, December 9, 2020 from 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM

Verbal comments may be left by phone at 843-258-1135 from November 19, 2020 through January 15, 2021. Additionally, one live verbal comment session will be made available online on **Tuesday, December 15, 2020 from 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM.**

Please provide any comments on the DEIS or if would like to discuss the project in more detail, to Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by e-mail at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,



(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

cc: Chad Long, SCDOT Director, Environmental Services Office  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design-Build NEPA/Permits Coordinator  
Jim Martin, FHWA Major Projects Engineer

**From:** Overton, Randall D CIV <[Randall.D.Overton@uscg.mil](mailto:Randall.D.Overton@uscg.mil)>

**Sent:** Thursday, December 3, 2020 7:39 AM

**To:** McGoldrick, Will <[McGoldriWR@scdot.org](mailto:McGoldriWR@scdot.org)>; Belcher, Jeffery - FHWA <[Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov)>

**Subject:** FW: I-526 DEIS

\*\*\* This is an EXTERNAL email. Please do not click on a link or open any attachments unless you are confident it is from a trusted source. \*\*\*

Shane/Will,

Attached and below are the comments regarding the 526 LCC EIS from CGHQ.

Please let me know if you have questions/concerns.

Thank you,  
Randy

-----Original Message-----

From: Scholzen, Jamie L CIV <[Jamie.L.Scholzen2@uscg.mil](mailto:Jamie.L.Scholzen2@uscg.mil)>

Sent: Wednesday, November 25, 2020 8:43 AM

Subject: I-526 DEIS

Hi Randy,

I went through the DEIS for I-526 and have a few recommendations. It's possible they are similar to what you provided earlier. If not, could you include them with your comments during the public comment period?

My recommendations:

Clean Air Act - Include a statement whether or not transportation or general conformity regulations (or both) apply.

Invasive Species, EO 13112 - Include statements describing possible invasive species, impacts to invasive species and their spread, and mitigation measures.

Floodplains, EO 11988 - Missing elevation of 100 year flood level at the bridge location.

Coastal Zone Management Act - Clearly state if the State CZMA program certified that the project is consistent with CZM program and, if applicable, the State concurs with the CZM determination.

NEPA description of site history - the site history could be more clearly described. Current land and future use is discussed, but not the history of the roadway.

Best,  
Jamie

**From:** Overton, Randall D CIV <[Randall.D.Overton@uscg.mil](mailto:Randall.D.Overton@uscg.mil)>

**Sent:** Thursday, December 3, 2020 7:39 AM

**To:** McGoldrick, Will <[McGoldriWR@scdot.org](mailto:McGoldriWR@scdot.org)>; Belcher, Jeffery - FHWA <[Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov)>

**Subject:** FW: I-526 DEIS

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Shane/Will,

Attached and below are the comments regarding the 526 LCC EIS from CGHQ.

Please let me know if you have questions/concerns.

Thank you,  
Randy

-----Original Message-----

From: Scholzen, Jamie L CIV <[Jamie.L.Scholzen2@uscg.mil](mailto:Jamie.L.Scholzen2@uscg.mil)>

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Jamie

## EA/EIS REVIEW CHECKLIST USCG LEAD AND NON-LEAD FEDERAL AGENCY

YES	NO	N/A		PAGE #	Comments
			<b>NEPA Documentation</b>		
x			Date of EA/EIS.	Signature page	
x			Brief description of proposed action.	i-xix	
x			Statement of purpose and need for proposed action.	ii-iii, Chapter 2	
x			Citation that a USCG permit is needed.	222	
x			Alternatives considered, including the proposed action.	Chapter 3	
x			Description of alternatives, including the proposed action and no-action in comparative form.	33-45	
			Description of Site History.	70	Existing land use
x			States the Lead Federal Agency.	1, 234	
x			States the Cooperating Agencies for project.	2, 235	
		x	States whether the EA or EIS has been modified, reevaluated, supplemented or rescinded for the proposed action.		

		x	<b>Environmental Effects Abroad – Executive Order 12114</b>		
		x	Does the proposed project involve a bridge connection to Canada or Mexico?		
		x	If yes, any CEQ and DOS comment, as appropriate.		

x			<b>Water Quality – Clean Water Act</b>		
x			Description of water resources.	143-148; 152-153	
x			Discusses impacts to water resources from bridge.	149-150; 156-161	
x			States whether Water Quality Certification is required and the status of the application (if applicable).	151	
x			Discusses mitigation measures.	161-162	
x			Consultation and coordination (letters, meeting minutes, reports). EPA comment, if applicable.	152, Appendix L, S	

x			<b>Wetlands – Executive Order 11990</b>		
x			Description of wetlands.	154	
x			Discusses impacts to wetlands (temporary and permanent) from bridge.	156-161	
x			Discusses mitigation measures.	161-162	

## EA/EIS REVIEW CHECKLIST USCG LEAD AND NON-LEAD FEDERAL AGENCY

x			Consultation and coordination (letters, meeting minutes, reports) with USACE if mitigation measures are taken.	Chapter 6; Appendix L	
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<b>x</b>			<b>Coastal Zone Management Act</b>		
x			States if project is within boundaries of State(s) CZM Program.	151	
x			Identifies State(s) Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Program, if applicable.	151	
	x		Certifies that project is consistent with CZM program(s).		Pending
	x		State concurrence for CZM, if applicable.		Pending

<b>x</b>			<b>Floodplains – Executive Order 11988</b>		
x			States if project is located in the base floodplain.	164	
			Gives 100-year flood elevation.		Missing elevation
x			Discusses impacts of bridge project on floodplains.	165-166	
x			Consultation and coordination (letters, meeting minutes, reports) with FEMA.	Appendix N	

		<b>x</b>	<b>Wild and Scenic Rivers Act</b>		
		x	Is the river involved in the proposed bridge project a designated Wild and Scenic River segment or listed on the Nationwide Rivers Inventory?		
		x	If yes, discusses impacts to the river segment, mitigation, and other compliance with Section 7 of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 (including correspondence with the river-administering agency).		

		<b>x</b>	<b>Coastal Barrier Resources Act</b>		
		x	Does the proposed project connect to a unit of the Coastal Barrier Resources System?		
		x	If yes and the project is federally funded, does the EA/EIS discuss impacts to the coastal barrier resource, mitigation, and includes Section 6 exception and coordination with FWS?		

<b>x</b>			<b>Land and Water Conservation Fund Act 6(f)</b>	<b>200</b>	
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**EA/EIS REVIEW CHECKLIST  
USCG LEAD AND NON-LEAD FEDERAL AGENCY**

x			States if the project will require a conversion of land funded by the LWCFA.	201	
x			Correspondence with the NPS, State Liaison Officer (SLO), and authorization from the Secretary of the Interior, if applicable.	Appendix R	

		x	<b>National Marine Sanctuary Act and Marine Protected Areas</b>		
		x	States if the proposed project is in or adjacent to a National Marine Sanctuary or Marine Protected Area.		
		x	If so, is the proposed bridge likely to destroy, cause loss of, or injure a resource of a National Marine Sanctuary? If so, include a sanctuary resource statement.		
		x	Gives mitigation measures and correspondence with NOAA's ONMS or the relevant MPA.		
		x	If yes, includes consultation and coordination (letter of authorization) with NMFS.		

x			<b>Endangered and Threatened Species Act</b>		
x			Description of endangered, threatened, and candidate species, and critical habitat.	167-172	
x			Discusses impacts to endangered, threatened, and candidate species, and critical habitat.	175-178	
x			Provides date of Biological Assessment (separate or included in NEPA document).	Appendix L	15 May 2020
x			Provides mitigation measures.	179-180	
x			Timeline of consultation with FWS and/or NMFS.	238	
x			Provides relevant correspondence with USFWS/NMFS (Review the Final EA or EIS for the concurrence, if not final at this point).	Appendix L, O	

x			<b>Essential Fish Habitat – Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act</b>		
x			Description of Essential Fish Habitat (EFH).	173-175	
x			Discusses impacts to EFH from proposed bridge.	175-177	
x			Provides mitigation measures.	179-180	
x			Consultation and coordination (letters, meeting, minutes, reports) with the NMFS.	Appendix O	

x			<b>Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act</b>		
x			Description of fish and wildlife.	167-175	
x			Discusses impacts to fish and wildlife.	175-178	

## EA/EIS REVIEW CHECKLIST USCG LEAD AND NON-LEAD FEDERAL AGENCY

x			Discusses mitigation measures.	179-180	
			Correspondence with USFWS and the relevant state wildlife agency(ies) regarding FWCA coordination.	Appendix L	

x			<b>Marine Mammals Protection Act</b>		
x			Description of marine mammals.	171	
x			Discusses impacts to marine mammals.	171	
	x		Will the proposed project involve a “take” of marine mammals?		
x			Discusses mitigation measures.	179	
x			Correspondence with NMFS and/or FWS.	Appendix L; Appendix O	

<b>x</b>			<b>Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Executive Order 13186</b>		
x			Description of migratory birds.	172	
x			Discusses impacts to migratory birds.	172	
	x		Will the project involve a potential take of migratory birds?	172	
	x		Is a permit from USFWS required?		
x			Discusses mitigation measures.	172-173	
		x	Correspondence with USFWS if a permit is required.		

<b>x</b>			<b>Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act</b>		
<b>x</b>			Description of eagles in the project area.	<b>171</b>	
<b>x</b>			Discusses impacts to eagles.	<b>175</b>	
	x		Will the proposed project take or disturb bald or golden eagles (including nests)?		
	x		Is a permit from USFWS required?		
		x	Correspondence with USFWS.		

			<b>Invasive Species – Executive Order 13112</b>		Missing
			Description of invasive species.		
			Discusses impacts to invasive species and their spread.		
			Discusses mitigation measures.		

<b>x</b>			<b>National Historic Preservation Act – Section 106</b>		
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## EA/EIS REVIEW CHECKLIST USCG LEAD AND NON-LEAD FEDERAL AGENCY

x			Description of historic, archaeological, and cultural resources.	182-184	
x			Discusses impacts to historic, archaeological, and cultural resources.	185-186	
x			Discusses mitigation measures.	187	
x			If the project has potential to impact Section 106 properties, does the EA or EIS provide evidence of consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (and the Advisory Council on Historic preservation, if applicable)?	186	
		x	Date of Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), if applicable (Make note to review Final EA or EIS for the MOA, if not final at this point)		
		x	If project is located on federal or Native American land, provide compliance with Archeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 (ARPA) and/or Antiquities Act of 1906.		
		x	If project involves collection of human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or other similar objects associated with Indian tribes and native Hawaiian organizations, provide compliance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.		
		x	If project involves the disturbance or destruction of shipwrecks located on state submerged lands, provide compliance with the Abandoned Shipwreck Act of 1987.		

			<b>Clean Air Act</b>		
x			Description of air quality in the project area.	130-131	
x			Discusses impacts from construction and operation.	130-131; 210	
x			Discusses mitigation measures.	130-131; 210	
x			States whether the project is in an area of attainment, maintenance, or nonattainment for each of the criteria pollutants in the NAAQS.	130	
	x		If project occurs in a nonattainment or maintenance area, states if the transportation or general conformity regulations, or both, apply.		Missing
		?	If applicable, provides exemption (s) from a transportation conformity analysis for any of the reasons listed in 40 CFR 93.126 and provides the reason.		
		?	If applicable, provides exemption (s) from a general conformity analysis for any of the reasons listed in 40 CFR 93.153(c) and provides the reason.		

**EA/EIS REVIEW CHECKLIST  
USCG LEAD AND NON-LEAD FEDERAL AGENCY**

		?	If transportation conformity applies, is the project listed in a conforming SIP, FIP, TIP, and/or RTP.		
--	--	---	--	--	--

x			<b>Environmental Justice – Executive Order 12898</b>		
x			Discusses impacts to minority or low-income populations and determines whether those impacts are disproportionately adverse.	114-117	
x			Discusses mitigation measures.	117-125	
		x	Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice comment, if applicable.		

x			<b>CERCLA – RCRA – Hazardous Materials, Substances, or Wastes</b>		
x			Description of contaminated sites.	203-205	
x			Discusses compliance with Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) or State law regulating hazardous materials, substances, or wastes.	206	

## Mark Mohr

---

**Subject:** FW: Response to USCG Comments RE: I-526 Low Country Corridor West DEIS

---

**From:** Belcher, Jeffrey (FHWA) <[Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, March 30, 2021 12:41 PM

**To:** McGoldrick, Will <[McGoldriWR@scdot.org](mailto:McGoldriWR@scdot.org)>

**Subject:** FW: Response to USCG Comments RE: I-526 Low Country Corridor West DEIS

\*\*\* This is an EXTERNAL email. Please do not click on a link or open any attachments unless you are confident it is from a trusted source. \*\*\*

See below.

*J. Shane Belcher*

*Lead Environmental Specialist*

*Federal Highway Administration*

*1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270*

*Columbia, SC 29201*

*Phone: 803-253-3187*

*The content of this email is confidential and intended for the recipient specified in message only.*

---

**From:** Overton, Randall D CIV <[Randall.D.Overton@uscg.mil](mailto:Randall.D.Overton@uscg.mil)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, March 30, 2021 12:33 PM

**To:** Belcher, Jeffrey (FHWA) <[Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: Response to USCG Comments RE: I-526 Low Country Corridor West DEIS

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the Department of Transportation (DOT). Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Shane,  
The responses look great.

Thank you sir,  
Randy

---

**From:** Belcher, Jeffrey (FHWA) <[Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.Belcher@dot.gov)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, March 30, 2021 11:49 AM

**To:** Overton, Randall D CIV <[Randall.D.Overton@uscg.mil](mailto:Randall.D.Overton@uscg.mil)>

**Cc:** McGoldrick, Will <[McGoldriWR@scdot.org](mailto:McGoldriWR@scdot.org)>

**Subject:** [Non-DoD Source] Response to USCG Comments RE: I-526 Low Country Corridor West DEIS

Randall,

Wanted to provide you an update on the proposed plans to update the I-526 West Corridor EIS based on USCG's comments. The table includes the proposed response to comments received from USCG for inclusion in the

FEIS/ROD. Any issues with the proposed responses, please let me know. A full draft version of the FEIS/ROD will be provided to all cooperating agencies for review and comment on 5/21/2021 to ensure the document maintains compliance with each agency's requirements. So, you will be able to recheck the document at that time also. As always, any questions please let Will McGoldrick or I know.

USCG DEIS Review Comment	Suggested response	Response/Changes Made
Missing description of Site History in the land use section	Suggestion from USCG to respond "the site history could be more clearly described. Current land and future use is discussed, but not the history of the roadway."	Added paragraph to section 4.1.3.1 describing history
Missing coastal zone consistency discussion.	Suggestion from USCG to respond "Clearly state if the State CZMA program certified that the project is consistent with CZM program and, if applicable, the State concurs with the CZM determination."	CZC Critical area determination scheduled for June 2021. Once determination has been made, additional sentence/paragraph will be added to document the decision
Missing elevation of 100yr floodplain	Suggestion from USCG to respond "Need to provide floodplain elevation at bridge location"	Sentence added in section 4.12.5 "The 100-year floodplain elevation at the bridge over the Ashley River is 14 feet. The lowest portion of the proposed bridge at this location would be 38 feet, well above the floodplain elevation."
Missing discussion on invasive species		additional text added in 4.13.3.2- notes requirements of EO 13112/13751 and adds new Env Commitment to avoid planting listed noxious weeds
Missing response to "If project occurs in a nonattainment or maintenance area, states if the transportation or general conformity regulations, or both, apply."	Suggestion from USCG to respond, "Include a statement whether or not transportation or general conformity regulations (or both) apply."	Added sentence in 4.8.1 stating project is in area of State that is IN attainment therefore conformity regulations do not apply.

*J. Shane Belcher*  
*Lead Environmental Specialist*  
*Federal Highway Administration*

*1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, SC 29201  
Phone: 803-253-3187*

*The content of this email is confidential and intended for the recipient specified in message only.*



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**South Carolina**

October 22, 2020

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-765-5411  
803-253-3989

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-SC

**ELECTRONIC CORRESPONDENCE ONLY**

Mr. Mark Caldwell  
Deputy Field Supervisor  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services  
176 Croghan Spur Road, Suite 200  
Charleston, SC 29407

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation  
for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST Project, Charleston County, South  
Carolina; Federal Project Number P027507

Dear Mr. Caldwell:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST Project. The public comment period will begin on October 30, 2020, when the Notice of Availability is published, and conclude on January 15, 2021, for a period of 77 days. The extended comment period is due to holidays falling within the comment period. In an effort to be environmentally friendly, in lieu of printing a hard copy, the DEIS and Appendices are currently available for download at <https://scdot.sharefile.com/share/view/sf4663ef49964c468> and at the project website beginning **October 30, 2020: [www.526LowcountryCorridor.com/WEST/DEIS/](http://www.526LowcountryCorridor.com/WEST/DEIS/)**.

The public is encouraged to participate online by visiting [www.526lowcountrycorridor.com/WESTPH](http://www.526lowcountrycorridor.com/WESTPH) between Thursday, November 12 and January 15, 2021. One-on-one, live chat sessions with the project team will be held on;

- Thursday, November 19, 2020 from 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM
- Saturday, December 5, 2020 from 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- Tuesday, December 8, 2020 from 9:00 AM – 6:00 PM
- Wednesday, December 9, 2020 from 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM

An in-person, appointment only option for individuals that are unable or do not wish to participate online will be made available. Appointments can be made by calling or texting 843-258-1135 between the hours of 9:00 AM and 6:00 PM Monday through Friday. Appointments can also be made by visiting the project website, [www.526LowcountryCorridor.com/WESTPH](http://www.526LowcountryCorridor.com/WESTPH). The in-person sessions will be held at the I-526 LCC Community Office located at 5627 Rivers Avenue on:

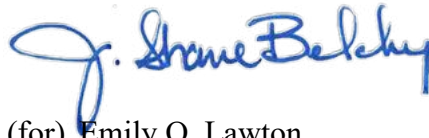


- Thursday, November 19, 2020 from 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM
- Saturday, December 5, 2020 from 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- Tuesday, December 8, 2020 from 9:00 AM – 6:00 PM
- Wednesday, December 9, 2020 from 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM

Verbal comments may be left by phone at 843-258-1135 from November 19, 2020 through January 15, 2021. Additionally, one live verbal comment session will be made available online on **Tuesday, December 15, 2020 from 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM.**

Please provide any comments on the DEIS or if would like to discuss the project in more detail, to Mr. J. Shane Belcher at 803-253-3187 or by e-mail at [jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov](mailto:jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov).

Sincerely,



(for) Emily O. Lawton  
Division Administrator

cc: Chad Long, SCDOT Director, Environmental Services Office  
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design-Build NEPA/Permits Coordinator  
Jim Martin, FHWA Major Projects Engineer

# AGENCY COORDINATION PLAN

## APPENDIX D

### AGENCY MEETING SUMMARIES

# Final ACE Meeting Notes – March 14, 2019

## Attendees:

FHWA	Shane Belcher Michelle Herrell
NOAA	Cindy Cooksey (on phone)
USEPA	Kelly Laycock (on phone)
USFWS	Mark Caldwell (on phone)
SCDHEC	Chuck Hightower Cameron Polomski
SCDHEC-OCRM	Josh Hoke (on phone) Chris Stout (on phone) Blair Williams (on phone)
SCDNR	Susan Davis (on phone) Greg Mixon (on phone) Lorianne Riggan (on phone)
SCDOT	Sean Connolly Siobhan Gordon David Kelly Jessica Kennedy Lyle Lee Chad Long Vince McCarron Will McGoldrick Joy Riley
SCPRT	Amy Blinson
SHPO	Elizabeth Johnson Joe Wilkinson
Stantec	Rick Day (on phone)
Three Oaks Engineering	Russell Chandler Heather Robbins

## Purpose of the Meeting:

Agency coordination kick-off meeting for One Federal Decision for I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST.

FHWA gave a summary overview of One Federal Decision (OFD) in E.O. 103807

- Executive Order 13807 – Establishing Discipline and Accountability in the Environmental Review and Permitting Process. Signed and became effective August 15, 2017.
  - This Executive Order (EO) requires major infrastructure projects to be processed as One Federal Decision; this project is considered a major infrastructure project and will follow One Federal Decision.



- Sets a goal of two years between issuance of Notice of Intent (NOI) to Record of Decision (ROD), and any additional permits/authorizations 90 days after ROD
  - This does not replace any current laws or regulations
- Key aspects of OFD per EO 13807:
  - Development of a single permitting timetable for the necessary environmental review and authorization decisions of agencies who have a NEPA or permit decision.
  - Preparation of a single EIS that can be used by other federal agencies to make their NEPA/permit decisions.
  - Issuance of all necessary permit and authorizations within 90 days after the ROD
  - Performance Accountability reporting to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). FHWA is awaiting guidance from FHWA HQ whether hours worked need to be tracked on this project, and how to do that.
- Memorandum of Understanding for Implementing OFD – signed by USDOT and 11 federal agencies in April 9, 2018. Outlines how signatory agencies will jointly and cooperatively process environmental reviews and make authorization decisions.
  - MOU stresses the development of the permitting timetable in coordination with agencies to meet project milestones.
  - Preliminary project planning to be done prior to the issuance of the NOI.
  - There are scoping and concurrence points.
  - It includes an elevation and dispute resolution process to address issues and avoid delays. However, this is elevation to Headquarters of each agency. FHWA would prefer to have a dispute resolution process internally to this project to avoid elevation to headquarters offices.
  - Three main concurrence points for lead/cooperating agencies:
    - Purpose and Need (prior to issuance of NOI)
    - Alternatives to be carried forward for evaluation (prior to detailed analysis for Draft EIS)
    - Preferred Alternative (prior to FEIS)
  - FHWA will request written concurrence. Per the MOU, cooperating agency will have 10 business days to concur or not concur. If more time is needed, we can discuss this with the cooperating agencies
- One Federal Decision – activities that will occur before the NOI:
  - Identify Cooperating and Participating agencies and invite them to participate;
  - Develop a draft P & N;
  - Develop a draft Agency Coordination Plan and Permitting Timetable;
  - Identify community and stakeholders affected and develop a Public Involvement Plan (PIP);
  - Identify preliminary Range of Alternatives;
  - Determine the extent of analysis needed for each resource;
  - Initiate applicable resource surveys/studies;
  - Identify potentially significant environmental issues;



- Identify potential mitigation strategies; and,
  - Initiate permit activities as soon as possible, such as pre-application process
- Working Agreement signed between USACE, USCG, USEPA, USFWS, NOAA, and FHWA:
  - Intended to accelerate and coordinate the planning, environmental review, permitting and decision-making for FHWA projects that fall under OFD
  - Included attached chart agreed upon by the agencies list above for the general coordination process for projects (See attached chart).
  - Provides for:
    - Agencies identifying a main point of contact for the project early in the process;
    - Participate in early coordination meetings;
    - Identify information required and/or applications needed for agency determinations as early as practicable;
    - Comment and/or concur on NEPA documents in a timely manner; and,
    - Dispute resolution.
    - FHWA HQ guidance is we should seek to get concurrence on the purpose and need, and range of alternatives/alternatives to be carried forward prior to the Notice of Intent.
    - FHWA HQ also strongly suggests concurrence by the agencies on the permitting timetable prior to issuing the NOI.
- Will be providing information to agencies earlier than when DEIS is issued. Goal is to provide sections of DEIS for review prior to the DEIS so that any comments/issues can be addressed sooner.
- First OFD project in the state, third in the nation done by FHWA. However, we are further along in the process than the other states, so have an opportunity to set an example for future projects and show other states/agencies how well we work together.
- If there is a delay for some reason, we will document it thoroughly, as we will be tracked on the federal permitting dashboard. Important to have local dispute resolution process to avoid delays. We will update the permitting timetable accordingly.
- USCG public notice on navigation will be issued before or during the DEIS comment period.
- USACE joint public notice will be issued when FHWA publishes DEIS so the comment period for the public notice and DEIS are at the same time.
- FHWA wants to work cooperatively to ensure that all agencies information needs for approvals and authorizations can be met within the timeframe in the OFD.

**Three Oaks Engineering and Joy Riley of SCDOT provided a Project Summary:**

The 526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST is between Paul Cantrell Boulevard and Virginia Avenue, approximately 11.4 miles long (refer to Figure 1). The project is a four-lane divided highway. SCDOT currently ranks the segments of I-526 between I-26 and Virginia Avenue as one of the most congested segments of interstate highway in the State. The remainder of the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST project, from I-26 to Paul Cantrell Boulevard, ranks among the top ten of the State's existing most



congested corridors. Forecasts show that segments of that corridor will continue to be among the State's most congested in 2040. The interchange of I-526 and I-26 is the major source of the congestion. This is due to the high number of vehicles moving between I-26 and I-526, coupled with closely spaced interchanges with ramps that have steep grades and tight curves, and limited distances for vehicles to merge onto and off of I-526.

The I-526 and I-26 System-to-System interchange is a key interchange locally. It links downtown Charleston, Summerville, West Ashley, and Mount Pleasant. I-26 links the Charleston area with the other major cities to the west like Columbia, Spartanburg, and Asheville, North Carolina, as well as with I-95, I-77, I-20, I-85, I-40, and I-81. I-526 provides the only freeway access to two important port terminals - the North Charleston terminal and the Wando Welch terminal. Wando Welch is the busiest terminal in the region and has no access to rail. Not only is I-526 an important route for daily commuting traffic, it is also part of a network for transporting freight and commercial goods to and from the Port of Charleston and throughout the region. To the west of I-26, the route crosses the Ashley River and provides a similar connection to the growing West Ashley area.

The purpose of this project is to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26/I-526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard.



Figure 1

**Three Oaks Engineering went through the studies that had been completed and their status:**

- Cultural resources survey has been completed and will be submitted to SHPO in March 2019.
- Wetland delineations were almost completed as well as critical area delineations.



- Natural resources studies were still ongoing.
- Traffic studies being updated to 2050 and preliminary alternatives are being updated to reflect the results of the 2050 traffic modeling.
- Hydrologic surveys have been completed and initial drainage designs are underway.

#### **Agency Input:**

##### **FHWA**

- FHWA asked the agencies to review the draft agency coordination plan and the overall NEPA schedule in the back on the plan and provide comments on what deliverables they would need in order for the major milestones to be met in that overall schedule.
- Concurrence points are only required for coordinating agencies based on OFD and Section 6002 since they have NEPA decision associated with permitting decisions. Thus, USACE and USCG would be cooperating agencies for the project as they both have permit decisions. However, FHWA would like participating agencies to also concur on major milestones to ensure agencies are on board with the project as it goes through the NEPA process.
- FHWA and SCDOT asked if SCDHEC and SCDHEC-OCRM would like to be a cooperating agency also since they had an approval. SCDHEC and SCDHEC-OCRM stated they would like to discuss that internally and also asked how the schedule would flow for permitting with the USACE. FHWA asked if it would be beneficial if there was a meeting between USACE, SCDHEC, SCDHEC-OCRM, FHWA, and SCDOT.
- FHWA would like to develop a dispute resolution process in case an issue should arise so that issues can be handled at the state level rather than rely on the dispute resolution process that is in the OFD guidance, which refers it to the headquarters office of each agency. The I-73 dispute resolution process worked well and would like to see something similar for this. **Action Item: Three Oaks Engineering to develop a draft process agreement/dispute resolution process based on I-73 agreement.**
- **Action Item: FHWA will send letter requesting agencies participation as cooperating or participating agencies by end of March. FHWA will send it to the lead office and copy those in the meeting who will be working directly on the project.**
- This project will have extensive environmental justice outreach because community impacts are one of the reasons this project was elevated to EIS. FHWA will coordinate with their internal expert in environmental justice and also reach out to USEPA's expert on environmental justice. FHWA offered to share draft public involvement plan with any other agency who wanted to review it.

##### **USFWS**

- Appears that congestion is not caused by 526 interchange, but farther west near Ashley Phosphate, and thought adding more capacity would add more cars. SCDOT explained that this project is intended to focus on the I-526 corridor as well as the congestion at the I-526/26 interchange. Other projects may be done in the future on I-26 based on regional congestion management plan study currently underway.



- Would like to see a permittee responsible mitigation plan (PRM) for salt water impacts instead of a bank for mitigation.
- Improving Filbin Creek could be part of mitigation plan
- No T&E specific concerns within corridor but just outside there are known manatee occurrences (on I-526 E corridor)
- Stated there was no federally-designated critical habitat in the project area

#### **NOAA-NMFS**

- NMFS would also not support use of Murrayhill and Clydesdale banks for this project
- Full EFH assessment will be needed, including assessment of Filbin Creek

#### **SCDHEC**

- SCDHEC has one year to make a decision on the Section 401 water quality certification and is concerned about the timeline if a full permit application is not available at the time of the joint public notice issued by USACE.
- Evaluate and discuss internally if SCDHEC wants to be a cooperating or participating agency
- SCDHEC would do the work needed on the Section 401 water quality certification and pass it to SCDHEC-OCRM who would take the lead on the 401 and the Coastal Zone Certification since they to issue the critical area permit.

#### **SCDHEC-OCRM**

- The permit application would require a certified critical area line. Three Oaks Engineering stated that it would have that done in July. Stated that SCDHEC-OCRM certifies the critical area line first, then the USACE will follow with their jurisdictional determination.
- SCDHEC-OCRM has up to 6 months to make a decision on the coastal zone certification (CZC).
- Critical Area Permit is good for five years
- Remind SCDOT and Three Oaks Engineering that Critical Area surveys need to be coordinated with OCRM.

#### **SCDNR**

- Suggested a tract of Cainhoy Plantation on Daniel Island as a possible PRM site, as it has freshwater, brackish water, T&E species and species of concern.
- Will a letter be sent out requesting comments? SCDOT stated they would send out letters at formal concurrence points and request concurrence in writing.
- Main concern is tidal river crossings.
- Encouraged SCDOT to reach out to SCDNR protected species group.

#### **SCDOT**

- Will provide all agencies the same documents regardless of status as cooperating or participating agency
- Would like state agency input.
- Consider this a formal request for comments on documents already sent, including the draft purpose and need statement and the draft agency coordination plan.
- Please send Will McGoldrick comments on these documents by 3/29.

#### **SCPRT**





- SCPRT provided a map of the Section 6(f) property for boundary lines
- Stated they need to see what is being taken as soon as possible to start process
- Anticipate a full 6(f) conversion on Russelldale.
- Stated that SCDOT and FHWA need to reach out to North Charleston since they manage the property.
- Stated that identifying replacement property in the same community is a concern.
- SCDOT stated they would set up a separate meeting with SCPRT and FHWA on Section 6(f) conversion process.

#### SHPO

- Hadn't received the cultural resources report yet but would review it and talk to SCDOT after the review
- Stated they would do a two-step process, first they would do concurrence on eligibility determinations and then do concurrence on effect determinations.

#### Three Oaks Engineering

- Proposed Cooperating and Participating Agencies.
- NEPA permitting schedule and Permitting timetable are two separate documents. ACE meetings as well as additional monthly meetings. Milestone meetings correlate with concurrence points. Discuss Agency Coordination Plan, permitting timetable and P&N in April. First concurrence points are in May 2019. Agencies letters to go out in March. 10 days for concurrence but can extend as needed. Refer to draft schedule.
- Propose monthly meeting: 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month at 9:00 am. Move April meeting to 4/23 due to Spring Break.
- **Action items: Agencies review plan and permitting timetable, P&N comments to Will 3/29. Incorporate comments from 4/23 meeting. Permitting meeting to be scheduled. Doodle poll. Draft dispute and process agreement.**

#### Action Items:

Action Items	Date	Status
SCDOT to set up meeting between USACE, SCDHEC, SCDHEC-OCRM, FHWA and SCDOT	March 14, 2019	Action completed. Meeting set for April 1, 2019
Three Oaks Engineering to develop a draft process agreement/dispute resolution process based on I-73 agreement.	March 14, 2019	
FHWA will send letter requesting agencies participation as cooperating or participating agencies by end of March 2019.	March 14, 2019	Letters were sent out via FedEx on March 29, 2019
Agencies to review the draft purpose and need statement and draft agency coordination plan and provide Will McGoldrick comments by 3/29/2019	March 14, 2019	
SCDOT to set up meeting with FHWA and SCPRT regarding Section 6(f) conversion process	March 14, 2019	

#### Cooperating Agencies:

Agency	Primary Responsibility
U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)	Navigational Permitting for Bridges
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)	Jurisdictional Area Determination and Section 404/10 Permitting; Wetlands and streams expertise

#### Participating Agencies:

Federal Agencies	
Agency	Primary Responsibility
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)	Consultation on Endangered Species Act Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Bald & Golden Eagle Protection Act, Fish & Wildlife Coordination Act Streams and wetlands expertise
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)	NEPA/Environmental Justice Review Section 404, Section 401, Water Quality
NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)	Essential Fish Habitat Endangered Species Act/Marine Mammal Protection Act Coordination

State Agencies	
Agency	Primary Responsibility
South Carolina Department of Archives and History (SCDAH)	Archaeological and Historical Resources consultation, Section 106 review
South Carolina Department of Health & Environmental Control; Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (SCDHEC-OCRM)	Jurisdiction of Critical Areas, Critical Area Permitting, Air, and Section 401 Water Quality & CZM consistency determinations; wetlands and streams expertise
South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR)	State Protected Species; wetlands and streams expertise
South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism (SCPRT)	Consultation on Section 6(f) properties funded by Land and Water Conservation Fund Act

Sovereign Nations	
	Primary Responsibility
Catawba Indian Nation	Historic/cultural resources review
Eastern Shawnee Tribe	Historic/cultural resources review
Muscogee (Creek) Nation	Historic/cultural resources review

# **Draft Schedule:**

Milestones	Date
2019	
<i>Agency Project Kickoff and Scoping Meeting</i>	<i>March 14, 2019</i>
Send Letters Inviting Cooperating and Participating Agencies	March 2019
Agencies review draft Purpose and Need Statement	April 2019
Agencies review Agency Coordination Plan and Permitting Timetable	March-April 2019
<i>Follow-up Agency Meeting to discuss ACP, Permitting Timetable, and P&amp;N Statement</i>	<i>April 2019</i>
<b>Concurrence Point for Agency Coordination Plan and Permitting Timetable</b>	<b>May 2019</b>
<b>Concurrence Point for Purpose and Need Statement</b>	<b>May 2019</b>
Project Initiation Letter and Navigation Report sent to USCG	May 2019
<i>Agency Meeting to discuss the alternative evaluation criteria, alternatives analysis process, and Preliminary Range of Alternatives</i>	<i>Summer 2019</i>
Agencies Review the Preliminary Range of Alternatives for Concurrence	Summer 2019
Submit Preliminary Jurisdictional Determination to USACE & Critical Area to SCDHEC-OCRM	July 2019
FHWA issues Notice of Intent (NOI)	July 2019
Community and Stakeholder Meetings	August-September 2019
Public Information Meeting	Fall 2019
<i>Agency Meeting to discuss initial Alternatives Analysis and Reasonable Range of Alternatives</i>	<i>Fall 2019</i>
<b>Concurrence Point for Preliminary Range of Alternatives/Alternatives Carried Forward by Agencies</b>	<b>Fall 2019</b>
Continued Coordination with Agencies on specific resources (i.e. Permitting, EFH, Section 106, Section 7, etc.)	Fall/Winter 2019
<i>Agency Meeting to discuss potential mitigation options</i>	<i>Winter 2019</i>
2020	
<i>Agency Meeting to discuss Reasonable Alternatives and Preferred Alternative</i>	<i>Late Spring 2020</i>
Preliminary Draft EIS section for review by Agencies	Spring/Summer 2020
<b>Agency Meeting and Concurrence Point for Preferred Alternative by Agencies</b>	<b>Summer 2020</b>
Pre-Application Meeting with UASCE and SCDHEC	Summer 2020
Draft EIS issued; Joint USACE Individual Permit and USCG Public Notices	Fall 2020
Community and Stakeholder Meetings	Fall 2020
Public Hearing	Fall/Winter 2020
<i>Agency Meeting to discuss comments received during the public hearing comment periods and path forward to FEIS/ROD</i>	<i>Winter 2020-2021</i>
Response to Public and Agency Comments	Winter 2020-2021
2021	
Prepare Final EIS/Record of Decision	Spring 2021
FHWA Issues FEIS/ROD	Summer 2021
USACE and USCG Issue Permit Decisions	Summer/Fall 2021

# I-526 West Agency Coordination Meeting

## April 23, 2019

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### Attendees:

FHWA	Michelle Herrell (on phone)
NOAA	
USACE	Christopher Mims (on phone)
USEPA	Alya Singh-White (on phone)
USFWS	Mark Caldwell (on phone)
SCDHEC	Chuck Hightower (on phone) Cameron Polomski (on phone)
SCDHEC-OCRM	Josh Hoke (on phone) Blair Williams (on phone)
SCDNR	
SCDOT	David Kelly Chad Long Will McGoldrick
SCPRT	
SHPO	
Stantec	
Three Oaks Engineering	Amanda Chandler Russell Chandler (on phone) Heather Robbins Geni Theriot (on phone)

### Purpose of the Meeting:

Follow-up Agency Meeting to discuss Agency Coordination Plan (ACP) comments, Purpose and Need, Permitting Timetable, and Dispute Resolution Process.

Agencies that attended were asked if any changes need to be made and for any additional comments as meeting progressed.

### I. Comments Received from Agencies on ACP and P&N:

Heather Robbins provided overview and response of comments received from agencies. Five (5) comments were received from the agencies and reviewed during the meeting.

Agency	Comment
US Fish and Wildlife Service	<b>Purpose &amp; Need</b> "There is no obvious stated Need for the project to support the stated Purpose. We recommend that the Need Statement be revised to entail a tangible benefit or resolution to a targeted problem."
US Fish and Wildlife Service	"The Service has no objections to the <b>Agency Coordination Plan</b> discussed during the March 14, 2019 meeting. We do recommend adding projected or approximate dates for onsite field visits to the project area as well as potential mitigation properties. Such dates can be refined as the I-526 project develops."
US Fish and Wildlife Service	"The Service has no objection to the <b>Draft Permitting Schedule</b> . However, we are concerned that the accelerated timelines stimulated by the One Federal Decision process is an aggressive schedule. It may not provide ample time to thoroughly review alternatives in order to find the least environmentally damaging alternative and appropriate mitigation strategy to compensate for unavoidable impacts for the project. "
SC State Historic Preservation Office	"We offer no specific comments regarding this stage of project review under the One Federal Decision guidance. If abstaining from such concurrence points presents a problem with implementing the OFD process, please communicate with us so that we may discuss this further. I also request that you include me in Table 2.3 of the ACP as the primary contact at the SC SHPO for this project."
SC Department of Natural Resources	"The DNR offers no specific comments or concerns regarding the review of this project under the One Federal Decision process. We would ask that the DNR's role in dispute resolution be clarified in the Final ACP. We would also stress the need for an in-kind watershed scale based PRM to address the compensatory mitigation needs of the project."

Response to agency comments made during meeting:

1. Need statement will be in Chapter 1 and completed before the DEIS. Agencies will receive the Need statement in advance for comments.
2. Dates for field visits will be added to the Agency Coordination Plan. HDR will be able to provide dates after identifying potential properties. A mitigation needs assessment will be presented by HDR at the August 14<sup>th</sup> meeting.
3. The time to comment and make decisions on the Draft Permitting Timetable is now to keep on track with aggressive schedule. Working to give agencies as much advance notice as possible.
4. Participating agency can abstain, but FHWA would like concurrence with all agencies whether participating or cooperating.
5. Clarify roles in dispute resolution process. Table in dispute resolution will be updated with agency titles to keep consistent.

## **II. Purpose Statement:**

Heather Robbins described that the Purpose statement has not been changed and agency concurrence is requested. Need is still being developed as Chapter 1 of the DEIS and will be provided to agencies for review prior to issuance of DEIS.

## **III. Agency Coordination Plan:**

Heather Robbins described that the Agency contact information was updated and added into Table 2-3 of the ACP, Version 2.

Version 3 of the ACP will include an updated NEPA/Permitting Timetable, Table 3-1. The updated schedule will include the date of today's meeting and any subsequent milestones where more detailed information is known. The Permitting Timetable will be added as an appendix to the ACP.

FHWA sent Cooperating and Participating invitation Letters on March 29, 2019. Responses will be added to the ACP. Chad Long asked if we have received a response from each agency. Heather Robbins to follow-up.

FHWA will send a letter requesting concurrence from agencies on:

1. ACP
2. P&N
3. Permitting Timetable

## **IV. Permitting Timetable:**

Discussion led by Will McGoldrick from SCDOT. Representatives from FHWA, USACE, SCDHEC, SCDHEC-OCRM, and SCDOT met to go through the draft Permitting Timetable. Each agency was asked for an appropriate timeframe for submittals and review. Anticipate submitting JD and Critical Line plats in late June. Decision by October to move forward with range of alternatives.

Red squares on Permitting Timetable are very important date to meet to maintain schedule. Comments and concerns are needed ASAP to maintain schedule.

At the upcoming December Agency Coordination meeting, Project Team plans to present mitigation needs assessment. Field visits to potential sites are anticipated in Spring 2020.

Anticipate comment responses after hearing in January 2021. All permitting agencies will meet to go over what is expected. This is not a firm deadline but will need responses by May to meet water quality certification deadline.

Permitting Timetable shows that the ROD will be issued in July after 401 and CAP. SCDOT asked in SCDHEC or SCDHEC-OCRM would have any need for the ROD to be issued before. Both agencies commented that they would like to see the final ROD, but with agency coordination and addressing all comments a decision

from their agencies could be made. SCDOT agreed and would share draft information to allow for easy of decision making without the final ROD in hand.

#### V. **Agency Process Agreement and Dispute Resolution Process:**

Discussion led by Heather Robbins that the Agency Process Agreement and Dispute Resolution was developed after March ACE Meeting.

Dispute Resolution consists of two levels.

- 1) Fill out template attached in ACP to outline issue. Agencies will meet and come to concurrence that the decision to move forward can be lived with. Will have a document to add to record and use if dispute escalates to level 2.
- 2) Next in command will be contacted and brought in to assist in Dispute Resolution.

Agency Process Agreement and Dispute Resolution will be added as an Appendix to the ACP.

#### **Upcoming Meetings:**

May 8<sup>th</sup> conference call will check on responses for Cooperating and Participating Agency invitations and concurrences.

June 12<sup>th</sup> project update.

July 10<sup>th</sup> Agency Meeting to discuss the alternative evaluation criteria, alternatives analysis process, and Preliminary Range of Alternatives.

August 14<sup>th</sup> conference call will focus on mitigation needs assessment.

#### **Action Items:**

	Date	Status
Update Tables in ACP and add Permitting Timetable and Dispute Resolution as Appendices in ACP		
Update titles in Dispute Resolution table		
Update Schedules with meeting dates		
Create Concurrence letter to send to agencies		
SCDOT to reach out to SHPO about abstaining		
FHWA to follow up with USCG on concurrence points		

#### Draft Schedule:

Milestones	Date
<i>Agency Project Kickoff and Scoping Meeting</i>	<i>March 14, 2019</i>
Send Letters Inviting Cooperating and Participating Agencies	March 29, 2019
Agencies review draft Purpose and Need Statement	April 2019
Agencies review Agency Coordination Plan and Permitting Timetable	March-April 2019
<i>Follow-up Agency Meeting to discuss ACP, Permitting Timetable, and P&amp;N Statement</i>	<i>April 23, 2019</i>
<b>Concurrence Point for Agency Coordination Plan and Permitting Timetable</b>	<b>May 2019</b>
<b>Concurrence Point for Purpose and Need Statement</b>	<b>May 2019</b>
Project Initiation Letter and Navigation Report sent to USCG	May or June 2019
Submit Preliminary JD to USACE & Critical Area to SCDHEC-OCRM	June 2019
FHWA issues Notice of Intent (NOI)	July 2019
<i>Agency Meeting to discuss the alternative evaluation criteria, alternatives analysis process, and Preliminary Range of Alternatives</i>	<i>July 2019</i>
<i>Agency Meeting to discuss mitigation needs assessment</i>	<i>August 14, 2019</i>
Agencies Review the Preliminary Range of Alternatives for Concurrence	August 2019
Community and Stakeholder Meetings	August-September 2019
Public Information Meeting	Fall 2019
JD and Critical Area Line plat approval	September 2019
<i>Agency Meeting to discuss initial Alternatives Analysis and Reasonable Range of Alternatives</i>	<i>October 2019</i>
<b>Concurrence Point for Preliminary Range of Alternatives/Alternatives Carried Forward by Agencies</b>	<b>November 2019</b>
Continued Coordination with Agencies on specific resources (i.e. Permitting, EFH, Section 106, Section 7, etc.)	Fall/Winter 2019
<i>Agency Meeting to discuss potential mitigation options</i>	<i>December 2019</i>
Potential mitigation site visits	Spring 2020
USCG Navigation Determination	April 2020
<i>Agency Meeting to discuss Reasonable Alternatives and Preferred Alternative</i>	<i>May 2020</i>
Preliminary Draft EIS section for review by Agencies	Spring/Summer 2020
<b>Agency Meeting and Concurrence Point for Preferred Alternative by Agencies</b>	<b>June 2020</b>
Pre-Application Meeting with UASCE and SCDHEC	July 2020
Application submittal	August 2020
Draft EIS issued; Joint USACE Individual Permit and USCG Public Notices	October 2020
Community and Stakeholder Meetings	Fall 2020
Public Hearing	November 2020
Response to Public and Agency Comments	Winter 2020-2021
<i>Agency Meeting to discuss comments received during the public hearing comment periods and path forward to FEIS/ROD</i>	<i>January 2021</i>
Response to comments	March 2021
SCDHEC 401 Decision	May 2021
SCDHEC-OCRM CAP	June 2021
Prepare Final EIS/Record of Decision	Summer 2021
FHWA Issues FEIS/ROD	July 2021
USACE Issue Permit Decision	August 2021
USCG Issues Permit Decision	November 2021



# Agency Coordination Meeting Notes – July 10, 2019

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**Attendees:**

FHWA	Shane Belcher Michelle Herrell Jim Martin
NOAA-NMFS	Cindy Cooksey Dale Youngkin
NPS	Alexis John
USACE	Christopher Mims
USCG	
USEPA	Alya Singh-White Amenetta Somerville
USFWS	Mark Caldwell
SCDHEC	Logan Smith
SCDHEC-OCRM	Chris Stout
SCDNR	
SCDOT	David Kelly Will McGoldrick
SCPRT	Justin Hancock
SCDAH	Joe Wilkinson
Three Oaks Engineering	Amanda Chandler Russell Chandler Heather Robbins Geni Theriot

**Purpose of the Meeting:**

Discuss Permitting Timetable and Agency Milestones with Agencies.

**Updates:**

Permitting Timetable has not been updated to correspond with Agency Milestones. Need concurrence from agencies to merge tables together with correct milestones and dates. Once the Agency Milestones and Permitting Timetable are merged it will be added and maintained in the Agency Coordination Plan.

Dates shown in red on the Permitting Timetable represent the date FHWA sends out concurrence request. Need agency responses 30 days after request is sent from FHWA.

Draft Agency Milestones are attached with revisions made based on agency comments during the meeting.



**Additional Agency Comments:**

Provide dates and gray the box of completed milestones.

NOAA-NMFS: (Section 7) month day and year for milestones to be provided by ESA biologist, Andrew Herndon.

USFWS: At-Risk species need to be included in surveys.

MMPA: rulemaking vs. IHA. Pile driving would have an impact. Milestones for rulemaking (if applicable) to be requested from NMFS.

Milestones will be sent by FHWA for concurrence after final revisions.

Permitting Timetable will be revised and sent back out by FHWA for concurrence.

# Meeting Notes – July 25, 2019

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## Attendees:

FHWA	Shane Belcher
NOAA	Andrew Herndon Jaclyn Daly
SCDOT	David Kelly Will McGoldrick Chad Long
Three Oaks Engineering	Heather Robbins

## Meeting:

- Shane Belcher – provided background of permitting timetable
- Reviewed milestones specifically focused on Section 7 ESA and MMPA

## NFMS Section 7:

- Ashley River is not critical habitat but possible foraging habitat for sturgeon
- DEIS anticipated October 2020
- Conclusion of Section 7 is scheduled for September 2020
- Initial Submittal of a Draft is scheduled for April 2020
- Andrew Herndon discussed that there would be a 135 day period if formal consultation is required
- SCDOT/FHWA believe it would (informal consultation)
- Andrew Herndon mentioned that if it is determined to be informal consultation then it may be eligible for streamlining efforts and can probably meet those deadlines
- FHWA- wants to build in the formal timeline with the 135 days to the conclusion.

## NMFS-MMPA:

- FHWA explained the approach of including protective measures in construction efforts, so that an incidental take would not be applicable
- NMFS is unsure about the project therefore unable to make a determination. Ashley River does have resident dolphins.
- FHWA explained project would be adding drilled shafts in Ashley River to add 2 lanes in each direction.
- NMFS
  - Explained potential impacts from noise level exposure that are deemed as harassment.
  - Independent Marine Observers are recommended
  - Any applicant can move forward without getting NMFS authorization
  - Can do multiple 1 year IHA. This work would qualify as an IHA. Can also make effective date of IHA to be later to cover construction.



- SCDOT explained that the project is Design-Build so we do not know specific number and location of piles. So may need to wait until we know that information.
- SCDOT asked if One Federal Decision require NMFS- MMPA Concurrence
- NMFS explained that SCDOT/FHWA needs to determine if concurrence is needed, suggested that it is better to include and take off later, and stated that she is not sure if it will require an IHA at this time
- SCDOT stated that they will talk with FHWA to determine if they want to seek concurrence from NMFS on the MMPA. Suggested to change first item to “Determination if an IHA is needed” in Agency Milestone Table
- NMFS is not sure if that will work, need to get feedback from management.
- NMFS asked how to provide comments on DEIS?
- SCDOT indicated that the section will be sent out for NMFS review in Summer 2020.

**Action Item:**

- ✓ Next Steps: Updating Agency Milestone Table
- ✓ Permitting Timetable will be revised and sent back out by FHWA for concurrence.

# Agency Coordination Meeting Notes – August 14, 2019

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## Attendees:

FHWA	Shane Belcher Jim Martin
NOAA-NMFS	Noah Silverman
NPS	Alexis John Chris Abbett
USACE	Christopher Mims
USCG	Randall Overton
USEPA	Kelly Laycock
USFWS	
SCDHEC	
SCDHEC-OCRM	Blair Williams
SCDNR	Lorianne Riggins
SCDOT	David Kelly Will McGoldrick
SCPRT	
SCDAH	Joe Wilkinson
Three Oaks Engineering	Amanda Chandler Heather Robbins Geni Theriot

## Purpose of the Meeting:

Discuss Alternatives Evaluation Process/Criteria and Preliminary Range of Alternatives.

## Updates:

USFWS contacted FHWA to give verbal concurrence with Agency Milestones and Permitting Timetable, unable to attend meeting.

Agency Milestones and Permitting Timetable will be continuously updated with items greyed out upon completion. Agency Milestones are now included on the Permitting Timetable.

NOI date moved from August to November to allow more time to front load the schedule before the OFD time clock starts and help maintain 2020 dates. Allows more time for pre-NOI activities and more development and detail of preliminary and reasonable alternatives.

Agency Concurrence – Agency Milestones and Permitting Timetable. FHWA previously sent letters to agencies for concurrence. FHWA asked today if verbal concurrence was possible with each agency. Not



all agencies can provide verbal concurrence so an email with a letter attached will be sent by FHWA to all agencies.

Alternatives Development Flowchart was presented to depict the alternatives evaluation process. Have Preliminary Range of Alternatives. Currently working through the first level of evaluation (second box down) which includes Purpose & Need, Traffic, and Traffic Reduction Potential. Once alternatives have been evaluated based on these criteria, the preliminary alternatives will be either, eliminated or carried forward to the Reasonable Alternatives. After Reasonable Alternatives are determined a Detailed Impact Evaluation will be conducted to select the Preferred Alternative. An Alternatives Matrix will be created with the Detailed Impact Evaluation criteria to quantify impacts for each Reasonable Alternative. After the evaluation process a Preferred Alternative can be selected.

**Additional Agency Comments:**

NOAA-NMFS – Certain milestones need to be added to Permitting Timetable whether need a permit or not, will send list to FHWA and SCDOT. Regarding MMPA, incidental take will be avoided but if need IPA, instead of IHA, will disrupt current timetable and NEPA document. The potential use of protective measures during construction was explained by FHWA in the July 25, 2019 meeting with NOAA-NMFS. Coordination will be continued.

NPS – Need Permitting Timetable and Agency Milestones

USACE & SCDNR – Need all Meeting Notes to date

USACE & SCDHEC-OCRM – Add “No Federal Action” Alternative to Preliminary Range of Alternatives.

15-day review time can be requested of agencies instead of standard 30 days.

**Action Items:**

July meeting notes have been provided to SCDOT to send to USACE

Criteria has been added to the Alternatives Development Flowchart

**Upcoming Events:**

- Agency Meeting – September 11, 2019 – HDR will present mitigation needs assessment. In the assessment all potential build alternatives with 8-lanes were used to show largest footprint. Avoidance and minimization are not included.
- Agency Meeting – October 9, 2019 – Discuss Preliminary Range of Alternatives.
- Public Information Meeting – November 21, 2019

**Revised DRAFT Alternatives Development Flowchart attached.**

# Agency Coordination Meeting Notes – September 11, 2019

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## Attendees:

FHWA	Shane Belcher Jim Martin
NOAA-NMFS	Andrew Herndon Noah Silverman
NPS	Anita Barnett Alexis John
USACE	Christopher Mims
USCG	
USEPA	Alya Singh-White
USFWS	Mark Caldwell
SCDAH	Joe Wilkinson
SCDHEC	
SCDHEC-OCRM	Chris Stout
SCDNR	Lorianne Riggin
SCDOT	Chris Beckham Shawn Connolly Chad Long Will McGoldrick
SCPRT	Justin Hancock
HDR	Ben Furr Blair Wade
Stantec	Rick Day
Three Oaks Engineering	Amanda Chandler Russell Chandler Heather Robbins Geni Theriot

## Purpose of the Meeting:

Discuss Mitigation Needs Assessment developed by HDR.

## Mitigation Needs Assessment Overview:

HDR conducted a high-level assessment of the mitigation needs for the I-526 West project using a “big footprint” of the potential area. Revisions will be made as the alternatives design process continues. The estimated impacts represent a worst-case scenario. At this time wetland and stream limits are still under review and impact totals will be revised after JD completed. Existing mitigation banks that service the project area were analyzed for credit availability. No agency comments.

### **Mitigation Strategy Overview:**

The project is still in the early stages of developing a mitigation strategy. The goal of this meeting is to receive input from agencies. SCDOT is considering all options available for mitigation. The use of only mitigation banks does not seem feasible based on the existing credit and bank availability. SCDOT is aware of the opposition to the use of Clydesdale as mitigation for this project. SCDOT is investigating the combination of PRM and bank credits.

A landscape scale mitigation approach may be appropriate and beneficial for such a large project. The use of landscape scale mitigation would require SCDOT to consider a ratio of preservation/conservation acres to impacted acres. Ratios between impact types do not have to be the same, but a site should provide adequate mitigation to offset impacts.

SCDOT has a limited budget available. Money spent on restoration activities will limit the ability to purchase a high value conservation property under the landscape scale mitigation approach. Under the landscape scale approach, it may be difficult to mitigate all impacts “in-kind” due to limitations of the property. For example, a site may have freshwater wetlands and streams, but no tidal salt marsh. A combination of landscape scale mitigation and bank credits or additional PRM is allowable and should be considered under that scenario.

Potential sites suggested for PRM and/or landscape scale mitigation are the “Cainhoy” and “Cedar Hill” properties. These properties appear to provide appropriate levels of mitigation for freshwater wetland and stream needs but no tidal salt marsh on site. Use of these sites would require tidal impacts to be mitigated using another site or PRM.

PRM for tidal marsh impacts could include activities such as installation of living shorelines, oyster bed restoration, or aquatic nuisance species management. Another potential component is replacing or “upsizing” culverts in tidal areas to improve tidal flows and improving the surrounding marsh. Agencies would like to see a more defined plan of work for tidal impacts. SCDOT should not propose a plan to simply bankroll a fund for “future mitigation projects.”

Landscape scale or PRM properties with a King’s Grant designation can be helpful but are not required unless SCDOT is proposing tidal salt marsh preservation as part of the proposed mitigation plan. SCDOT should not request the preservation of tidal marsh on any property without King’s Grant since the tidal marsh is already protected by state and federal law.

The majority of tidal impacts quantified in the Mitigation Needs Assessment are shading impacts. If a minimal loss of function can be demonstrated could SCDOT reduce the required mitigation ratios for those shading impacts? OCRM requires a 1:1 ratio for public projects and must be provide enough offset for impacts.

HDR will prepare a short list of mitigation properties and tidal components for the December agency meeting.



**Additional Agency Comments on Mitigation Strategy Overview:**

USFWS suggested review of an apparent spoil island along the James Island Connector. The Cainhoy property was also suggested by USFWS.

SCDNR suggested there may be portions of Cainhoy that would provide tidal opportunities but may be unobtainable financially.

USACE suggests looking into Drum Island if thinking of using a spoil area for mitigation, could FOIA them to see an example of a proposal.

**Action Items:**

NOAA will contact Cynthia Cooksey about EFH.

EPA will Have Kelly Laycock review Mitigation Needs Assessment and comment.

**Additional Topics:**

FHWA reminded agencies that the concurrence deadline for the permitting timetable is due on September 18 if they had not responded to date. Future concurrence time frames will be set at 10 business days per the OFD MOU, concurrence will be assumed if no response.

**Upcoming Events:**

- Agency Meeting – October 9, 2019 – Discuss Preliminary Range of Alternatives
- Agency Meeting – November 13, 2019 – TBD
- Public Information Meeting – November 21, 2019

**Mitigation Needs Assessment attached.**

# Memo

Date: Wednesday, August 28, 2019

Project: I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor

To: Chris Beckham, SCDOT

From: Ben Furr, HDR

Subject: Mitigation Needs Assessment

## Purpose

This memorandum summarizes the estimated impacts to waters of the U.S. associated with the I-526 West Lowcountry Corridor project (Project). The memorandum also provides information regarding the availability of compensatory mitigation credits servicing the project area.

## Project Background and Regulatory Framework

The Project includes I-526 and the intersecting roadways of Rivers Avenue, I-26, International Boulevard, Montague Avenue, Dorchester Road, Leeds Avenue, and Glenn McConnell Parkway/Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The project is anticipated to result in impacts to Waters of the U.S. (WOUS) under the jurisdiction of the (USACE) as regulated by Section 10 and 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA). Tidal marsh is also regulated as “Critical Area” by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM). Although two Project alternatives are currently under consideration, only one set of impact estimates is provided in this memorandum because the impact footprint is nearly identical for both alternatives. The major differences between the alternatives involve traffic distribution and 2-level versus 3-level interchange designs.

## Estimated Wetlands and Waters Impacts

Table 1 provides estimates of stream and wetland impacts for the Project. HDR used preliminary designs to estimate wetland and stream impacts. Estimates are expected to decrease as designs are developed and finalized. The 25' drainage offset line was used to set the permanent impact boundary. In areas where a drainage line was not present, slope stake lines set the impact boundary. In areas lacking drainage and slope stake lines, proposed right of way or existing right of way was used to set the impact boundary. Temporary clearing impacts were assigned to wetlands and streams located between the permanent impact boundary line and the proposed right of way line to account for impacts related to installing erosion control measures. Shading impacts were assigned to tidal wetlands underneath proposed bridges. Clearing impacts were assigned to streams and wetlands located within the I-526/I-26 intersection because the majority of these resources could be temporarily impacted

during construction of the flyovers. Clearing impacts were also assigned to streams underneath proposed bridges.

**Table 1. Required Mitigation Summary Table**

	I-526 West
Freshwater Wetland Impacts (AC)	49.53
Tidal Impacts (AC)	19.85
Stream Impacts (LF)	9,353

## Mitigation Bank Availability

Information provided in this memorandum is comprised of information obtained from publically-available sources, including the USACE Regulatory In-Lieu Fee and Bank Information Tracking System (RIBITS), as of August 2, 2019. The project area was reviewed for mitigation banks currently servicing the project watershed. Table 4 summarizes the mitigation banks identified as having credits available to service the Project. Anticipated WOUS and Critical Area impacts associated with the Project are predominately located in Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) 03050201 Cooper River watershed and Sea Islands/Coastal Marsh Level IV ecoregion. A small portion of the project south of Ashley River Road (SC 61) is located in HUC 03050202.

**Table 2. Mitigation Bank Availability Summary**

Mitigation Bank	Service Area	Available Credits			Notes/Status
		Freshwater Wetlands	Freshwater Streams	Critical Area Wetlands	
Caton Creek Mitigation Bank	Primary	59	12,000	N/A	Approved
Clydesdale Club	Tertiary	N/A	N/A	330	Approved; Past litigation & agency concern
Palmetto Umbrella Mitigation Bank: Big Run Site	Primary	715	32,965	N/A	Approved

# Agency Coordination Meeting Notes – October 9, 2019

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## Attendees:

FHWA	Shane Belcher
NOAA-NMFS	Cynthia Cooksey Noah Silverman
NPS	Alexis John
USACE	Christopher Mims
USCG	
USEPA	
USFWS	Mark Caldwell
SCDAH	Joe Wilkinson
SCDHEC	
SCDHEC-OCRM	Blair Williams
SCDNR	
SCDOT	Sean Connolly David Kelly Chad Long Will McGoldrick
SCPRT	
Stantec	
Three Oaks Engineering	Amanda Chandler Russell Chandler Heather Robbins Geni Theriot

## Purpose of the Meeting:

Discuss Alternatives Carried Forward

## Concurrence Tracking:

DHEC/OCRM gave verbal concurrence for P&N and Permitting Timetable and are working on a joint letter.

NPS will send an official concurrence language email.

FHWA will send 3<sup>rd</sup> concurrence letter for the Alternatives Carried Forward.

Concurrence moving forward will be a 10-business day review per the OFD MOU.

### **Alternative Development:**

2013 Corridor Study evaluated various options to address congestion and capacity along I-526 and I-26. The Corridor Study led to the Preliminary Range of Alternatives. Refer to Alternatives Development Flowchart (“Funnel”) attached for the Preliminary Range of Alternatives.

Traffic tables reviewed. V/C (Vehicle Volume / Carrying Capacity) ratio explained generally to represent 1 is at capacity. Example: 0.50 = 50% capacity, 1 = 100% capacity. Anything over 1 is exceeding capacity. No-Build table shows one segment out of ten would be acceptable. The Build table is for a 2050 design year. The Build table compares 6-lane and 8-lane widening. The 8-lane widening was identified as a means to manage capacity and congestion.

Modal strategies were also evaluated. TSM/TDM and modal strategies result in a 12.6% reduction in congestion. The percentage represents the amount of traffic removed from I-526. These strategies are not feasible alone but may be incorporated into the Reasonable Alternatives.

### **Alternatives Carried Forward:**

Based on the traffic tables, it is recommended that the mainline of I-526 be widened to 8 lanes. Two options have been presented at each of the interchanges: I-26 (system to system), Rivers Ave., and Virginia/N Rhett.

Graphics shown are less than 30% design and variations at each interchange may be evaluated. SCDOT/FHWA requests agency feedback and concurrence on these alternatives before the proposed NOI and the Public Information Meeting on November 21<sup>st</sup>.

### **Agency Comments:**

USFWS asked about Filbin Creek restoration projects – SCDOT is coordinating with SCDNR and will address at the December mitigation meeting.

NOAA-NMFS concerned about EFH impacts at N Rhett interchange. One alternative presented at the N Rhett intersection and would like to see more alternatives that minimize impacts. – Will request more detail from engineers that would include refinements that would further avoid and minimize impacts.

USACE needs better explanation of designs to be able to concur and address avoidance and minimization of impacts. – Wording of concurrence letter will determine how agencies respond. – Concurrence is being asked on the locations not the specific configuration.

SCDNR requests further analysis of the designs for avoidance and minimization of impacts such as reduce shoulder width and slopes. Consider and evaluate construction methods to avoid and minimize impacts. Construction practices such as top down, minimal access widths/points, and others. These requests are with the understanding that methods may not be dictated or determined at this stage but at least considered.

**Action Items:**

Contact Howard Schnabolk at the NOAA Restoration Center about current and potential mitigation at Filbin Creek.

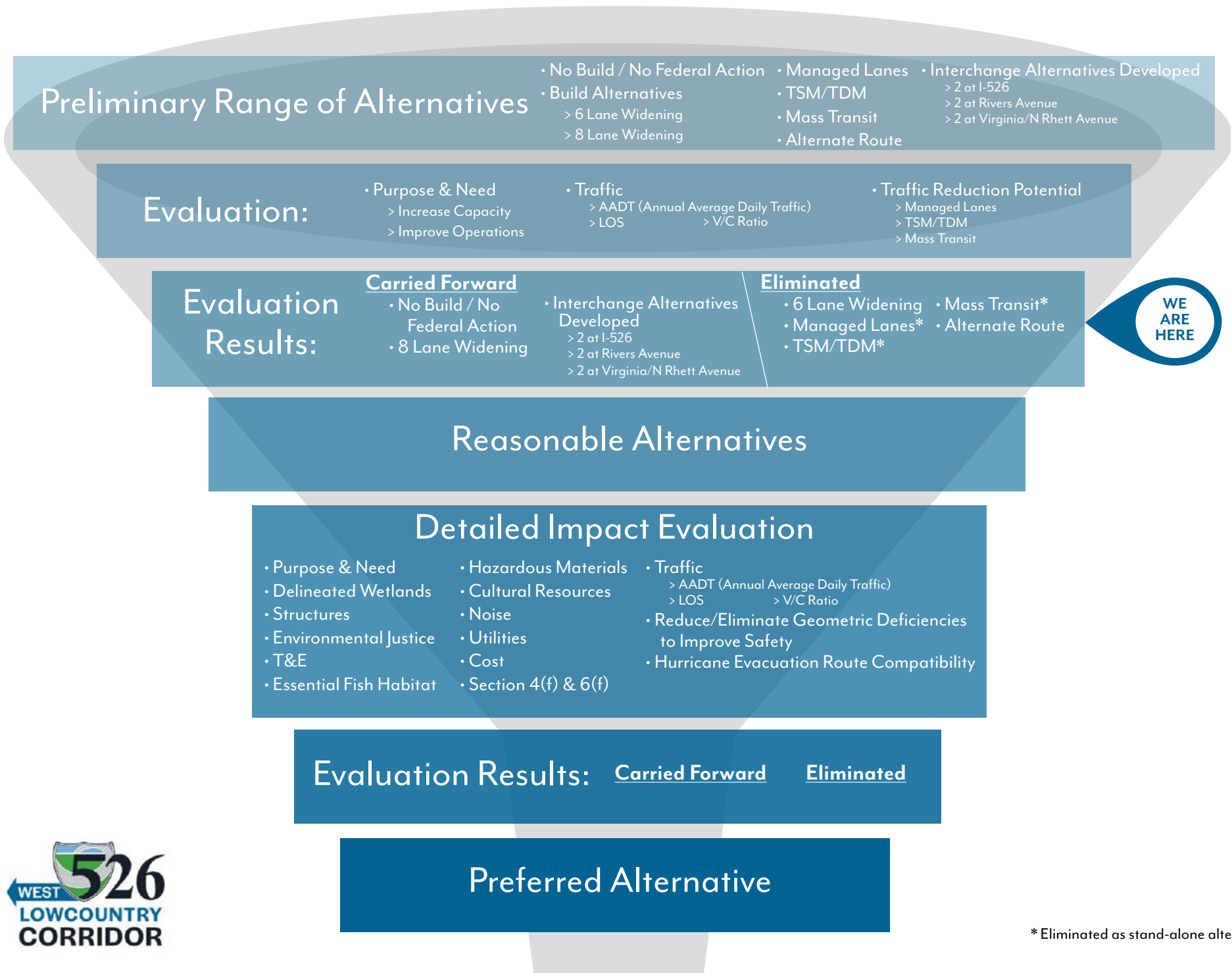
Request more detail on the Alternatives Carried Forward from engineers.

**Upcoming Events:**

- Agency Meeting – November 13, 2019 – TBD
- Public Information Meeting – November 21, 2019
- Agency Meeting – December 11, 2019 – Mitigation

**Alternatives Development Flowchart and Traffic Tables attached.**

# Alternatives Development Flowchart



Segment	Description	Segment	Description
1	SC 7 (Sam Rittenberg Blvd) to Paul Cantrell Blvd	6	International Blvd to I-26
2	Paul Cantrell Blvd to Leeds Ave	7	I-26 to Rivers Ave
3	Leeds Ave to Dorchester Rd	8	Rivers Ave to N Rhett Ave
4	Dorchester Rd to Montague Ave	9	N Rhett Ave to Virginia Ave
5	Montague Ave to International Blvd	10	Virginia Ave to Clements Ferry Rd

I-526 West No-Build Volumes by Segment

Segment	2015 AADT	No Build 2050 AADT	V/C	LOS
1	39,400	59,800	0.67	C
2	79,200	106,900	1.2	F
3	78,800	106,400	1.19	F
4	80,700	108,900	1.22	F
5	67,400	91,000	1.02	F
6	89,000	120,200	1.34	F
7	77,200	104,200	1.17	F
8	75,600	104,400	1.17	F
9	80,500	122,200	1.37	F
10	68,900	110,100	1.23	F

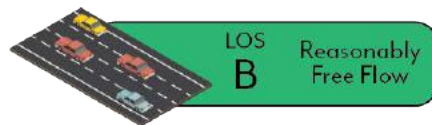
I-526 West Build Volumes by Segment

Segment	2015 AADT	Build 2050 AADT	V/C		LOS	
			6-Lane	8-Lane	6-Lane	8-Lane
1	39,400	68,500	0.52	0.39	B	B
2	79,200	136,900	1.03	0.78	F	D
3	78,800	134,000	1.01	0.76	F	D
4	80,700	127,300	0.96	0.72	E	C
5	67,400	109,600	0.83	0.62	D	C
6	89,000	126,700	0.95	0.72	E	C
7	77,200	116,100	0.87	0.66	D	C
8	75,600	126,700	0.95	0.72	E	C
9	80,500	148,400	1.12	0.84	F	D
10	68,900	133,800	1.01	0.76	F	D

I-526 West Capacity

LOS	4-Lane	6-Lane	8-Lane
A-B	53,500	75,300	97,000
C	69,800	100,500	130,100
D	83,600	120,300	156,500
E	89,400	132,700	176,000
F	> 89,400	>132,700	>176,000

## Level of Service (LOS)



### Definitions:

AADT – Annual Average Daily Traffic

Volume to Capacity Ratio (V/C) is a measure which compares roadway demand (vehicle volumes) with roadway supply (carrying capacity).

A V/C ratio greater than 1.0 is defined as a LOS E or LOS F.

Source: Highway Capacity Manual



## Travel Demand Management Strategies

Strategy	Traffic Reduction Potential
Carpools/Rideshare Matching Vanpools	2.0%
Transit Pass Incentives Financial Incentives	1.5%
Telecommuting Compressed Work Week	0.1%
Work Flex Time Staggered Work Hours	0.5%
Bike/Walk Enhancements	0.1%
Education, Promotion	1.0%
<b>Total Reduction Potential:</b>	<b>5.2%</b>

Source: Adapted from "I-526 Corridor Analysis Between North Charleston and West Ashley", Table ES3

Note: All strategies with the exception of Bike/Walk Enhancements have been funded by FHWA.

## Modal Strategies

Strategy	Traffic Reduction Potential
Improve Existing Transit Routes	0.30%
New Transit Routes	1.10%
Improved Connectivity to/from Transit	0.30%
Improve Transit Facilities and Equipment	0.30%
Public/Private Partnerships	0.60%
BRT, Commuter Rail, Light Rail	3.40%
Zoning/Transit Oriented Developments	0.00%
Increase Intermodal Split to Rail	3.50%
Expand Port Operating Hours	0.00%
Construct Near-Terminal Staging Areas	0.20%
Peak-Hour incentives/Disincentives	0.20%
Truck Routes away from I-526	0.90%
<b>Total Modal Reduction Potential:</b>	<b>7.40%</b>

Source: Adapted from "I-526 Corridor Analysis Between North Charleston and West Ashley", Table ES4

Note: The BRT, Commuter Rail, Light Rail strategy has been funded by Charleston County.

# SCPRT SECTION 6 (F) CONFERENCE CALL

## OCTOBER 21, 2019

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### Attendees:

FHWA	Shane Belcher
SCDOT	Chris Cooper
	David Kelly
	Chad Long
SCPRT	Justin Hancock
	Debbie Jordan
Stantec	Amy Sackeroff
Three Oaks Engineering	Russell Chandler
	Heather Robbins
	Geni Theriot

### Initial Application Received Feb 2020

- Letter from project sponsor
- What property is being converted and why
- The replacement property has to be identified
- 6f Screening will include all practicable alts considered
- Env screenings/appraisals

### NPS (cooperating agency)

- Will not get anything until everything is in place (Sept 2020)
- They don't review pieces- review entire package
- Goals is to get PRT letter by end of 2019/first of 2020
- No real format to follow. The process is more like a "series" of boxes to check things through the process
- Would like to keep NPS in the loop to ensure all information needed is accounted for
- Should we not coordinate along the way?
  - SCPRT says you can but he will also coordinate

### Stantec

- Existing facility appraisal is occurring
- Working with N. Charleston to determine what is available for replacement
- Also looking at private land too
  - Is there enough upland available on these private lands?
- Can appraisal be sent for SCPRT review? SCPRT agrees to provide early feedback?

- Public review for Section 6(f) coordinates with EIS Public Notices

## FHWA

- Need community “buy in” on replacement locations
- SCPRT – record any feedback you receive to document community support → env
- Hold initial request letter until appraisals are received

## General

- Subsequent to the conference call it was determined that an initiation letter would be sent to SCPRT in November 2019 to formally initiate Section 6(f) Coordination

# Agency Coordination Meeting Notes – November 13, 2019

---

## Attendees:

FHWA	Shane Belcher Jim Martin
NOAA-NMFS	Cynthia Cooksey
NPS	
USACE	Christopher Mims
USCG	Randall Overton
USEPA	Alya Singh-White
USFWS	Mark Caldwell
SCDAH	Joe Wilkinson
SCDHEC	
SCDHEC-OCRM	Chris Stout Blair Williams
SCDNR	Stacie Crowe
SCDOT	Chad Long Will McGoldrick Joy Riley
SCPRT	Justin Hancock
Three Oaks Engineering	Amanda Chandler Heather Robbins Geni Theriot

## Purpose of the Meeting:

Discuss Concurrence Points and upcoming milestones

## Concurrence Tracking:

NOI published on November 8, 2019

DHEC/OCRM currently working on joint letter, Blair Williams to follow up on status and update SCDOT.

Concurrence Point for Alternatives Carried Forward moved to February 2020. Agency meeting on February 12, 2020 is a workshop to discuss Interchange Design Alternatives. Meeting will be held at the I-526 Community office in Charleston. Workshop is for agencies to participate and interact with engineers to address questions and concerns. Alternatives analysis and public comment summary will be provided.

Concurrence Points are not tracked on the FHWA dashboard. The NOI published date of November 8, 2019 will be added to the dashboard by FHWA HQ.



### **Public Involvement and Virtual Public Information Meeting (VPIM)**

Five Community Meetings have been set up prior to the Public Information Meeting on November 21, 2019. Three of the Community Meetings are being held in EJ communities. A Community Advisory Council (CAC) has been established and has held two meetings. An I-526 Community office has been set up and will be staffed to allow community members to drop in and discuss the project. The hours of the office are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday; 10 a.m. to 8 a.m. on Tuesday and Thursday; and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the second and fourth Saturday of each month.

Project website with VPIM video is available to view at

<https://www.526lowcountrycorridor.com/virtual-public-meeting-112119/>

Public comment period ends January 4, 2020.

### **Action Items:**

- SCDOT, NPS and SCPRT to discuss Section 6(f) EA public comment period
- SCDOT/FHWA to share monthly EJ outreach report with EPA

### **Upcoming Events:**

- Public Information Meeting – November 21, 2019
- Agency Meeting – December 11, 2019 – Mitigation
- Agency Meeting – January 8, 2020 – Review of Public Comments Received
- Agency Meeting – February 12, 2020 – Agency Workshop

**Permitting Timetable attached.**

Permitting Timetable

Revised 11/7/2019



2019	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Action					CP ACP + Purpose and Need  USCG Navigation Data Report to USCG	USCG Preliminary Navigation Determination Issued  Consultation initiated with SHPO/THPO  Section 106 Consultation initiated (6/18)	Submit JD and CALP packages  NOAA Initially Contacted Regarding MMPA Consultation	Agency Meeting to Discuss Alternatives Evaluation Process/Criteria & Preliminary Range of Alternatives (8/14)  CP Agency Milestones and Permitting Timetable	Agency Meeting to Discuss Mitigation Needs Assessment (9/11)	Agency Meeting to Discuss Alternatives Analysis and Reasonable Alternatives (10/9)  JD + Critical Area Line Plat Approvals	NOI issued (11/8)  Determination of Applicability of Section 4(f)  Agency Meeting (11/13)  Section 106 Consulting parties invited  Public Information Meeting (11/21)	Agency Meeting to Discuss Mitigation Alternatives (12/11)
2020	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Action	Agency Meeting (1/8)	CP Alternatives Carried Forward  Agency Workshop to Discuss Interchange Design Alternatives (2/12)  Initial 6(f) Application received		Request for ESA Consultation Report	Agency Meeting to Discuss Proposed Preferred Alternative  Draft EFH assessment submitted (5/8)	CP Preferred Alternative  Section 106 determination of effect made by FHWA	NOAA receives Complete EFH Assessment to initiate EFH Consultation (7/8)  Pre-Application Meeting with Agencies (Fed & State) Public Hearing Agency Planning Meeting  Consultation with SHPO/THPO on Preferred Alternative  Section 7 Consultation Package complete (USFWS & NMFS)	Application Submittal-Individual 404 Permit/USCG  Initial State Application received CAP, 401	Section 106 consultation concluded  Section 7 Conclusion of Informal Consultation/Issuance of Biological Opinion (USFWS)  NOAA issues response to EFH assessment (9/8)  Completed 6(f) Application received	DEIS Notice of Availability  Public Notice: USACE/USCG/CAP /401  FWCA Review initiated	Public Hearing-Joint Notice to cover all agencies  FWCA Comments to USACE  Section 7 Conclusion of Informal Consultation/Issuance of Biological Opinion (NMFS)	
2021	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Action	Comments Due: 404b.1/401/CAP/USCG Agency Meeting to discuss Comments		Response to Comments due to USACE/OCRM /USCG/DHEC		401 Decision	Critical Area Permit			Coordination with/Concurrence from Officials with Jurisdiction 4(f)  Section 6(f) Issuance of Decision for Permit/Approval & NTP	FEIS/ROD Approval (30 day wait period) USACE Prepares Draft ROD  FHWA Approval/Conclusion of Section 4(f)	USACE Permit Decision/Signs ROD 30 days after FEIS; Complete Application submitted to USCG	USCG Permit Decision
2022	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
		90 Day post ROD period ends										

Adjustments to the proposed schedule may be made when sufficient information is available for an agency to proceed with an action so long as that action does not adversely affect the overall permitting timeline.

Unless specified, an action within a month will be completed by the end of the month.

A 10-day comment period will be requested for each Concurrence Point.

Public Notice must occur by 10/2 or schedule shifts

# Section 6(f) Conversion Conference Call Notes – December 9, 2019

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## Attendees:

FHWA	Shane Belcher
SCDOT	Will McGoldrick Chad Long
SCPRT	Justin Hancock
NPS	Alexis John
Three Oaks Engineering	Heather Robbins Geni Theriot

## Conversion Process Discussion

- SCDOT summarized where we are in the process and the need for public comment on the replacement project. Parcel identification is ongoing to identify parcels to satisfy the conversion.
- The permitting timetable identifies the completed application package to SCPRT as the milestone for 6(f). This submittal will be prior to the Public Hearing.
- NPS states it is acceptable to submit the final package to SCPRT/NPS and then provide supplemental information after Public Hearing. The Community Advisory Council (CAC) will have the opportunity to vet the replacement properties prior to the official public comment period. NPS can include additional public involvement in the NPS Section 6f decision/FONSI.
- SCDOT pointed out the Section 6(f) decision is prior to ROD issuance for EIS and NPS agreed that provided enough time for the review.
- Prior to the conference call it was determined that an initiation letter was sent to SCPRT on November 6, 2019 to formally initiate Section 6(f) Coordination.

## General Discussion

- SCDOT recommends the next call with SCPRT/NPS be scheduled for March 2020.

# Agency Coordination Meeting Notes – December 11, 2019

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## Attendees:

FHWA	Shane Belcher
NOAA-NMFS	Cynthia Cooksey
NPS	Alexis John
USACE	Christopher Mims
USCG	Randall Overton
USEPA	
USFWS	Mark Caldwell
SCDAH	Joe Wilkinson
SCDHEC	
SCDHEC-OCRM	Chris Stout
SCDNR	Susan Davis
SCDOT	Chris Beckham Shawn Connolly Chad Long Will McGoldrick
SCPRT	
HDR	Blair Wade
Three Oaks Engineering	Amanda Chandler Heather Robbins Geni Theriot
Wildlands Engineering	Daniel Johnson

## Purpose of the Meeting:

Discuss summary of mitigation options evaluated and path forward.

## Overview:

- HDR prepared a draft report to provide a summary of the potential mitigation sites for the I-526 West project. Revisions will be made as the alternatives design process continues and after field visits to the potential sites. Along with PRM sites, existing and potential mitigation banks that service the project area were analyzed for credit availability. Ten potential PRM sites were evaluated.
- Cainhoy currently has on-going permitting action and the cost estimates received to acquire land are prohibitive.
- Cedar Hill has risen to the top of SCDOT's watch list, but further evaluation is needed. Cedar Hill is freshwater only and a tidal component would be needed to supplement this PRM site. A site visit will be conducted of this property. NOAA-NMFS in support of combination strategy to be sure ratios are met appropriately.



- Jehossee Farm Site was proposed as a mitigation bank in a public notice on August 26, 2019 but is being considered as a PRM site for the I-526 LCC WEST project. The site includes freshwater and salt marsh/Critical Area wetlands but is located outside of the project watershed. Agencies confirmed that the watershed is not a concern and are open to pursuing this site. This site would be restoration, enhancement, and preservation.
- Daniel Island site would be salt marsh restoration. This site is being investigated for potential soil contamination. Construction and earthwork costs would be very high, estimate above \$10 million.
- James Island Dredge site needs to be further evaluated and may require testing for soil contamination. SCDNR in support of this site proposed by USFWS. SCDOT to confirm construction constraints in proximity to James Island Connector bridge piers.
- SCDNR suggested that proposed Kings Grant site is out of kind and not preferable for salt marsh mitigation.
- Agencies are supportive of phragmites control but should be a supporting component of a mitigation plan, not as a key piece of mitigation. Invasive species control would be lowest priority for potential mitigation options.
- SCDNR suggests review of Filbin Creek due to the large amount of previous impacts in the watershed.
- Agencies stated that preservation only mitigation plans for salt marsh is not preferred.
- If a portion of a proposed mitigation site is taken for PRM and used for preservation, there is no objection unless there is already a mechanism for protection in place.
- SCDNR indicated that holding Kings Grant title to salt marsh does not allow preservation of salt marsh, as the salt marsh would still require a permit to impact and are not under threat.

**Action Items:**

- Vet proposed sites and revise memo
- Site visits
- Refine mitigation needs with Alternatives

**Upcoming Events:**

- Agency Meeting – January 8, 2020 – Public Involvement Summary
- Agency Workshop – February 12, 2020 (held at Project Office in Charleston)
- Agency Meeting – March 11, 2020 – Mitigation Update

**Permittee-Responsible Mitigation Analysis attached.**



PERMITTEE-RESPONSIBLE

## MITIGATION ANALYSIS

FROM PAUL CANTRELL BOULEVARD TO VIRGINIA AVENUE  
NORTH CHARLESTON AND CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA



November 25, 2019

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### 1.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to summarize the results of a mitigation analysis for the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) I-526 West Corridor Improvements Project (herein, Lowcountry Corridor). Impacts to waters of the US are anticipated from the project. After efforts to avoid and minimize wetland and stream impacts are considered, SCDOT must mitigate for unavoidable impacts to these resources. This report builds upon a Mitigation Needs Assessment provided to SCDOT on August 16, 2019. Based on the outcome of the Mitigation Needs Assessment, HDR evaluated potential mitigation options for the I-526 project.

This draft report was prepared to provide a summary of site selection criteria and conservation priorities, potential site constraints, long-term management considerations, and proposed recommendations for the Conceptual Mitigation Plan. The results will be presented at an Agency Coordination Meeting (ACE) on December 11, 2019. Upon conclusion of the ACE meeting and field visits, the report will be updated with findings and a final recommendation will be made.

The information provided in this report is comprised of impact estimates, preliminary conceptual designs, and cursory reviews of potential mitigation alternatives. Due to its preliminary nature, this information is intended to be used for planning purposes only.

### 1.2 PROJECT BACKGROUND AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The Project includes I-526 and the intersecting roadways of Rivers Avenue, I-26, International Boulevard, Montague Avenue, Dorchester Road, Leeds Avenue, and Glenn McConnell Parkway/Paul Cantrell Boulevard in Charleston County, South Carolina. The project is anticipated to result in impacts to Waters of the U.S. (WOUS) under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) as regulated by Section 10 and 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA). Tidal marsh is also regulated as “Critical Area” by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM). Although two Project alternatives are currently under consideration, only one set of impact estimates is provided in this memorandum as the impact footprint is nearly identical for both alternatives. The major differences between the alternatives involve traffic distribution and 2- level versus 3-level interchange designs.

Anticipated WOUS and Critical Area impacts associated with the I-526 project are predominantly located in Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) 03050201 Cooper River watershed and the Sea Islands/Coastal Marsh Level IV ecoregion.

### 1.3 REGULATORY BACKGROUND

As previously mentioned, impacts to WOUS are anticipated as a result of the proposed project. As such, compensatory mitigation will be required by USACE. Mitigation credit estimates outlined in this memorandum are based on the Charleston District USACE 2010 Compensatory Mitigation Guidelines.

*Compensatory mitigation means the restoration (re-establishment or rehabilitation), establishment (creation), enhancement, and/or in certain circumstances preservation of aquatic resources for the purposes of offsetting unavoidable adverse impacts which remain after all appropriate and practicable avoidance and minimization has been achieved (33 CFR §332.2)*

In 2008, EPA and the US Army Corps of Engineers jointly promulgated regulations revising and clarifying requirements regarding compensatory mitigation. Under the regulations, there are three mechanisms for providing compensatory mitigation, which are listed below in order of preference as established by the regulations:

- mitigation banks
- in-lieu fee programs
- permittee-responsible mitigation (PRM)

This order is known as the mitigation hierarchy. South Carolina does not currently operate in-lieu fee programs; therefore, this analysis focuses on mitigation banks and PRM.

This section summarizes the estimated impacts to waters of the U.S. associated with the Lowcountry Corridor project (Project) and provides the estimated mitigation credit need in accordance with the USACE Charleston District's 2010 "Guidelines for Preparing a Compensatory Mitigation Plan" (Guidelines). The memorandum also provides information regarding the availability of compensatory mitigation credits servicing the project area.

Tables 2-1 through 2-2 provide estimates of stream and wetland impacts and mitigation requirements for the Project. HDR used preliminary designs to estimate wetland and stream mitigation needs based on estimated impacts. Estimates are expected to decrease as designs are developed and finalized. The 25' drainage offset line was used to set the permanent impact boundary. In areas where a drainage line was not present, slope stake lines set the impact boundary. In areas lacking drainage and slope stake lines, proposed right of way or existing right of way was used to set the impact boundary. Temporary clearing impacts were assigned to wetlands and streams located between the permanent impact boundary line and the proposed right of way line to account for impacts related to installing erosion control measures. Shading impacts were assigned to streams and wetlands underneath proposed bridges. Clearing impacts were assigned to streams and wetlands located within the I-526/I-26 intersection because the majority of these resources could be temporarily impacted during construction of the flyovers.

Table 2-1 Required Wetland Mitigation Estimate

	Freshwater		Tidal		
	Permanent Fill	Clearing/NPDES	Permanent Fill	Clearing	Shading
Impact Area (acres)	18.76	30.37	2.71	5.93	17.32
<b>Total</b>	<b>49.13</b>		<b>25.96</b>		

Table 2-2 Required Stream Mitigation Estimate

	Freshwater	
	Pipe	Shade/Clear
Impact LF	6,441	5,997

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## 3.0 EXISTING AND PENDING MITIGATION BANKS

Information provided in this memorandum is comprised of information obtained from publicly-available sources, including the USACE Regulatory In-Lieu Fee and Bank Information Tracking System (RIBITS), as of August 2, 2019. The project area was reviewed for mitigation banks currently servicing the project watershed. Table 3-1 summarizes the mitigation banks identified as having credits available to service the Project. Anticipated WOUS and Critical Area impacts associated with the Project are predominately located in Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) 03050201 Cooper River watershed and Sea Islands/Coastal Marsh Level IV ecoregion. A small portion of the project south of Ashley River Road (SC 61) is located in HUC 03050202.

Table 3-1 Mitigation Bank Availability Summary

Mitigation Bank	Service Area	Available Credits			Notes/Status
		Freshwater Wetlands	Freshwater Streams	Critical Area Wetlands	
Approved Mitigation Banks					
Caton Creek Mitigation Bank	Primary	59	12,000	N/A	Bank Owned and Operated by HDR Inc.
Clydesdale Club	Tertiary	N/A	N/A	330	Past litigation & agency concern
Murray Hill	Tertiary	N/A	N/A	Unknown	Associated with Clydesdale Club Mitigation Bank
Palmetto Umbrella Mitigation Bank: Big Run Site	Primary	715	32,965	N/A	
Congaree Carton	Primary	1	N/A	0	Sold Out
Pigeon Pond	Secondary	0	N/A	N/A	Sold Out
SCDOT Huspa Creek – East Marsh Site	Primary	N/A	N/A	205	SCDOT owned bank
Swallow Savannah	Primary	0	N/A	N/A	Sold Out
Pending Mitigation Banks					
Brosnan Forest Coldwater Branch	Tertiary	Unknown	Unknown	N/A	Pending; Public Notice dated 1/2019
Caw Caw Swamp	Secondary	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Pending; Public Notice dated 1/2015
Daniel Island Mitigation Bank	Primary	N/A	N/A	Unknown	Pending; Public Notice dated 1/2017; SC Ports Authority is Sponsor
French Quarter Creek	Tertiary	Unknown	Unknown	N/A	Pending; Public Notice dated 2/2019

Mitigation Bank	Service Area	Available Credits			Notes/Status
		Freshwater Wetlands	Freshwater Streams	Critical Area Wetlands	
Halidon Hill	Primary	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Pending: Public Notice dated 8/2019
Robert F Haggerty – Jehossee Farm	Primary	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Pending: Public Notice 8/2019
Point Farm Salt Marsh Bank	Primary	N/A	N/A	Unknown	Pending; Public Notice dated 11/2018
Poplar Grove	Secondary	Unknown	N/A	N/A	Pending; Public Notice dated 12/2012
Swamp Thing	Tertiary	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Pending; Prospectus dated 4/2017

HDR used the landscape scale and watershed approach when identifying potential mitigation sites, by considering watershed priorities and existing protected properties. HDR also met with local conservation organizations and mitigation organizations to identify conservation priorities in the project area.

### 4.1 POTENTIAL MITIGATION SITES

HDR used GIS to analyze potential properties that could provide PRM for the project. Initial assessments of the search area were completed to identify potential PRM sites using a high-level evaluation of aquatic, terrestrial, recreational, cultural and historical resources. GIS data utilized in this screening process included the following:

- National Wetland Inventory (NWI) Mapping
- National Hydrography Dataset (NHD) Mapping
- United States Geological Survey (USGS) Quadrangles
- Aerial imagery
- Provided delineation or mitigation shapefiles

#### 4.1.1 Cainhoy Plantation North

Cainhoy Plantation is a proposed mixed-use development on a 9,375 acre tract in Berkeley County, South Carolina. Approximately 4,547 acres of wetlands are located on the tract. The property is divided by Clements Ferry Road, and the northern portion of the property, or Cainhoy Plantation North, contains approximately 2,478 acres of wetlands and 97,409 linear feet of freshwater and tidal streams.

A public notice was issued by the USACE for the project on March 21, 2018. According to the public notice, approximately 187.9 acres of freshwater wetlands and 2.65 acres of tidal wetlands, or Critical Area, would be impacted by the project. The public notice includes an onsite PRM plan, which includes the creation of the 585-acre Point Hope Nature Sanctuary in Cainhoy Plantation North. The developer also proposes to preserve all remaining wetlands unimpacted by the project.

Cainhoy Plantation North was evaluated as a potential PRM site for the Lowcountry Corridor Project. Delineated wetland and stream boundaries were provided to HDR and were used to assess the site. Wetlands within the Point Hope Nature Sanctuary were estimated based on permit drawings within the USACE public notice.

#### **Advantages:**

- Approximately 752 acres of Salt Marsh/Critical Area wetlands are present onsite, with 26 acres suitable for restoration/enhancement.
- Approximately 1,736 acres of freshwater wetlands are present onsite.
- Federal and state agencies and conservation organizations have expressed interest in preservation of property.
- The permit application demonstrates threat of development.

- Proximity to federal protected lands owned by US Forest Service.

**Constraints:**

- Cost per acre is high because of development potential and would acquiring site may be cost prohibitive for SCDOT.
- The status of permit application is unknown.
- Acquiring property and preparing mitigation plan may exceed Lowcountry Corridor project schedule.
- Portions of site are not under threat as they are proposed as the Point Hope Nature Sanctuary, and may generate fewer credits. Site developer plans to preserve remaining wetlands which further minimizes threat.

### 4.1.2 Cedar Hill

Cedar Hill is the largest privately-owned plantation on the Cooper River in Berkeley County, South Carolina. Cedar Hill is 3,488 acres and unencumbered by conservation easements. Cedar Hill was evaluated as a potential PRM site for the Lowcountry Corridor Project. The parcel boundary was estimated based on Berkeley County GIS and NWI and NHD boundaries were used to assess the site for mitigation opportunities.

**Advantages:**

- 1,296 acres of wetlands and 62,447 linear feet of streams may be present on the site based on NWI and NHD boundaries.
- Federal and state agencies and conservation organizations have expressed interest in preservation of property.
- Proximity to federal protected lands owned by US Forest Service.

**Constraints:**

- Site is located outside of OCRM Critical Area. Freshwater marsh would be preserved, which is out-of-kind with proposed salt marsh/Critical Area impacts.
- Site does not meet the stream mitigation need.
- Property is listed as Under Contract.

### 4.1.3 Kings Grant

Kings Grant is an existing mitigation site located on the Ashley River in Dorchester County owned and operated by Open Space Institute. Portions of the former golf course are being restored into marsh as part PRM for other projects in the Cooper River watershed. The western portion of the site is the final phase of the project and was evaluated as a potential PRM site for the Lowcountry Corridor Project.

HDR used existing wetland boundaries and potential restoration areas provided by Open Space Institute to assess the site for mitigation opportunities. The site is located outside of OCRM Critical Area boundary and waters in this area are brackish. Credit generation may be reduced if the waters are determined to be freshwater instead of salt marsh/Critical Area.

**Advantages:**

- Site would contain 17 acres of existing wetlands which may be enhanced to meet Salt Marsh/Critical Area mitigation needs. Approximately 34 acres of the property could be restored to tidal wetlands based on initial elevation data (elevations less than 3.5 ft NAVD88, which were identified as areas that would be tidally flooded and potential restoration areas without grading).
- Adjacent lands have already been used as mitigation sites, so there is a precedence of mitigation activities in this area.

**Constraints:**

- Site does not meet the freshwater wetland mitigation need or produce stream mitigation.

#### 4.1.4 Gippy Plantation

Gippy Plantation is an 800-acre property on the northwestern bank of the Cooper River located in between Fort Fairlawn and Lewisfield Plantation in Berkeley County, South Carolina. The property contains approximately 330 acres of historic rice fields and freshwater wetlands protected by a 330-acre conservation easement. Built in the 1850s, Gippy Plantation was identified as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places in 1971 for its mid-19th century architecture, and in a 1989 survey of historic resources in Berkeley County.

A residential development was proposed on Gippy Plantation, but in April 2019, the Town of Moncks Corner Planning Commission voted 4 to 2 to recommend denial to annex Gippy Plantation into the town and rezone the property to PUD. The developers subsequently decided to pull their annexation and zoning request instead of moving forward to Town Council.

Gippy Plantation was evaluated as a potential PRM site for the Lowcountry Corridor Project. NWI and NHD boundaries were used to estimate mitigation potential. A conservation easement boundary shapefile was provided to HDR.

**Advantages:**

- Site contains approximate 245 acres of freshwater wetlands outside of the conservation easement, with the potential for restoration, enhancement, and preservation.
- The site contains 12,466 linear feet of streams based on NHD layers, with the potential for preservation and enhancement.
- Conservation organizations have expressed interest in preservation of property.
- The recently denied permit application demonstrates threat of development.
- Proximity to protected lands at Lewisfield Plantation.

**Constraints:**

- Site does not meet the freshwater wetland or stream mitigation need. Salt marsh credits are not available at this site.
- A large portion of the site (330 acres) is not under threat as they are protected by a conservation easement as a result of an enforcement action.

### 4.1.5 Halidon Hill Mitigation Site

Halidon Hill Mitigation Bank was proposed by Halidon Hill Mitigation Bank, LLC in August 2019. SCDOT is considering use of the proposed bank as a PRM site. The proposed project consists of establishing a freshwater wetland and stream mitigation bank in the Cooper River watershed (8-digit Hydrologic Unit Code 03050201) located in the Level III Middle Atlantic Plains Ecoregion. Based on the public notice, the proposed 1,744.5-acre mitigation site includes approximately 1,074.6 acres of wetlands, 22.8 acres of non-wetland waters (or streams), and 647.1 acres of uplands. The proposal is to preserve 175.14 acres of freshwater wetland and 802 linear feet of stream. In addition, 222.93 of freshwater wetlands will be enhanced through removal of loblolly pine and replanted with native hardwood species. 94.36 acres of wetland will be enhanced through filling ditches, breaching/removal of berms, removal of roads and culverts, and installation of bridges or low flow crossings. 418.81 acres of wetland will be enhanced through removal of loblolly pine, replanting native species, and removing hydrological impairments. 16.91 acres of freshwater wetland will be restored by removal of loblolly pine and restoring natural hydrology. 21,881 linear feet of stream will be restored through removal of undersized culverts, bank stabilization, and construction of a new channel.

#### Advantages:

- 1,074.6 acres of freshwater wetlands and 22.8 acres of non-wetland waters are present on the site.
- SC Conservation Bank interest in preservation of site.

#### Constraints:

- Salt marsh credits are not available at this site.
- Portion of site under a conservation easement.

### 4.1.6 Fairlawn Expansion

Fairlawn Plantation is located near the Wando River, west of Awendaw, in Charleston County. In 2014, the Open Space Institute Land Trust Inc. and The Nature Conservancy purchased 2,241 acres as part of the Boeing facility mitigation. The property will be turned over to the U.S. Forest Service. The parcels evaluated include approximately 869 acres comprising of Tax Map Number 6250000040, 6250000087, and 6250000005 near Guerins Bridge Road and the Francis Marion National Forest. The parcels are also located adjacent to the existing Congaree Carton Mitigation Bank, which has produced freshwater and salt marsh/Critical Area mitigation credits.

Based on NWI and NHD mapping, the parcels contain approximately 95 acres of salt marsh/Critical Area, 362 acres of freshwater wetlands, and 8,800 linear feet of tidally-influenced streams.

#### Advantages:

- Proximity to federal protected lands and previous mitigation sites
- Site contains a variety of freshwater and salt marsh/Critical Area resources.

#### Constraints:

- Small size in total acres and preserved wetlands and ratios will be lower than other sites, which may mean it might not cover the impacts by itself. Would have to be combined with othersites.

- Greater distance to impact site compared to other sites

#### 4.1.7 Daniel Island Mitigation Site

Daniel Island Mitigation Bank was proposed by the SC State Ports Authority in January 2017. SCDOT is considering use of the proposed bank as a PRM site. According to the public notice, the proposed project consists of establishing a saltwater mitigation bank in the Cooper River watershed (8-digit Hydrologic Unit Code 03050201) in the Sea Island/Coastal Marsh Ecoregion. The 135-acre mitigation site is a portion of a former confined disposal facility and prior to 1970 was used to manage dredged material. During the 1980s and 1990s, the majority of the mitigation site was plowed and planted with row crops on an annual basis. However, farming activities were discontinued more than 10 years ago. According to the Prospectus, the mitigation site consists of 25.67 acres of existing salt marsh and 109.09 acres that were used for the placement of dredged material and farming activities.

The proposed mitigation work plan consists of removing the existing vegetation and excavating 105.35 acres in order to create the elevations necessary to establish tidal creeks, low marsh, and high marsh on the mitigation site. Once the appropriate elevations are established, salt marsh vegetation would be planted within the low marsh and high marsh restoration areas and natural tidal flows would inundate the mitigation site twice daily.

##### **Advantages:**

- Over 130 acres of existing salt marsh and Salt marsh/Critical area restoration on the site.

##### **Constraints:**

- Freshwater wetland credits are not available at this site.
- Sediment testing for contaminants ongoing.
- Construction costs for earthwork are cost prohibitive.

#### 4.1.8 Berkeley County Timber Sites

The Berkeley County Timber Sites include properties surrounding the existing Big Run Mitigation Site, which is part of the approved Palmetto State-wide Umbrella Mitigation Bank. The Berkeley County Timber Sites are approximately 15,805 acres owned by private timber management companies. The sites include freshwater wetlands and streams in the Cooper River watershed (8-digit Hydrologic Unit Code 03050201) in the Lower Coastal Plain Ecoregion. NWI and NHD boundaries were used to estimate mitigation potential. The site contains approximately 120,934 linear feet of streams and 2,545 acres of freshwater wetlands.

##### **Advantages:**

- Proximity to an existing mitigation bank and protected lands.
- Sites are located in headwaters of Ashley/Cooper watershed.

##### **Constraints:**

- Salt marsh/Critical Area credits are not available at this site.

### 4.1.9 James Island Dredge Island Restoration

Based on Google Earth mapping, an approximately 28-acre dredge disposal island is located on the James Island Connector in Charleston County near the SC 61 exit. USFWS recommended review of this site for mitigation opportunities. Based on aerial mapping, approximately 9 acres and 4 acres of salt marsh/Critical area could be restored and enhanced, respectively. Topographic survey of the dredge disposal and installation of tide gages would be necessary to refine restoration and enhancement areas.

**Advantages:**

- Agency interest in restoration of property.
- Salt marsh/Critical area credit generation.

**Constraints:**

- Freshwater wetland credits are not available at this site.
- Sediment testing for contaminants may be required as a former dredge disposal.
- Construction costs for earthwork may be cost prohibitive.

### 4.1.10 Jehossee Farm Mitigation Site

The Robert F. Hagerty Coastal Mitigation Bank – Jehossee Farm Mitigation Site was proposed as a mitigation bank in a public notice on August 26, 2019. SCDOT is considering use of the proposed bank as a PRM site. The Jehossee Farm Site is approximately 485 acres and would provide a total of 453.08 acres of estuarine emergent and palustrine forested wetlands. This total includes 266.38 acres of estuarine emergent wetland preservation, 28.16 acres of palustrine forested wetland preservation, 18.13 acres of estuarine emergent wetland restoration, 44.83 acres of estuarine emergent wetland enhancement, 5.20 acres of estuarine salt shrub thicket restoration, and 82.13 palustrine forested wetland restoration. In addition, the project will include 17.38 acres of Bird Management Area (BMA) preservation. Estuarine emergent wetland areas (i.e. coastal marsh) include tidal creeks and sub-tidal bottom habitats.

The Jehossee Farm Site is located on the hydrologic break between two watershed cataloging units: (1) South Edisto River – Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway (12-digit HUC 030502060308); and (2) Dawho River–North Edisto River (12-digit HUC 030502060405). The proposed primary service area extends to Charleston and would include the proposed I-526 Lowcountry Corridor project.

**Advantages:**

- Site includes freshwater and salt marsh/Critical Area wetlands.

**Constraints:**

- Mitigation Site is located outside of project watershed.
- Site does not include streams.

## 4.2 CONSERVATION AGENCY AND MUNICIPAL CORRESPONDENCE

Conservation agencies were contacted to determine if they have identified specific properties or high-interest areas that may be suitable as potential PRM sites or coastal restoration projects. The following is a summary of entities contacted and potential mitigation projects.



### 4.2.1 SC Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

One of DNR's priorities is to create living shorelines through oyster bed restoration projects and/or marsh plantings. SCDNR's South Carolina Oyster Recycling and Enhancement Program (SCORE) is a community-based habitat restoration and monitoring program. On October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019 HDR held a conference call with several staff from DNR (Ben Dyar, Michael Hodges, Peter Kingsley-Smith, and Gary Sundin). Per DNR staff, there are ample locations within Charleston County in need of such work. The cost for such projects depends on the specific project's restoration goal and therefore the methods employed to accomplish the goal. The cost ranges are shown in Table 4-1. The shell bags and marsh plantings have a volunteer component to them adding to the community involvement and outreach and education.

Table 4-1 Oyster Bed Restoration Costs

Project Type/Method	Cost per Acre
Loose Shell Planting	\$150k-180k
Shell Bag Planting	\$225k
Marsh Planting	\$100k-150k

### 4.2.2 NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service

On October 17<sup>th</sup> HDR spoke with Cyndi Cooksey with NOAA's Habitat Conservation Division concerning their priority areas. NOAA has an interest in improving Filbin Creek, which is a tributary into the Cooper River that runs along Interstate 526 within the Project area. There are opportunities to improve tidal connectivity and overall water quality in Filbin Creek.

### 4.2.3 City of Charleston

The City of Charleston recently published their Final Report associated with the Dutch Dialogues. In reviewing the report, the City of Charleston is looking at opportunities to expand the Newmarket Creek watershed to improve drainage, water storage potential, and environmental quality. Specifically it was suggested that Newmarket Creek is daylighted and that the intertidal zone under Septima Clark should be improved to manage tidal impacts.

### 4.2.4 City of North Charleston

Over the years the City of North Charleston has focused on revitalizing the southern end of the city which includes Noisette Creek. The Noisette Community Master Plan includes recommendations for restoring natural systems in the focus area. As outlined in the plan, there are ample opportunities to restore Noisette Creek as well as portions of Filbin Creek. In 2009, the City of North Charleston applied for a grant to fund the 'Restoring Wetlands in Noisette Creek' project. This project identified 8 restoration areas (Figure 11 in Appendix A). The project would result in the restoration of 9.5 acres of wetlands and 2,400 feet of restored creek channel. The overarching goal of the project is to enhance and restore the Noisette Creek watershed.

### 4.2.5 SCDOT Invasive Species Control

*Phragmites australis* is a non-native reed that can crowd out native vegetation in marsh or estuary habitats. *Phragmites* management has occurred on Filbin Creek in the past. As a potential mitigation measure, SCDOT would fund *Phragmites* management for up to 3,500 acres of wetlands and marsh.

Herbicide applications may occur using aerial, aquatic and land-based equipment and may be considered when environmental factors, such as large spray areas, topography and site access, may hinder the ability to spray target plant species. Both airplanes and helicopters have been used traditionally for aerial herbicide applications. Implementation of drone aerial herbicide applications can also be used for targeted spraying. Vegetation monitoring methods typically include direct stem counts or percent aerial cover estimates for established vegetation plots in terrestrial environments. Access to these plots is often challenging because of their remote location, topography, dense vegetation or environmental factors, such as the presence of sensitive communities.

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Table 5-1 provides a summary of the sites identified for potential PRM. Mitigation estimates, advantages and constraints were identified based on GIS mapping, professional judgment, and readily available data sources. Field verification of jurisdictional resources will reveal discrepancies when compared with data depicted within this document. In addition to the sites identified, SCDOT will continue to consider contributions to the SCDNR SCORE program as well as other conservation and municipal restoration initiatives.

Constraints associated with Cainhoy Plantation North, Gippy Plantation, Daniel Island Mitigation Bank, James Island Dredge Island would limit the potential for these sites to provide mitigation within the project schedule and budget. Based on the initial analysis, a combination of mitigation sites may be necessary to meeting mitigation needs for the project. Cedar Hill and Kings Grant sites have the potential to meet freshwater and tidal mitigation needs of this project and are within the watershed. HDR recommends an on-the-ground reconnaissance of these sites in an effort to determine accurate existing conditions of its resources. An evaluation of on-site conditions will allow for a more accurate determination of potential credit generation and identification of potential fatal flaws that may render a site unusable. Additionally, discussions with landowners will provide SCDOT an opportunity to discern their interests in selling property (or an easement on the property), which is a critical step in determining each site's feasibility to provide anticipated mitigation needs.

If constraints are identified for Cedar Hill and Kings Grant, other sites identified in this report have the ability to meet project mitigation needs, including Halidon Hill Mitigation Site, Fairlawn Expansion, Berkeley County Timber Sites, and Jehossee Farm Mitigation Site. Discussion during the December 11, 2019 Agency Coordination Effort meeting will be documented and appended to this report.

Table 5-1 PRM Site Summary

Site Name	County	Site Acreage	Freshwater Streams (LF)	Estimated Salt Marsh/ Critical (AC)	Estimated Freshwater Wetland (AC)	Advantages	Disadvantages
Cainhoy Plantation	Berkeley	5,703	65,110	752	1,736	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agency and conservation organizations interest.</li> <li>Threat of development.</li> <li>Proximity to federal protected lands.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High cost per acre.</li> <li>Unknown permit application status.</li> <li>Project schedule.</li> <li>Portions of site are not under threat.</li> </ul>
Cedar Hill	Berkeley	3,528	62,447	0	1,296	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agency and conservation organizations interest.</li> <li>Proximity to federal protected lands.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Site is located outside of OCRM Critical Area</li> <li>Site does not meet the stream mitigation need.</li> <li>Property is Under Contract.</li> </ul>
Kings Grant	Dorchester	104	0	51 <sup>1</sup>	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Precedence of mitigation activities in this area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Site does not meet the freshwater wetland mitigation need or produce stream mitigation.</li> </ul>
Gippy Plantation	Berkeley	332	12,466	0	245	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conservation organization interest of property.</li> <li>Threat of development.</li> <li>Proximity to protected lands at Lewisfield Plantation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Site does not meet the freshwater wetland or stream mitigation need.</li> <li>Salt marsh credits are not available at this site.</li> <li>330 acres is already protected by a conservation easement.</li> </ul>
Halidon Hill	Berkeley	1,745	23	0	1,075	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SC Conservation Bank interest in preservation of site.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Salt marsh credits are not available at this site.</li> <li>Portion of site under a conservation easement.</li> </ul>

Site Name	County	Site Acreage	Freshwater Streams (LF)	Estimated Salt Marsh/Critical (AC)	Estimated Freshwater Wetland (AC)	Advantages	Disadvantages
Fairlawn Expansion	Charleston	869	0	95	362	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proximity to federal protected lands and previous mitigation sites.</li> <li>Site contains a variety of freshwater and salt marsh/Critical Area resources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small size in total acres and preserved wetlands.</li> <li>Would have to be combined with other sites.</li> <li>Greater distance to impact site compared to other sites.</li> </ul>
Daniel Island	Berkeley	135	0	130	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Freshwater wetland credits are not available at this site.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Freshwater wetland credits are not available at this site.</li> <li>Sediment testing ongoing.</li> <li>High construction costs.</li> </ul>
Berkeley County Timber	Berkeley	15,805	120,934	0	2,545	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proximity to an existing mitigation bank and protected lands.</li> <li>Sites are located in headwaters of Ashley/Cooper watershed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Salt marsh/Critical Area credits are not available at this site.</li> </ul>
James Island Dredge	Charleston	28	0	13	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agency interest in restoration of property.</li> <li>Salt marsh/Critical area credit generation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Freshwater wetland credits are not available at this site.</li> <li>Sediment testing for contaminants may be required.</li> <li>High construction costs.</li> </ul>
Jehossee Farm Mitigation Site	Charleston	485	0	335	128	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Site includes freshwater and salt marsh/Critical Area wetlands.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mitigation Site is located outside of project watershed.</li> <li>Site does not include streams.</li> </ul>

1 Site is located outside of OCRM Critical Area, but mitigation would enhance and restore tidal brackish wetlands.

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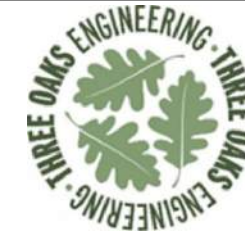
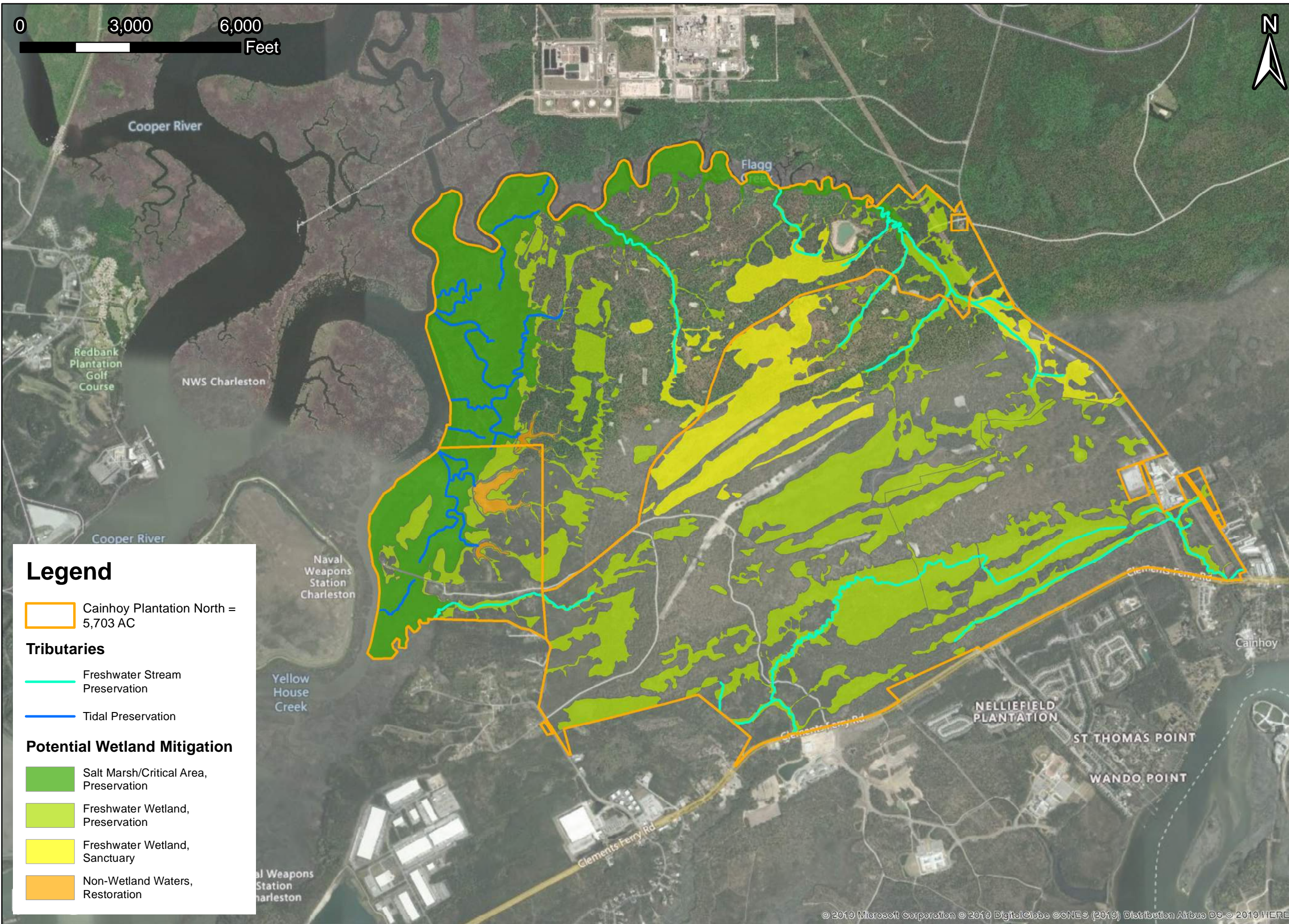
## APPENDIX A

### FIGURES



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Prepared For:

**SCDOT**

**FHWA**

**I-526 LOWCOUNTRY  
CORRIDOR MITIGATION  
ANALYSIS**

Cainhoy Plantation North

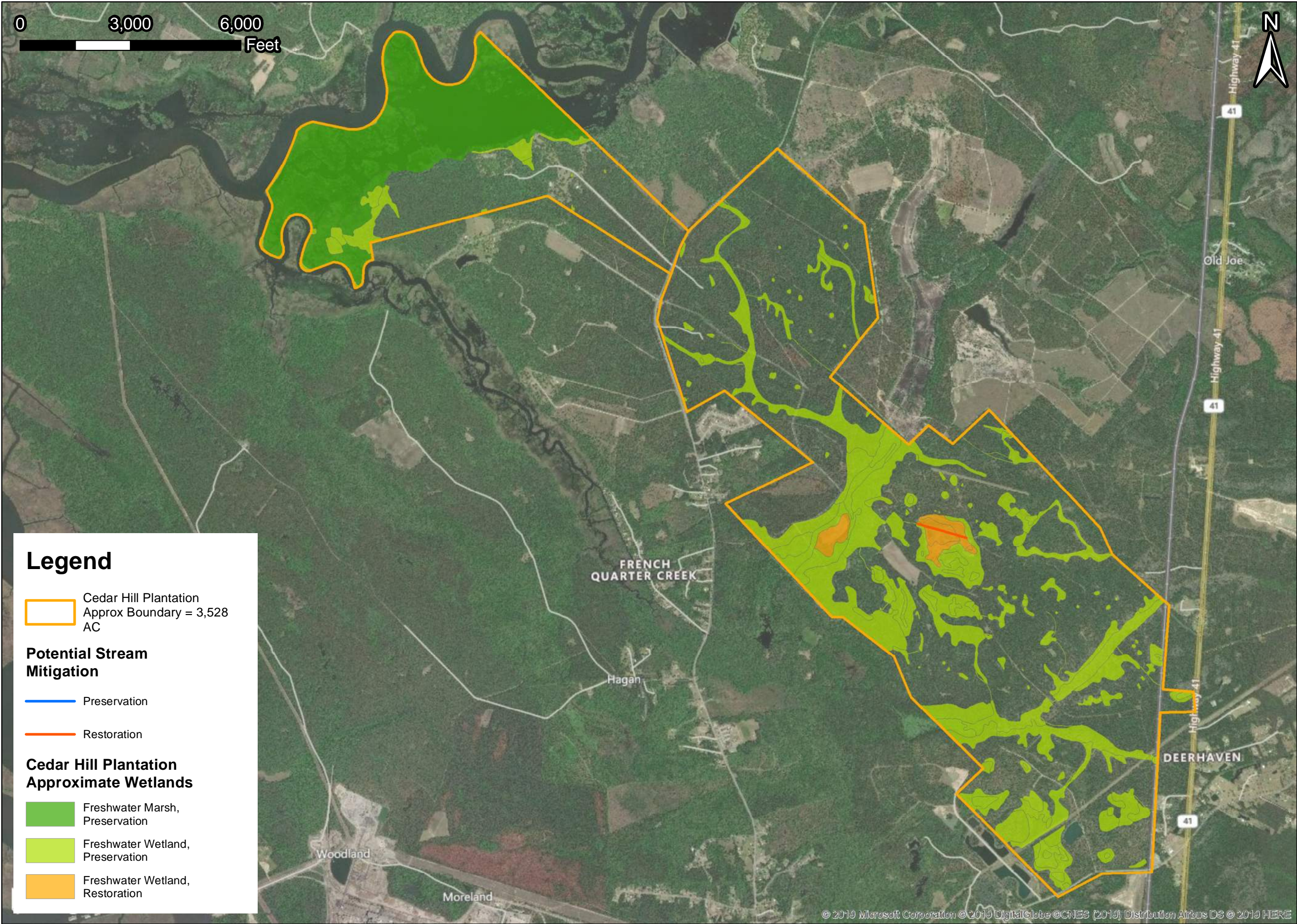
Berkeley County, SC

Date:	11/18/2019
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Drawn By:	rd
Checked By:	ek


Mitigation Analysis

**1**





## Legend


 Cedar Hill Plantation  
Approx Boundary = 3,528  
AC


### Potential Stream Mitigation


 Preservation

 Restoration

### Cedar Hill Plantation Approximate Wetlands

 Freshwater Marsh,  
Preservation

 Freshwater Wetland,  
Preservation

 Freshwater Wetland,  
Restoration



Prepared For:

**SCDOT**

**FHWA**

### I-526 LOWCOUNTRY CORRIDOR MITIGATION ANALYSIS

Cedar Hill Plantation

Berkeley County, SC

Date: 11/18/2019

Scale: 1:30,000

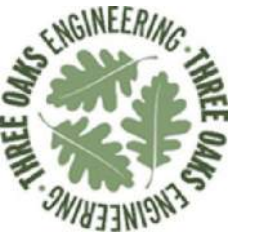
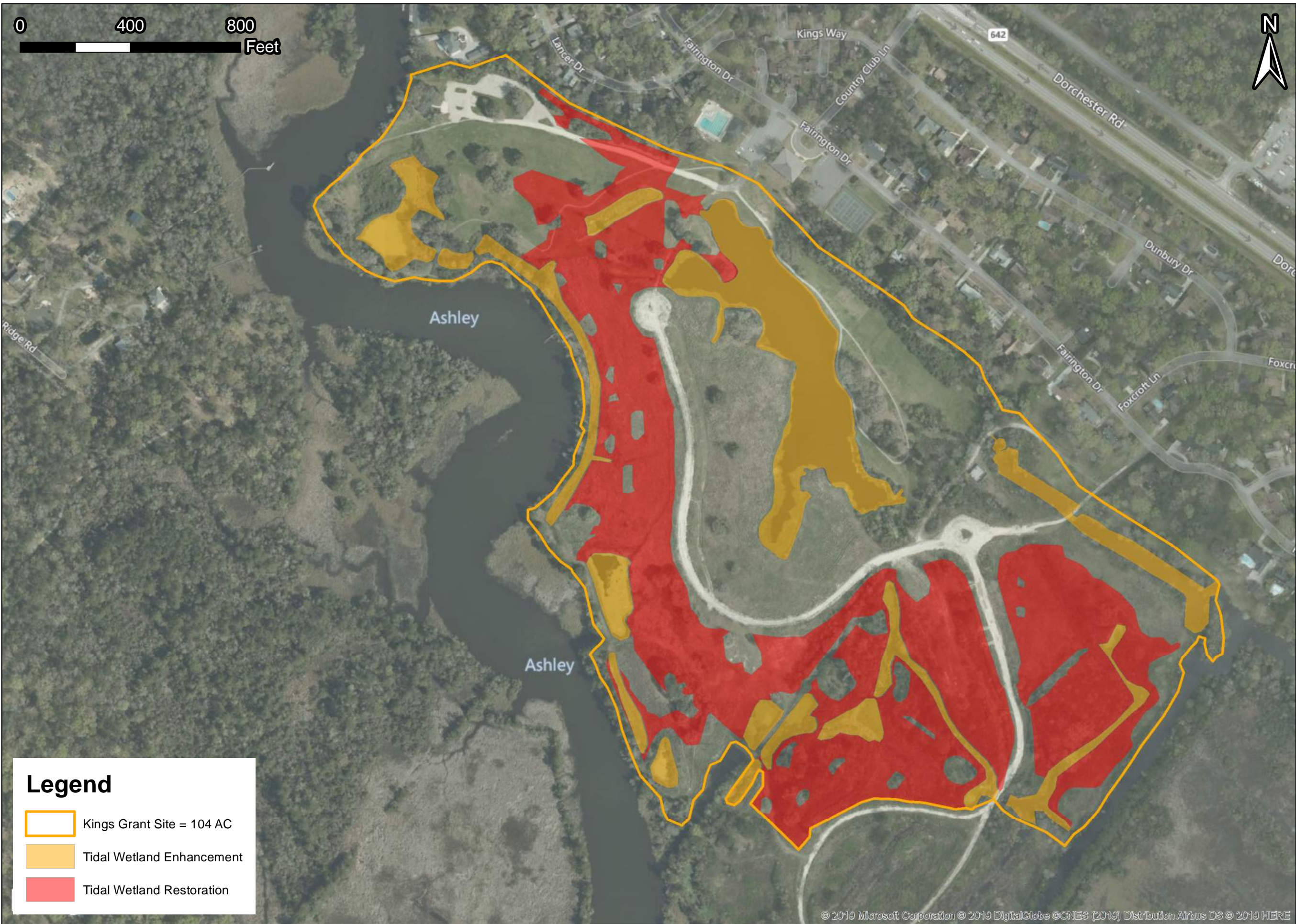
Job No.: 10045819

Drawn By:	Checked By:
rd	ek

Mitigation Analysis

2





Prepared For:



### I-526 LOWCOUNTRY CORRIDOR MITIGATION ANALYSIS

Kings Grant Mitigation Site

Dorchester County, SC

Date: 11/18/2019

Scale: 1:4,000

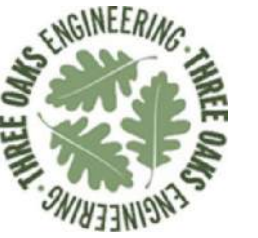
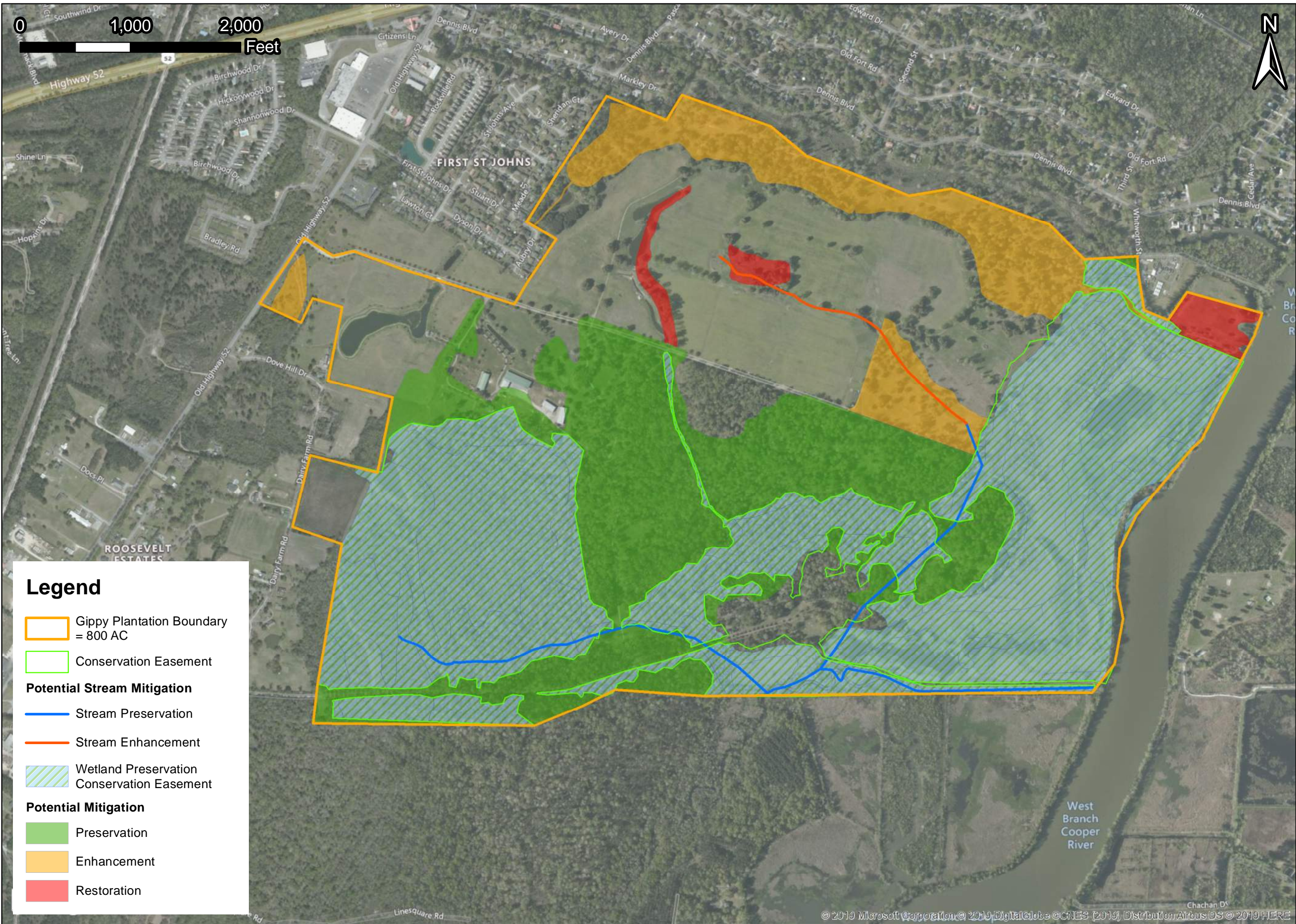
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Drawn By: rd	Checked By: ek
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Mitigation Analysis

# 3





Prepared For:



**I-526 LOWCOUNTRY  
CORRIDOR MITIGATION  
ANALYSIS**

Gippy Plantation

Berkeley County, SC

Date: 11/18/2019

Scale: 1:10,000

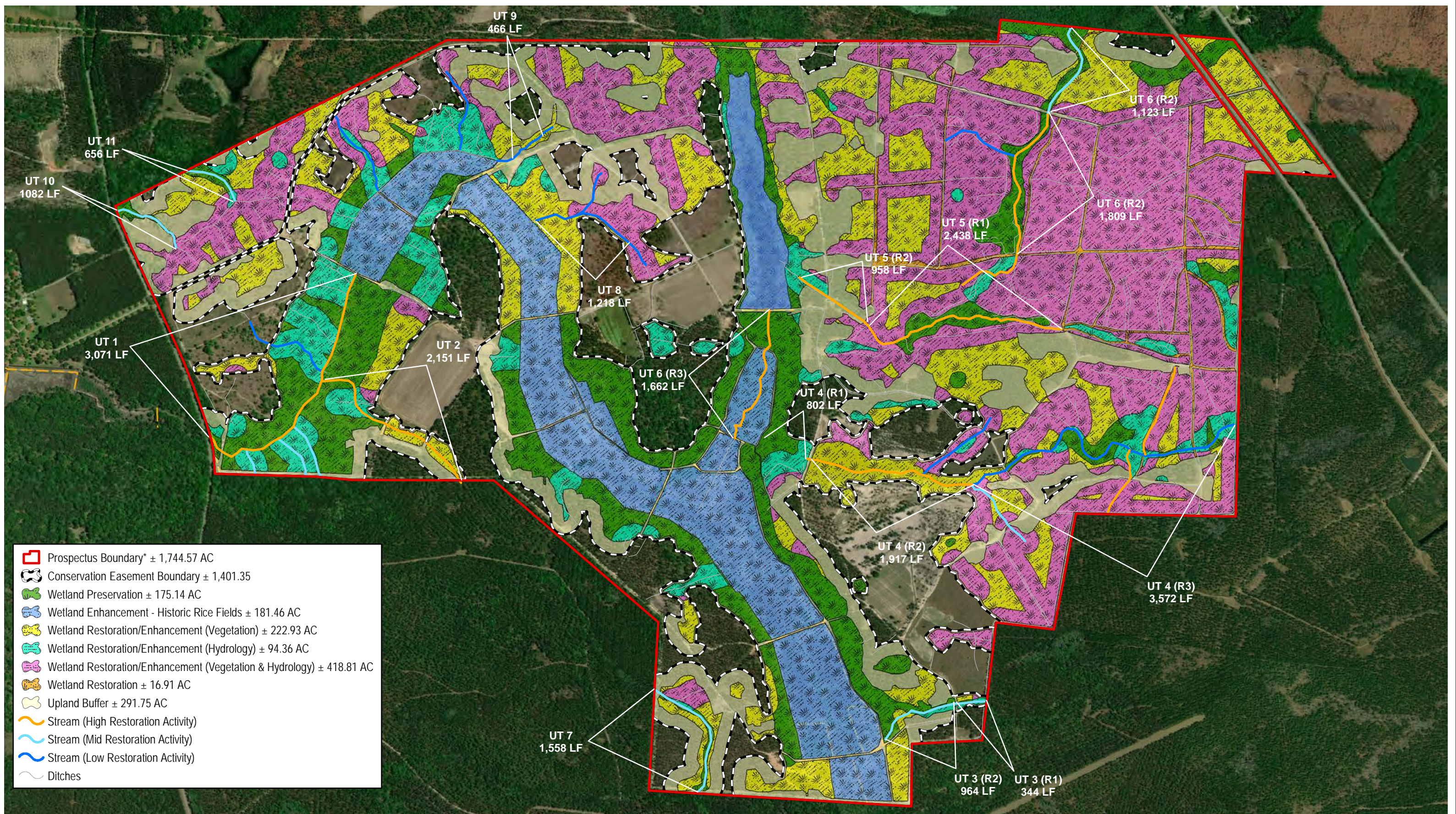
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Drawn By: rd	Checked By: ek
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Mitigation Analysis

4

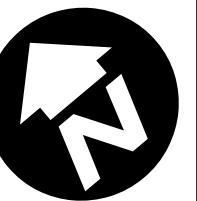
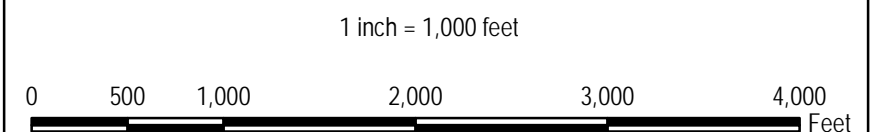




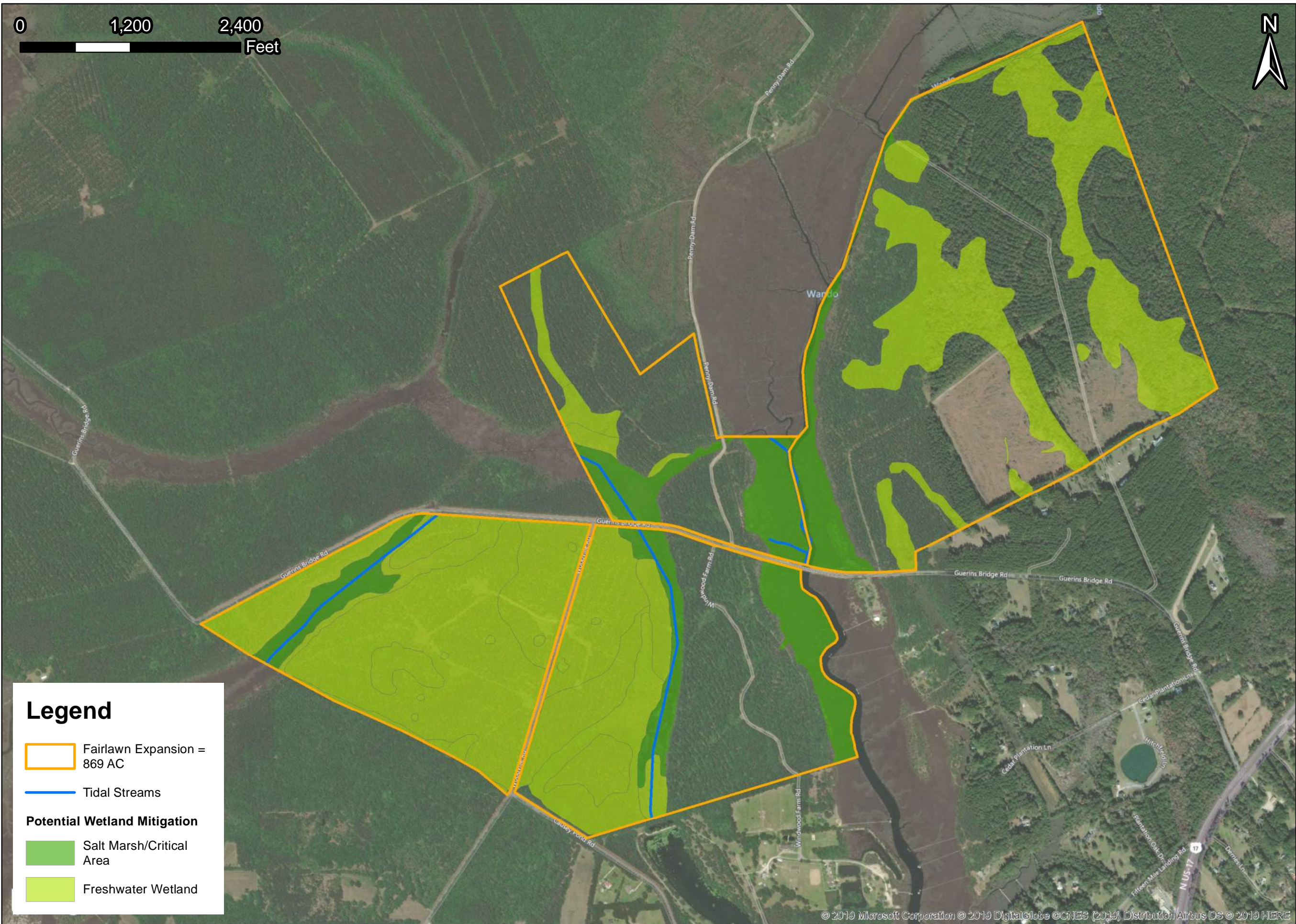
952 Houston Northcutt Blvd, Suite 100  
Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464  
Phone: (843) 556-2624 Fax: (843) 556-4329  
www.JMT.com

Halidon Hill Mitigation Bank  
Draft Prospectus  
Berkeley, South Carolina  
Source: ESRI World Imagery  
Date: July 2019

Figure 5: Mitigation Unit Map







## Legend

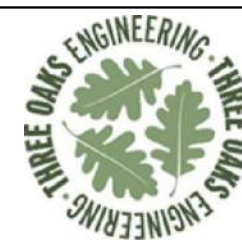
Fairlawn Expansion = 869 AC

— Tidal Streams

### Potential Wetland Mitigation

Salt Marsh/Critical Area

Freshwater Wetland



Prepared For:



## I-526 LOWCOUNTRY CORRIDOR MITIGATION ANALYSIS

Fairlawn Expansion

Charleston County, SC

Date: 11/18/2019

Scale: 1:12,000

Job No.: 10045819

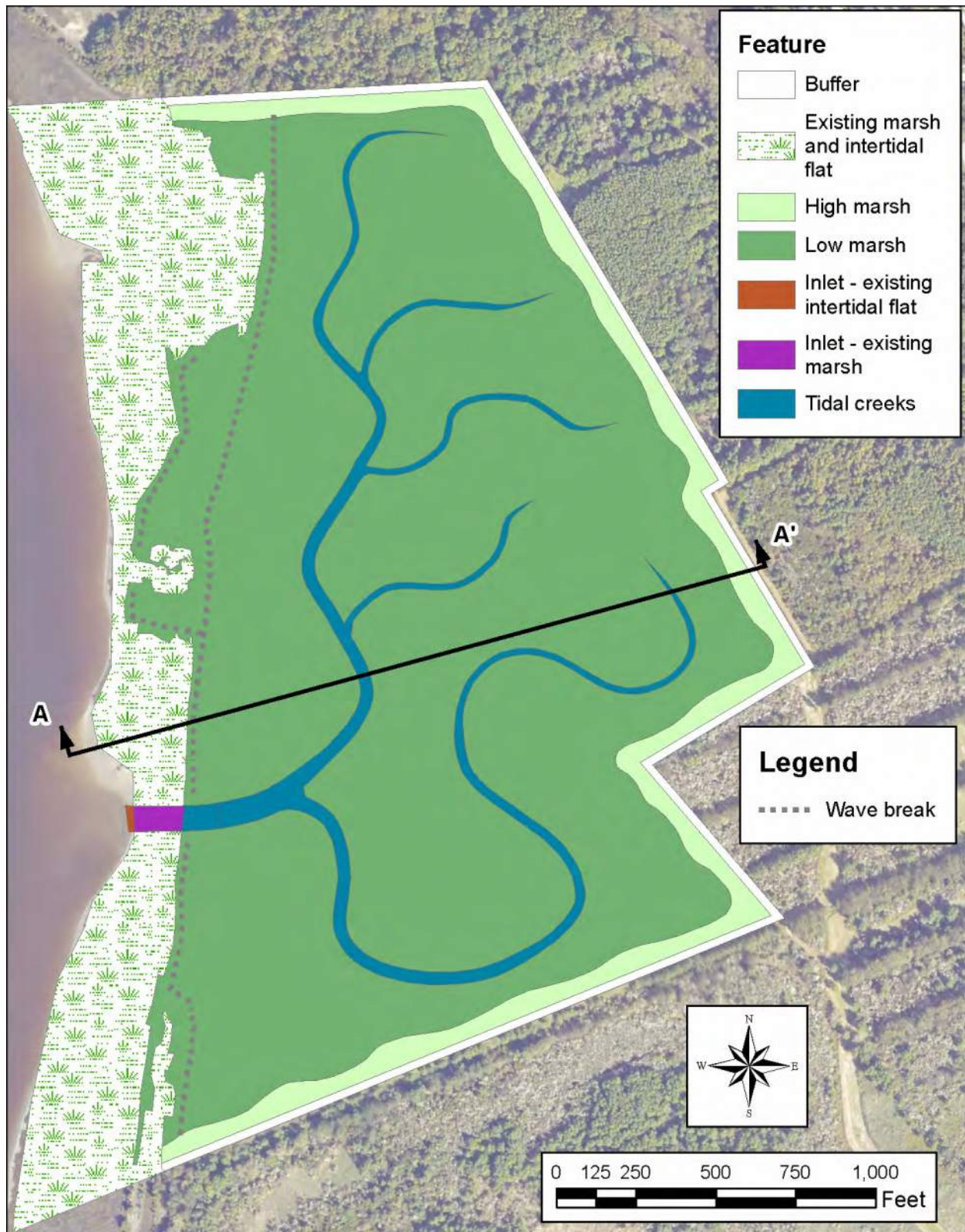
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Mitigation Analysis

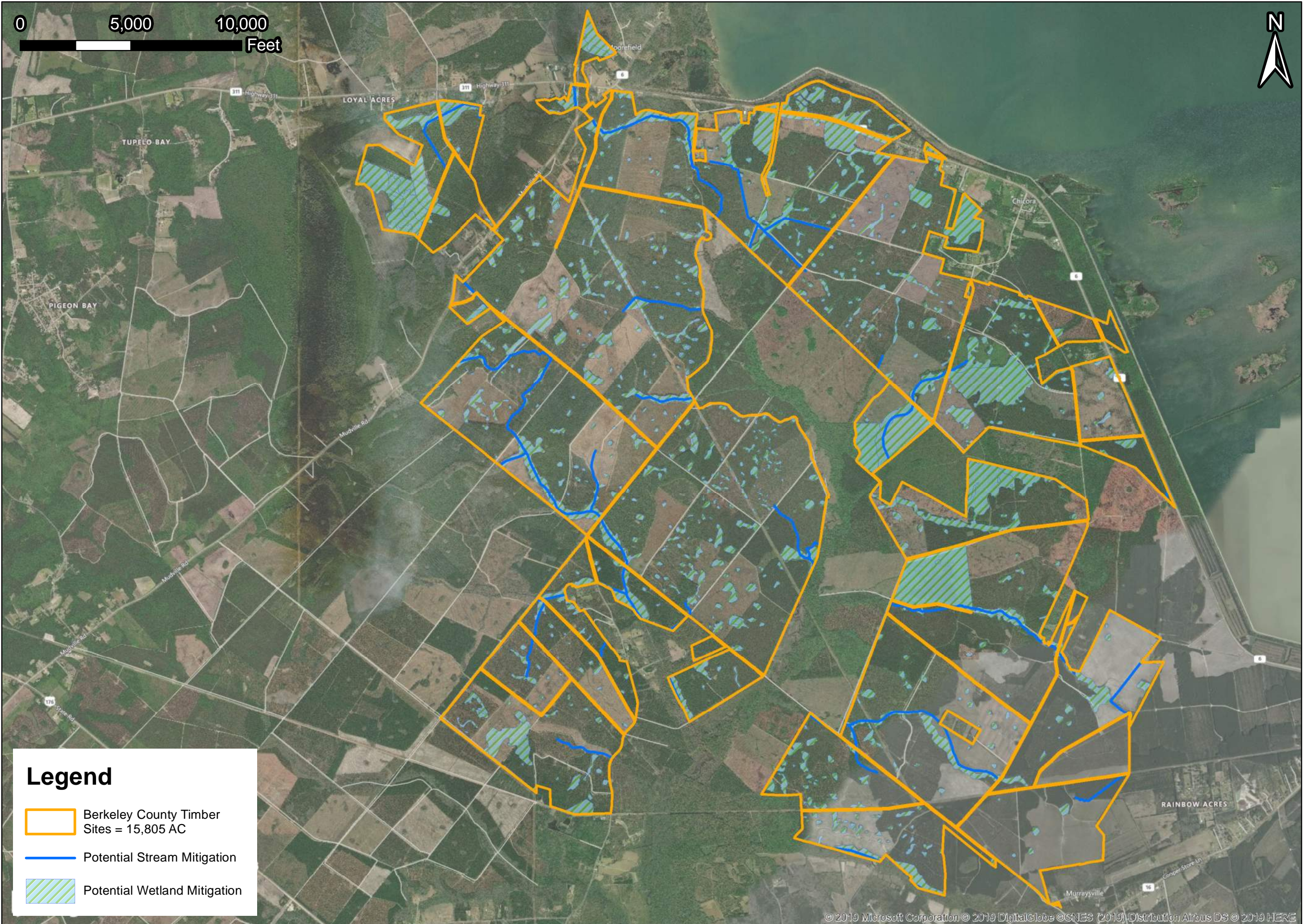
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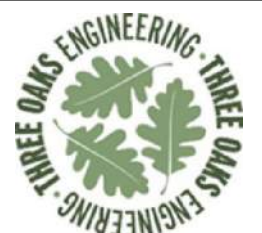
Daniel Island Mitigation Bank  
Figure 7: Mitigation Unit Map





**Legend**

-  Berkeley County Timber Sites = 15,805 AC
-  Potential Stream Mitigation
-  Potential Wetland Mitigation



Prepared For:



**I-526 LOWCOUNTRY  
CORRIDOR MITIGATION  
ANALYSIS**

Berkeley County Timber Sites

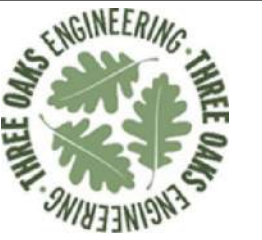
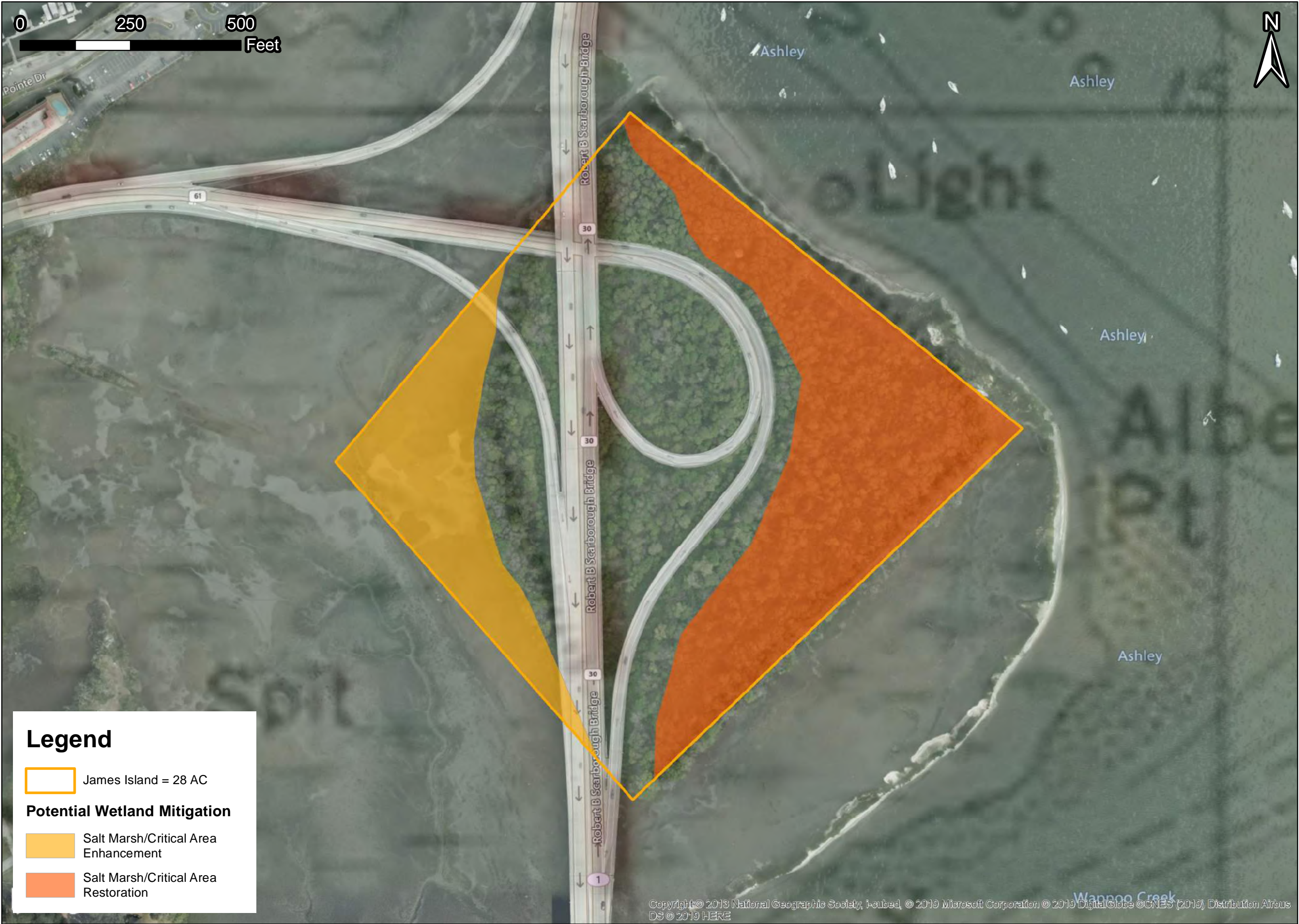
Berkeley County, SC

Date:	11/18/2019
Scale:	1:50,000
Job No.:	10045819
Drawn By:	Checked By:
gm	ek

Mitigation Analysis

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Prepared For:



**I-526 LOWCOUNTRY  
CORRIDOR MITIGATION  
ANALYSIS**

James Island  
Dredge Island Restoration

Charleston County, SC

Date: 11/18/2019

Scale: 1:2,500

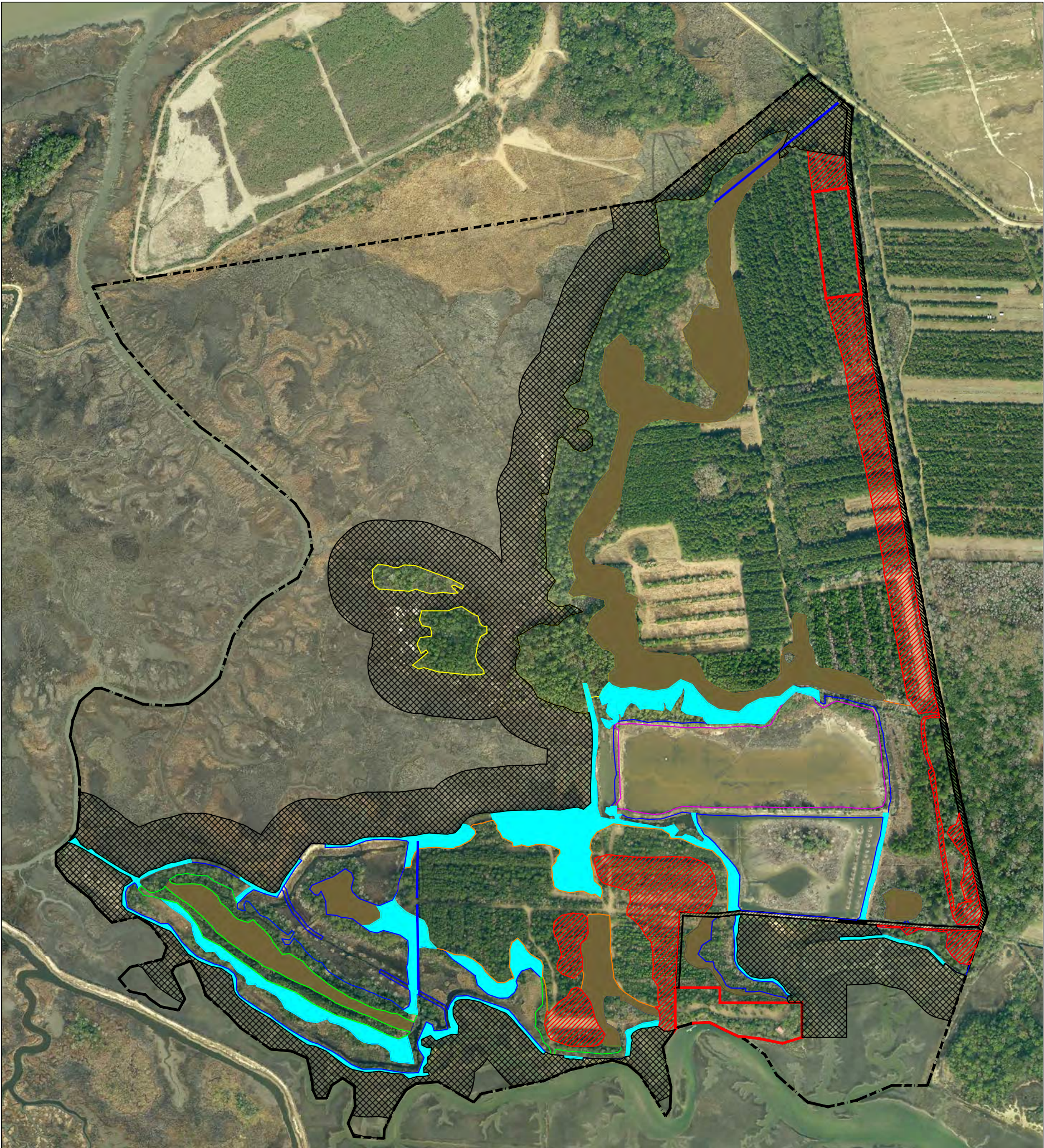
Job No.: 10045819


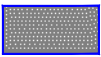
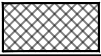




Drawn By: gm	Checked By: ek
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Mitigation Analysis

9






Mitigation Unit by Type and Quantity				
Map ID	Mitigation Unit	Resource Type	Mitigation Type	Quantity
	W-1	Coastal Marsh	Restoration	(~ 18.29 ac.)
	W-2	Coastal Marsh	Enhancement	(~ 44.83 ac.)
	W-3	Coastal Marsh	Preservation	(~ 86.61 ac.)
	W-4	Salt Shrub Thicket	Restoration	(~ 5.20 ac.)
	W-5	Estuarine Fringe Forest	Restoration	(~ 28.93 ac.)
	W-6	Estuarine Fringe Forest	Preservation	(~ 28.16 ac.)
	W-7	Pine Flatwoods	Restoration	(~ 82.13 ac.)
	W-8	Bird Management Area	Preservation	(~17.38 ac.)
	U-9	Upland Buffer	Preservation	(~9.85 a.c.)

Legend		
Boundary	(~ 473.17 ac.)	
Outparcels	(~6.02 ac.)	
Dike Removal (Bridge Span)		
Access Easement	(~4.22)	

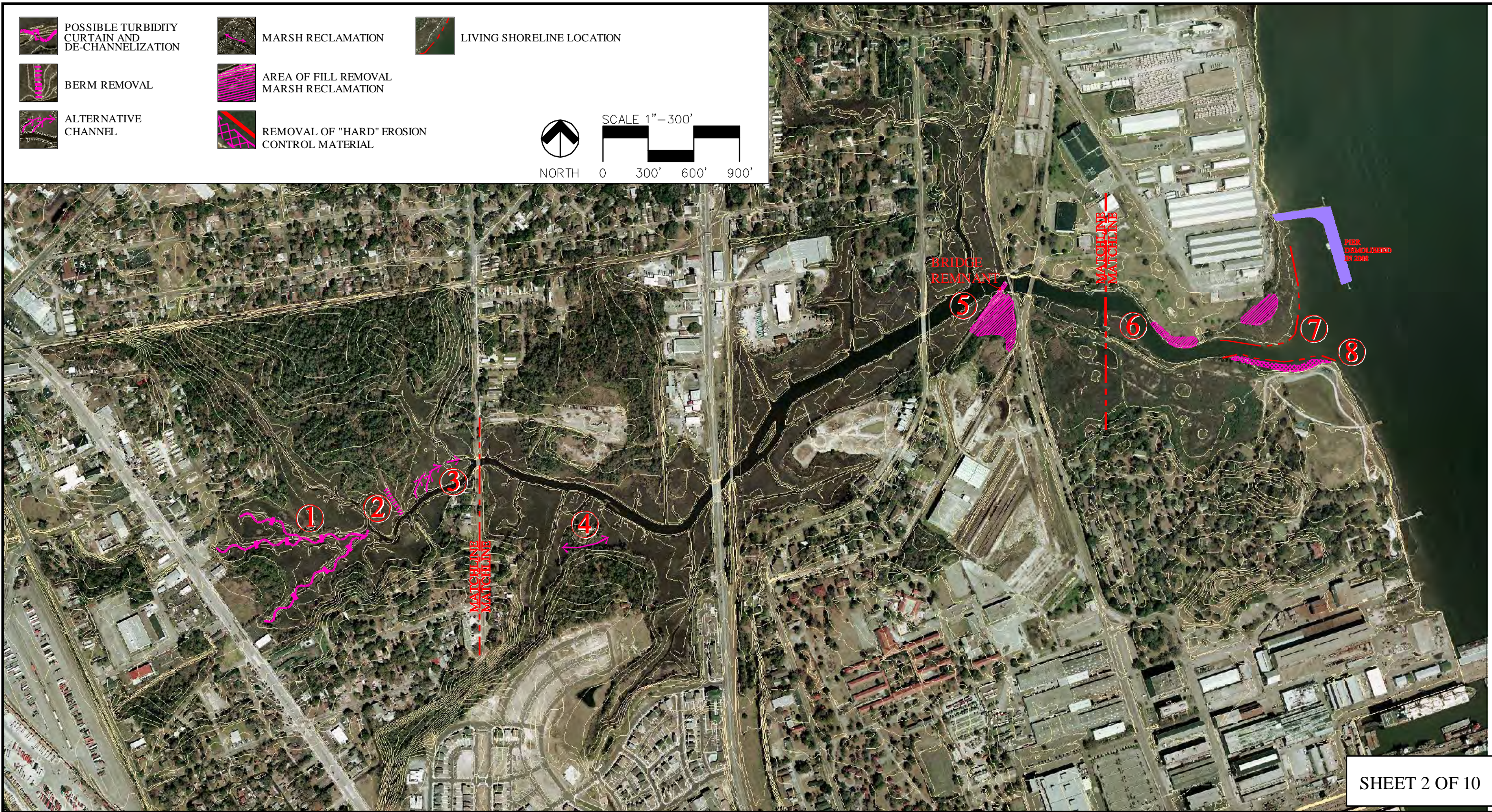
- NOTES:
1. This is not a survey.
  2. Area calculations are approximate.
  3. Aerial photograph from USGS high resolution orthoimagery dated 2012.

Figure 10: Jehossee Farm Mitigation Site



 a DAVEY company 3805 Wrightsville Ave, Suite 15 Wilmington, North Carolina 28402 Telephone: 910-452-0001	Project: Jehossee Farm Charleston County, SC	Date: 4/3/19	Revision Date: NA
	Title: Mitigation Layout	Scale: 1"=600'	Job Number: LMG19.021
		Drawn By: GSF	Figure: 4





SHEET 2 OF 10

**HLA INC**

**THE NAVY  
YARD**  
at noisette

**SOUTHERN  
CONSTRUCTION  
SERVICES INC**

## RESTORING WETLANDS IN NOISETTE CREEK

### RESTORATION AREA LOCATION EXHIBIT

CITY OF NORTH CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

**michaux conservancy**  
*A Center for Urban Coastal Ecosystems*



**Allen & Associates**  
Innovative Solutions to Environmental Challenges

29 Leinbach Drive, Bldg A, Charleston, SC 29407-6988  
www.hlainc.com  
tel 843.763.1166  
fax 843.763.1909

City of North Charleston  
P.O. Box 190016, North Charleston, SC 29419  
tel 843.740.2588  
www.northcharleston.org

**Figure 11: Noisette Creek Restoration  
Area**

1031 Chuck Dawley Blvd., Ste 7A-1, Mt. Pleasant, SC, 29464  
www.allenenv.com  
tel 843.793.9887  
fax 843.849.0508



# Agency Coordination Meeting Notes – January 8, 2020

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## Attendees:

FHWA	Shane Belcher Jim Martin
NOAA-NMFS	Cynthia Cooksey
NPS	
USACE	Christopher Mims
USCG	Randall Overton
USEPA	Alya Singh-White
USFWS	Mark Caldwell
SCDAH	Joe Wilkinson
SCDHEC	
SCDHEC-OCRM	Josh Hoke Chris Stout Blair Williams
SCDNR	Susan Davis
SCDOT	David Kelly Chad Long Will McGoldrick
SCPRT	
CDM Smith	Amy Livingston
HDR	Blair Wade
Three Oaks Engineering	Amanda Chandler Heather Robbins Geni Theriot

## Purpose of the Meeting:

Public involvement update

## Public Involvement Overview:

- Comment period extended to January 31, 2020
- Activity from November to present
  - 5 Community Meetings
  - Public Information Meeting
  - Virtual Public Information Meeting (VPIM)
  - Stakeholder Meeting
  - Media Day
- Received 291 comments as of January 2, 2020. Variety of sources for comments to be submitted (in-person, hotline, email, etc.)
  - 77 were visits to community office
  - 127 from website

- Top Comments
  - Right of Way (ROW) – Half of the comments have been received by people going to the community office
  - Displacements – fair treatment of those displaced, specific question, or if their property had the potential for impact
  - Multimodal/Regional transit – additional methods, better system, bus lanes, and addition of bike/ped access
  - Wetlands – Filbin Creek and flooding
  - Noise – Park Circle area
- Alternatives Comments
  - Maintain access to Rivers Ave
  - Truck traffic at N Rhett Ave
  - Support of No-build
- 16 positive comments about outreach (public or community meeting)
- Next step is to take a hard look at the comments and generate correct responses to continue public engagement in the project.
- Community Office
  - Located in Gas Lite Square in North Charleston
    - Within the project study area
    - Pedestrian and public transit friendly
  - Staffed with community liaisons
    - ROW specialists available every Wednesday
  - Appointments can be scheduled if the operating hours are inconvenient
- Comment summary will be shared once the comment period ends and prior to asking agency concurrence

#### **DEIS Review:**

- Which sections does each agency want to review?
  - A poll or spreadsheet will be sent to agencies for their input
- 2-week review built into schedule, but can request more time if needed
- Agencies will be sent a test pdf document using an FTP in an attempt to access it
  - Comments are acceptable in the pdf or by email

#### **Action Items:**

- February Agency Workshop Attendance poll - Completed
- DEIS Agency Review of Chapters/Sections poll - Completed
- Test FTP for agency use to review documents - Completed

#### **Upcoming Events:**

- Agency Workshop – February 12, 2020 (held at Project Office in Charleston)
- Agency Meeting – March 11, 2020 – Mitigation Update
- Agency Meeting – April 8, 2020 – DEIS Section Discussion
- Agency Meeting – May 13, 2020 – Proposed Preferred Alternative

## Agency Coordination Meeting Notes – February 12, 2020

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FHWA	Shane Belcher Jeffrey Cantey Jim Martin
NOAA-NMFS	Cynthia Cooksey Brian Rosinger
NPS	
USACE	Christopher Mims
USCG	Randall Overton
USEPA	Alya Singh-White
USFWS	Mark Caldwell
SCDAH	
SCDHEC	
SCDHEC-OCRM	Josh Hoke Colleen McDonald Chris Stout
SCDNR	
SCDOT	David Kelly Chad Long Will McGoldrick Joy Riley
SCPRT	
CDM Smith	Amy Livingston
HDR	Blair Wade
Maximum Consulting	Mattese Lecque
Stantec	Rick Day Jim Fisher Jason Hambley Horrace Tobin
Three Oaks Engineering	Amanda Chandler Russell Chandler Heather Robbins Geni Theriot

### Introductions

#### Joy Riley presentation

- Overview of project limits
- Review of P & N
  - Most congested corridor on CHATS, #6 on SCDOT list, Top 20 most congested interstate segments (SCDOT 2014 Multimodal Transportation Plan)
- OFD project
- Project timeline and where we are
  - Tracking towards a preferred alternative in next few months

- Public Hearing Q4 2020

Looking at alternatives throughout the life of this project

- Interstate corridor analysis → planning level analysis
  - Completed in 2013, funding assigned in 2014
- Three different planning studies for this project
  - 2013 I-526 Corridor Study
  - 2019 I-26 Corridor Study
  - 2019 CHATS interstate Congestion Management Plan
    - One large document that shows analysis of all existing studies and analysis for interstates in CHATS boundary
    - i.e. mass transit, park and ride, managed lanes, etc.
- Analysis of traffic operations
  - Crash data, geometry review, existing traffic patterns, level of service, delays, etc.
    - Rank each problem with those that would benefit public the most if fixed
    - Look for low \$ solutions then long-term improvements

Travel Demand Management

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| • Bus Rapid Transit → Rail project in Charleston | • Bike Ped                                    |
| • Park and Ride                                  | • Manage Lanes                                |
| • Telecommuting                                  | • Land Use Management (Out of SCDOTs control) |

Funding has been applied to:

Carpools/ vanpools & park and rides  
 Telecommuting & Flex Work Times  
 Bus & Rapid Transit  
 Education & promotion of TA

Interim Low-Cost Improvements

- Ramp Alterations and minor improvements to intersections
- Signed improvements
- Clear zone improvements
- Access management
- Restriping bridges/existing road and advanced signaling
  - Ruled out due to safety and electrical infrastructure deficiencies
- Improved signage/ additional signage
- Pavement marking improvements
- Ramp metering

Which improvements result in greatest benefit?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| • I-526/I-26 system interchange modifications | • I-526 Mainline capacity and operations |
|---|--|



- Service interchange improvements LOS
- Bike and Pedestrian Improvements within corridor

To solve Purpose and Need, must incorporate multiple solutions –  
Widening alone or other standalone alts don't solve the problem

#### Preliminary Screening of Range of Alternatives

- No Build
- Improvements to local facilities
  - East Montague
  - Remount Rd
- New Facilities

#### Alternatives Evaluation

- Carry forward alts from 2013 Corridor Study
- Evaluate interchange mods at all service interchanges
- Study traffic operations of each interchange model- what moves forward?
- Compare traffic operations/acceptable LOS
- Compatibility with adjacent interchanges
- Eliminate large footprints with no improvement to LOS

#### 7 Alternatives Evaluated for System to System

- Some included improvements to Rivers Avenue
- Alternative 7 was preferred in corridor study

#### 4 were carried forward for detailed NEPA Analysis

What happened to other 3?

Cost, constructability, similarities to other alternatives, cost/benefit analysis  
Alternative 7 had large impact to airports and a very large footprint

#### Rivers Avenue Analysis → 4 alternatives in corridor study

- Currently works okay
- Other alternatives impact functionality and requires modification
- Could involve closure of access on Rivers
- Build over interchange and modify access
- Partial cloverleaf rebuilds carried forward
  - = "A" Alternatives in Reasonable Alts
- Basic Build = closes Rivers Avenue access and widens I-526 mainline

#### Paul Cantrell Boulevard and Magwood Drive → 7 Alternatives

- Alternative 5 carried forward
- Intersection creates delays on interstate
  - Ramps couldn't be made large enough to store traffic

#### Paul Cantrell Boulevard at I-526 → 5 Alternatives

- Alt 5 moved forward

#### N Rhett/ Virginia Avenue → 4-6 Alternatives reviewed

- Alternatives 1 & 2 carried forward

#### Mainline Alternatives

- 6 lane vs 8 lane

#### No Build

- LOS continues to fail and get worse
- Increased delays and travel time
- Increase in crashes
- Funding spent elsewhere on interstates and not here

\*526 West is funded by interstate funds, limits how many can be used

#### Reasonable Alternatives

- Meets purpose and need
- Eliminated large footprint with minimal improvements
- SCDOT goals and priorities
- Public & Agency input

#### Roadway Typical Alignments

- Widens over Ashley River on existing structures
- Build parallel on other elevated structures
  - Seismic “lifeline”
  - More value with similar impacts when compared to widening existing structures

#### Future Traffic Operations

- Active traffic management
- This may be the last time this corridor can be widened
  - Improve infrastructure now to account for future needs and improvements

#### System to System

- Alts 1&2 closes access to Rivers Avenue
- 1A and 2A rebuilds access to Rivers Avenue

#### N Rhett/ Virginia Avenue

- Alt 1&2 did not get positive feedback from Public New Alts at this interchange being developed as Alt 5&6
- Alt 5&6 are variations of Alt 1&2, modified to improve function with heavy truck traffic volumes on Virginia Avenue

- Don't want to create another problem while trying to fix existing

Paul Cantrell Boulevard

- Only one alternative

In the process of screening each reasonable alternative:

553 comments from the public

- Row Impacts
- Natural Impacts
- Bike/Pedestrian
- Improve transit
- Noise Impacts

Community Impacts

- ROW Impacts
  - 281-334 relocations anticipated
- Environmental Justice Impacts
  - 4 neighborhoods at system to system
  - 133-170 of 281-334 in this area
  - Approximately 75% with ROW impacts
  - Looking at ways to minimize/mitigate

Public Outreach

- Project office → workshops at project office
- Trying to repair wounds from past SCDOT projects
- Community Advisory Committee
- Community Driven Mitigation

No Build for USACE needs to include: No Federal Action

- Include information about Low Cost Improvements and any other work that has been funded or completed in lieu of widening and interchanges
- Alternative Technical Memo will include this information.

#### **Action Items**

- Public Involvement Comment Log to be sent to agencies
- Chapter 1 & 2 to be sent to agencies
- Updated PDF of workshop presentation provided with meeting summary
- Send agencies updated kmz files for reasonable alternatives

#### **Upcoming Events**

- Agency Meeting – March 11, 2020 – Mitigation Update
- Agency Meeting – April 8, 2020 – DEIS Section Discussion
- Agency Meeting – May 13, 2020 – Proposed Preferred Alternative



## Meeting Summary

I-526 LCC WEST Agency Coordination Meeting

SCDOT – 955 Park Street, Columbia, SC 29202

March 11, 2020 10:00AM

---

### Attendees

FHWA	Shane Belcher Jim Martin	NOAA-NMFS	Cynthia Cooksey Brian Rosinger
NPS		USACE	Christopher Mims
USCG	Randall Overton	USEPA	Alya Singh-White
USFWS	Mark Caldwell	SCDAH	
SCDHEC		SCDHEC-OCRM	Chris Stout
SCDNR	Susan Davis	SCDOT	Chris Beckham Sean Connolly David Kelly Chad Long Will McGoldrick Joy Riley
SCPRT	Justin Hancock	HDR	Blair Wade
Three Oaks Engineering	Amanda Chandler Russell Chandler Heather Robbins Geni Theriot	Wildlands	Daniel Johnson

### Introductions

The purpose of this meeting is to provide an update and receive agency feedback on the mitigation needs assessment for the I-526 LCC West project.

### DEIS Updates

- Ch. 1&2 comments received
- Working on incorporating those

### NRTM

- SCDOT has reviewed, going to FHWA on 3/27

### Reasonable Alts Concurrence Point

- Coming out from FHWA later this week via email to each agency POC

### Mitigation Update

- Goal of this conversation is "Fire side chat about mitigation" per Sean Connolly
- Focus on tier 1,2,3 options
- Site visits have been conducted at Cedar Hill and Jehossee Farms
- Cedar Hill –
  - High quality resources
  - No current protective measures on the site
- Jehossee –
  - SCDOT would convert to PRM, should it move forward
  - Concerns with easement overlay, status (or support by TNC) is unknown.
    - Need more defined parameters of conservation easement
- 3 combinations being proposed at this point



March 11, 2020  
I-526 LCC WEST Agency Coordination Meeting  
Page 2 of 3

- Cedar Hill and Jehossee
- Cedar Hill and Noisette
- Cedar Hill and credit procurement
  - Credit procurement is not DOT's preferred alternative
- "Kings Grant site" still included as a contingency plan (aware of agency concerns with this site)
  - Not DOT's preferred alternative
- Cedar Hill seems good for FW mitigation needs, need feedback from agencies for tidal
- Looking for feedback on Noisette, Jehossee, Kings Grant
  - Pros & cons, red flags?

Noisette site:

- SCDNR – status of NOAA grant for Noisette?
  - DOT's understanding is the grant never funded or moved forward/implemented
  - NOAA believes the same
  - Noisette – mitigation would use NOAA's grant plan as a guide on this site
  - SCDNR – good site in correct watershed
- USFWS – what do the numbers on plan represent?
  - Site identifiers and work plans associated with each number
  - Specific to the plan → will be sent out after this meeting
  - Need to reach out to M Caldwell (USFWS) with map and descriptions of what each number represents in the Noisette figure
  - USFWS has concerns with adding sinuosity to Noisette
- Noisette site will require coordination with city of N. Chas and revisit proposed restoration plan
  - Will have to be updated and modified since it was developed about 10 years ago
    - Fill removal, living shoreline
- DHEC – OCRM mentioned development in the area (a lot of upland change as compared to aerial)
  - Sites 4,5,6,7 may be only options
  - HDR identified the need for additional due diligence related to defining activities
  - Ped bridge project by city of N. Chas is in the works

Cedar Hill site:

- Cedar Hill site is a "landscape" approach and would be approached as a ratio vs. credits
  - How does that look if paired with Noisette?
  - Cedar Hill is about 15/1 wetlands & 5/1 streams
  - 3600 acres
  - Property is owned by Johnson Development
- DNR worried that only wetlands and small buffer would be protected
- Proposed land uses by Johnson Development are solar farm and timber management
- DOT's preference is to go with Cedar Hill if possible
- DNR doesn't want to pursue Cedar Hill if the owner has intentions of "chopping it up" for development

Other properties:

- DNR concerns with "Berkeley County Timber Sites"
  - Would prefer bank credits to those sites

March 11, 2020

I-526 LCC WEST Agency Coordination Meeting

Page 3 of 3

- Cedar Hill is top priority
- A new property was brought to DOTs attention
  - Hermine/Martin site
    - Had been proposed as SC 41 mitigation
  - About 53 credits USFS interested in long term management
  - \*\*\*USFWS opposed to preservation credits being generated
  - USFWS expressed concern with removal of entire berm to retain habitat
  - Shade Credit Determination: Less than 20ft is when shading impacts apply – higher bridges let in enough light
  - Need to evaluate shading impacts – would Hermine work for shading?
  - Hermine may offset fill
- Hermine site would not satisfy all credit needs
- Majority of impacts to tidal are shading about 2.5 acres fill
- What can be done for tidal if we go landscape?
  - DNR ok if credit generation is close to meeting needs
  - SCDNR noted concern with large scale out of kind and NOAA concurs
- If preservation not available for tidal, how else can needs be met?
  - Finite budget available
    - More tidal = less Cedar Hill
- Hermine site offsets dominant impact of fill
- SCORE project closer to project site as a component of the plan
  - Offset partial functional loss of shading
- Noisette is preferred by DNR, NOAA
- Hermine preferred by USFWS
- Combination of Noisette and Hermine?
  - Dykes breached at Hermine already
  - Noisette restoration – partial
- If we have to go credit for credit on tidal Cedar Hill is out
- USACE supports PRM due to proximity and lack of in-kind mitigation.
- USACE suggested that landscape may exceed in some areas and fall short in others.

#### Closing Discussion

- Landscape, watershed approach of Cedar Hill
- Noisette restoration components and Hermine site seems reasonable to agencies
  - Need to nail down shading impacts and how those are being quantified (4.8-5 existing on Ashley River)
  - DOT to continue vetting sites Cedar Hill, Jehossee, Hermine, Noisette and others
    - Continued due diligence
      - Working with landowners at Cedar Hill
      - Jehossee Easement
      - Noisette Reach out to City of N. Charleston
      - Explore Hermine site in more detail
- 404 Pre-app in July
  - How to update agencies between now and then?
    - Updates during monthly meetings



## Meeting Summary

I-526 LCC WEST Agency Coordination Meeting

Adobe Connect

April 8, 2020 10:00AM

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### Attendees

FHWA	Shane Belcher Jim Martin	NOAA-NMFS	Cynthia Cooksey
NPS	Alexis John	USACE	Christopher Mims
USCG	Randall Overton	USEPA	Alya Singh-White
USFWS	Mark Caldwell	SCDAH	Elizabeth Johnson
SCDHEC		SCDHEC-OCRM	Josh Hoke Chris Stout Blair Williams
SCDNR	Susan Davis Stacie Crowe	SCDOT	David Kelly Will McGoldrick Joy Riley
SCPRT	Justin Hancock	HDR	Blair Wade
Three Oaks Engineering	Amanda Chandler Russell Chandler Heather Robbins Geni Theriot		

### Introductions

The purpose of this meeting is to provide agencies with an update on the DEIS and preliminary evaluation of floodplain mitigation.

### DEIS Update

- Need Recommended Preferred Alternative to finish Alternatives Development Tech Memo.
- Draft DEIS to SCDOT in August.

### Concurrence

- Agency review time extended due to current circumstances.
- Agencies that have not submitted concurrence as of April 8, 2020
  - SCDHEC
  - SCDHEC-OCRM
  - SCPRT

### Floodplain Mitigation

- SCDOT is in preliminary stages of evaluating areas for floodplain mitigation.
  - Evaluating land surrounding Filbin Creek from Railroad Avenue to Attaway Street and portion of land west of Attaway Street.
- Rivers Avenue bridge crossing Filbin Creek needs to be replaced.
  - Goal is to replace bridge and reduce flooding upstream and downstream.
- Area is located within a FEMA designated special flood hazard area.
- Area being evaluated extends the study area.
- Field work is being conducted to quantify potential impacts.
- Asking for input from agencies.



April 8, 2020  
I-526 LCC WEST Agency Coordination Meeting  
Page 2 of 2

- Agency Comments:
  - Significant concerns with excavating wetlands for stormwater retention.
  - Would like to see more innovative solutions other than solving drainage issues by excavating wetlands.
  - area is EFH adjacent and there is concern that excavation could impact EFH downstream.
  - Concern with natural attributes of area.
  - Concern with surrounding EJ neighborhoods and impacts.
  - Water of the U.S. and cannot be used for water quality treatment.
- SCDOT intent is not to create a pond but flood control storage.
  - Need to grade down 3-4 feet and could let area revegetate – not yet to that part of analysis.
  - Still trying to find the balance to reduce flooding and minimize impacts while replacing the bridge.
- Alterations to bridge at Rivers Avenue would allow for more water downstream and area surrounding Attaway Street would have the most impacts.
  - Bridge will not meet current hydraulic standards without creating some sort of flood control.
- City of North Charleston desires to improve aesthetics and public access in areas around Filbin Creek.
  - SCDOT desires to maintain natural storage for large storm events and reduce flooding downstream
- The Rivers Avenue bridge replacement does not have to happen with the I-526 LCC WEST project but will have to be replaced before BRT and could become emergency project.
  - Very complicated with flooding and utilities.
  - Considered retention area at mobile home park but this would not address flooding between the railroad and Attaway Street.





## Meeting Summary

I-526 LCC WEST Agency Coordination Meeting

Adobe Connect

May 13, 2020 9:00AM

### Attendees

FHWA	Shane Belcher Jim Martin	NOAA-NMFS	Cynthia Cooksey Andrew Herndon
NPS	Alexis John	USACE	Christopher Mims
USCG	Randall Overton	USEPA	Kelly Laycock Alya Singh-White
USFWS		SCDAH	
SCDHEC	Chuck Hightower	SCDHEC-OCRM	Josh Hoke Chris Stout Blair Williams
SCDNR	Susan Davis	SCDOT	Sean Connolly David Kelly Chad Long Will McGoldrick Joy Riley
SCPRT	Justin Hancock	HDR	Blair Wade
Three Oaks Engineering	Amanda Chandler Heather Robbins Geni Theriot	Stantec	Rick Day Jason Hambley Josh Mitchell
Wildlands	Daniel Johnson		

### Introductions

The purpose of this meeting is to provide agencies with an opportunity to view and comment on the Recommended Preferred Alternative.

### Concurrence

- Recommended Preferred Alternative
  - FHWA will send concurrence request the first week of June with a mid-June response time

### Alternatives PowerPoint

- Presentation given by SCDOT; pdf version attached for reference. Recommended Preferred Alternative includes the following components:
  - Paul Cantrell Blvd to International Boulevard and includes intersection at Magwood Drive
  - International Boulevard to Rivers Avenue, includes I-526 at I-26 system-to-system interchange – Alternative 2 was selected because it eliminates weaving movements and performs better
  - Rivers Avenue to N Rhett/Virginia Ave – Alternative 2A is a combination of Alternative 2 and 6, maintains access to/from Virginia Ave to I-526

### Discussion/Questions

- Are impacts just fill or everything?
  - Impacts in matrix include all potential impacts, not just fill



May 13, 2020  
I-526 LCC WEST Agency Coordination Meeting  
Page 2 of 2

- Does not seem like LOS is greatly improved
  - Some LOS F are very bad, it is a huge improvement from LOS F to D
  - Widening also allows for ability to integrate new technology and congestion management practices in the future
- Presenting Recommended Preferred Alternative to agencies to allow time for review
  - Want to address "red flags" now to avoid issues being brought up at the concurrence request
- USACE cannot concur on a Recommended Preferred Alternative until after the Public Notice
  - Can send a letter of no objection
- OCRM has definition of feasibility that needs to be met, need adequate documentation
- Congestion Management Plan
  - Draft is currently being reviewed by CHATS
  - Available for public review Summer 2020
  - Plan communicates vision and how current projects facilitate plans and management

Next Meeting June 10, 2020 at 10:00 AM via TEAMS, Outlook invite sent



# **WEST** 526 **LOWCOUNTRY CORRIDOR**

*I-526 Lowcountry Corridor  
Project Update*

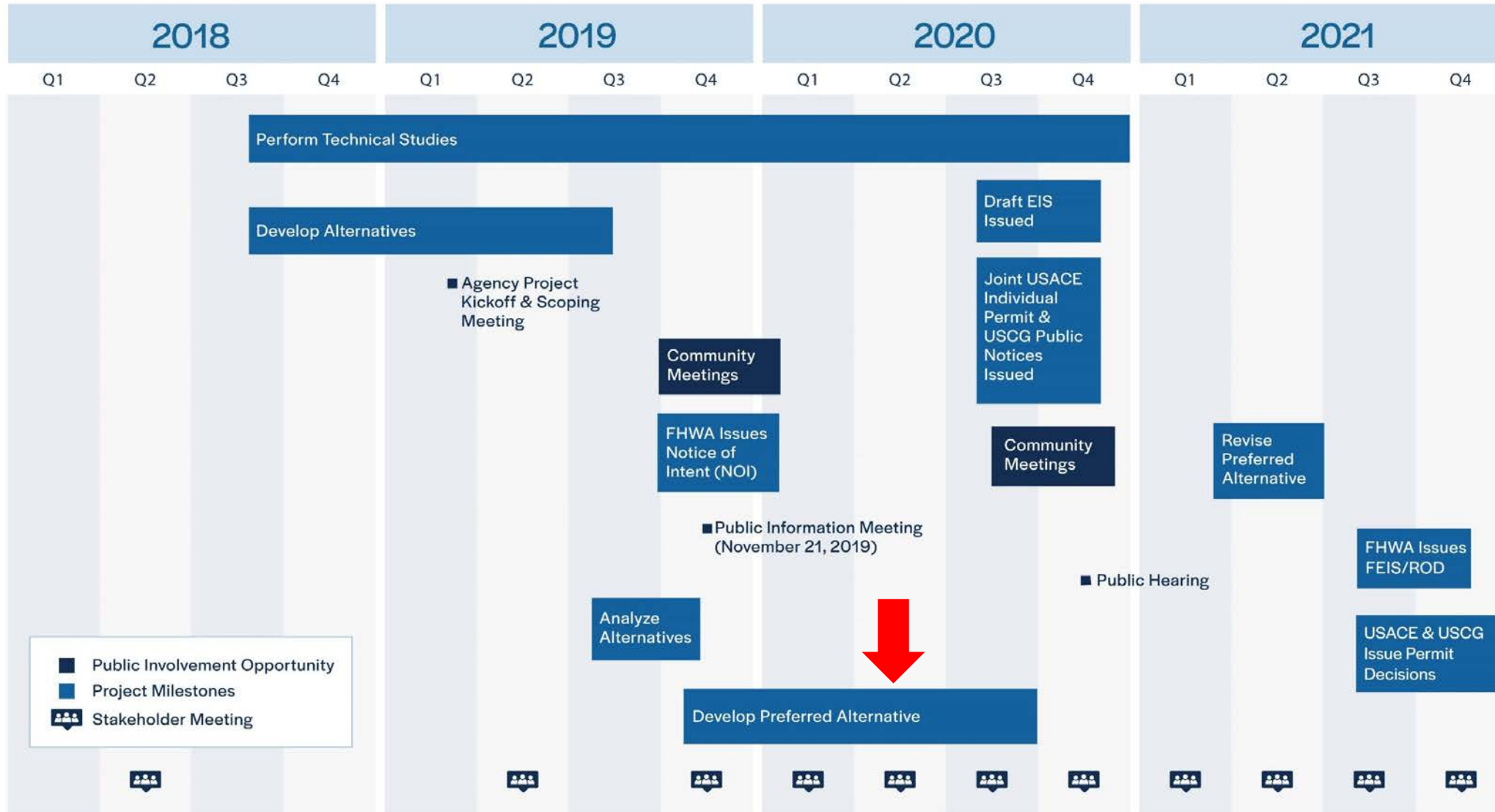
**May 13, 2020**



U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration



# Project Schedule *One Federal Decision*



# Preliminary Screening of the Range of Alternatives

Identify Preliminary Alternatives

Screening of Preliminary Alternatives

Identify Proposed  
Reasonable Alternatives

Detailed Impact Evaluation of  
Proposed Reasonable Alternatives

Recommended  
Preferred Alternative







# Proposed Reasonable Alternatives



# Proposed Reasonable Alternatives

- No-Build
- Existing Corridor Improvements Mainline Interstate Alternatives 8-lane widening
- Interchange Alternatives
  - 1 at I-526/Paul Cantrell Boulevard
  - 4 at I-526/I-26 and Rivers Avenue
    - Alt 1
    - Alt 1A
    - Alt 2
    - Alt 2A
  - 5 at I-526 N Rhett/Virginia Avenue
    - Alt 1
    - Alt 2
    - Alt 2A (newly developed)
    - Alt 5
    - Alt 6

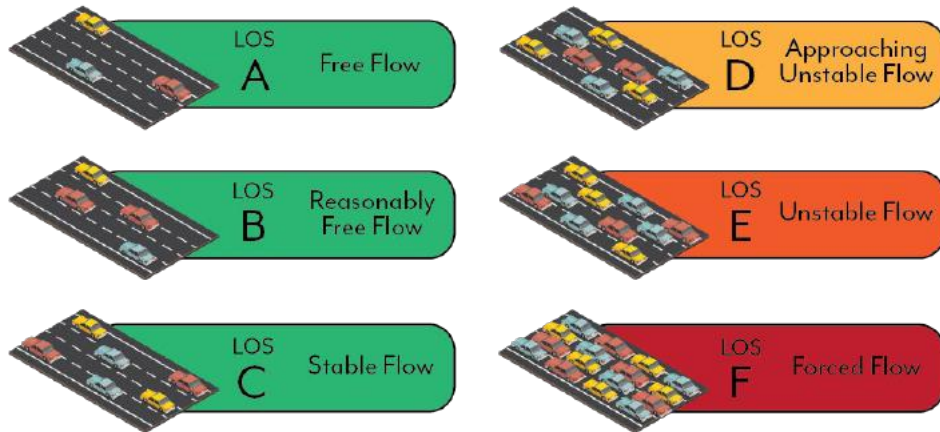
# Reasonable Alternative Evaluation Criteria

- Purpose & Need
  - Geometric Deficiencies Resolved
  - Provides Direct Access to/from I-526
  - Provides Direct Access to/from I-26
  - Weighted v/c Ratio
  - Intersection LOS Delay
- Wetlands
  - Freshwater Wetland & Stream
  - Critical Area
  - Pond
- Relocations
- Environmental Justice
- Threatened & Endangered Species
- Essential Fish Habitat
- Cultural Resources
- Utilities
- Cost
- Section 4(f) & 6(f)

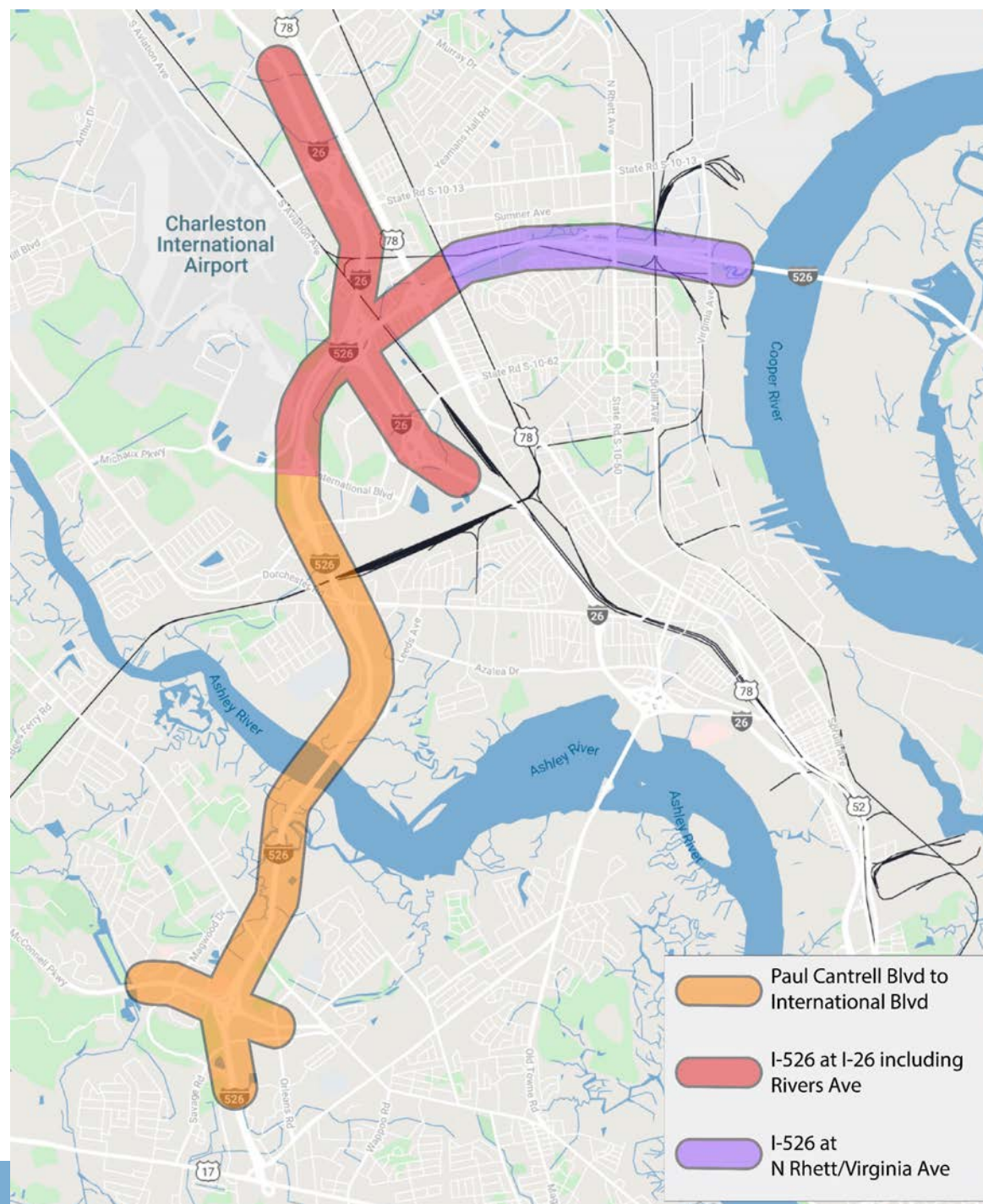


# Reasonable Alternative Evaluation Criteria

- Purpose & Need
  - Weighted v/c Ratio
    - Weights each individual v/c ratio according to the volume processed in that movement
    - A way to measure the efficiency of the alternatives for moving traffic within the interchange
  - Intersection LOS/Delay



Segment Description	2015 AADT	No Build 2050 AADT	LOS	Build 2050 AADT	LOS	
					6-Lane	8-Lane
Sam Rittenberg to Paul Cantrell Blvd	39,400	59,800	C	68,500	B	B
Paul Cantrell Blvd to Leeds Ave	79,200	106,900	F	136,900	F	D
Leeds Ave to Dorchester Rd	78,800	106,400	F	134,000	F	D
Dorchester Rd to Montague Ave	80,700	108,900	F	127,300	E	C
Montague Ave to International Blvd	67,400	91,000	F	109,600	D	C
International Blvd to I-26	89,000	120,200	F	126,700	E	C
I-26 to Rivers Ave	77,200	104,200	F	116,100	D	C
Rivers Ave to N Rhett Ave	75,600	104,400	F	126,700	E	C
N Rhett Ave to Virginia Ave	80,500	122,200	F	148,400	F	D
East of Virginia Ave	68,900	110,100	F	133,800	F	D

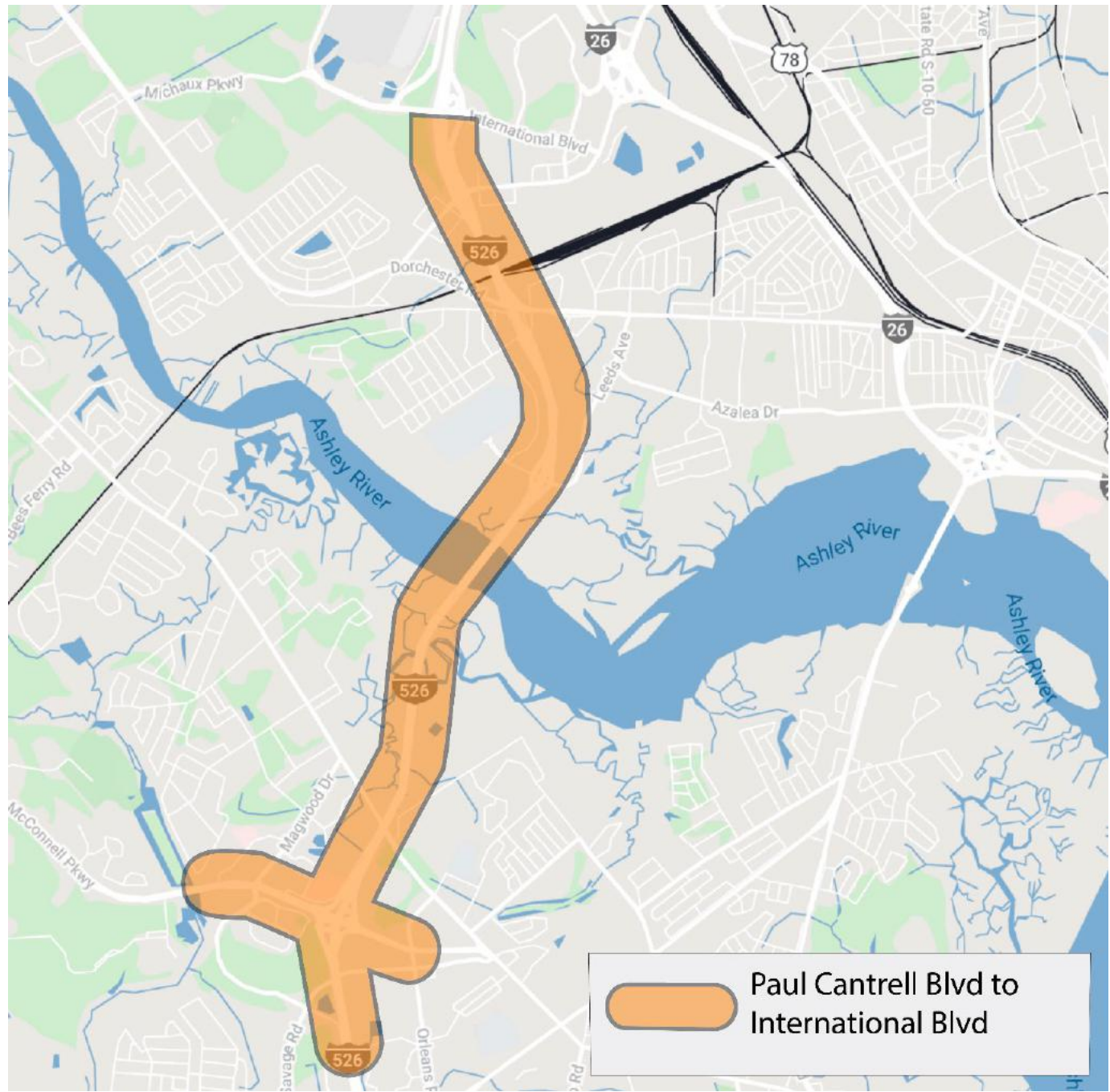






# Paul Cantrell Blvd to International Blvd







# Paul Cantrell Blvd to International Blvd

## Alternative Analysis Matrix

	No-Build	Paul Cantrell Blvd to International Blvd
Weighted v/c Ratio	1.74   2.50   2.90   3.11	0.72   0.75   0.72   0.67
Mainline LOS	F	D/D/C/C
Wetland Impacts (acres)	0	19.3
Stream Impacts (feet)	0	327.0
Critical Area (acres)	0	15.5
Relocations	0	18
EJ Impacts	0	0
Cultural Resources	No	No
Section 4f/6f impacts	No	No
Utility Costs	\$0	\$12.9 M
Construction Costs	\$0	\$108 M

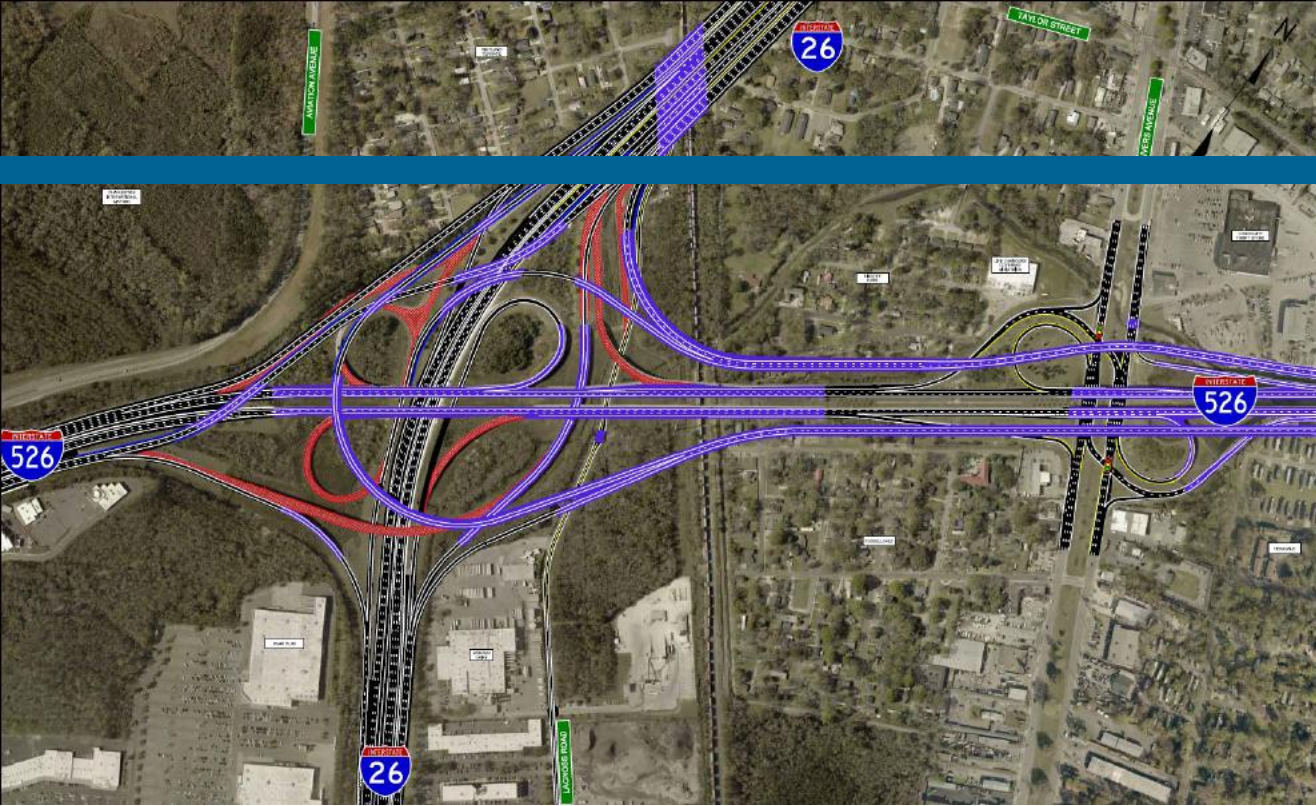


# I-526 at I-26 Including Rivers Avenue





# I-526 / I-26 Interchange



## Alternative 1

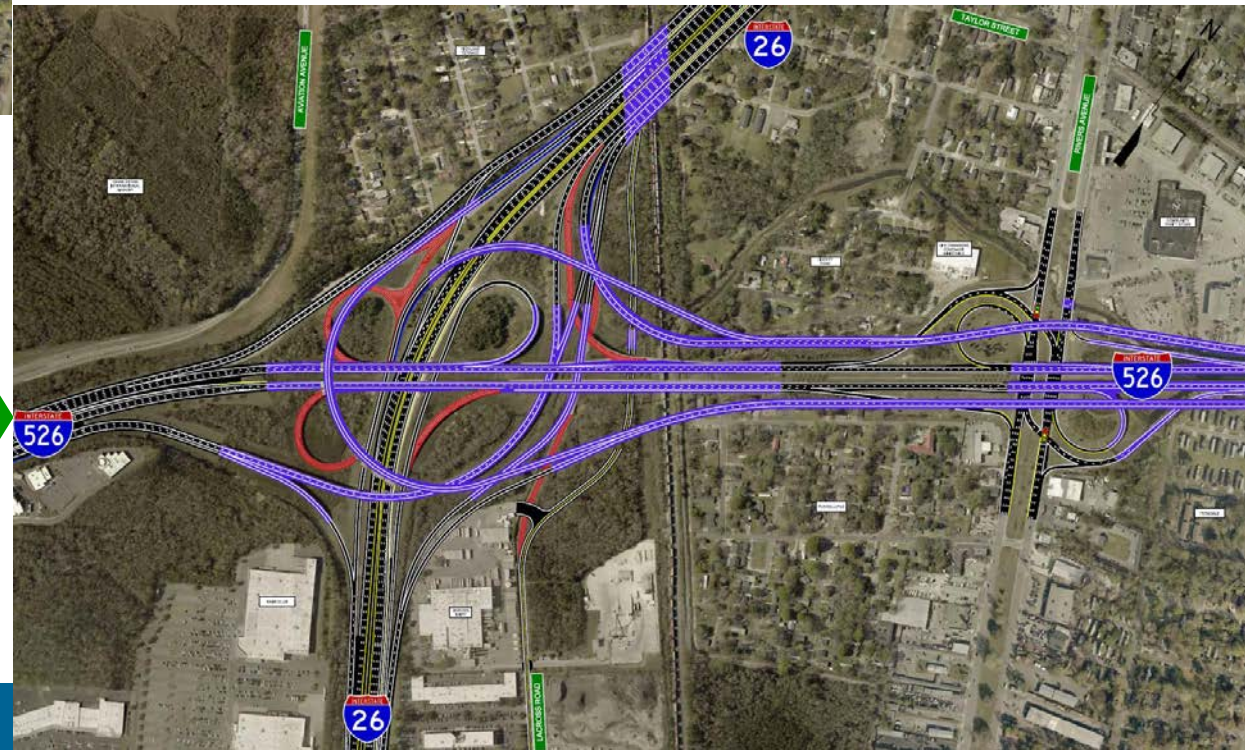
### Semi-Directional Interchange with Advance EB I-526 to WB I-26 Flyover Ramp

- New CD system over Rivers Avenue
- Access maintained to existing lanes I-526
- Access between Rivers and I-26 via I-526 removed

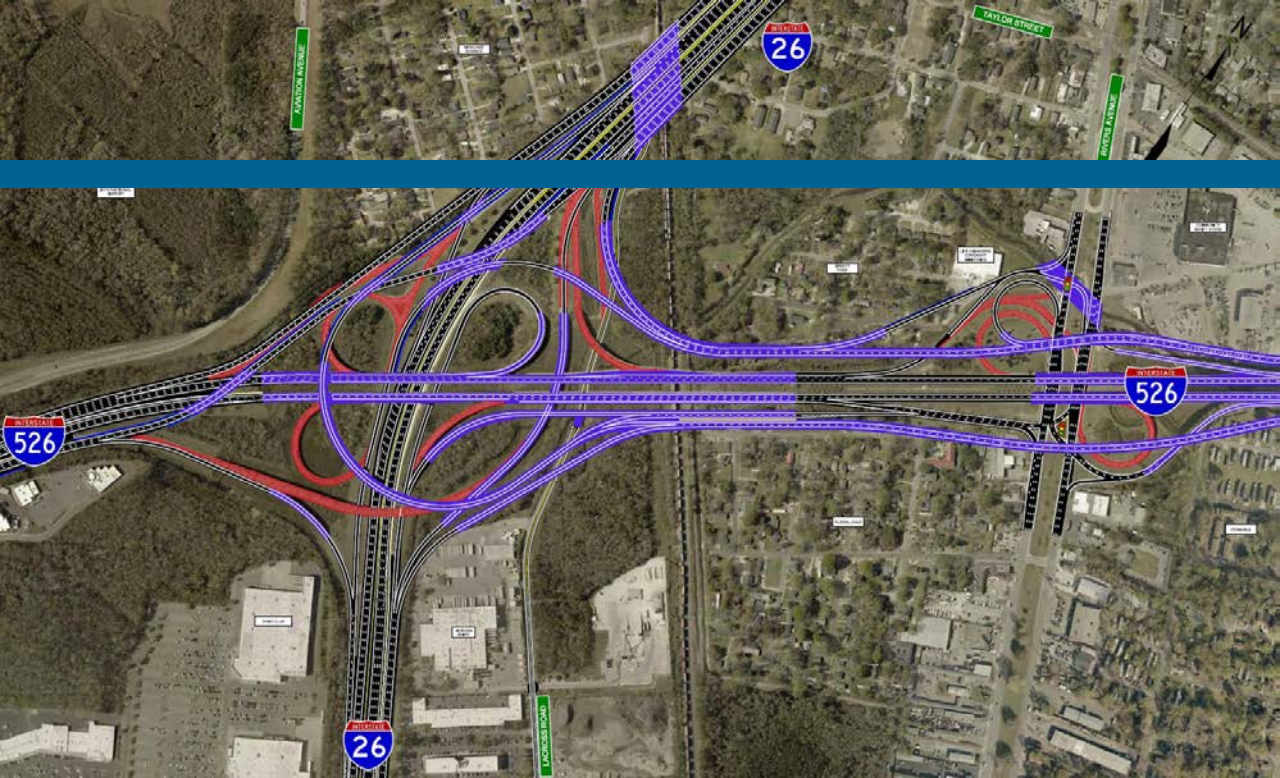
## Alternative 2

### Semi-Directional Interchange

- Similar to Alternative 1
- Utilizes existing directional ramp for EB I-526 to WB I-26







### Alternative 1A

#### Semi-Directional Interchange with Advance EB I-526 to WB I-26 Flyover Ramp

- Similar to Alternative 1 with the same I-26 interchange
- Alterations at River Ave Interchange to add ramps to allow access to I-26 from Rivers Avenue via I-526

### Alternative 2A

#### Semi-Directional Interchange

- Similar to Alternative 2 with the same interchange design at the I-526 and I-26 Interchange
- Alterations at Rivers Avenue interchange to add ramps to allow access to I-26 from Rivers via I-526



# I-526 at I-26 including Rivers Avenue Alternatives Analysis Matrix

I-526 at I-26 including Rivers Ave:	No-Build	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 1A	Alternative 2A
Weighted v/c Ratio	1.09	0.74	0.71	0.77	0.74
Mainline LOS	F	C	C	C	C
Wetland Impacts (acres)	0	28.5	28.5	28.5	28.5
Stream Impacts (feet)	0	13,327.1	13,327.1	13,327.1	13,327.1
Critical Area (acres)	0	0	0	0	0
Relocations	0	106	106	132	132
EJ Impacts	0	94	94	120	120
Cultural Resources	No	No	No	No	No
Section 4f/6f impacts	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Utility Costs	\$0	\$31 M	\$31 M	\$31 M	\$31 M
Construction Costs	\$0	\$950 M	\$979 M	\$1068 M	\$1066 M

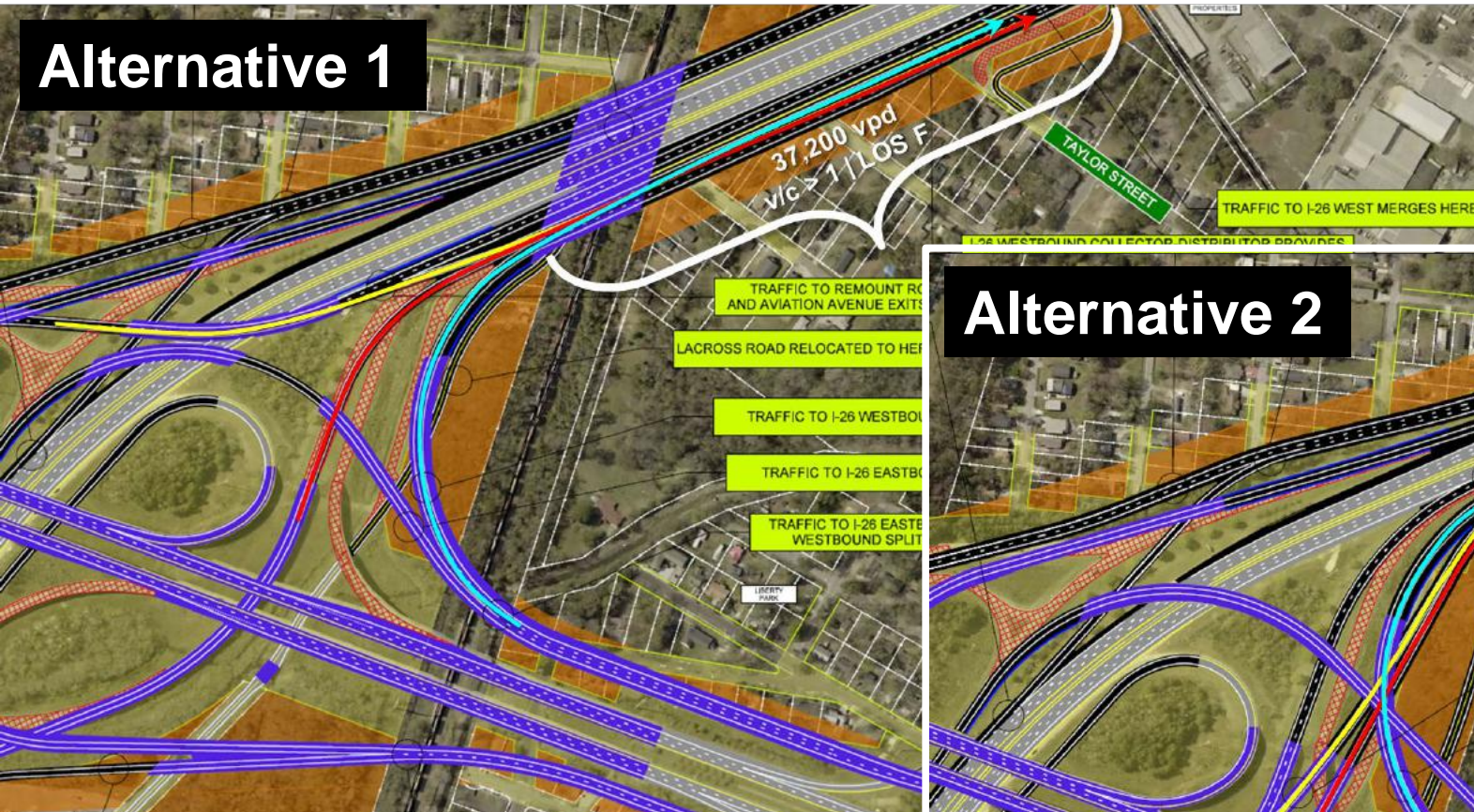


**yellow** - All traffic from I-526 EB

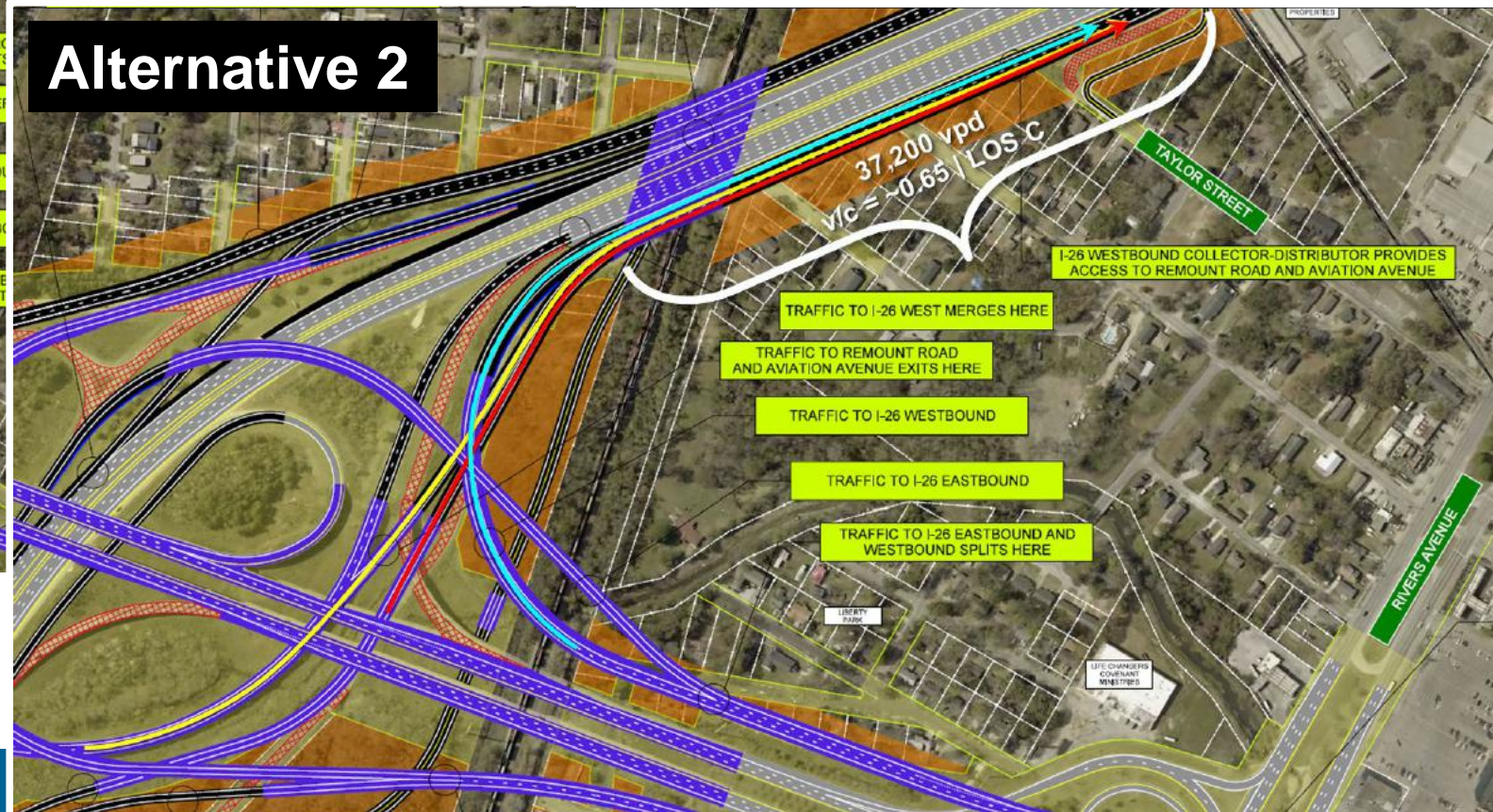
**red** - traffic from I-26 WB entering this section is destined for either Remount or Aviation and therefore desires the outer-most lane(s)

**teal** - The majority of traffic from I-526 WB desires to continue on the C-D towards I-26 WB past Remount and Aviation and therefore desires the inner-most lane(s)

## Alternative 1



## Alternative 2







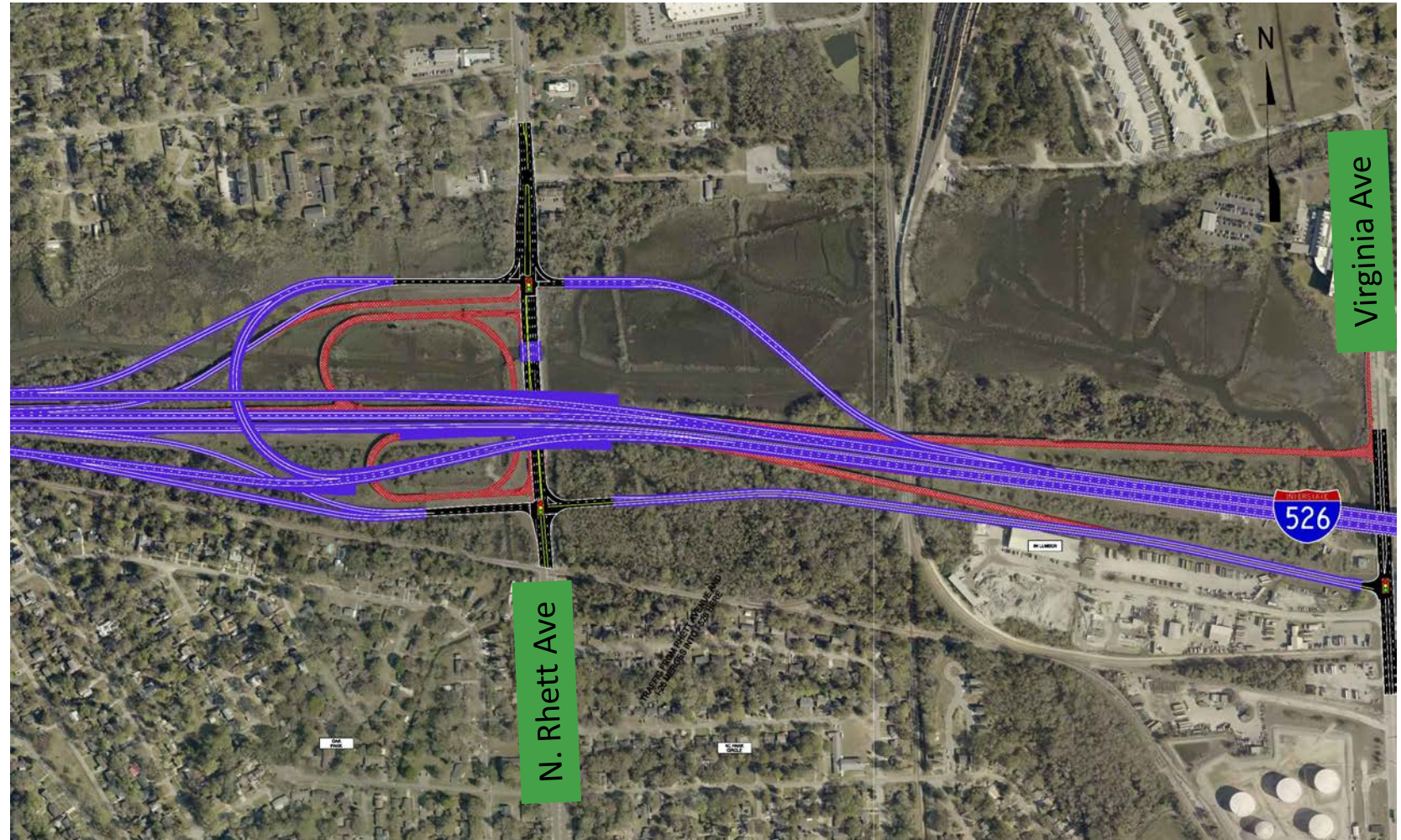
# I-526 at N Rhett / Virginia Avenue





# N Rhett Avenue Reasonable Alternative 1

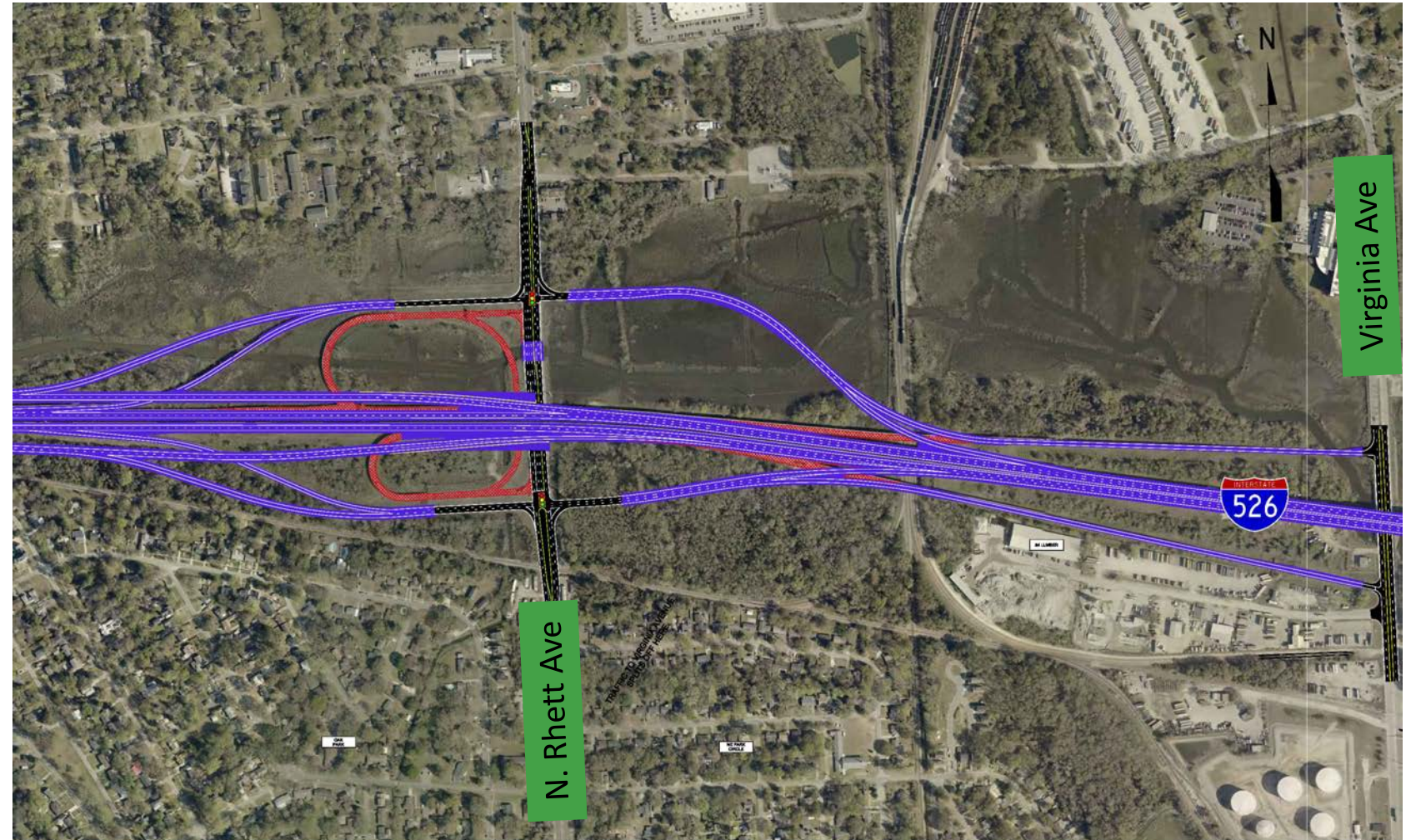
- Provides access from one intersection on N. Rhett Ave to Eastbound & Westbound I-526
- Provides separate, 2-way frontage road between N Rhett & Virginia Avenues
- Exit ramps from Eastbound & Westbound I-526 terminate at intersections on the south & north sides





# N Rhett Avenue Reasonable Alternative 2

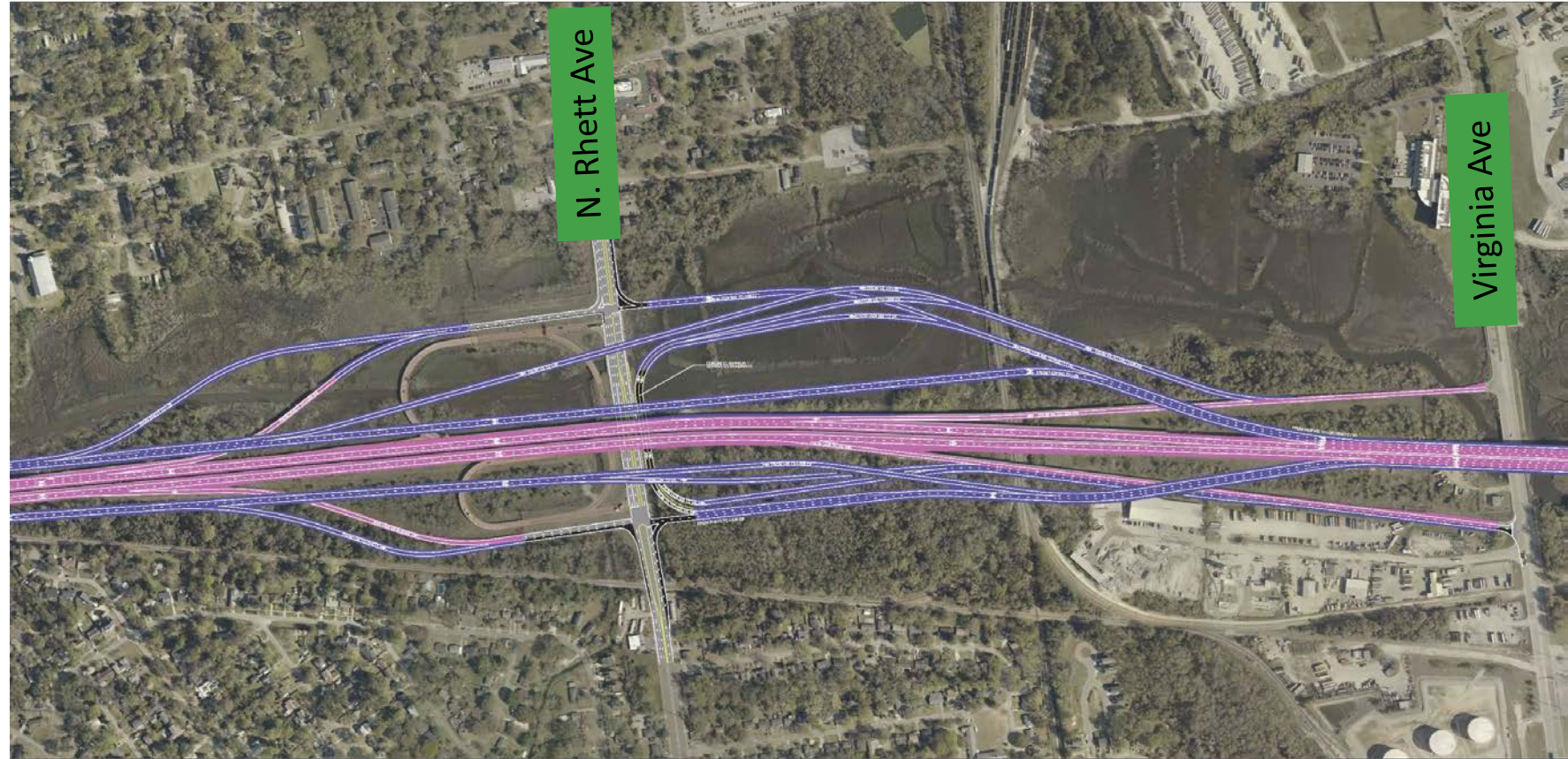
- Entrance ramps begin at **separate intersections** for Eastbound & Westbound I-526
- Provides separate, **1-way** frontage roads on either side of I-526 connecting N Rhett Ave to Virginia Ave
- Exit ramps from Eastbound & Westbound I-526 terminate at intersections on the south and north sides of I-526





# N Rhett Avenue Reasonable Alternative 5

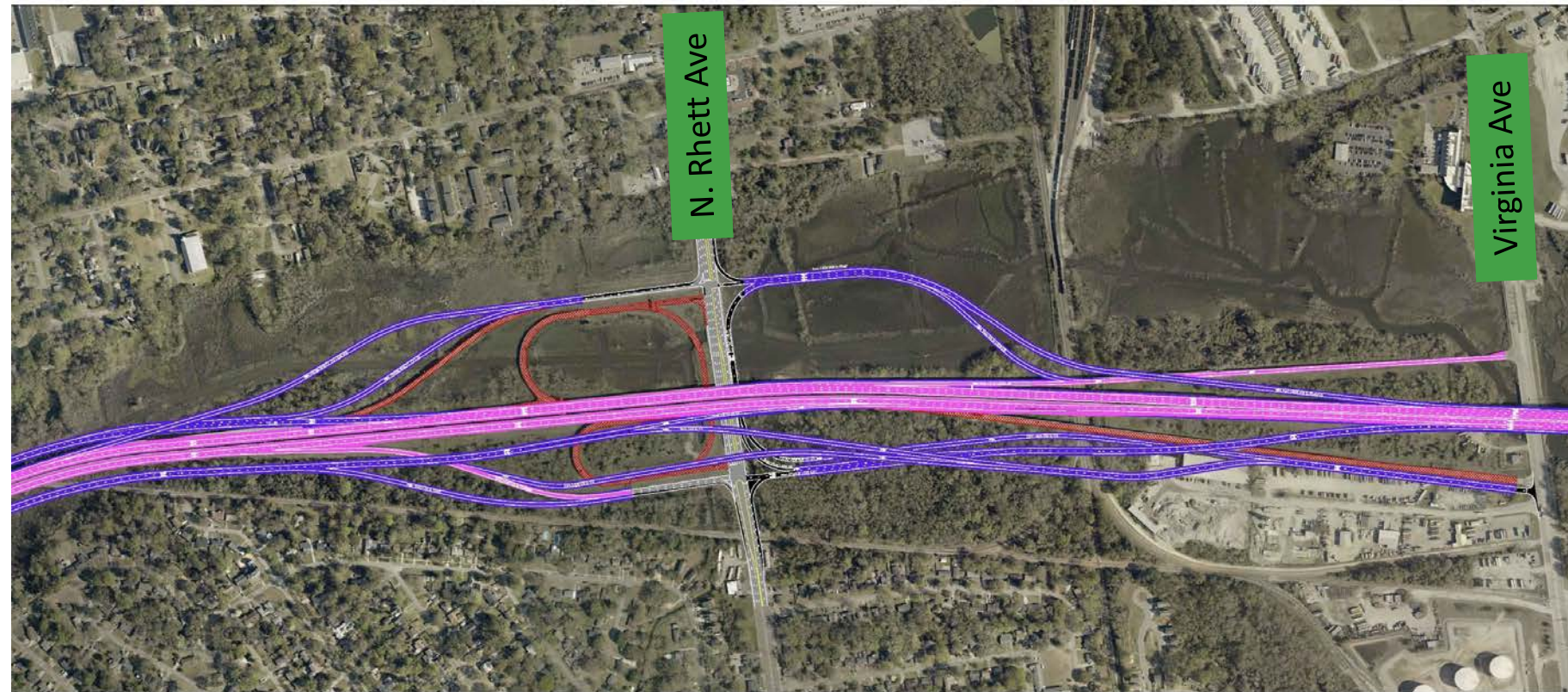
- Direct access ramps provided from/to I-526 and I-26 provided to/from N Rhett Ave and Virginia Ave
- Merge from I-26 EB C-D and diverge to I-26 WB C-D both occur just west of Virginia Ave
- Traffic from Virginia Ave to I-526 EB and from I-526 WB to Virginia Ave do not mix on U-turn under I-526





# N Rhett Avenue Reasonable Alternative 6

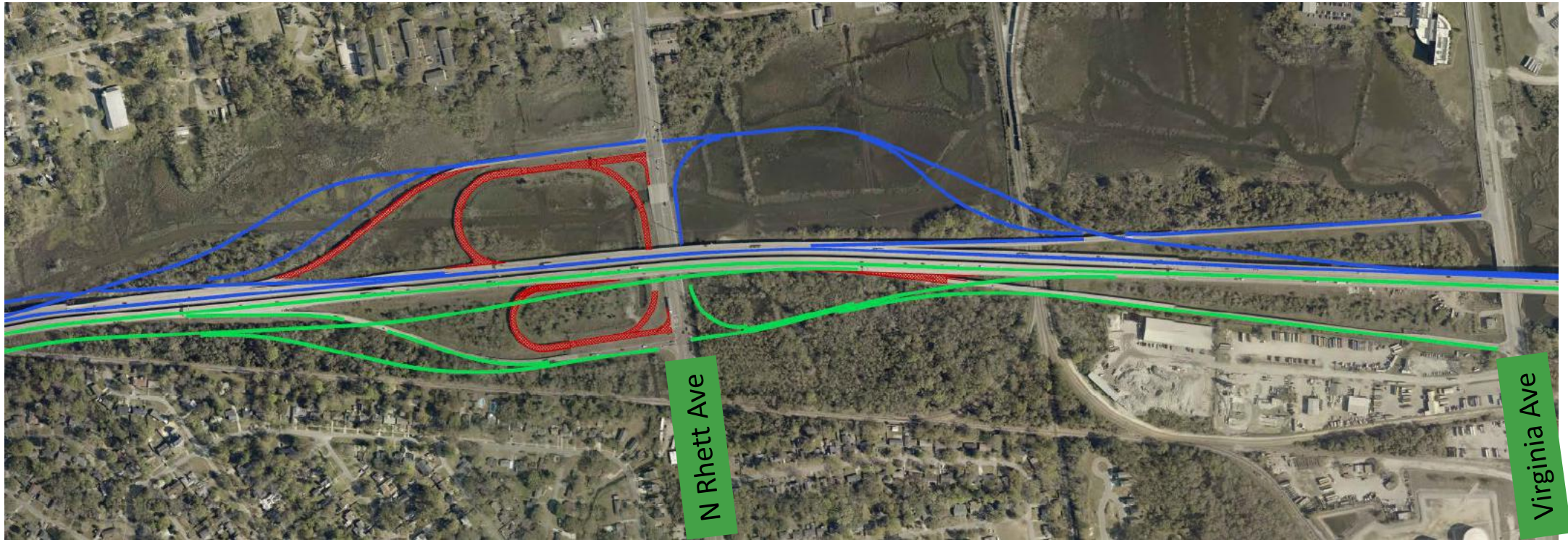
- Direct access ramps provided from/to I-526 and I-26 provided to/from N Rhett Avenue and Virginia Avenue
- Merge from I-26 EB C-D and diverge to I-26 WB C-D both occur just west of N Rhett Avenue
- Traffic from Virginia Avenue to I-526 EB and from I-526 WB to Virginia Avenue weave through U-turn under I-526





# N Rhett Avenue Reasonable Alternative 2A

*ADDITIONAL Reasonable Alternative*



- Restores direct access from Virginia to I-526 WB
- Streamlines access from Virginia to I-526 EB by adding Texas U-turn
- Vehicles travelling I-526 EB & WB go through N Rhett Intersection to access Virginia Ave

# N Rhett / Virginia Alternatives Analysis Matrix

N Rhett/Virginia Interchange:	No-Build	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 5	Alternative 6	Alternative 2A
Weighted v/c Ratio	1.14	1.00	0.99	0.86	0.91	0.91
Mainline LOS	F	C/D	C/D	C/D	C/D	C/D
Wetland Impacts (ac)	0	54.5	51.3	57.3	50.8	49.9
Stream Impacts (ft)	0	5,159.6	5,169.1	5,197.4	5,205.9	4,977.6
Critical Area Impact (ac)	0	2.3	2.3	2.8	2.7	2.4
Relocations	0	4	4	4	4	1
EJ Impacts	0	1	1	1	1	1
Cultural Resources	No	No	No	No	No	No
Section 4f/6f Impact	No	No	No	No	No	No
Utility Impacts	\$0	\$4.5 M	\$4.5 M	\$5.6 M	\$5.6 M	\$5.6 M
Construction Costs	\$0	\$336 M	\$338 M	\$473 M	\$461 M	\$341 M





# Recommended Preferred Alternative



	No-Build	Paul Cantrell Blvd to International Blvd	I-526 at I-26 including Rivers Ave : Alt 2	I-526 at N Rhett/Virginia Ave : Alt 2A
Weighted v/c Ratio	> 1.00	0.72   0.75   0.72   0.67	0.71	0.91
Mainline LOS	F	D/D/C/C	C	C/D
Wetland Impacts (ac)	0	19.3	28.5	49.9
Stream Impacts (ft)	0	327.0	13,327.1	4,977.6
Critical Area Impact (ac)	0	15.5	0	2.4
Relocations	0	18	106	1
EJ Impacts	0	0	94	1
Cultural Resources	0	0	0	0
Section 4f/6f Impact	No	No	Yes	No
Utility Impacts	\$0	\$12.9 M	\$31 M	\$5.6 M
Construction Costs	\$0	\$108 M	\$979 M	\$341 M



	No-Build	Preferred Alternative
Weighted v/c Ratio	> 1.00	< 1.00
Mainline LOS	F	D/D/C/C/C/C/D
Wetland Impacts (acres)	0	97.7
Stream Impacts (feet)	0	18,631.7
Critical Area Impact (acres)	0	17.9
Relocations	0	125
EJ Impacts	0	95
Cultural Resources	0	0
Section 4f/6f Impact	No	Yes
Utility Impacts	\$0	\$49.5 M
Construction Costs	\$0	\$1,428 M



## Meeting Summary

I-526 LCC WEST Agency Coordination Meeting

Microsoft Teams

June 10, 2020 10:00AM

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### Attendees

FHWA	Shane Belcher	NOAA-NMFS	Cindy Cooksey Andrew Herndon Brian Rossegger
NPS	Alexis John	USACE	Christopher Mims
USCG		USEPA	Kelly Laycock
USFWS	Mark Caldwell	SCDAH	Elizabeth Johnson
SCDHEC	Chuck Hightower Logan Ress	SCDHEC-OCRM	Josh Hoke Chris Stout
SCDNR	Susan Davis	SCDOT	Chris Beckham Sean Connolly David Kelly Chad Long Will McGoldrick
SCPRT	Debbie Jordan	HDR	Blair Wade
Three Oaks Engineering	Amanda Chandler Russell Chandler Heather Robbins	Stantec	Rick Day
Wildlands	Daniel Johnson		

### Introductions

The purpose of this meeting is to provide agencies with an update on the project mitigation strategy

### Concurrence

- Recommended Preferred Alternative
  - Letters have been sent by FHWA and have received some agency responses
  - Would like to have all responses by June 18, 2020

### Mitigation Update

- Change in approach
  - No longer seeking landscape approach
    - Tidal creek/marsh mitigation sites did not provide efficient use of resources
    - Aggressive schedule to purchase site was not feasible
    - Legal concerns with Jehossee site
  - Will send out solicitation for bank credits
    - Goal is to not deplete credits in watershed
    - More credits becoming available soon
  - Construction schedule shift now allows for more time to secure bank credits in watershed
  - Bid going out in July for freshwater wetland, stream, and tidal credits
    - May be three separate solicitations



June 10, 2020  
I-526 LCC WEST Agency Coordination Meeting  
Page 2 of 2

#### Discussion/Questions

- Table shown is worst case scenario, numbers will be updated as move through the permit drawing process
  - USACE suggests filling out mitigation worksheets that can be reviewed by the Corps to ensure calculations and feature types are correct
- Not all tidal areas are critical area but need to be accounted for
  - USACE and OCRM have different criteria when evaluating tidal jurisdiction
  - Suggest sorting by wetland types
    - NOAA - Magnuson-Stevens is in line with this approach
  - DNR recommends brackish areas be mitigated as tidal
    - Bridged areas would require less credits versus fill
      - Height to width ratio needs to be confirmed for shading impacts
- Temporary impacts from construction will need to be considered and mitigated

Next Meeting July 8, 2020 at 10:00 AM via TEAMS, Outlook invite sent.

Pre-app meeting with USACE, USCG, DHEC 401, and OCRM CZC in July

Agencies will have chance to review the draft DEIS in August



## Meeting Summary

I-526 LCC WEST Agency Coordination Meeting

Microsoft Teams

August 12, 2020 10:00AM

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### Attendees

FHWA	Shane Belcher Jim Martin Sandra Saint-Surin	NOAA-NMFS	Cindy Cooksey
NPS	Alexis John	USACE	Richard Darden
USCG	Randall Overton	USEPA	Alya Singh-White
USFWS	Mark Caldwell	SCDAH	
SCDHEC	Logan Ress	SCDHEC-OCRM	Josh Hoke Chris Stout
SCDNR	Susan Davis	SCDOT	Sean Connolly David Kelly Chad Long Will McGoldrick
SCPRT			
Three Oaks Engineering	Amanda Chandler Geni Theriot Heather Robbins	Stantec	Amy Sackeroff LaTonya Derrick Hannah Clements

### Introductions

The purpose of this meeting is to provide agencies with an update on the project concurrence points, milestone dates, Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), and to provide an overview of Section 6(f).

### Concurrence Points and Milestone Dates

- FHWA summarized the concurrence points and upcoming milestone dates as shown on the Agency Milestone Table and the Permitting Timetable.

### DEIS Update

- FHWA/SCDOT have reviewed the DEIS and provided comments. A revised DEIS is due to FHWA/SCDOT on August 18<sup>th</sup>. At this time, the DEIS will go to FHWA-HQ and FHWA-Atlanta for review.
- The DEIS will then be made available to the agencies via Stantec's FTP site.
- Agency comments are requested to be made in the PDF document and sent back to Will McGoldrick.
- SCDOT will send an email to the agencies with instructions and the link to the FTP site.

### Section 6(f) Overview

- Stantec gave a presentation (copy sent to agencies) to provide an update on the Section 6(f).
- National Park Service (NPS) and SC Parks Recreation & Tourism (SCPRT) will receive all the materials and the Draft Environmental Assessment.



August 12, 2020  
I-526 LCC WEST Agency Coordination Meeting  
Page 2 of 2

- It was noted that the Final EIS & Record of Decision cannot be approved without the Section 6(f)

Discussion/Questions

- The Public Hearing Advertisement will include a statement about the Section 6(f) Environmental Assessment
- A Draft of the Public Hearing Advertisement will be provided to NPS/SCPRT for review.

Next Meeting September 9, 2020 at 10:00 AM via TEAMS, Outlook invite sent.





# Section 6(f) Conversion

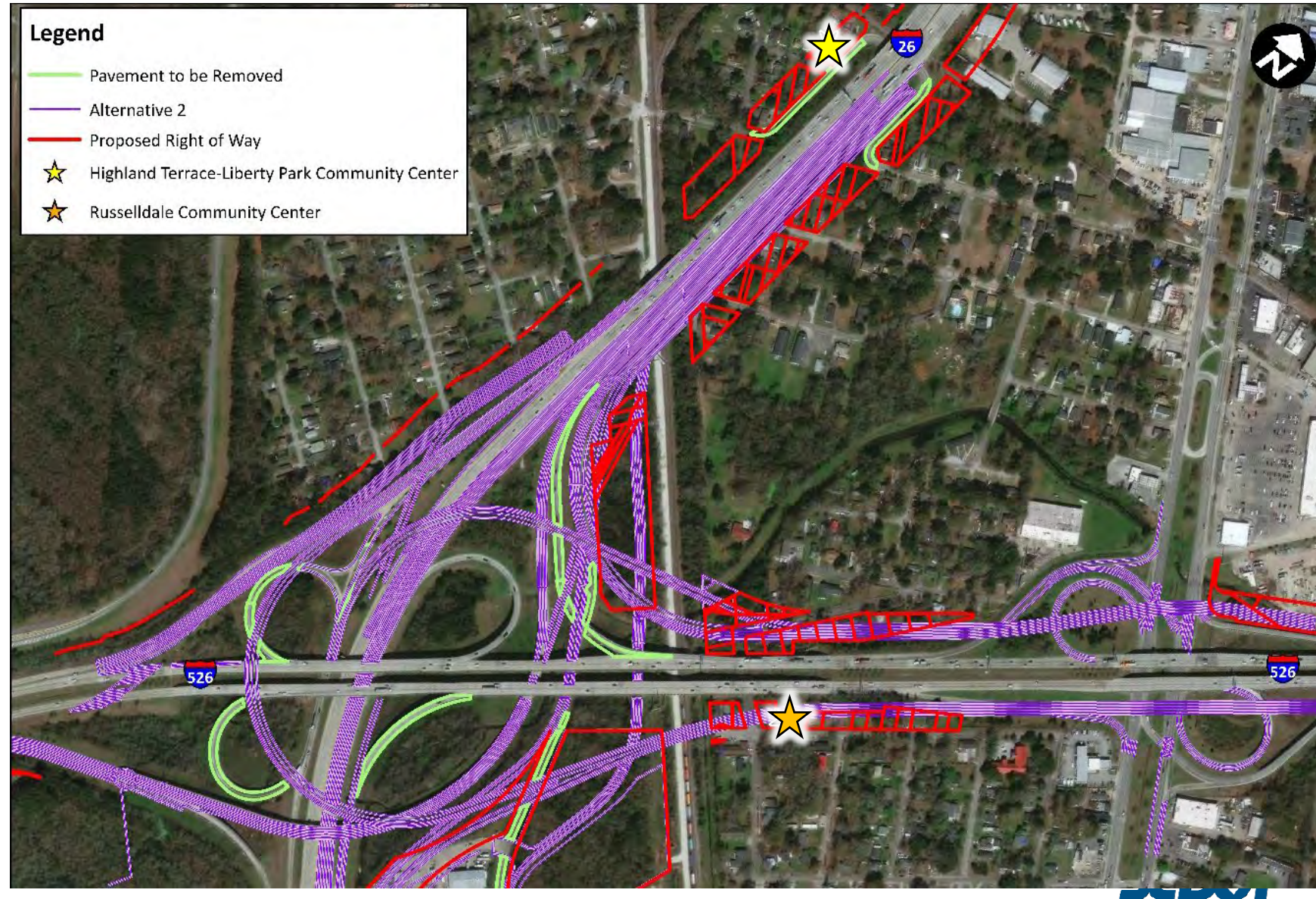
*Highland Terrace-Liberty Park Community Center*





# Highland Terrace – Liberty Park Community Center

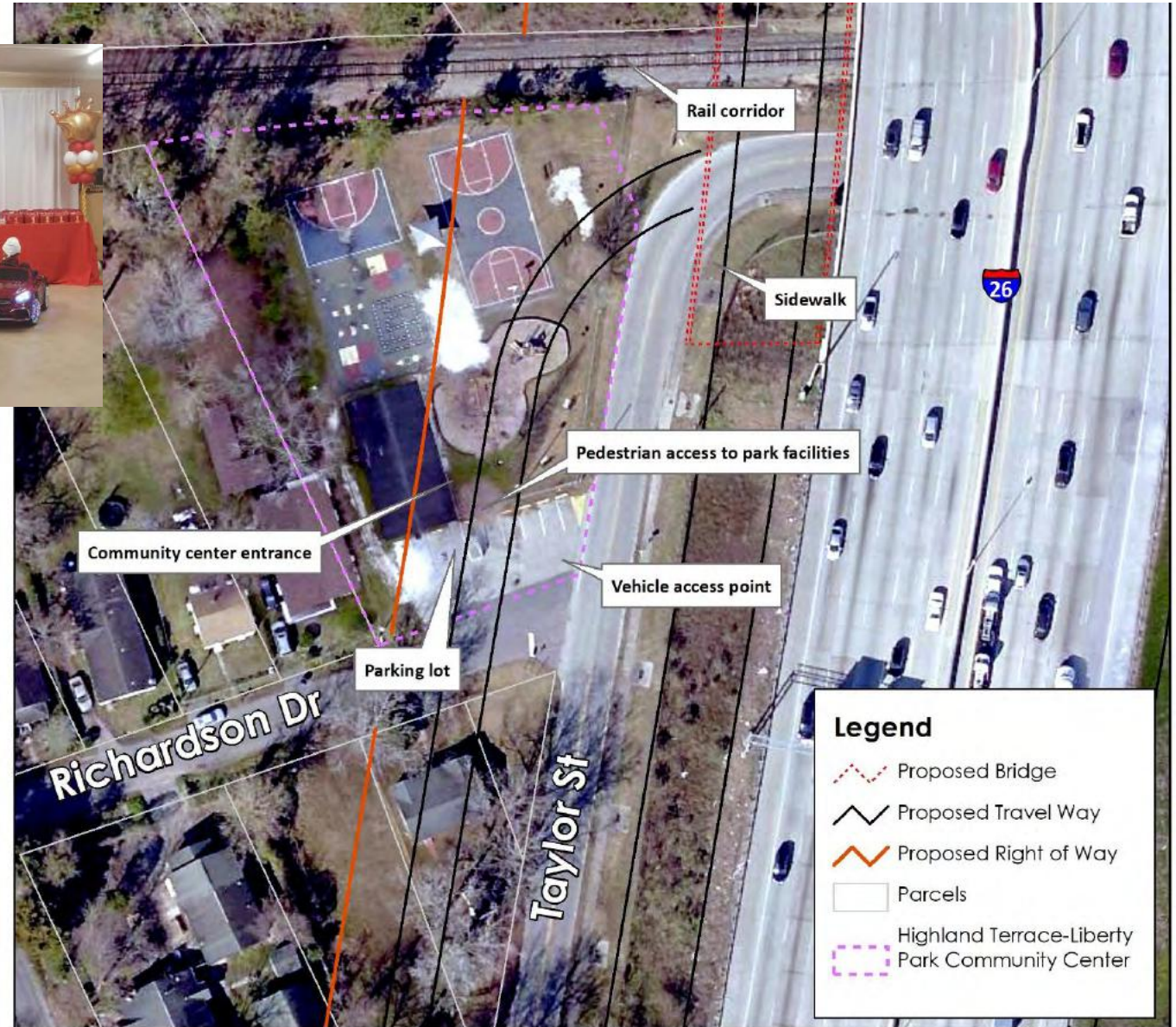
- Located immediately west of I-26 at corner of Richardson Drive and Taylor Street
- Recreational resource protected under Section 6(f) and Section 4(f) regulations
- Impacts also being evaluated as part of Environmental Justice impacts
- Nearby Russelldale Community Center: Section 4(f)/EJ





# Highland Terrace – Liberty Park Community Center

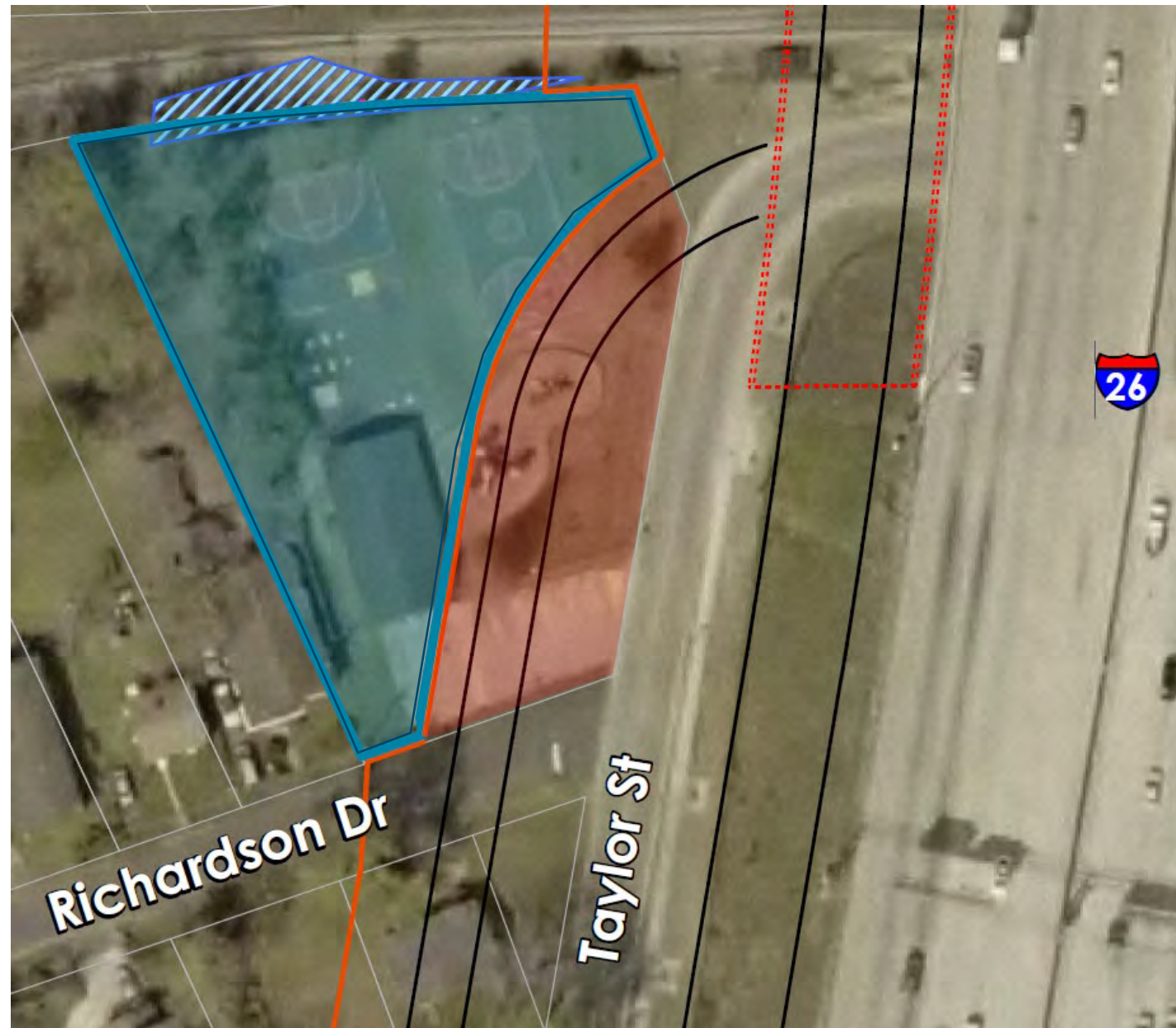
- Amenities:
  - Basketball courts (1½)
  - Foursquare/hopscotch
  - Playground, benches, picnic table
  - Community center building
- Operations
  - Staffed part-time
  - Open dawn to dusk
- Programs
  - Afterschool/summer camp programs
  - Cultural and academic enrichment programs
  - Seasonally available for rent for social events
- Neighborhood Significance:
  - Main recreation/entertainment source for children
  - Safe place with quality supervision and guidance
  - Children learning valuable leadership and life skills
  - Fosters community cohesion





# Highland Terrace – Liberty Park Community Center

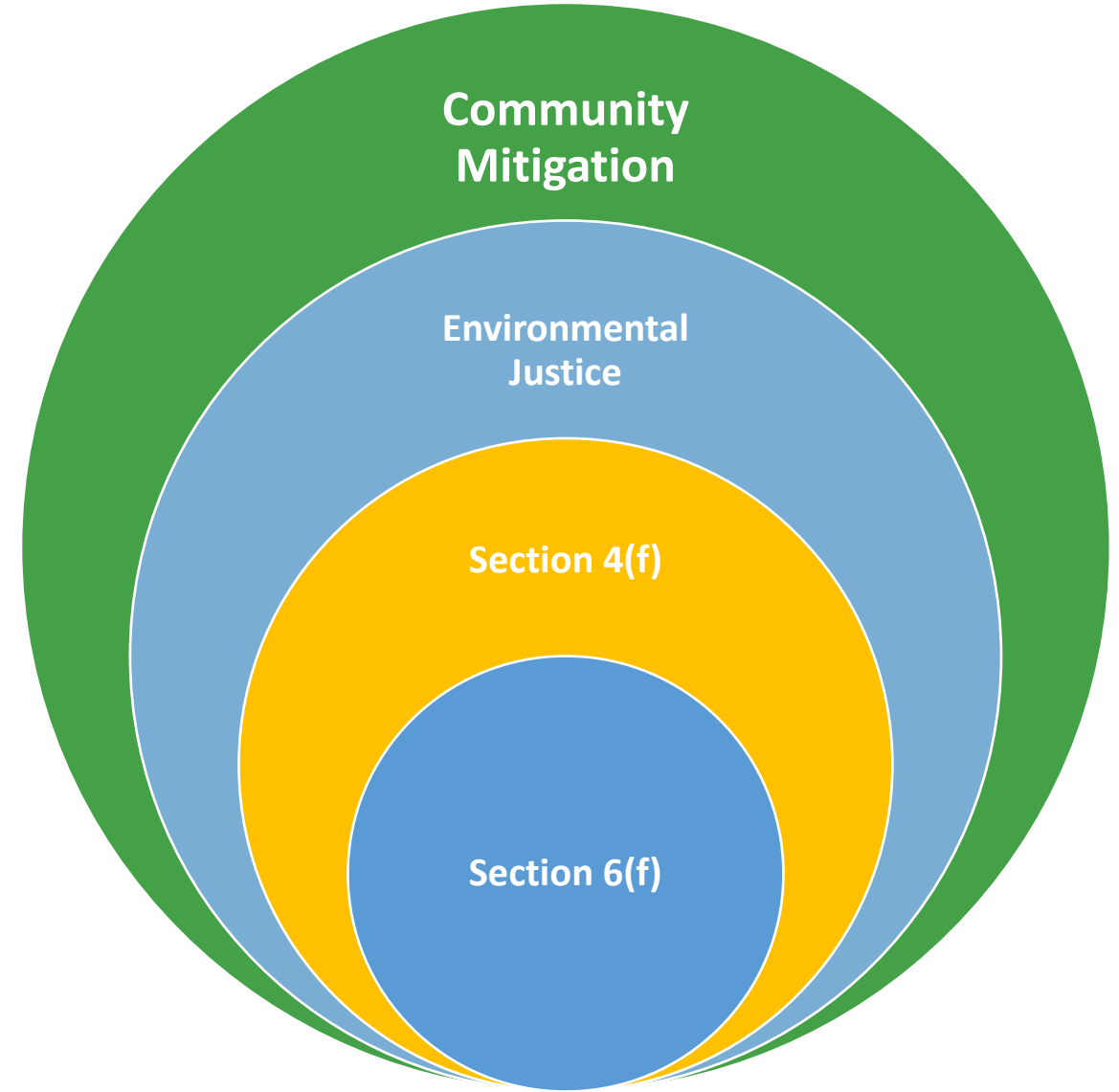
- Original proposed right-of-way bisected property roughly in half
- Minimized conversion by reducing proposed right-of-way along Taylor Street
- Proposed as partial conversion (0.23-ac of total 0.87-ac) for transportation use (*shaded in red*)
- Proposed Highland Terrace-Liberty Park Pocket Park (0.64-ac) to remain under Section 6(f) protections (*shaded in blue*)



# Community Mitigation

- Range of integrated measures to offset project impacts and satisfy:
  - Section 6(f) conversion requirements
  - Section 4(f) requirements
  - Environmental Justice Orders: Executive Order 12898, FHWA Order 6640.23

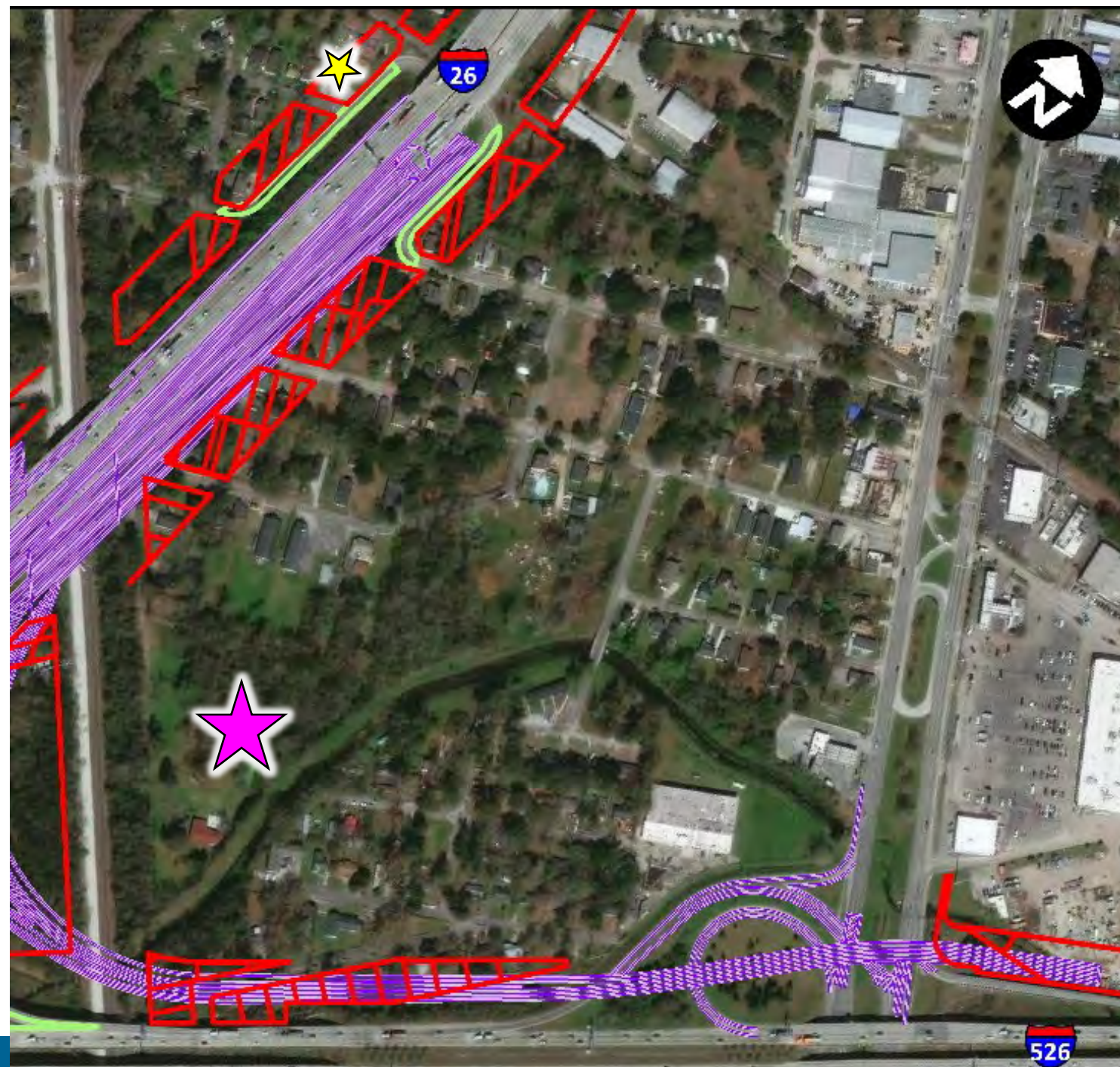
→ *Integrated mitigation for impacts to recreational facilities*





# Integrated Mitigation

- Integrated mitigation for impacts to recreational facilities
  - Pocket Park at current location
  - New replacement recreational facilities at proposed Filbin Creek Community Center
  - Amenities and programming at Filbin Creek Community Center to exceed current levels at impacted recreational facilities





# Highland Terrace 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

*Proposed Section 6(f)  
boundary in blue*



# Filbin Creek Community Center



- 1 ACCESS DRIVE TBD
- 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

*Proposed Section 6(f) boundary in pink*

# Section 6(f) Replacement

Existing Outdoor Features at Highland Terrace-Liberty Park Community Center	Proposed Filbin Creek Community Center (see conceptual sketch)	Highland Terrace-Liberty Park Pocket Park (see conceptual sketch)	Section 6(f) Replacement Need Met?
Total size: 0.87-acre	Total size: 3.34 acres <sup>1</sup>	Total size: 0.48-acre	Yes
Land value: \$105,000	Land value: \$203,000	Land value: \$58,000	Yes
0.70-acre open space	2.36 acres open space	0.64-acre open space	Yes
Parking: 9 spaces	Parking: ~ 67 spaces	Parking: ~ 16 spaces	Yes
Playground: 2,500 sq ft	Playground: 5,000 sq ft	Playground: 5,000 sq ft	Yes
1 full basketball court, 1 half-court	1 basketball court	1 full basketball court, 1 half-court	Yes
Picnic table	Yes	Yes	Yes
Park benches	Yes	Yes	Yes

# Section 6(f) Documentation: Status Update

Impact assessment and Draft EA production	In progress
ESA and Section 106 coordination	Complete
SCDOT review of 6(f) EA	8/10-8/21/2020
<b>Conversion Application</b> DNF Forms for both Proposed Converted/Replacement Sites Initial Application ( <i>previously submitted</i> ) Final Appraisal of Converted Site Environmental Assessment of both Proposed Converted/Replacement Sites 424 Form for LWCF – Assisted Site Narrative Answering Questions in Chapter 675.9.3B	9/30/2020
<b>Public Review Meeting</b>	Fall 2020 (w/DEIS Public Review)
<b>Amendment for the Conversion</b>	Fall 2021
<b>Approval Letter from NPS &amp; Issuance of Decision for Permit/Approval and Notice to Proceed</b>	9/30/2021





# Discussion



# Meeting Summary

I-526 LCC WEST Agency Coordination Meeting

Microsoft Teams

September 9, 2020 10:00AM

## Attendees

FHWA	Shane Belcher Jim Martin Sandra Saint-Surin	NOAA	Cindy Cooksey
NPS	Alexis John	USACE	Richard Darden
USCG	Randall Overton	USEPA	Alya Singh-White
USFWS	Mark Caldwell	SCDAH	
SCDHEC	Chuck Hightower Logan Ress	SCDHEC OCRM	Josh Hoke Chris Stout
SCDNR	Susan Davis	SCDOT	David Kelly Chad Long Will McGoldrick Joy Riley
SCPRT	Justin Hancock	HDR	Blair Wade
Three Oaks Engineering	Amanda Chandler Geni Theriot Heather Robbins	Stantec	Amy Sackeroff Ryan White

## Introductions

The purpose of this meeting is to provide agencies with an update on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and to provide an overview of the EJ Mitigation Plan.

## DEIS Update

- Appreciation expressed to agencies who responded already with comments.
- Agency comment period has been extended to September 21, 2020.

## EJ Mitigation Plan Overview

- Stantec gave a presentation (copy included with this summary) outlining the EJ Mitigation Plan.
- Plan is based on input from the public with focus given to local residents and community leaders.

## Discussion/Questions

- Is the replacement affordable housing single family or multi-family?
  - Combination of both, SCDOT is purchasing vacant lots for single family homes and are partnering with the SC Housing Authority for multi-family units.
  - Also, looking into partnering with other non-profits to develop programs to assist displacees.
  - Displaced residents would get priority for replacement housing.
- Package USACE, USCG, and SCDHEC OCRM public notice into DEIS notice of availability.
  - Each agency will provide Will a copy of their agency notice language.



September 9, 2020  
I-526 LCC WEST Agency Coordination Meeting  
Page 2 of 2

- o SCDOT will mail notice to adjacent property owners along corridor and target audiences as identified by EJ Team.

Next Meeting October 14, 2020 at 10:00 AM via TEAMS, Outlook invite sent.



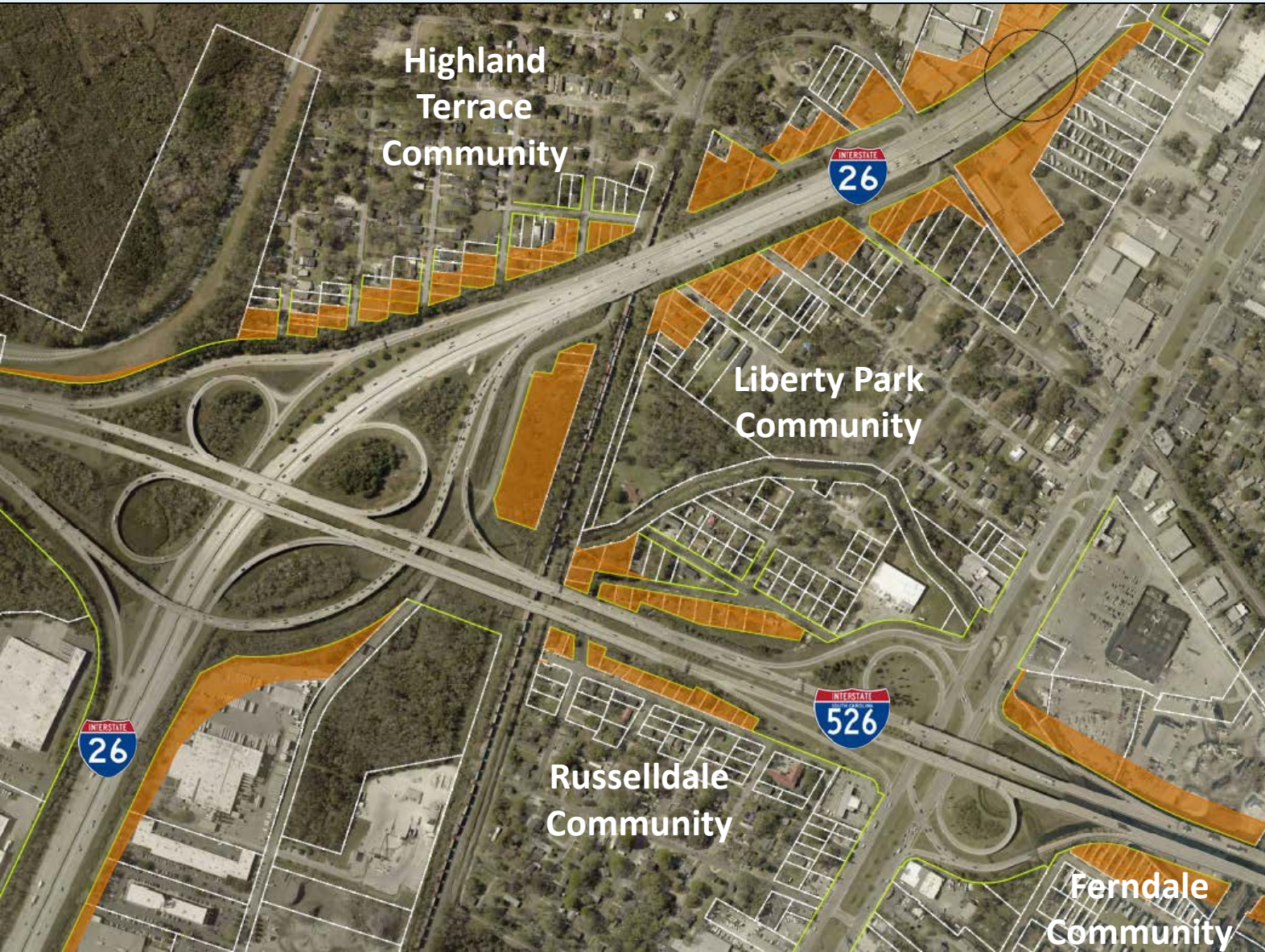


# Environmental Justice Mitigation





# Environmental Justice Community Impacts



Right of Way RELOCATION IMPACTS	Preferred Alternative EJ Community Impacts
Apartment Complexes	6 Buildings 57 Units
Single Family Homes	39
Mobile Homes	16
Duplexes/Triplexes	13
Parks / Community Centers / Churches	6

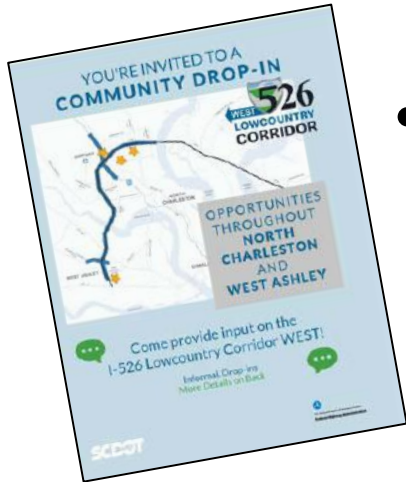


# Environmental Justice Outreach Efforts



- **Pop-Up Meetings**

- Mobile booths set up in various locations throughout the EJ Communities
- 12 Pop-Up Meetings conducted from 7/20/2019 – 11/7/2019



- **Flyer Box Program**

- 23 indoor and 10 outdoor information stands/realtor boxes with project information distributed around the EJ communities
- Enables SCDOT to keep citizens in and around the impacted EJ communities updated on project information without relying on technology

# Environmental Justice Outreach Efforts



- **EJ Community Drop-In's**
  - Focused on engaging the following groups
    - Residents of the four impacted EJ communities
    - Small neighborhood businesses
    - City of North Charleston's Neighborhood Association Council
    - Faith-based organizations
  - Three meetings held between November 9–14, 2019

# Environmental Justice Outreach Efforts



- **Community Office**
  - Located on Rivers Avenue just north of Liberty Park and along CARTA Route #10 for ease of accessibility
  - Opened 11/7/2019
  - Over 240 visitors prior to social distancing requirements
  - Open House held on 1/25/2020 and included 57 visitors
  - Full-time Office Manager and Community Liaisons
  - Part-time Right-of-Way Agent
- **Community Liaison Activities**
  - Various Community Outreach Programs
  - Community Mitigation Plan development support

# Community EJ Mitigation Plan Focused Outreach



## Community Advisory Council (CAC)

- SCDOT will continue to support the CAC (established 9/2019) through the approval of the FEIS/ROD
- Consists of residents and property owners from the impacted EJ communities
- The CAC serves the following roles:
  - Share individual knowledge and perspectives
  - Provide input on project-related impacts and proposed mitigation
  - Serve as a voice for EJ community residents
  - Share project-related information with neighbors
- Eleven (11) CAC Meetings held to date

# Community EJ Mitigation Plan Focused Outreach



- **Organizational Training**
  - SCDOT will provide support for training to transition the Community Advisory Council to a Project Oversight Committee (POC).
  - This training will also be made available to residents of the impacted EJ communities who are interested in joining the POC or other groups looking to initiate community advocacy.



- **Community Office**
  - The Community Office will be maintained through completion of the right-of-way acquisition phase
  - Staffing will consist of full-time Office Manager & Community Liaisons/Outreach Specialists as well as part-time Right-of-Way Specialists



# Community EJ Mitigation Plan

## Residential Displacements

### Affordable Housing



- SCDOT is developing a plan with the SC Housing Finance & Development Authority to construct replacement affordable housing
- SCDOT will purchase single family vacant lots in the vicinity of the impacted EJ communities for replacement home construction
- Options include partnering with non-profits (like Habitat for Humanity or others) to build affordable homes **OR** SCDOT utilizes lots for the construction of new during right-of-way phase
- 12 lots already secured

# Community EJ Mitigation Plan Residential Displacements

## Financial Literacy and First-time Home Buyer Counseling



- SCDOT will develop partnerships with the local organizations to provide financial literacy and first-time home buyer counseling to displaced residents.
- The counseling could assist individuals in securing residential loans and transitioning from renters to homeowners.
- The counseling will be initiated during first quarter 2021.

# Community EJ Mitigation Plan

## Educational and Employment Initiatives



- **School to Work Program**

- During the right-of-way acquisition phase, SCDOT will hire up to ten (10) summer interns with the goal of enhancing opportunities in engineering, construction, and transportation.



- **Pre-employment Training**

- Contractor-led program to provide training and job-readiness skills to individuals from the impacted EJ communities
- Graduates will be considered for participation in OJT program



- **College Aid Initiative**

- Up to \$50,000 in scholarships for high school and college students from the impacted EJ communities

# Community EJ Mitigation Plan

## Recreational Amenities

### Facilities and Amenities



- SCDOT will fund the property acquisition and construction of replacement recreational facilities and associated infrastructure to mitigate the project impacts and satisfy Section 4(f) and Section 6(f) requirements.
- SCDOT will acquire properties within the affected communities and provide funding to the City of North Charleston to construct one large centrally-located community center and two pocket parks within the impacted neighborhoods.

# Community EJ Mitigation Plan Recreational Amenities

## Programs and Activities



- SCDOT and the City of North Charleston will develop an inter-governmental agreement outlining programs, services, and arrangement for long-term operation and maintenance of the replacement community and recreation centers.
- The agreement will include language related to:
  - Priority access for community residents to program enrollment/participation, reserving facility space, and volunteer opportunities
  - The City of North Charleston seeking qualified candidates from the communities for employment opportunities



# Community EJ Mitigation Plan

## Residential Displacements

### Connectivity and Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety



- Improve bicycle and pedestrian connectivity, safety, and mobility between the impacted EJ communities and the replacement community and recreation centers as well as transit stops along Rivers Avenue.
- Improvements could include:
  - New and Upgraded Sidewalks and Multi-use Paths
  - Street and Pedestrian-scale Lighting Improvements
  - CARTA Bus Stop Improvements along Rivers Avenue
  - Traffic Calming
- Addresses concerns identified in a Social Needs Assessment and by the CAC

# Community EJ Mitigation Plan

## Community Initiatives

### Community Infrastructure Enhancement Plan



- Identify community infrastructure needs not addressed by the bicycle, pedestrian, and transit improvements related to the new and reconstructed community and recreation centers. Improvements could include:
  - Traffic Calming
  - Streetscaping and Aesthetics
  - Street and Pedestrian-scale Lighting Improvements
  - Project-related Stormwater drainage Improvements
  - New and Improved Sidewalks and Crosswalks
- Addresses concerns identified in a Social Needs Assessment and by the CAC

# Community EJ Mitigation Plan

## Community Initiatives

### Community History Preservation Study



- Qualified Historian and Photographer
- Document the history and character of Liberty Park/Highland Terrace/Russelldale/Ferndale communities
- Collection of oral histories, archival research and other historical photos and documents
- Acknowledges multi-generational history of these long-standing residential communities
- Final deliverable will consist of a Community History Report & recommendations for visual imagery or cultural displays to be incorporated into community center designs

## Technical Review Committee



- Consists of City of North Charleston technical staff from departments with purview over elements of the recommended mitigation items
- Members to include:
  - Mayor's Office
  - Parks and Recreation
  - Public Works
  - Planning
- Serves as technical advisors and subject matter experts
- Coordinates the development of the Inter-governmental Agreement with the Mayor's Office and City Council
- Three (3) meetings conducted to date

# Proposed Mitigation Implementation Schedule

## PUBLIC HEARING

## FINAL DESIGN 2021-2023

## RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION 2023-2027

## CONSTRUCTION 2027-2032

*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, replacement community center.



### Community Infrastructure Enhancement Plan

A set of improvements identified to address bicycle and pedestrian safety, access to community centers, enhanced street aesthetics project-related stormwater improvements, 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.



### Connectivity; Bike & Pedestrian Safety

Enhanced bike and pedestrian facilities within the community to provide safe access to new community centers, parks and transit stops.



### 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

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

Will partner with educational institutions to develop internship opportunities within the fields of construction and engineering.



### Pre-Employment Training

Job readiness training will be provided to prepare program participants for On-The-Job Training during the project's construction.



### College Scholarships

Up to \$50,000 in scholarships will be awarded to students from the impacted communities (up to 10 scholarships of \$5,000 each.)





## Meeting Summary

I-526 LCC WEST Agency Coordination Meeting

Microsoft Teams

October 14, 2020 10:00AM

### Attendees

FHWA	Shane Belcher Sandra Saint-Surin	NOAA-NMFS	Cindy Cooksey Brian Rossegger
NPS	Alexis John	USACE	Richard Darden
USCG	Randall Overton	USEPA	
USFWS	Lindsey Troutman	SCDAH	Elizabeth Johnson
SCDHEC	Logan Ress Chuck Hightower	SCDHEC-OCRM	Josh Hoke Chris Stout
SCDNR		SCDOT	Joy Riley Chad Long Will McGoldrick
SCPRT	Justin Hancock		
Three Oaks Engineering	Mark Mohr Karen Taylor	Stantec	
HDR	Blair Wade		

### Introductions

The purpose of this meeting is to provide agencies with an update on the agency milestone dates, shared use path (SUP), Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), and the upcoming public hearing and community meetings.

### Update on Eastern Black Rail Listing

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) gave an update on the October 7, 2020 final 4(d) rule on the eastern black rail with more information to be found at the following link <https://fws.gov/southeast/faq/eastern-black-rail-final-4d-rule/>. This species is listed at Threatened. Final rule is effective November 9, 2020.
- SCDOT noted that the Biological Assessment (BA) has the eastern black rail as a proposed species to be listed and will make sure documentation submitted to USFWS is still valid.
- FHWA noted the DEIS currently shows a No Effect for this species and that Section 7 consultation is complete. SCDOT will need to follow up with USFWS to confirm consultation is still considered complete.

### Agency Milestone Dates

- SCDOT gave a quick review of the Agency Milestone Table and noted that Section 7 review with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is due back in about 30 days (the date of Conclusion of Informal Consultation/Issuance of BO is November 13, 2020)
- SCDOT noted a discrepancy that was revealed during ongoing coordination with the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) that the date shown in the Agency Milestone Table for the USCG permit application deemed complete is supposed to be November 2021, not March 2021.
- The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) provided an update at that their part of the Section 7 consultation is in review and they are on track to make the 30 day review milestone.



October 14, 2020  
I-526 LCC WEST Agency Coordination Meeting  
Page 2 of 3

#### SUP

- SCDOT gave an update on the inclusion of a SUP at the Ashley River crossing as part of this project.
- As part of the public input process and in coordination with local municipalities, the need to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians along the project corridor became apparent. The area has a very prominent cyclist presence, and the I-526 crossing of the Ashley River is one of the main crossings from a connectivity and mobility standpoint. In addition, the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments (BCDCOG) recently developed a very comprehensive, regional Bike & Ped plan, and SCDOT was asked to investigate if/how some aspects of this plan could be incorporated into the I-526 LCC WEST project.
- The Project Team looked at potential options that could fit within the project and an analysis showed that it may be feasible to accommodate a SUP over the Ashley River, but the Team still needed more information to determine how this would be done.
- The I-526 Ashley River crossing currently consists of two separate structures. Constructability constraints, impacts, connection points, as well as how to perform required maintenance, required inspections, and maintain navigability all had to be considered and evaluated. It was determined that from a constructability, cost, safety, and maintenance ability that attaching the SUP to the widened upstream structure (I-526 westbound bridge) would best meet all necessary requirements, avoid, minimize, and provide a balance of impacts.
- The SUP design has not yet been finalized, but the existing structure would be widened to accommodate not only the additional lanes on the I-526 Westbound bridge but also the SUP. Additional coordination with NOAA and USFWS for impacts associated with the SUP is ongoing. Information and impacts associated with the SUP are included in the DEIS, but continued coordination is needed since it is anticipated that there will be some additional comments related to the SUP that will need to be addressed.
- All permit applications are being revised to include the SUP and are on track to be submitted to the permitting agencies by 10/15/2020.
  - The Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM) Critical Area Permit is ready to be posted tomorrow with hard copies to follow.
  - October 30, 2020 is the joint Public Notice (PN) date for the permits
  - Mailing list for PN includes parcels/property owners ½ mile up and downstream of the Ashley River to meet USCG PN requirements
  - EFH assessment will include additional pile drivings/drilled shafts associated with SUP. It is not anticipated that any new species will be impacted.
- NOAA asked if the SUP would increase wetland impacts
  - There are additional impacts anticipated at the fill slopes for the bridge approaches where the SUP ties in to slopes. There are safety constraints on the eastern end of the bridges (toward N. Charleston). The downstream side has a marina within 40-50 feet of the existing roadway. On the west side is an underwater archaeology anomaly that has not yet been surveyed, and a private boat landing associated with the Ashley Harbor Community.
- NOAA asked how SUP will be accessed.
  - A proposed/future recreational path is included in the BCDCOG Bike & Ped plan, but no details were given on how it will tie in on the West Ashley or the N. Charleston side. There are two different jurisdictions on either side of the Ashley River crossing and SCDOT still needs to work out these details with the municipalities since they will need to construct and maintain it. The future path may be a boardwalk with an access point further on down away from the bridge but most likely not within wetland area.



October 14, 2020  
I-526 LCC WEST Agency Coordination Meeting  
Page 3 of 3

Construction on this section of the I-526LCC WEST project is at least 10 years out, so there is time to work out the details.

- NOAA stated there are impacts associated with boardwalks.
  - SCDOT has not committed to construct anything other than the SUP on the bridge. It will be up to municipalities to construct the future path and tie it into the SUP on the bridge. The future path will need to be behind the control-of-access (COA) fence once they add the connections to the bridge crossing of the SUP.
  - NOAA noted that the W. Ashley side has an extensive causeway leading up to the existing bridge and stated their concern that the causeway may need to be widened to accommodate the future path.
- NOAA noted that there is a potential for a lot more impacts as a result of this SUP, and not sure what these impacts will be since details of the future path and the connection the SUP on the bridge are not known at this time. Will need to do some additional research to determine how to handle this.
  - SCDOT acknowledged that additional coordination is needed with NOAA and will also include the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) to be part of the discussions.

#### DEIS Update

- DEIS is in final stages of review with FHWA. Any revisions will be addressed before document is signed late next week (10/22/2020).
- Signed DEIS will be uploaded to EPA's website on 10/23/2020 and be published in the Federal Register on 10/30/20. All the permitting notices are intended to go out on the same day.
- Anticipated to be a 60-day comment period.
- SCDOT gave a brief update on the upcoming virtual public hearing:
  - DEIS will be available to public on Nov. 4<sup>th</sup>.
  - Limited in-person public hearings (4) will be held between November and December.
  - A Draft Community Mitigation Plan has been released and a survey is currently out to obtain input on the Plan.
  - Series of small group meetings will be held November 6, 7, and 14 to get communities' feedback on mitigation plan. Meetings will be held outdoors in tents with drive-thru options as well.
  - A virtual comment session will also be held.
  - Series of zoom meetings will be held to dive into certain topics.
  - Project website will have a virtual 3-D public hearing room that will include the SCDOT project manager at the center of the room. Notice will be sent out to agencies once it becomes available.

#### Upcoming Meetings

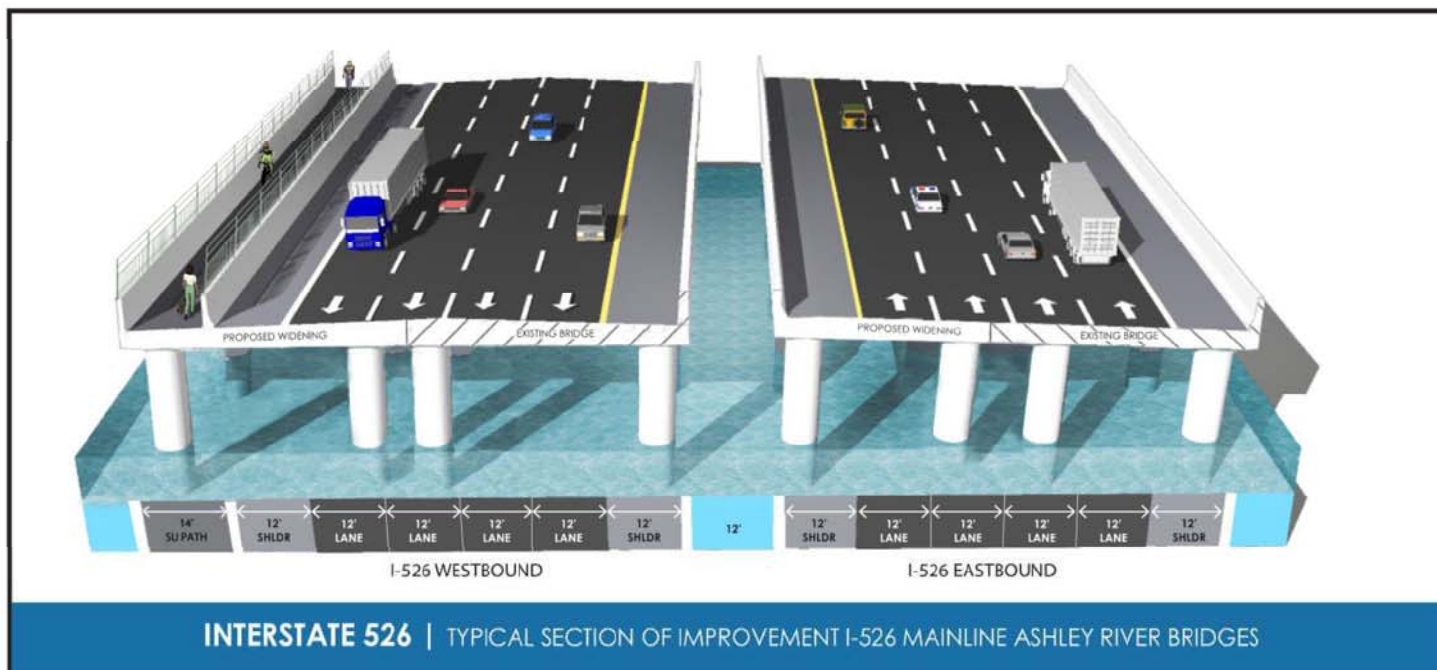
- SCDOT requested to postpone the November I-526 LCC WEST agency meeting to December but use the November meeting date/time to discuss the Mark Clark Extension project.
- November meeting falls on Veteran's Day (11/11/2020), so SCDOT will coordinate with agencies to move the meeting to a week before or a week after this date.

Next Meeting December 9, 2020 at 10:00 AM via TEAMS, Outlook invite sent.

Milestone	Date
<b>FHWA / Section 4(f)</b>	
Determination of Applicability of Section 4(f)	November 2019
Coordination with /Concurrence from Officials with Jurisdiction	September 2021
FHWA Approval/Conclusion of Section 4(f)	October 2021
<b>State or Sponsor / Potential National Park Service / Section 106* Review</b>	
Consultation initiated with SHPO/THPO	June 18, 2019
Consulting Parties Invited	November 2019
Determination of effect made by FHWA	June 2020
ACHP Provided Opportunity to Comment	TBD
National Historic Landmark- National Park Service Concurrence	N/A
Section 106 Consultation Concluded	September 2020
*Conclusion of Section 106 can be: 1) No historic properties affected, 2) Finding of no adverse effect, or 3) Memorandum of agreement or programmatic agreement, or other conclusion to resolve adverse effects reached	
<b>U.S. Army Corps of Engineers / Section 404 Clean Water Act and Section 10 Rivers and Harbors Act, Individual Permit</b>	
Joint Application Received	August 2020
Publication of Public Notice	October 2020
Response to comments	March 2021
Permit Decision Rendered	November 2021
<b>U.S. Coast Guard / Bridge Permit</b>	
Navigation Data Received	May 21, 2019
Issued Navigation Determination	June 11, 2019
Application Received	August 2020
Publication of Public Notice	October 2020
Application Deemed Complete	March 2021
Permit Decision Rendered	December 2021

Milestone	Date
<b>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service / Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act Review (Part of Section 404 CWA)</b>	
Process initiated by Public Notice	October 2020
Comments to USACE	November 2020
<b>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service / Section 7 Endangered Species Act Consultation</b>	
Request for ESA Consultation Report	October 30, 2020
Consultation Package deemed complete (Formal or Informal)	November 30, 2020
Conclusion of Informal Consultation/Issuance of Biological Opinion	March 15, 2021
<b>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service / Migratory Bird Treaty Act Permit</b>	
Initial Application received	TBD
Completed Application received	
Issuance of Permit	
<b>National Marine Fisheries Service / Section 7 Endangered Species Act Consultation</b>	
Request for ESA Consultation Received	April 1, 2020
Consultation Package deemed complete (Formal or Informal Consultation)	July 1, 2020
Conclusion of Informal Consultation/Issuance of Biological Opinion	November 13, 2020
<b>National Marine Fisheries Service / Essential Fish Habitat Consultation</b>	
Draft EFH assessment submitted	May 8, 2020
Complete EFH assessment	July 8, 2020
NOAA issues Response to EFH assessment	September 8, 2020
<b>National Park Service / Section 6(f) Land and Water Conservation Fund Act</b>	
Initial Application Received	February 2020
Completed Application Received	September 2020
Issuance of Decision for Permit/Approval	September 2021
Notice to Proceed	September 2021
<b>State, Local, Other Non Federal Agency / Dependent Action (CWA Section 401 WQC, Section 402 Permit, etc.)</b>	
Initial Application Received	August 2020
Response to comments	March 2021
Issuance of Permit/Approval	May/June 2021

 = Completed Milestone







# Agenda

I-526 WEST Lowcountry Corridor Agency Coordination Meeting

TEAMS online meeting

December 9, 2020 10:00AM

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- A. Introductions
- B. Agency Milestone Schedule-Updates
- C. 6(f) Resources
- D. Discussion of Public Hearing Comments
- E. Upcoming Meetings
- F. Adjourn

## Microsoft Teams meeting

**Join on your computer or mobile app**

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[+1 336-560-3117,,139865172#](#) United States, Greensboro

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## Meeting Summary

I-526 LCC WEST Agency Coordination Meeting

Microsoft Teams

December 9, 2020 10:00AM

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### Attendees

FHWA	Shane Belcher Jim Martin	NOAA	Noah Silverman
NPS	Alexis John Anita Barnett	USACE	
USCG	Randall Overton	USEPA	Alya Singh-White
USFWS	Mark Caldwell	SCDAH	
SCDHEC	Logan Ress	SCDHEC OCRM	Josh Hoke
SCDNR	Susan Davis Stacie Crowe	SCDOT	David Kelly Chad Long Will McGoldrick Joy Riley
SCPRT	Justin Hancock	HDR	Blair Wade
Three Oaks Engineering	Amanda Chandler Russell Chandler Mark Mohr Karen Taylor	CDM Smith	Amy Livingston

### Introductions

The purpose of this meeting is to provide agencies with an update on the schedule, Section 6(f), and Public Hearing comments received.

### Milestone Schedule Update

- Changes made to consultation documents due to the addition of the Shared Use Path (SUP) over the Ashley River
  - Coordinated with NOAA to amend and resubmit documents for EFH and ESA
  - EFH and ESA are scheduled to be complete by March 2021

### Public Hearing

- 92 comments received since October
  - Refer to attached presentation for details on comments received
- Community specific surveys developed
- Several ways to provide comments on the project
  - <https://www.526lowcountrycorridor.com/westph/>
    - Websites in English, Spanish, and ADA accessible
      - Live Chat function available on all websites Monday-Friday, 9am-7pm
      - Virtual Meeting Room with 360 view
    - Community office accepting phone calls and in-person meetings by appointment
    - Virtual Meeting scheduled for December 15, 2020
      - Similar to in-person Public Hearing, 15 people currently signed up to speak



December 9, 2020  
I-526 LCC WEST Agency Coordination Meeting  
Page 2 of 2

#### Section 6(f)

- Held series of open-air tent meetings in November within communities to present mitigation options
  - Overall feedback was positive and community members seemed excited for a new and larger facility
  - Comments will be provided to NPS and SCPRT
- Continued feedback being received through the Community Advisory Council (CAC) meetings – held a meeting in November
  - Engaged the CAC throughout the process
    - Recommended to CAC to draft a letter as a collective body in response to the Public Hearing - will most likely be after the comment period ended - SCDOT wants to provide summary of Public Hearing comments to them
      - Let us know if the mitigation plan is on target and where it is lacking
      - Will be part of the summary of public comments

#### Discussion/Questions

- No changes to Permitting schedule
  - March 1, 2021 deadline for EFH and ESA to meet ROD/FEIS deadline
- USACE public notice ended November 30, 2020
  - Collecting comments and creating letter
  - Agency comments expected in January 2021

Next Meeting January 13, 2021 at 10:00 AM via TEAMS, Outlook invite sent.

# What We are Hearing During the Public Hearing Comment Period

12

Concerned with  
Right-of-Way Impacts



5

Concerned with  
Intersections



3

In Favor of  
Transit



4

Environmental  
Concerns



6

Concerned with  
Noise Impacts



4

In Favor of Bike/  
Ped Lanes



3

Concerned with  
Trucks



8

Community Mitigation  
Ideas



92  
Total  
Comments  
(including USACE)

- 34 Comments through websites
- 18 Emails
- 15 USACE Comments
- 24 Community Survey Comments
- 2 Voicemail
- 3 Offline Live Chats

Note: numbers will not equal the total number of comments

# Noise Comments from the Public Hearing Websites Mapped



5 Noise  
Comments  
from Public  
Hearing  
websites

The majority  
of comments  
related to  
noise are  
clustered  
around I-526



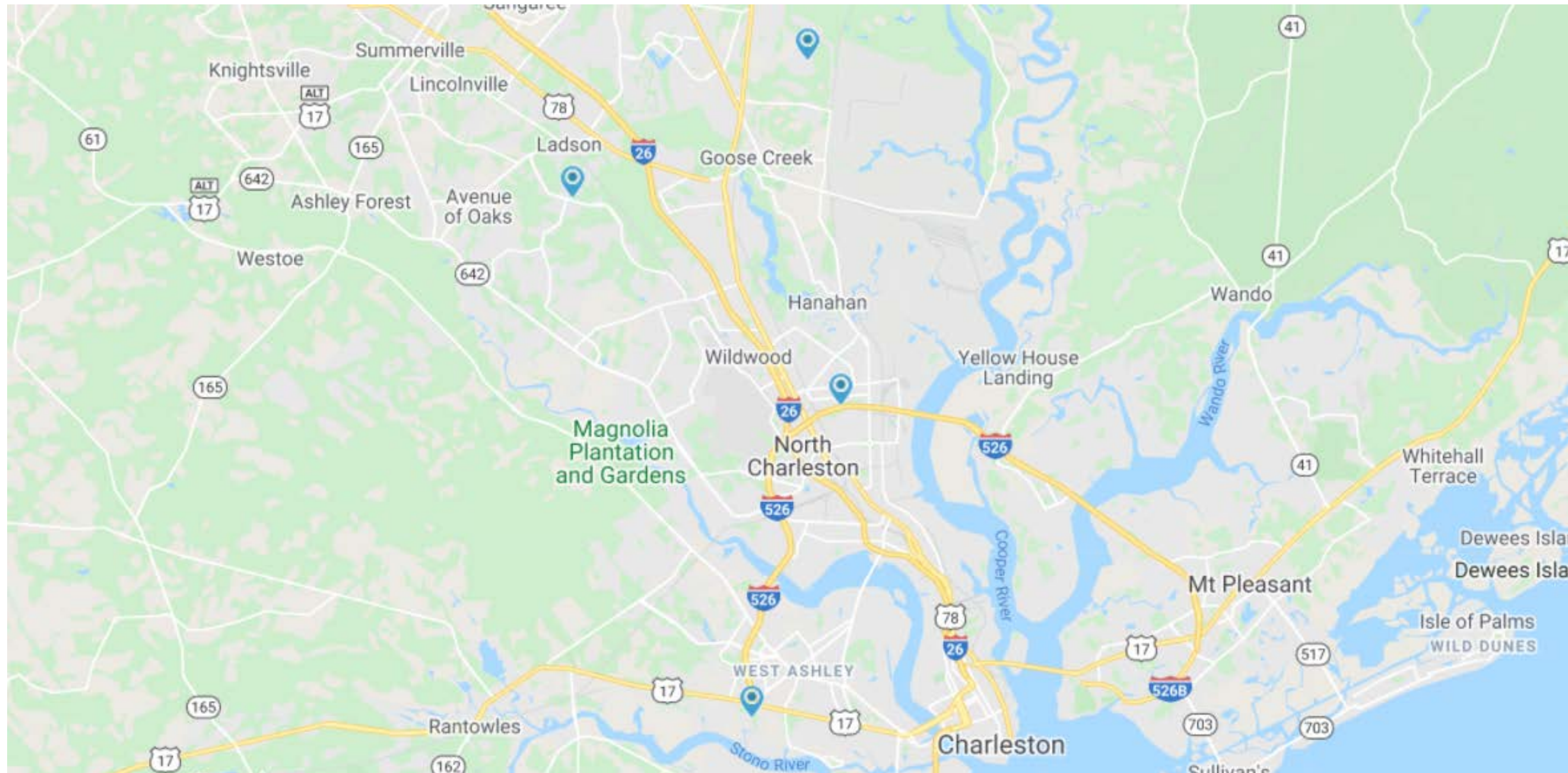


# ROW Comments from the Public Hearing Websites Mapped



4 Right-of-Way  
Comments from Public  
Hearing  
Websites

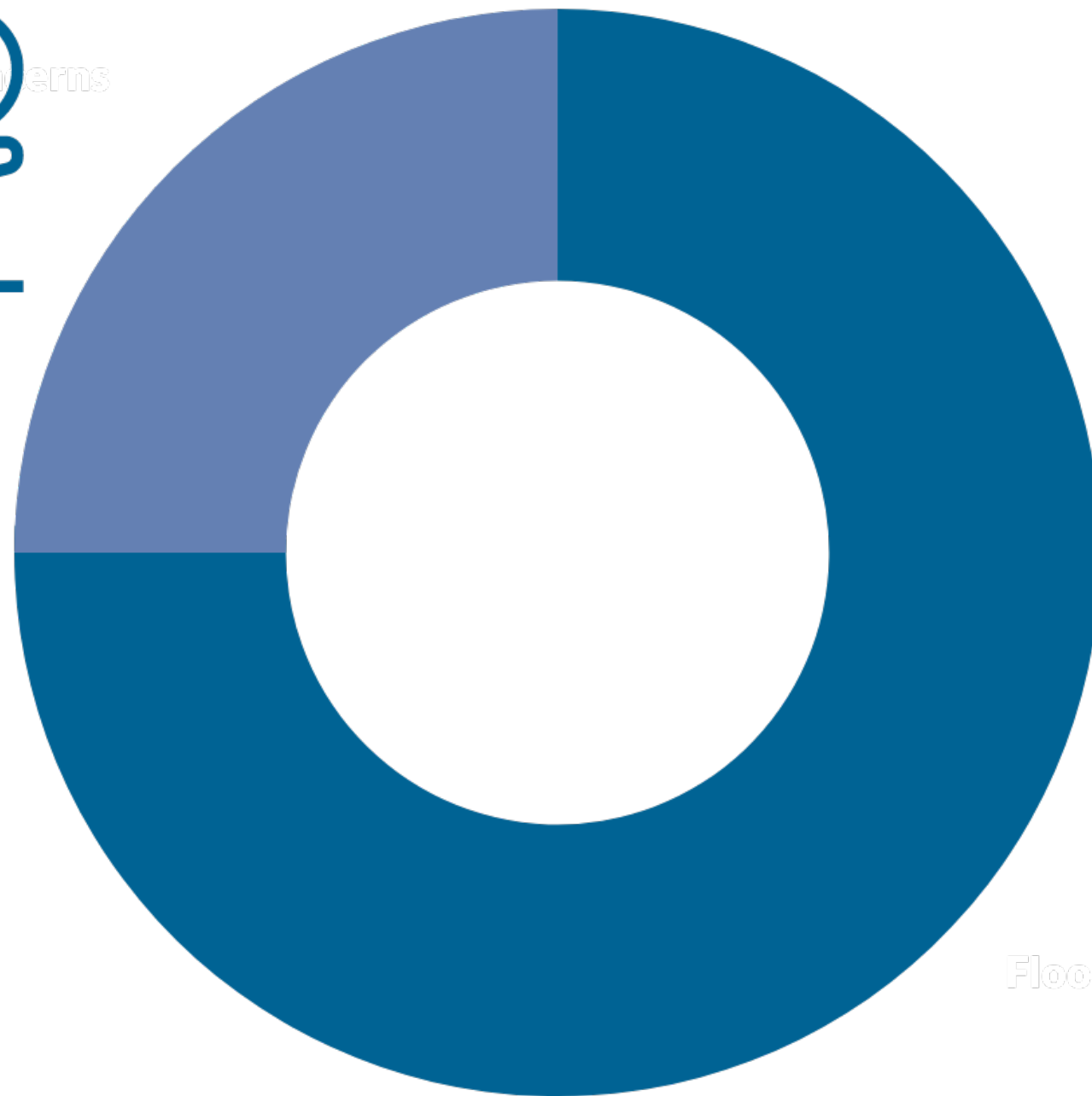
(Not all shown on map)



# Environmental Comments Breakdown



1 Comment  
Concerning  
Pollution



3 Comments  
Concerning  
Flooding



4 Comments  
Noting  
Environmental  
Concerns



## DRAFT Meeting Summary

I-526 LCC WEST Agency Coordination Meeting

Microsoft Teams

January 13, 2021 10:00AM

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### Attendees

FHWA	Shane Belcher Jim Martin Sandra Saint-Surin	NOAA	
NPS	Alexis John Anita Barnett	USACE	Richard Darden
USCG	Randall Overton	USEPA	Alya Singh-White
USFWS	Mark Caldwell	SCDAH	
SCDHEC	Chuck Hightower Logan Ress	SCDHEC OCRM	Josh Hoke Chris Stout
SCDNR	Susan Davis	SCDOT	David Kelly Chad Long Will McGoldrick Joy Riley
SCPRT	Justin Hancock	HDR	Blair Wade
Three Oaks Engineering	Amanda Chandler Russell Chandler Mark Mohr Karen Taylor		

### Introductions

The purpose of this meeting is to provide agencies with an update on the schedule, Section 6(f), and Public Comments received.

### Permitting Timetable Update

- Revised to reflect changes made to the Agency Milestones Table.

### Public Comments

- More comments have been received since the December 2020 update
- Most of the environmental concerns are related to flooding
  - Will separate these comments out and address appropriately
- Increase in noise comments, mostly positive for inclusion of noise walls
- Goal to have all comments collected and summarized by January 27, 2021
  - Will present to agencies at February meeting
- Project website <https://www.526lowcountrycorridor.com/westph/>
- FHWA reminder that DEIS comments are due January 15, 2021
  - Comments received from USCG, SCDHEC OCRM and DOI
  - Received EPA comments post agency meeting

### Section 6(f)

- Conversion for impacts to Highland Terrace Community Center
- Application to SCPRT is complete except for the public comment summary
  - Comment period ends January 15, 2021
  - Goal to have comment summary by January 27, 2021 to send to SCPRT/NPS



January 13, 2021  
I-526 LCC WEST Agency Coordination Meeting  
Page 2 of 2

- Held three community drop-in meetings and three appointment-only meetings at community office
  - Overall comments received are positive
- EJ survey sent out (mail and digital) to gather public input on proposed concepts and programs to be offered at new community center

Discussion/Questions

- No questions from agencies

Next Meeting February 10, 2021 at 10:00 AM via TEAMS, Outlook invite sent.



Permitting Timetable

Revised 1/13/2021



2019	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Action					CP ACP + Purpose and Need  USCG Navigation Data Report to USCG	USCG Preliminary Navigation Determination Issued  Consultation initiated with SHPO/THPO  Section 106 Consultation initiated (6/18)	Submit JD and CALP packages  NOAA Initially Contacted Regarding MMPA Consultation	Agency Meeting to Discuss Alternatives Evaluation Process/Criteria & Preliminary Range of Alternatives (8/14)  CP Agency Milestones and Permitting Timetable	Agency Meeting to Discuss Mitigation Needs Assessment (9/11)	Agency Meeting to Discuss Alternatives Analysis and Reasonable Alternatives (10/9)  JD + Critical Area Line Plat Approvals	NOI issued (11/8)  Det. of Applicability of Section 4(f)  Agency Meeting (11/13)  Section 106 Consulting parties invited  Public Information Meeting (11/21)	Agency Meeting to Discuss Mitigation Alternatives (12/11)
2020	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Action	Agency Meeting to review Public Comment (1/8)	CP Alternatives Carried Forward  Agency Workshop to Discuss Interchange Design Alternatives (2/12)  Initial 6(f) Application received	Agency Meeting to Discuss Update on Mitigation Needs Assessment (3/11)	Request for ESA Consultation Report (NOAA)	Agency Meeting to Discuss Proposed Preferred Alternative  Draft EFH assessment submitted (5/8)	CP Preferred Alternative  Section 106 determination of effect made by FHWA	NOAA receives Complete EFH Assessment to initiate EFH Consultation (7/8)  Pre-Application Meeting with Agencies (Fed & State) Public Hearing Agency Planning Meeting  Consultation with SHPO/THPO on Preferred Alternative  Section 7 Consultation Package complete (NOAA)	Application Submittal-Individual 404 Permit/USCG  Initial State Application received CAP, 401	Section 106 consultation concluded  NOAA issues response to EFH assessment (9/8)  Completed 6(f) Application received	DEIS Notice of Availability  Public Notice: USACE/USCG/CAP /401  FWCA Review initiated  Request for ESA Consultation Report (USFWS)	Public Hearing-Joint Notice to cover all agencies  FWCA Comments to USACE  Section 7 Conclusion of Consultation/Issuance of Biological Opinion (NOAA/USFWS)	Revised EFH Assessment to NOAA (12/1)
2021	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Action	Comments Due: 404b.1/401/CAP/USCG  Revised Section 7 Consultation Package complete (?) (NOAA/USFWS)  Revised EFH Consultation Package complete (NOAA)	Agency Meeting to discuss Comments	Response to Comments due to USACE/OCRM /USCG/DHEC  Revised Section 7 Conclusion of Consultation/Issuance of Biological Opinion (NOAA/USFWS)  Revised EFH Conclusion/Issuance of Decision (NOAA)		401 Decision	Critical Area Permit			Coordination with/Concurrence from Officials with Jurisdiction 4(f)  Section 6(f) Issuance of Decision for Permit/Approval & NTP	FEIS/ROD Approval (30 day wait period) USACE Prepares Draft ROD  FHWA Approval/Conclusion of Section 4(f)	USACE Permit Decision/Signs ROD 30 days after FEIS; Complete Application submitted to USCG	USCG Permit Decision
2022	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
		90 Day post ROD period ends										

Adjustments to the proposed schedule may be made when sufficient information is available for an agency to proceed with an action so long as that action does not adversely affect the overall permitting timeline.

Unless specified, an action within a month will be completed by the end of the month.

A 10-day comment period will be requested for each Concurrence Point.

Public Notice must occur by 10/2 or schedule shifts



# What We are Hearing During the Public Hearing Comment Period

27

Concerned with  
Right-of-Way Impacts



15

Concerned with  
Intersections



12

In Favor of  
Transit/BRT



8

Environmental  
Concerns



31

Mention Noise  
Impacts



11

In Favor of Bike/  
Ped Lanes



14

Concerned with  
Affordable Housing/  
Community Mitigation



23

Supportive of the  
Project



Many noise comments are now  
positive (Ashley Harbor)

142

Total  
Comments

(Does not include  
Community Survey and  
Agency Comments)

- 74 Comments through websites
- 38 Emails
- 2 Comments from Dec. 15 Live Comment Session
- 4 Hotline Voicemails
- 20 Live Chats
- 4 Community Drop-in Comments

Note: numbers will not equal the total number of comments

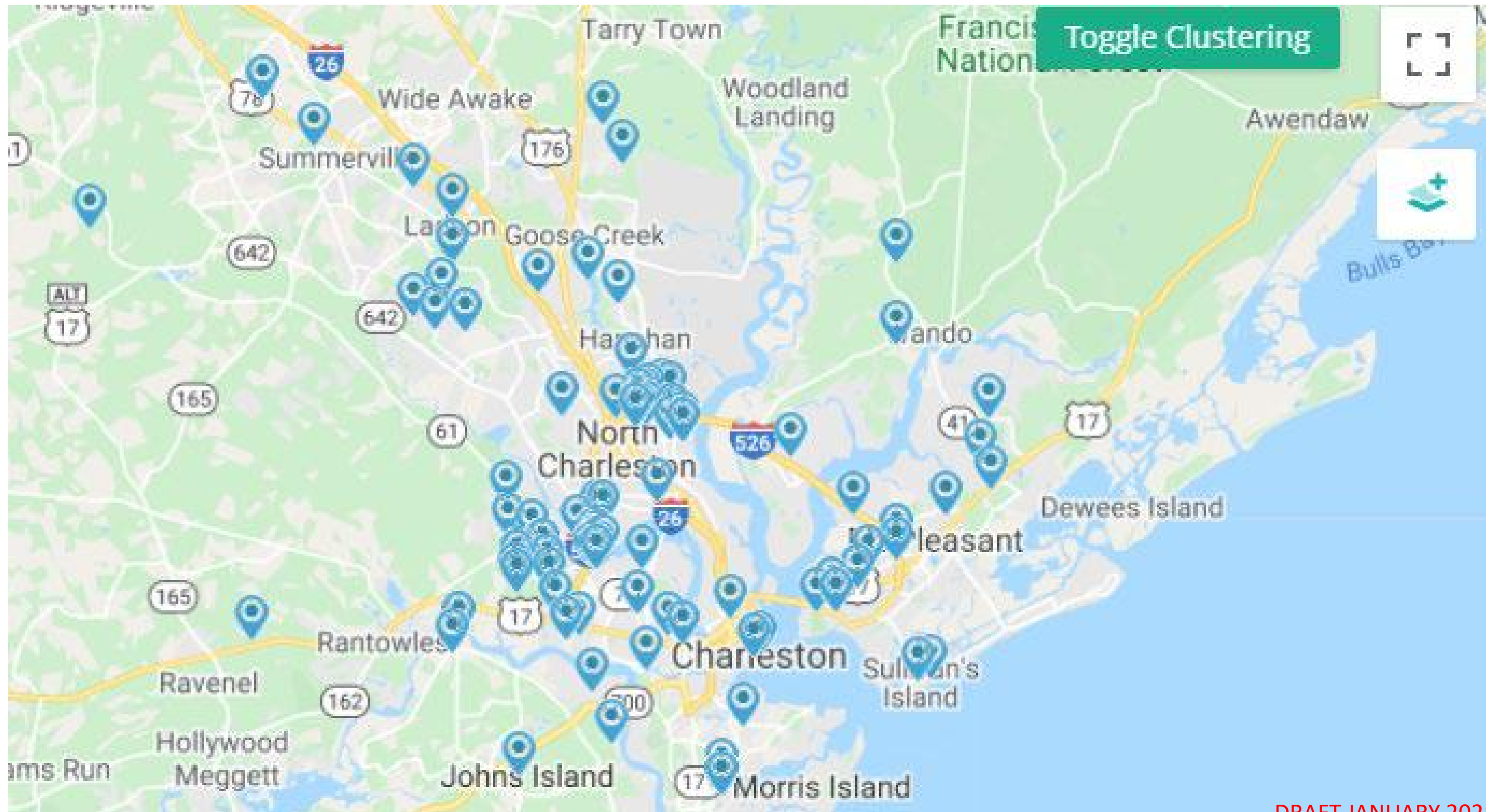
DRAFT JANUARY 2021

# Public Hearing Comments Mapped



**Comments  
Mapped by  
Location**

**Focus is on  
the Study  
Area. Not all  
Comments are  
shown on the  
map.**



DRAFT JANUARY 2021





## DRAFT Meeting Summary

I-526 LCC WEST Agency Coordination Meeting

Microsoft Teams

February 10, 2021 10:00AM

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### Attendees

FHWA	Shane Belcher Jim Martin	NOAA	Cynthia Cooksey
NPS	Alexis John	USACE	Richard Darden
USCG	Randall Overton	USEPA	Alya Singh-White
USFWS	Mark Caldwell	SCDAH	
SCDHEC	Logan Ress	SCDHEC OCRM	Josh Hoke Chris Stout
SCDNR	Susan Davis Stacie Crowe	SCDOT	Sean Connolly David Kelly Chad Long Will McGoldrick
SCPRT	Justin Hancock	HDR	Blair Wade
Three Oaks Engineering	Mark Mohr Karen Taylor	CDM Smith	Amy Livingston

### Introductions

The purpose of this meeting is to provide agencies with an overview of the Public Hearing comments received as well as updates on mitigation and Section 6(f). The Agency Coordination Plan stated that agencies will be briefed on comments received after the public hearing comment period has ended for the DEIS and public notices of the USACE and USCG. In addition, the plan also noted that mitigation options for offsetting impacts will be discussed in more detail.

### Public Hearing Comments

- Public hearing comment period lasted from November 12, 2020 through January 15, 2021.
- A total of 234 comments were received.
  - Majority of comments were related to right-of-way (ROW) impacts followed by affordable housing/community mitigation and comments related noise impacts.
  - Comments regarding ROW were mostly people asking if/how their property will be affected by the project.
  - Other comments category were random comments or requests not necessarily directly related to the project.
  - 16 comments were received related to the environment of which nine were about flooding concerns.

### Mitigation

- SCDOT noted that mitigation for the project is mitigation bank driven.
  - Solicitation for mitigation credit produced a winning bidder – Palmetto – will cover freshwater and stream credits.
  - Still working on securing tidal credits.
- SCDNR noted that mitigation banks are not necessarily offsetting the project impacts to various resources. Asked to also consider Point Farm and Daniel Island for credits.
  - SCDOT noted that while the Port Authority may have their banking instrument approved, it is not likely that actual credits would be available by the time the permit is to be issued.



February 10, 2021  
I-526 LCC WEST Agency Coordination Meeting  
Page 2 of 2

- USFWS encouraged SCDOT to look for other mitigation banks other than Clydesdale and Murray Hill.
  - SCDNR agreed that there have been long standing concerns with the Clydesdale and Murray Hill mitigation banks specifically in the Charleston area.
  - Huspa Creek can possibly be used for tidal credits.
  - SCDOT will continue to follow other mitigation bank options, including Point Farm and Daniel Island.

#### Section 6(f)

- SCDOT submitted public comments received on DEIS and proposed conversion packet to the SCPRT and NPS on Jan 27, 2021.
- Last piece is to start process on conversion. Justin (SCPRT) and Alexis (NPS) offered confirmation on this step.
- SCDOT is meeting with City of N. Charleston to review the public comments received and discuss the new community center and amenities working towards a resulting intergovernmental agreement between SCDOT and City of N. Charleston.
- SCPRT will finalize review of comments and will then draft conversion letter.
- NPS expressed appreciation for the opportunity to review public comments received early in the process.
- SCDOT will continue to provide information to agencies as the conversion gets finalized.

#### Discussion/Questions

- FHWA has not received any guidance on how to proceed with projects following One Federal Decision (OFD) since the Executive Order on OFD was repealed in January 2020.
  - Plan on keeping with the project schedule that has been set and move forward with agreements and timeframes.
  - Majority of permitting milestones have been met.
  - Regardless of OFD repeal, the project is still bound by requirements under MAP-21 which specify permitting timetable, dashboarding, and Agency Coordination Plan.
- USFWS noted they will continue to coordinate as agreed.
- Question regarding FAST-41 Permitting Dashboard (Title 41 of the FAST Act) - FHWA noted that FAST-41 did not apply to any Federal Highway projects.
- FAST-41 and Map 21 are not being impacted by OFD repeal.
- SCDOT reminded agencies of the upcoming agency milestone due dates in March 2021.

Next Meeting March 10, 2021 at 10:00 AM via TEAMS, Outlook invite sent.

# What We Heard!

Public Hearing 2020

234 Total Comments

Note: Numbers below will not equal 100%

26%

Right-of-Way



12%

Interchanges



11%

Transit/BRT



7%

Environmental



16%

Noise  
Impacts



10%

Bike/  
Ped Lanes



24%

Affordable Housing/  
Community Mitigation



14%

Support the  
Project



42% of the noise comments  
were positive (Ashley Harbor)

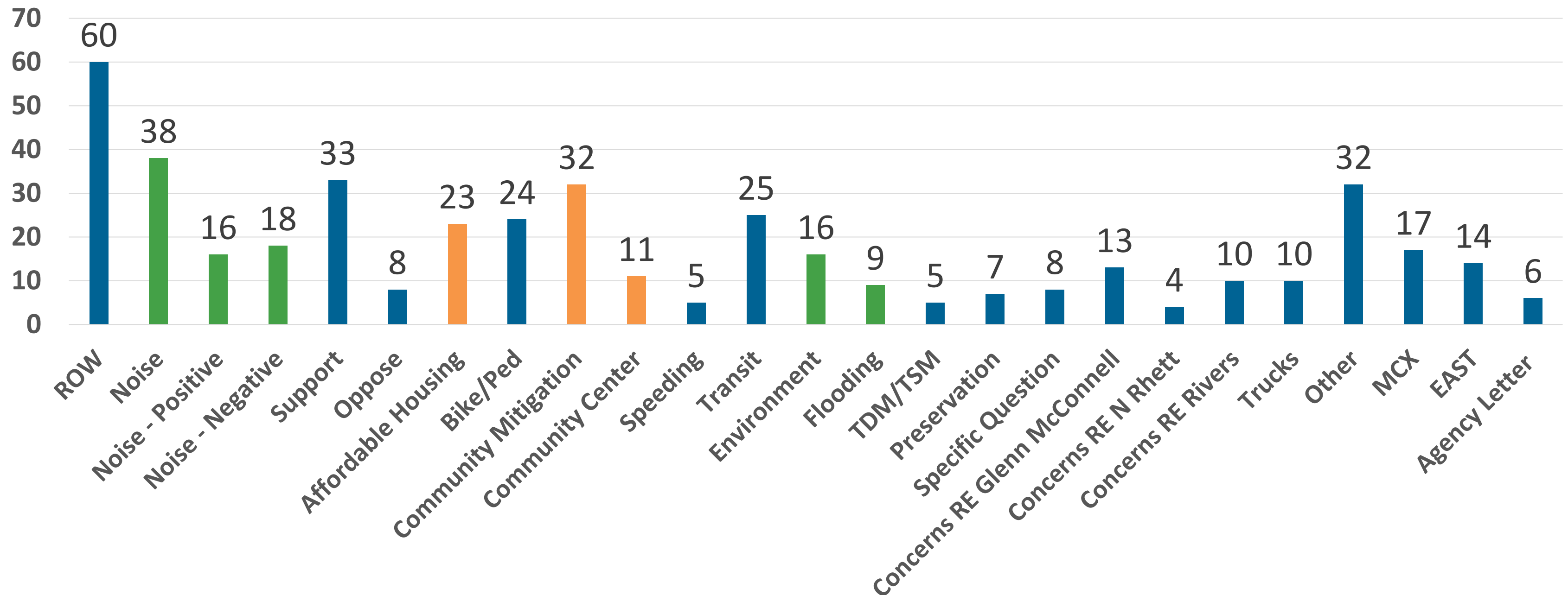


# What We Heard!

*Public Hearing 2020*

234 Total Comments

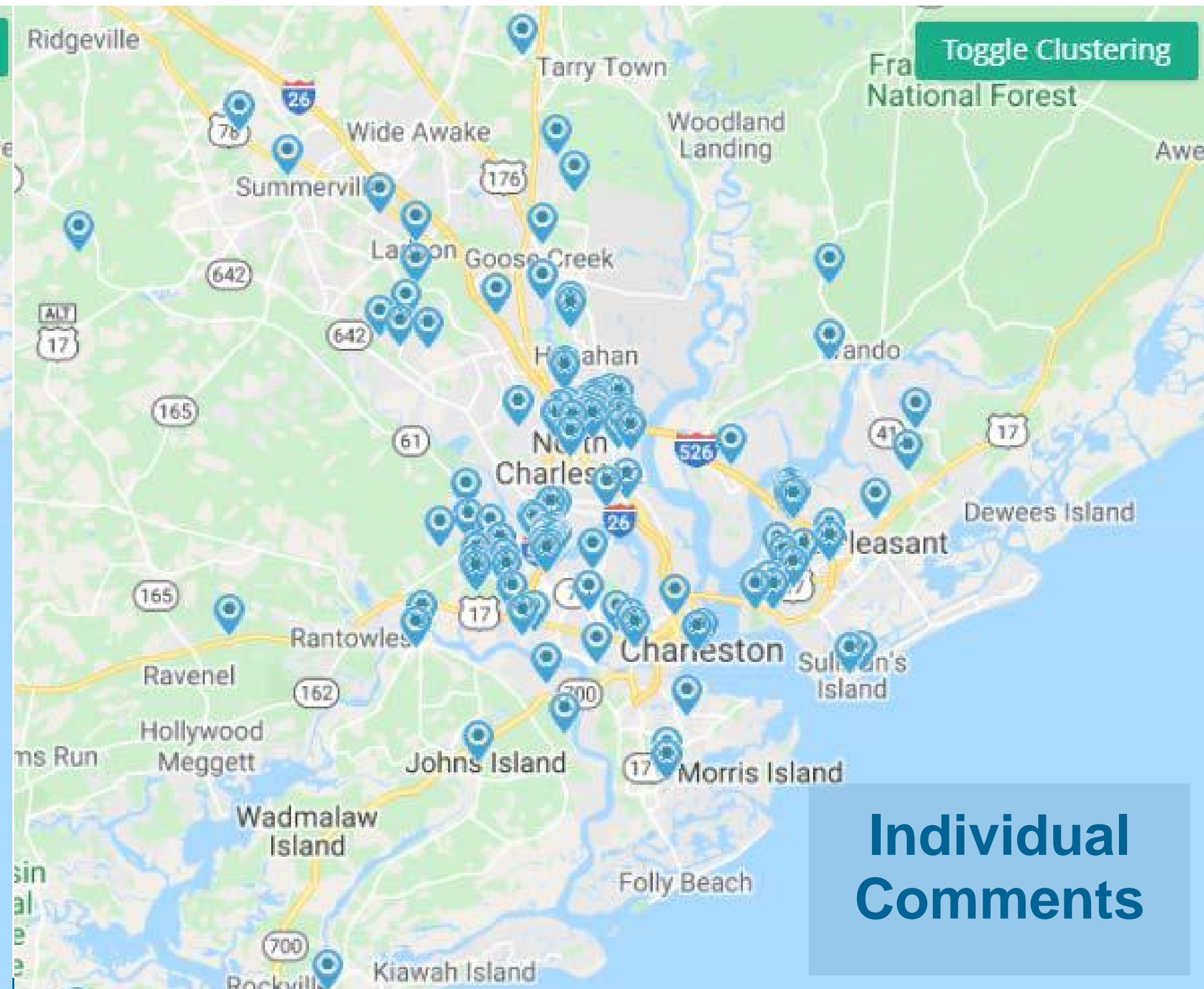
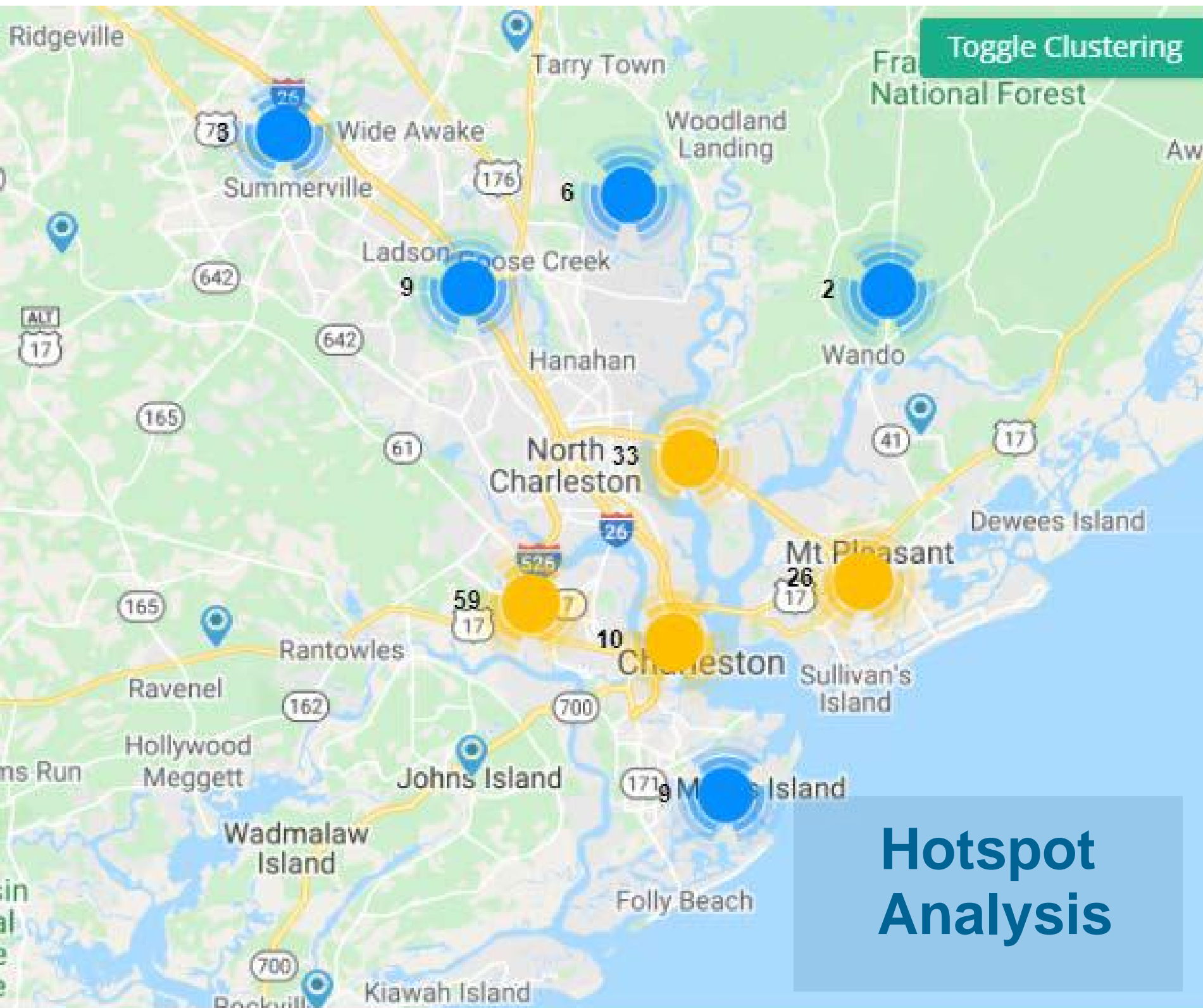
## Comment Tagging Analysis



# Public Hearing Comments Mapped

*Public Hearing 2020*

*Note: Not all comments are shown within map extent; map focus is on the Study Area*





# Meeting Summary

I-526 LCC WEST Agency Coordination Meeting

Microsoft Teams

April 14, 2021 10:00AM

## Attendees

FHWA	Shane Belcher Sandra Saint-Surin	NOAA	Cynthia Cooksey
NPS	Alexis John	USACE	
USCG	Randall Overton	USEPA	Kelly Laycock
USFWS	Mark Caldwell	SCDAH	
SCDHEC	Logan Ress	SCDHEC OCRM	Josh Hoke
SCDNR		SCDOT	Will McGoldrick
SCPRT	Justin Hancock	HDR	Blair Wade
Three Oaks Engineering	Mark Mohr Karen Taylor	Stantec	Hannah Clements LaTonya Derrick Amy Sackaroff Ryan White

## Introductions

The purpose of this meeting is to provide agencies with updates on the project schedule, Environmental Justice (EJ) mitigation, the North Charleston intergovernmental agreement (IGA), and Section 6(f)/4(f).

## Schedule Update

- Most of the Agency coordination has been completed.
- SCDOT has responded to Agency comments
- No concerns were expressed for meeting upcoming timeframes.
  - SCDHEC OCRM – needs 401 certification to place in Critical Area Permit.
  - SCDHEC – should have no issue with issuing Water Quality Certification by May 2021. It was noted 401 would not be a normal 401 with a 15 day appeal delay but would go straight to OCRM for incorporation and the appeal period would apply once the CAP is issued. DHEC indicated in follow up email that they would need the OCRM Coastal Zone Certification prior to being able to issue the 401 certification. Will M. to follow up with Chris Stout at OCRM about timing.
- SCDOT gave update on upcoming dates of significance. First is 4-23, draft complete FEIS is due to DOT for review. Second is complete FEIS draft will be ready for FHWA SC, NPS, USCG, and ACE review on 5-21. SCDOT requested that any commenting or resource agency interested in reading the draft FEIS should reach out and a draft would be made available to them. FHWA noted that the draft FEIS is still confidential and could not be shared outside the agency's reviewing it.

## EJ Mitigation

- PowerPoint slides for an overview/update on EJ mitigation (presentation appended to meeting summary). Topics reviewed included the following:
  - Community Advocacy Council (CAC)
    - Monthly meetings with group of residents representing 4 impacted communities.
    - 16 official CAC meetings have been held thus far.
  - Project Oversight Committee (POC)
    - Transition from CAC to POC to make sure mitigation plan gets implemented.



April 14, 2021  
I-526 LCC WEST Agency Coordination Meeting  
Page 2 of 2

- Committee will be made up of both community representatives and SCDOT staff.
  - Organizational Training - still working through what the training will be to transition to POC.
- Community Office - will remain open and staffed through final design and ROW acquisition phases of the project.
- Community Resource Guide - living and breathing document to provide information on various topics.
- Residential Displacements
  - Affordable Housing - SCDOT to partner with SC Housing to build 100 affordable housing units close to impacted communities as possible.
- Financial Literacy and 1st time home buyer counseling - group/individual classes taking place in June 2021.
- Recreational Amenities
  - Partner with N. Charleston to fund the construction of one replacement community center in Liberty Park neighborhood, 2 pocket parks, and associated infrastructure.
  - Will be constructed and opened prior to demolishing of Russelldale Community Center and portions of Liberty Park.
- Programs and Activities - pending approval from the City of N. Charleston
- Education & Employment Opportunities
  - College Aid Initiative - increased fund up to \$100,000
  - School-to-Work Program
  - Pre-Employment Training
- Community Initiatives
  - Community History Preservation Study
  - Mitigation Barriers
  - Community Infrastructure Enhancement Plan (CIEP) – input received through survey, field studies, workshop, input from CAC, social needs assessment.

#### North Charleston IGA

- Intergovernmental agreement (IGA) between SCDOT and City of North Charleston to agree on the programs that SCDOT is funding but the City will be constructing –
- On-going effort to get IGA completed and agreement signed by September 2021

#### Section 6(f)/Section 4(f)

- Final documents will be appended to the FEIS-ROD so reviews will be occurring concurrent with review of FEIS-ROD-
- As part of the Section 4(f) requirement, the Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation was submitted to the USDOJ as part of DEIS review and received acceptance from DOI on the DEIS. FEIS-ROD will be sent back to DOI headquarters for their review and final approval and that will complete the Section 4(f) coordination with DOI.

#### Discussion/Questions

- None

Next Meeting May 12, 2021 at 10:00 AM via TEAMS, Outlook invite sent.





# 526 LOWCOUNTRY CORRIDOR

*Environmental Justice Community  
Mitigation Plan (EJCMP) Update*

*April 2021*



U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration





# Focused Outreach

## ***Community Advisory Council (CAC)***

SCDOT will continue to support the CAC through publishing of the FEIS/ROD by:

- Facilitating regularly scheduled monthly meetings
- Providing logistical and administrative support, as needed.

## ***Project Oversight Committee (POC)***

SCDOT will assist in the creation of a POC that will be responsible for ensuring adherence to the commitments in the Final EJCMP. The POC will serve the following roles:

- Coordinate with technical staff
- Serve as a liaison between the communities and project staff

## ***Organizational Training***

SCDOT will provide organizational training for the CAC and community members interested in creating a community advocacy organization.



# Focused Outreach

## *Community Office*

- Maintained throughout the project development, final design, and Right-of-Way Acquisition phases of the project
- Staffed with a full-time Office Manager, Community Liaisons/Outreach Specialists, and part-time Right-of-Way Specialists
- Meeting space for the CAC, the POC, and other stakeholders with an interest in the I-526 LCC WEST project.



## *Community Resource Guide*

Help sustain livability within affected EJ neighborhoods by increasing residents' access to local organizations, resources, and other information on the following topics:

- food insecurities
- health and wellness
- home repair
- financial assistance
- minority-owned businesses
- referral agencies.

# Residential Displacements

## *Affordable Housing*

- SCDOT is partnering with the South Carolina State Housing and Finance and Development Authority (SC Housing) to build 100 new affordable housing units as close to the impacted communities as possible. Units must be located within the North Charleston city limits.
- SCDOT will partner with a local non-profit organization who specializes in affordable housing to implement a Single-Family Affordable Replacement Housing Program.

## *Financial Literacy and First Time Home Buyer Counseling*

- Partnerships with local organizations such as the Trident Urban League
- Provide financial literacy and first-time home buyer counseling to displaced residents
- Assist residents in securing residential loans and transitioning from renters to homeowners.
- ***The counseling will occur in group and individual classes and will be initiated during June 2021.***





# Recreational Amenities

## *Facilities and Amenities*

- Partner with the City of North Charleston to fund the construction of one replacement community center, two pocket parks, and associated infrastructure

### **Approved Amenities**

- Flexible space/classrooms
- Basketball courts
- Wi-Fi and internet access
- Emergency generators and refrigerators
- Facility approaches to be well-lit
- Multi-use path
- Crosswalks/traffic calming
- Multiple pedestrian access points
- Walkways, common spaces to be user-friendly
- Wayfarer/directional signs to help guide residents to new facilities
- A community garden
- An educational wetland
- Covered shelters/grills
- Audio/visual equipment
- Mural in the community center



*To be completed prior to the start of construction of the I-526 LCC WEST improvements*

# Recreational Amenities



## ***Programs and Activities – Pending approval from the City of North Charleston***

- Partner with the City of North Charleston to develop programs, services, and arrangements for long-term operation and maintenance of the replacement community center and amenities.
- Priority will be given to residents of the four impacted EJ communities
- The City will encourage residents of the four impacted EJ communities to apply for jobs at the replacement community center
- Potential programs and activities could include, but are not be limited to:
  - Senior and youth-focused programs and activities,
  - A monthly programming/activity calendar
  - A yearly calendar of community center events focusing on fostering community cohesion
  - Programming that provides access to educational and financial resources for community advocacy and self-advocacy,
  - Inclusion of a community garden at the recreational facility to serve as both an educational program and effort to mitigate neighborhoods' location in known food desert, and/or,
  - Maintenance of stormwater detention as an educational wetland to be used for educational purposes during summer programs.



# Educational & Employment Opportunities

## *College Aid Initiative*

- Increased fund to \$100,000
- Relocated residents will still be eligible to participate
- CAC will develop the criteria for eligibility
- SCDOT will distribute the funds

## *School-to-Work Program*

- Partner with local educational institutions
- Goal of enhancing employment opportunities within the fields of construction, engineering, and transportation
- During ROW phase, SCDOT will hire up to ten high school or college students from the impacted EJ communities

## *Pre-Employment Training*

- Provide training and job readiness skills to individuals from the impacted EJ communities



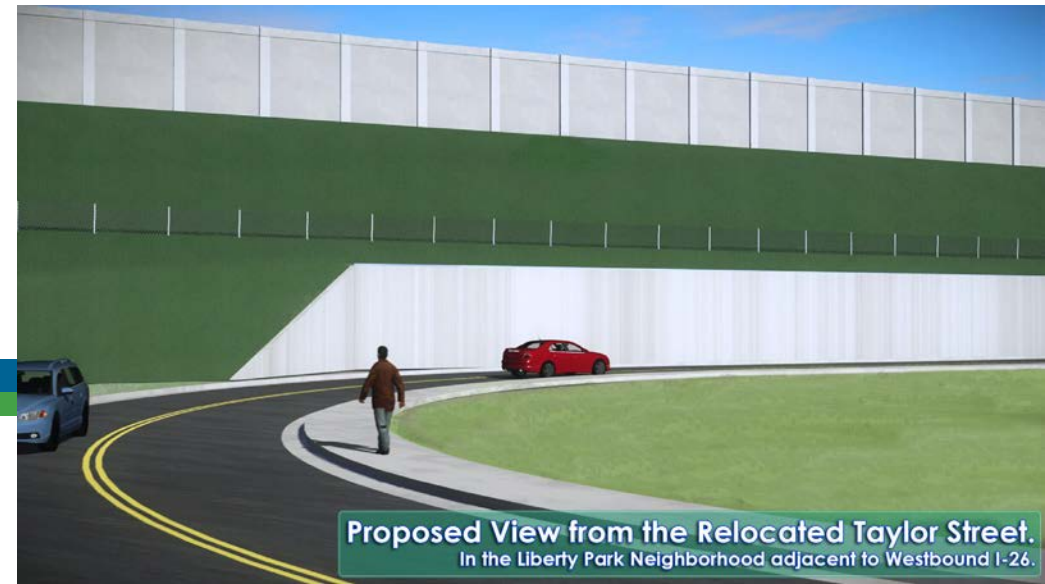
# Community Initiatives

## *Community History Preservation Study*

- Document the cultural history and character of the impacted EJ communities
- Began collecting information March 6, 2021, *interviews will start April 2021.*

## *Mitigation Barriers*

- To be built on either side of the I-26 corridor from south of Remount Rd to the southern end of the Highland Terrace neighborhood
- SCDOT will research techniques to reduce bridge joint noise on I-526



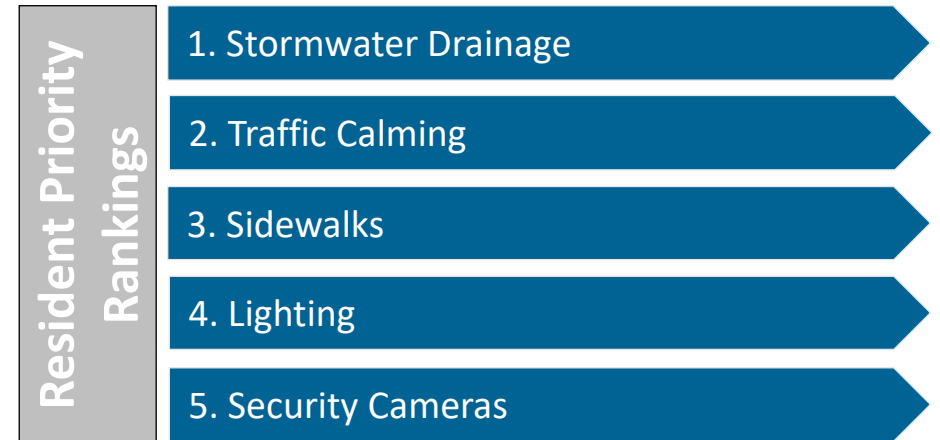
# Community Initiatives

## *Community Infrastructure Enhancement Plan (CIEP)*

Improvements to:

- Bicycle and Pedestrian Connectivity and Safety
- Bus Shelter Amenities
- Pedestrian Lighting
- Traffic Calming Measures
- Stormwater Infrastructure
- Landscaping and Aesthetics

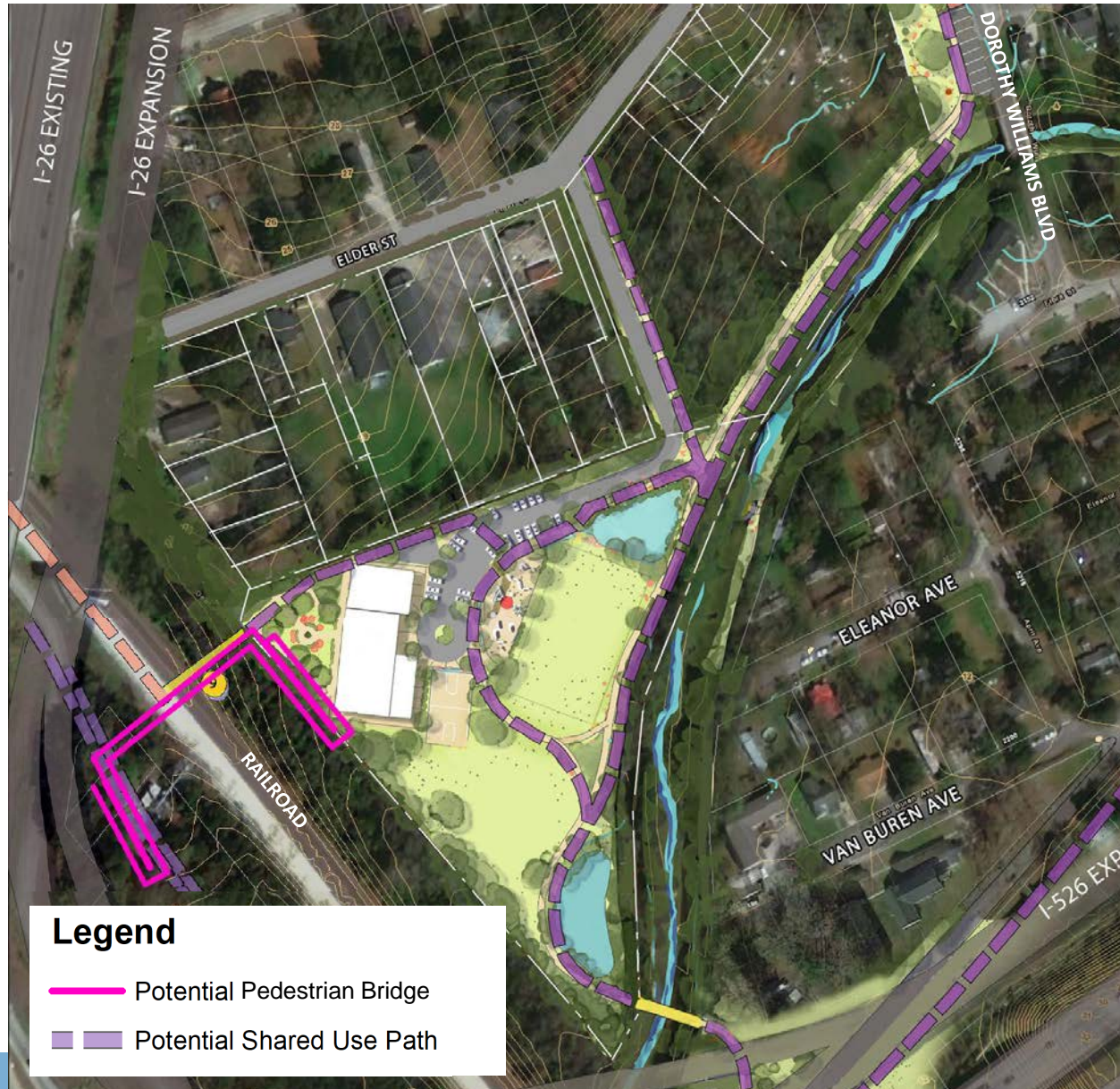
Locations for improvements were determined by CIEP survey participants, attendees at the CIEP Open House, and members of the CAC.



89% of survey respondents live in impacted EJ Neighborhoods



# CIEP: Pedestrian Bridge Update



## *Potential Pedestrian Bridges (pink)*

- Improved Highland Terrace and Joppa Way connectivity to replacement community center
- Includes a small bridge over Filbin Creek for connectivity to Russelldale
- Located near existing footpaths across the railroad tracks to help prevent trespassing and provide safe crossing over the tracks
- Additional fencing may be required near the railroad tracks



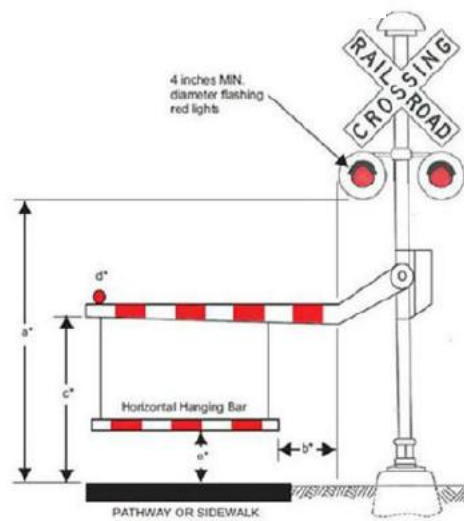
# CIEP: Safer Railroad Crossing

## *Taylor Street at Jonah Street*

- Primary route for Highland Terrace and Joppa Way residents to access *Highland Terrace-Liberty Park pocket park*
- Identified multiple times as a location needing pedestrian improvements in the CIEP survey
- CAC members have noted safety concerns at the railroad crossing
- Rail traffic projected to increase in future years



Opportunity to install pedestrian protection measures such as a crossing gate and upgraded signing





# Next Steps

- Develop Outreach and Marketing Plan for current and future EJ Community Mitigation Plan elements
- Develop EJ Community Mitigation Implementation Schedule: Includes construction activities, employment and financial training, scholarship and other programs
- Work with CAC and residents to develop the **Project Oversight Committee** – Training: May – September, First Meeting 11/2021
- **On-going:** CHPP, First-time Home Buyer/Financial Literacy Training, FHWA sponsored Personal and Professional Development classes



## Meeting Summary

I-526 LCC WEST Agency Coordination Meeting

Microsoft Teams

June 9, 2021 10:00AM

### Attendees

FHWA	Shane Belcher	NOAA	Cynthia Cooksey
NPS	Alexis John	USACE	Richard Darden
USCG	Randall Overton	USEPA	Alya Singh-White
USFWS	Mark Caldwell	SCDAH	
SCDHEC	Logan Ress	SCDHEC OCRM	Josh Hoke
SCDNR	Susan Davis	SCDOT	Joy Riley Chad Long Will McGoldrick David Kelly
SCPRT	Justin Hancock	HDR	Blair Wade
Three Oaks Engineering	Mark Mohr Russell Chandler Karen Taylor	Stantec	Amy Sackaroff Ryan White
CDM Smith	Amy Livingston	CESC	Kally McCormick

### Introductions

The purpose of this meeting is to provide agencies with updates on the project schedule, permitting approvals and give the meeting attendees the opportunity to ask questions and provide initial comments on their review of the draft FEIS-ROD that was sent out for review last month.

### Schedule Update & Permitting Approvals

- SCDOT received a notification in May from USACE that portions of wetlands surrounding the Centre Pointe development in North Charleston were placed under restrictive covenants that outlines protective measures put in place to mitigate impacts to waters of the US on undeveloped lands associated with this development.
- The I-526 LCC WEST project will need to acquire right of way from a portion of lands that fall under the restrictive covenants and will also have unavoidable impacts to a portion of the protected waters of the US on these lands.
- Total wetland impacts associated with this project have not changed; however, additional mitigation credits are needed to offset the loss of mitigation for the Centre Pointe development.
- The permitting approval date for the Section 401 Water Quality Certification and the Critical Area Permit will need to move, from May to June and June to July 2021 respectively. This additional review time is needed to develop/submit revised permit drawings that include information on wetlands under the restrictive covenants and recalculate/update the required mitigation credits.
- These changes will not affect the overall Section 404 permitting schedule or the FEIS-ROD schedule.

### FEIS Review and Discussion

- Draft FEIS-ROD was sent to FHWA-SC and agencies for their review on 5-21. Comments from agencies are due on 6-21.
- FHWA-SC office provided comments on the Draft document on 6-3.
- Comments received from USCG on the DEIS have been addressed.



June 9, 2021  
I-526 LCC WEST Agency Coordination Meeting  
Page 2 of 2

- SCDOT has not received any negative feedback related to the conversion for the parks/community centers.

#### Discussion/Questions

- None

#### Deliverables/Due Out Items

- Revised Permit Drawings to be submitted week of June 14<sup>th</sup>.
  - \*Note-revised drawings were submitted June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Next Meeting July 14, 2021, at 10:00 AM via TEAMS, Outlook invite sent.

Permitting Timetable

Revised 06/15/2021



2019	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Action					CP ACP + Purpose and Need  USCG Navigation Data Report to USCG	USCG Preliminary Navigation Determination Issued  Consultation initiated with SHPO/THPO  Section 106 Consultation initiated (6/18)	Submit JD and CALP packages  NOAA Initially Contacted Regarding MMPA Consultation	Agency Meeting to Discuss Alternatives Evaluation Process/Criteria & Preliminary Range of Alternatives (8/14)  CP Agency Milestones and Permitting Timetable	Agency Meeting to Discuss Mitigation Needs Assessment (9/11)	Agency Meeting to Discuss Alternatives Analysis and Reasonable Alternatives (10/9)  JD + Critical Area Line Plat Approvals	NOI issued (11/8)  Det. of Applicability of Section 4(f)  Agency Meeting (11/13)  Section 106 Consulting parties invited  Public Information Meeting (11/21)	Agency Meeting to Discuss Mitigation Alternatives (12/11)
2020	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Action	Agency Meeting to review Public Comment (1/8)	CP Alternatives Carried Forward  Agency Workshop to Discuss Interchange Design Alternatives (2/12)  Initial 6(f) Application received	Agency Meeting to Discuss Update on Mitigation Needs Assessment (3/11)	Request for ESA Consultation Report (NOAA)	Agency Meeting to Discuss Proposed Preferred Alternative  Draft EFH assessment submitted (5/8)	CP Preferred Alternative  Section 106 determination of effect made by FHWA	NOAA receives Complete EFH Assessment to initiate EFH Consultation (7/8)  Pre-Application Meeting with Agencies (Fed & State) Public Hearing Agency Planning Meeting  Consultation with SHPO/THPO on Preferred Alternative  Section 7 Consultation Package complete (NOAA)	Application Submittal-Individual 404 Permit/USCG  Initial State Application received CAP, 401	Section 106 consultation concluded  NOAA issues response to EFH assessment (9/8)  Completed 6(f) Application received	DEIS Notice of Availability  Public Notice: USACE/USCG/CAP /401  FWCA Review initiated  Request for ESA Consultation Report (USFWS)	Public Hearing-Joint Notice to cover all agencies  FWCA Comments to USACE  Section 7 Conclusion of Consultation/Issuance of Biological Opinion (NOAA/USFWS)	Revised EFH Assessment to NOAA (12/1)
2021	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Action	Comments Due: 404b.1/401/CAP/USCG  Revised Section 7 Consultation Package complete (?) (NOAA/USFWS)  Revised EFH Consultation Package complete (NOAA)	Agency Meeting to discuss Comments	Response to Comments due to USACE/OCRM / USCG/DHEC  Revised Section 7 Conclusion of Consultation/Issuance of Biological Opinion (NOAA/USFWS)  Revised EFH Conclusion/ Issuance of Decision (NOAA)			Revised Permit Drawings due to Regulatory Agencies week of June 14th  401 Decision	Critical Area Permit		Coordination with/Concurrence from Officials with Jurisdiction 4(f)  Section 6(f) Issuance of Decision for Permit/Approval & NTP	FEIS/ROD Approval (30 day wait period) USACE Prepares Draft ROD  FHWA Approval/Conclusion of Section 4(f)	USACE Permit Decision/Signs ROD 30 days after FEIS; Complete Application submitted to USCG	USCG Permit Decision
2022	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
		90 Day post ROD period ends										

Adjustments to the proposed schedule may be made when sufficient information is available for an agency to proceed with an action so long as that action does not adversely affect the overall permitting timeline.

Unless specified, an action within a month will be completed by the end of the month.

A 10-day comment period will be requested for each Concurrence Point.

Public Notice must occur by 10/2 or schedule shifts

 = Completed Milestone

Milestone	Date
<b>FHWA / Section 4(f)</b>	
Determination of Applicability of Section 4(f)	November 2019
Coordination with /Concurrence from Officials with Jurisdiction	September 2021
FHWA Approval/Conclusion of Section 4(f)	October 2021
<b>State or Sponsor / Potential National Park Service / Section 106* Review</b>	
Consultation initiated with SHPO/THPO	June 18, 2019
Consulting Parties Invited	November 2019
Determination of effect made by FHWA	June 2020
ACHP Provided Opportunity to Comment	TBD
National Historic Landmark- National Park Service Concurrence	N/A
Section 106 Consultation Concluded	September 2020
*Conclusion of Section 106 can be: 1) No historic properties affected, 2) Finding of no adverse effect, or 3) Memorandum of agreement or programmatic agreement, or other conclusion to resolve adverse effects reached	
<b>U.S. Army Corps of Engineers / Section 404 Clean Water Act and Section 10 Rivers and Harbors Act, Individual Permit</b>	
Joint Application Received	August 2020
Publication of Public Notice	October 30, 2020
Response to comments	March 2021
Revised Permit Drawings Submitted	June 15, 2021
Permit Decision Rendered	November 2021
<b>U.S. Coast Guard / Bridge Permit</b>	
Navigation Data Received	May 21, 2019
Issued Navigation Determination	June 11, 2019
Application Received	August 2020
Updated Application Received	October 15, 2020

Milestone	Date
<b>U.S. Coast Guard / Bridge Permit</b>	
Publication of Public Notice	October 30, 2020
Application Deemed Complete	November 2021
Permit Decision Rendered	December 2021

<b>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service / Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act Review (Part of Section 404 CWA)</b>	
Process initiated by Public Notice	October 2020
Comments to USACE	November 2020

<b>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service / Section 7 Endangered Species Act Consultation</b>	
Request for ESA Consultation Report	October 30, 2020
Revised ESA Consultation Package submitted	December 1 2020

<b>National Marine Fisheries Service / Section 7 Endangered Species Act Consultation</b>	
Request for ESA Consultation Received	April 1, 2020
Consultation Package deemed complete (Formal or Informal Consultation)	July 1, 2020
Revised ESA Consultation Package received	December 1, 2020
Consultation Package deemed complete	January 4, 2021
Conclusion of Informal Consultation/Issuance of Biological Opinion	March 1, 2021 (received 2-16-21)

<b>National Marine Fisheries Service / Essential Fish Habitat Consultation</b>	
Draft EFH assessment submitted	May 8, 2020



Milestone	Date
<b>National Marine Fisheries Service / Essential Fish Habitat Consultation</b>	
Complete EFH assessment	July 8, 2020
Revised EFH assessment received	December 1, 2020
Consultation Package deemed complete	January 4, 2021
NOAA issues Response to revised EFH assessment	March 1, 2021 (issued 2-26-21)
<b>National Park Service / Section 6(f) Land and Water Conservation Fund Act</b>	
Initial Application Received	February 2020
Completed Application Received	September 2020
Issuance of Decision for Permit/Approval	September 2021
Notice to Proceed	September 2021
<b>State, Local, Other Non Federal Agency / Dependent Action (CWA Section 401 WQC, Section 402 Permit, etc.)</b>	
Initial Application Received	August 2020
Response to comments	March 2021
Issuance of Permit/Approval	June/July 2021

**From:** [McGoldrick, Will](#)  
**To:** [alexis\\_john@nps.gov](#); [Amanda. L. Heath - ACE \(Amanda.L.Heath@usace.army.mil\)](#); [Andrew Herndon \(andrew.herndon@noaa.gov\)](#); [Anita Barnett \(anita\\_barnett@nps.gov\)](#); [Austin, Stan J; bbarnes@estoo.net](#); [Beckham, Chris](#); [Belcher, Jeffery - FHWA](#); [BoylesR@dnr.sc.gov](#); [caitlinh@ccppcrafts.com](#); [Stout, Christopher; clowe@mcn-nsn.gov](#); [Connolly, Sean](#); [Cynthia Cooksey cynthia.cooksey@noaa.gov](#); [daviss@dnr.sc.gov](#); [Elizabeth Johnson](#); [Geni Theriot; hightocw@dhec.sc.gov](#); [Hoke, Joshua D.](#); [jaclyn.daly@noaa.gov](#); [jhancock@scprt.com](#); [Karen Taylor](#); [Kelly Laycock \(laycock.kelly@epa.gov\)](#); [Kelly, David P.](#); [kelly.shotts@noaa.gov](#); [Ress, Logan D.](#); [Long, Chad C.](#); [lwendt@mcn-nsn.gov](#); [Mark Mohr](#); [Mark Caldwell@fws.gov](#); [Martin, James - FHWA](#); [Mims, Christopher D SAC](#); [mixong@dnr.sc.gov](#); [noah.silverman@noaa.gov](#); [pace.wilber@noaa.gov](#); [Randall Overton \(Randall.D.Overton@uscg.mil\)](#); [Richard Darden \(Richard.L.Darden@usace.army.mil\)](#); [richard.fickley@noaa.gov](#); [Riggin Lori Ann \("RigginL@dnr.sc.gov"\)](#); [Riley, Joy S.](#); [Russell Chandler](#); [Saint-Surin, Sandra \(FHWA\)](#); [Singh-White, Alva](#); [Stacie Crowe](#); [Tess Trumbull trumbunt@dhec.sc.gov](#); [thomas\\_mccoy@fws.gov](#); [Tom Daniel \(daniel@dnr.sc.gov\)](#); [Wade, Blair](#); [wenonahh@ccppcrafts.com](#); [williabn@dhec.sc.gov](#)  
**Subject:** July 526 LCC West Agency Meeting: CANCELLATION NOTICE  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 6, 2021 3:24:14 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)

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All,

Hope you had a relaxing and enjoyable Independence Day weekend. I wanted to let you know that we will *not* be meeting for the July Agency meeting for 526 LCC West. I felt it would be better to simply provide a written update on the project versus taking your time to call in and listen to me palavering about schedule updates.

Our most recent action items included receiving comments from agencies and incorporating recommendations/comments into the final draft version of the FEIS for FHWA review. The team has been hard at work on getting that draft ready. It was provided to FHWA SC last Friday (7-2). The draft is set to be provided to FHWA HQ for their review during the month of July and then on to FHWA Legal the first part of August for another 30 day review. We anticipate all FHWA comments being provided by the first part of September.

Two other milestones were recently completed, the issuance of the DHEC 401 Water Quality Assessment and OCRM CZC for the freshwater impacts. With the recent adjustment to the timetable and milestone schedule, OCRM is due to complete its review of all critical area impacts by the end of July. So far we are on track for our overall schedule and look forward to maintaining that momentum.

Again, we will NOT be meeting for July's meeting unless you or your agency has a topic or discussion item needing to be addressed. If that is the case, please let me know by COB tomorrow (7-7).

Otherwise I will ask Mark Mohr to cancel the invitation for next week's meeting. We will keep August's meeting open and available. Have a great week.

Respectfully,



**Will McGoldrick, Assoc. DBIA**

*Design-Build Environmental Coordinator*

**P** 803-737-1326      **E** [mcgoldrwr@scdot.org](mailto:mcgoldrwr@scdot.org)

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**LET 'EM WORK. LET 'EM LIVE.**

**From:** [McGoldrick, Will](#)  
**To:** [alexis\\_john@nps.gov](#); [Amanda. L. Heath - ACE \(Amanda.L.Heath@usace.army.mil\)](#); [Andrew Herndon \(andrew.herndon@noaa.gov\)](#); [Anita Barnett \(anita\\_barnett@nps.gov\)](#); [Austin, Stan J; bbarnes@estoo.net](#); [Beckham, Chris](#); [Belcher, Jeffery - FHWA](#); [BoylesR@dnr.sc.gov](#); [Bridges, Martin A CIV DHS \(USA\)](#); [caitlinh@ccppcrafts.com](#); [Stout, Christopher](#); [clowe@mcn-nsn.gov](#); [Connolly, Sean](#); [Cynthia Cooksey cynthia.cooksey@noaa.gov](#); [daviss@dnr.sc.gov](#); [Elizabeth Johnson](#); [hightocw@dhec.sc.gov](#); [Hoke, Joshua D.](#); [jaclyn.daly@noaa.gov](#); [jhancock@scprt.com](#); [Karen Taylor](#); [Kelly Laycock \(laycock.kelly@epa.gov\)](#); [Kelly, David P.](#); [kelly.shotts@noaa.gov](#); [Ress, Logan D.](#); [Long, Chad C.](#); [lwendt@mcn-nsn.gov](#); [Mark Mohr](#); [Mark\\_Caldwell@fws.gov](#); [Martin, James - FHWA](#); [mixong@dnr.sc.gov](#); [noah.silverman@noaa.gov](#); [pace.wilber@noaa.gov](#); [Randall Overton \(Randall.D.Overton@uscg.mil\)](#); [Richard Darden \(Richard.L.Darden@usace.army.mil\)](#); [richard.fickley@noaa.gov](#); [Riggin Lori Ann \("RigginL@dnr.sc.gov"\)](#); [Riley, Joy S.](#); [Russell Chandler](#); [Saint-Surin, Sandra \(FHWA\)](#); [Singh-White, Alva](#); [Stacie Crowe](#); [Tess Trumbull trumbumt@dhec.sc.gov](#); [thomas\\_mccoy@fws.gov](#); [Tom Daniel \(danielt@dnr.sc.gov\)](#); [Wade, Blair](#); [wenonahh@ccppcrafts.com](#); [williabn@dhec.sc.gov](#)  
**Subject:** 526 LCC August Agency Meeting  
**Date:** Friday, August 6, 2021 8:37:49 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[I-526 LCC WEST Permitting Table 08032021.pdf](#)  
[I-526 LCC WEST Agency Milestones 08042021.pdf](#)

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All,

On behalf of the project team, I wanted to provide an update on the project. As reported in June, the Final EIS has been sent to FHWA HQ for review. We anticipate comments being prepared and sent early next week and then the FEIS will be on its way to FHWA Legal for 30 days. Since there really has been no change since June, we are going to CANCEL the agency meeting in August. I will have Three Oaks send a meeting cancellation next week if there are no topics of interest suggested. However, if you have a topic or item of discussion, please let Shane or me know and we can certainly have the meeting if needed.

There is one item I need to update the agencies about. I am very pleased to say that the CAP was approved on 8/4/21. As per our Agency Coordination Plan, we needed to revise the Agency Milestone Table and Permitting Schedule documents to reflect the date change. Those documents are attached for review.

FHWA updated their Dashboard to have a due date of 8-31 and the documents have been adjusted accordingly so they are consistent. Please review the updated documents for upcoming milestones/due dates and please let me know if there are any present concerns with due dates. We'd like to go ahead and make adjustments if needed. The next major milestones are next month and relate to 4f and 6f and then in November.

Respectfully,



**Will McGoldrick, Assoc. DBIA**

*Design-Build Environmental Coordinator*

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# Meeting Summary

## I-526 LCC WEST Agency Coordination Meeting

Microsoft Teams

September 8, 2021 10:00AM

### Attendees

<b>FHWA</b>	Shane Belcher Jim Martin Sandra Saint-Surin	<b>NOAA</b>	Cynthia Cooksey
<b>NPS</b>	Alexis John	<b>USACE</b>	
<b>USCG</b>		<b>USEPA</b>	
<b>USFWS</b>	Mark Caldwell	<b>SCDAH</b>	
<b>SCDHEC</b>	Logan Ress	<b>SCDHEC OCRM</b>	Josh Hoke Chris Stout
<b>SCDNR</b>		<b>SCDOT</b>	Chad Long Will McGoldrick Joy Riley
<b>SCPRT</b>		<b>HDR</b>	Blair Wade
<b>Three Oaks Engineering</b>	Mark Mohr Karen Taylor	<b>Stantec</b>	
<b>CDM Smith</b>		<b>CESC</b>	

### Introductions

The purpose of this meeting is to provide agencies with updates on the FEIS/ROD review and schedule, Section 6(f) conversion, Section 4(f) mitigation/Russelldale pocket park, EJ mitigation, and permitting.

### FEIS-ROD Review and Schedule

- Draft FEIS-ROD was provided to agencies for their review and to provide comments.
- Received comments on draft document from FHWA Head Quarters last month.
- Draft document is currently undergoing legal sufficiency review. Will be to receiving comments soon.
- Looking at middle of October to upload final FEIS-ROD onto EPA's website and will have the final document available by end of October.

### Section 6(f) Conversion Update

- There are no changes from what was previously proposed, i.e., 0.27 acre of impact to the Highland Terrace Community Center on Taylor Street.
- SCPRT requested an updated appraisal for the remnant area that will be acquired that will be used for the Section 6(f) conversion of the proposed Highland Terrace Community Pocket Park.
- SCDOT anticipate having appraisal completed by Sept 15, 2021.
- SCPRT will need to do an independent review of the appraisal.
- Permitting dashboard currently has the Section 6(f) approval at the end of September 2021.
- SCDOT asked if NPS will need anything else. NPS can do cursory review while waiting for the update appraisal to be finalized but cannot give final approval without the updated appraisal.

### Section 4(f) Mitigation – Russelldale Pocket Park Update

- Russelldale Community Center will be impacted by the I-526 LCC WEST project.



September 8, 2021  
I-526 LCC WEST Agency Coordination Meeting  
Page 2 of 3

- Project team worked with the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) on trying to retain some recreational amenities within the Russelldale community. This has been challenging because of limited availability of vacant land that will be suitable for a pocket park.
- Previously identified site for the Russelldale pocket park on the corner of Rebecca Street and Rockingham Street is no longer available.
- SCDOT is looking at 2 options for potential parcels that are suitable for a pocket park; one option is
- Option 1 is on the corner of Russelldale Ave. and Twitty Street within Russelldale community.
- Option 2 is the proposed Filbin Creek Pocket Park at Van Buren Ave. that was previously considered.
- Both options will be presented at the CAC meeting this month for input.

### **EJ Mitigation Update**

- CAC letter from March 2021 gave feedback on EJ Community Mitigation Plan with specific concerns, including the following:
  - New community center should also serve as community shelter during emergency events with adequate refrigeration.
  - Multi-modal routes
  - Concern about child safety near creek - putting up signs or other protective measures
  - Request flexibility in design of new community center that will include multifunctional rooms.

Concern about future congestion at Rivers Ave. SCDOT presented modeling of future traffic which included local routes like Rivers Ave in its evaluation.

- Advocacy group funding - facilitator is working with CAC and will continue to do so
- Seed funding – SCDOT not able to provide it because CAC not set up to receive funds.
- Educational employment initiative - increased from 50K-100K
  - Increased duration of scholarship funding period
  - SCDOT is open to develop sub-committee to develop parameters for programs - looking for input from CAC and community to help set parameters
- Building noise walls on I-26, ground mounted barriers
- Noise abatement on I-526 – SCDOT is putting requirement on contractor to address noise concerns during final designs
- SCDOT were able to address most of their concerns and provided a written response back to the CAC in July 2021.
- Moving forward with Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with N. Charleston and hoping to have it finalized by the end of this month.

### **Permitting Update**

- Still on schedule to provide USACE with a signed document by end of October 2021.
  - Should have 404 permit approval by end of November 2021.
- DHEC/401 Certification and Critical Area Permit have been received.
- USCG Permit decision end of December 2021.
- NPS will need a 2 to 3-week review period once information is submitted to the appropriate people.
  - Anticipate having Section 6(f) approval in early October.





September 8, 2021  
I-526 LCC WEST Agency Coordination Meeting  
Page 3 of 3

- FHWA to change the Section 6(f) approval date on the permitting dashboard to October 31, 2021.

**Discussion/Questions**

- None

**Deliverables/Due Out Items**

- SCDOT to update Permitting Timetable and Agency Milestones--Complete
- FHWA to update dashboard--Complete

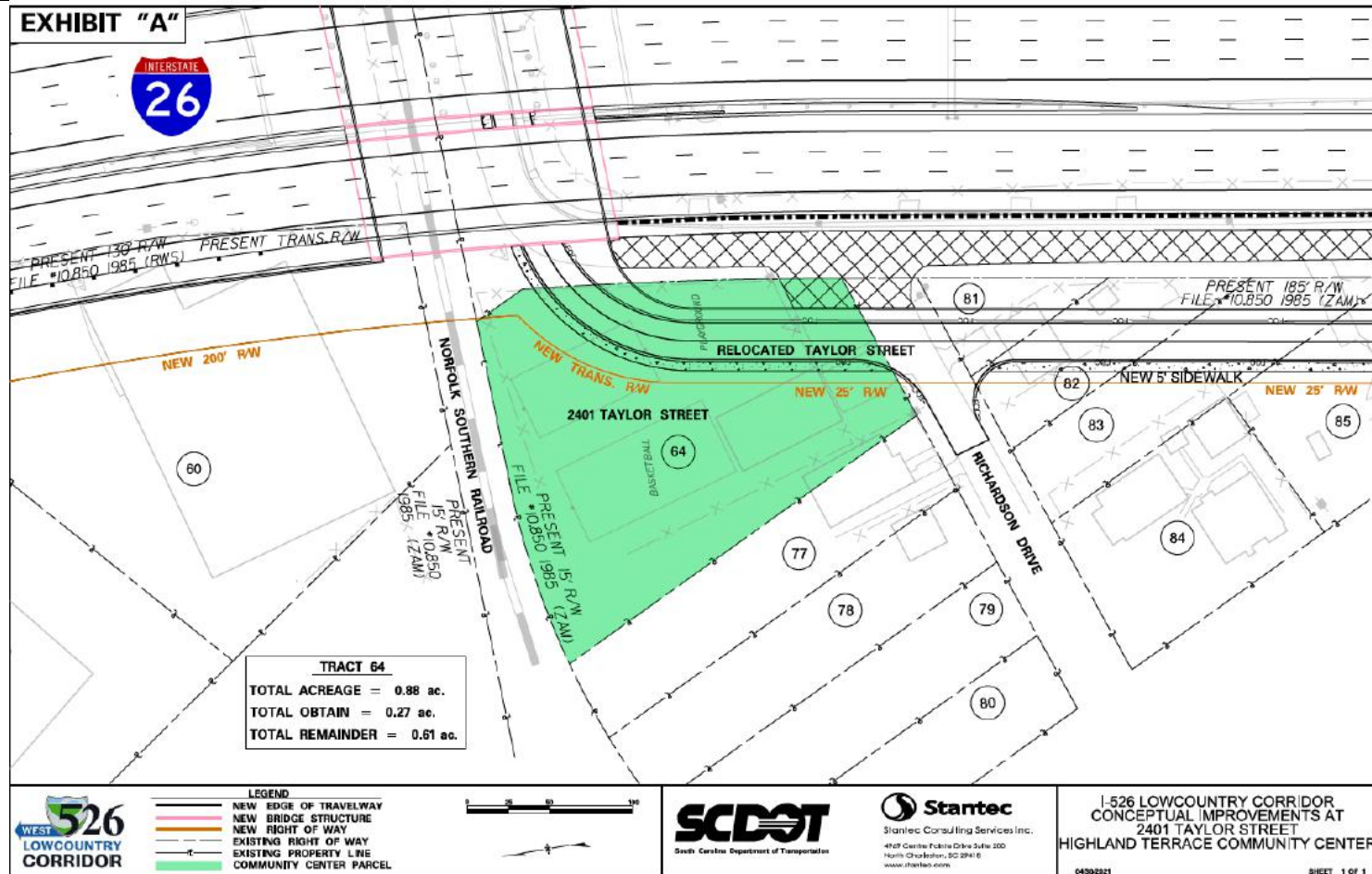
**Next Meeting October 13, 2021, at 10:00 AM via TEAMS, Outlook invite sent.**



# Section 6(f) Update

*Highland Terrace/Liberty Park Community Center*





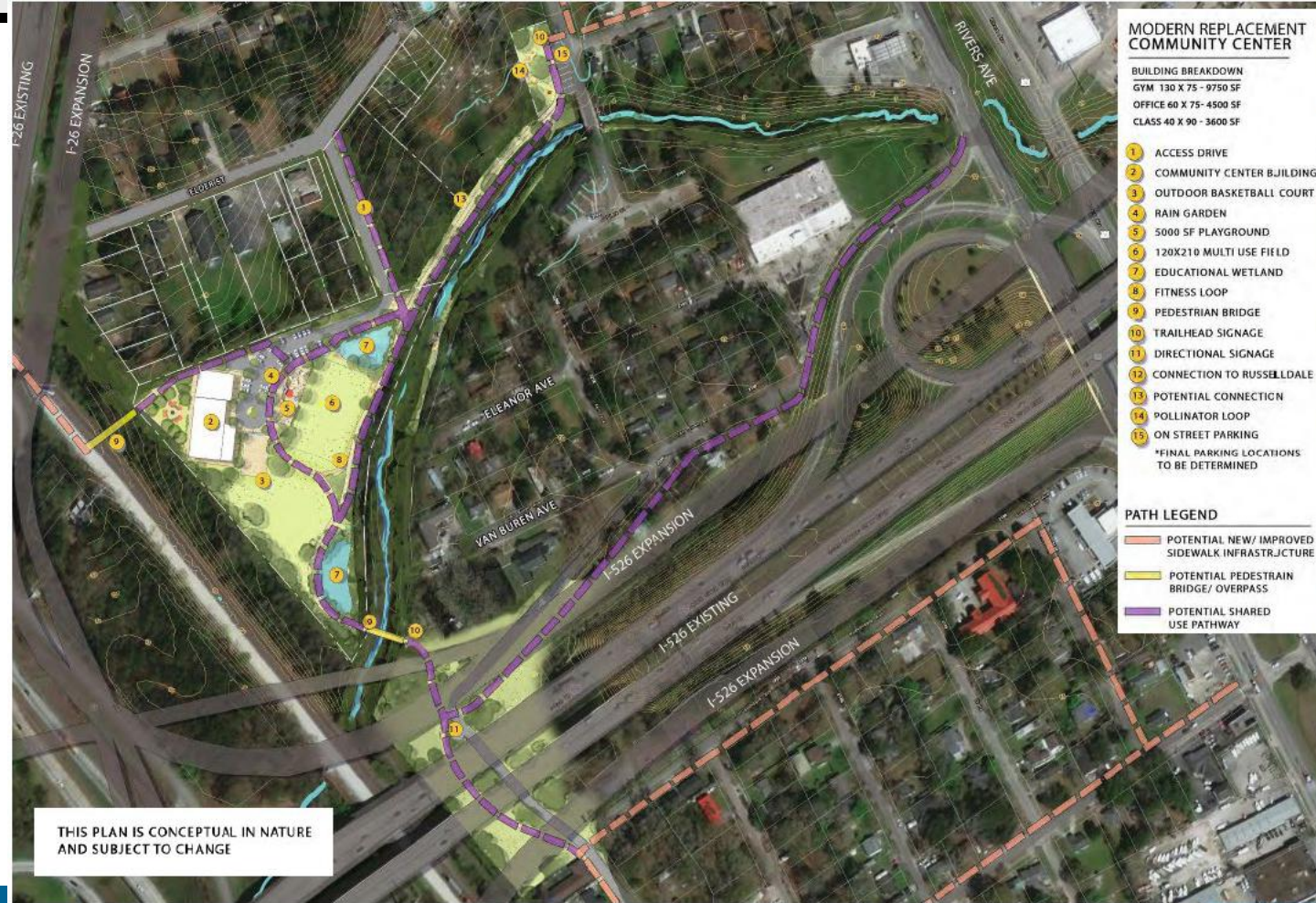
.27 acre of impact



# Highland Terrace Community Pocket Park







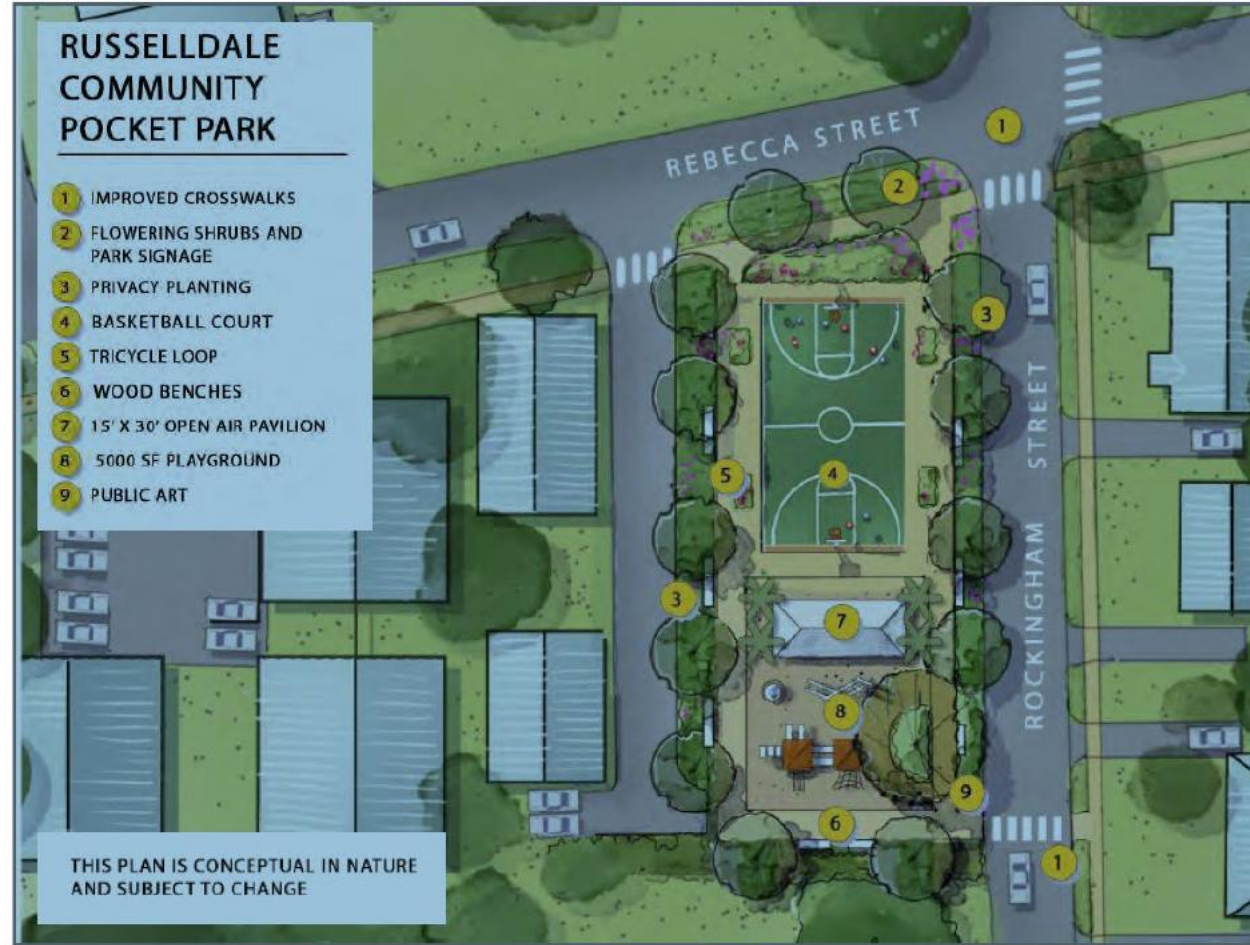




# Section 4(f) Update

*Russelldale Pocket Park*









**RUSSELDALE  
COMMUNITY  
POCKET PARK**

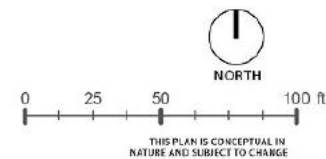
**OPTION 1**

- 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



**FILBIN CREEK  
POCKET PARK  
AT VAN BUREN**

- 1 PARK ENTRY SIGNAGE
- 2 FULL COURT BASKETBALL
- 3 WOOD BENCHES
- 4 TRICYCLE LOOP
- 5 4000 SF PLAYGROUND
- 6 FILBIN CREEK OVERLOOK
- 7 30'X15' PICNIC SHELTER







# EJ Mitigation Update

*March 2021 Letter from CAC*





- Replacement Community Center Design: backup generator, emergency shelter, refrigeration, multiple vehicular and pedestrian routes, child safety near creek, flexible facility design (i.e. partitions)
- Future Congestion at Rivers and I-26
- Organizational Training and Advocacy Group Funding
- Educational and Employment Initiatives
  - Increase scholarship funding to \$100,000 from \$50,000
  - Increase scholarship availability throughout period of construction
  - Concerns over the School to Work Program and Summer Transportation Institute
- Noise: I-526 Design

**From:** [McGoldrick, Will](#)  
**To:** [alexis\\_john@nps.gov](#); [Amanda. L. Heath - ACE \(Amanda.L.Heath@usace.army.mil\)](#); [Andrew Herndon \(andrew.herndon@noaa.gov\)](#); [Anita Barnett \(anita\\_barnett@nps.gov\)](#); [bbarnes@estoo.net](#); [Beckham, Chris](#); [Belcher, Jeffery - FHWA](#); [BoylesR@dnr.sc.gov](#); [Bridges, Martin A CIV DHS \(USA\)](#); [caitlinh@ccppcrafts.com](#); [Stout, Christopher](#); [clowe@mcn-nsn.gov](#); [Connolly, Sean](#); [Cynthia Cooksey \(cynthia.cooksey@noaa.gov\)](#); [daviss@dnr.sc.gov](#); [Elizabeth Johnson](#); [hightocw@dhec.sc.gov](#); [Hoke, Joshua D.](#); [jadyn.daly@noaa.gov](#); [jhancock@scprt.com](#); [Karen Taylor](#); [Kelly Laycock \(laycock.kelly@epa.gov\)](#); [Kelly, David P.](#); [kelly.shotts@noaa.gov](#); [Ress, Logan D.](#); [Long, Chad C.](#); [lwendt@mcn-nsn.gov](#); [M Jamison](#); [Mark Mohr](#); [Mark\\_Caldwell@fws.gov](#); [Martin, James - FHWA](#); [mixong@dnr.sc.gov](#); [noah.silverman@noaa.gov](#); [pace.wilber@noaa.gov](#); [Randall Overton \(Randall.D.Overton@uscg.mil\)](#); [Richard Darden \(Richard.L.Darden@usace.army.mil\)](#); [richard.fickley@noaa.gov](#); [Riggin Lori Ann \("RigginL@dnr.sc.gov"\)](#); [Riley, Joy S.](#); [Saint-Surin, Sandra \(FHWA\)](#); [Singh-White, Alya](#); [Stacie Crowe](#); [Tess Trumbull trumbumt@dhec.sc.gov](#); [thomas\\_mccoy@fws.gov](#); [Tom Daniel \(danielt@dnr.sc.gov\)](#); [Wade, Blair](#); [wenonahh@ccppcrafts.com](#); [williabn@dhec.sc.gov](#)  
**Subject:** 526 LCC West Agency Meeting for October 2021  
**Date:** Wednesday, October 6, 2021 8:16:54 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)

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All,

I wanted to provide an update on the 526 LCC West project. We will **not** be holding our regularly scheduled meeting next Wednesday (10-13) due to the fact that we are still finalizing and addressing comments on the FEIS as additional reviews occurred at FHWA. Therefore, more updates/revisions are being made to the document and relevant appendices to clarify, explain, and address issues.

Since these edits are more than originally anticipated and additional reviews have occurred, our goal for being able to have a nearly completed document to present this month won't be realized. We wanted to provide an update on where the document stands but didn't want to take your time to present a still incomplete document to everyone knowing updates and changes were still occurring. We did want to let you know that there most likely will be a delay to the present schedule which has the ROD being signed and FEIS/ROD noticed by the end of October.

Per the Agency Coordination Plan we wanted to let everyone know, on behalf of FHWA, the status of the document and that any change in the schedule would be brought before the agencies, as there are other decisions that are precipitated by the FHWA FEIS/ROD. If dates do need to be adjusted, FHWA will coordinate before making any formal changes. We will keep everyone updated as we move towards a final document. If you do have any questions or topics you would like to meet on, please feel free to reach out to Shane or me anytime.

After this is emailed out, I will have Mark (Three Oaks) send out a cancellation for next week's meeting unless I receive a request to hold for another discussion topic.

Respectfully,



**Will McGoldrick, Assoc. DBIA**

*Alternative Delivery Environmental Coordinator*

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**Subject:** November 526 LCC West Agency Meeting  
**Date:** Friday, November 5, 2021 9:08:34 AM  
**Attachments:** [I-526 LCC WEST Agency Milestones 10272021.pdf](#)  
[I-526 LCC WEST Permitting Table 10282021.pdf](#)

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All,

I apologize for the lateness of this email update. Quite a bit of work going on the last week or two here at DOT. I wanted to provide an update to everyone and give a project status. We will **not** be having our agency meeting this month as we are still working through review comments with FHWA on the FEIS and ROD. We appreciate your patience as we work through the process towards our goal of obtaining this approval.

Due to the unanticipated delay in getting the final document approvals for a public notice, we had to update our Permitting Schedule and Milestone Table for federal reporting purposes. We've coordinated with FHWA, USACE, USCG, and NPS on these revisions and feel that they reflect achievable goals barring any additional unanticipated requirements. I've attached the updated documents for your use and file record. As you'll notice, the FHWA FEIS/ROD has been moved to Jan 2022 and the ACE permit to Feb 2022 and CG permit to March. Our completed 6f approval was moved to the end of this month. Those were the major updates that have occurred in the past month.

As always, if you have any questions or comments feel free to reach out to Shane or I any time. We are working diligently to try and wrap up the necessary documentation to complete the document and appreciate everyone's assistance thus far. I will have Mark send out a cancellation notice for the meeting next week. Hope you all have an excellent weekend and remain healthy.

Respectfully,

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**Will McGoldrick, Assoc. DBIA**  
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(o) 803-737-1326

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**Subject:** 526 LCC Monthly Agency Meeting  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 11, 2022 12:58:10 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)

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All,

Hope you had an enjoyable Christmas and New Year. Hard to believe we are a week plus into 2022 already. I wanted to confirm with everyone that we will not be having our monthly meeting as there has been no change in the status of the EIS since our last meeting. We remain on stand-by regarding comments and finalizing the FEIS/ROD. We will keep you posted on progress. Have a great afternoon and rest of the week.

Respectfully,



**Will McGoldrick, Assoc. DBIA**

*Alternative Delivery Environmental Coordinator*

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**To:** [alexis\\_john@nps.gov](#); [Amanda.L.Heath \("Amanda.L.Heath@usace.army.mil"\)](#); [Andrew Herndon \(andrew.herndon@noaa.gov\)](#); [Anita Barnett \(anita\\_barnett@nps.gov\)](#); [bbarnes@estoo.net](#); [Beckham, Chris](#); [Belcher, Jeffery - FHWA](#); [BoylesR@dnr.sc.gov](#); [Bridges, Martin A CIV DHS \(USA\)](#); [caitlinh@ccppcrafts.com](#); [Stout, Christopher](#); [clowe@mcn-nsn.gov](#); [Connolly, Sean](#); [Cynthia Cooksey \("cynthia.cooksey@noaa.gov"\)](#); [daviss@dnr.sc.gov](#); [Elizabeth Johnson](#); [hightocw@dhec.sc.gov](#); [jaclyn.daly@noaa.gov](#); [Jeremy.M.Kinney \(Jeremy.M.Kinney@usace.army.mil\)](#); [jhancock@scprt.com](#); [Karen Taylor](#); [Kelly Laycock \(laycock.kelly@epa.gov\)](#); [Kelly, David P.](#); [kelly.shotts@noaa.gov](#); [Ress, Logan D.](#); [Long, Chad C.](#); [lwendt@mcn-nsn.gov](#); [M Jamison](#); [Mark Mohr](#); [Mark\\_Caldwell@fws.gov](#); [Martin, James - FHWA](#); [mixong@dnr.sc.gov](#); [noah.silverman@noaa.gov](#); [pace.wilber@noaa.gov](#); [Randall Overton \(Randall.D.Overton@uscg.mil\)](#); [richard.fickley@noaa.gov](#); [Riggin Lori Ann \("RigginL@dnr.sc.gov"\)](#); [Riley, Joy S.](#); [Saint-Surin, Sandra \(FHWA\)](#); [Sarah Reed \(reeds2@dhec.sc.gov\)](#); [Singh-White, Alya](#); [Stacie Crowe](#); [Tess Trumbull trumbunt@dhec.sc.gov](#); [thomas\\_mccoy@fws.gov](#); [Tom Daniel \(danielt@dnr.sc.gov\)](#); [Wade, Blair](#); [wenonahh@ccppcrafts.com](#); [williabn@dhec.sc.gov](#)  
**Subject:** 526 LCC West Project Updates and  
**Date:** Monday, January 31, 2022 10:16:09 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[I-526 LCC WEST Agency Milestones 01282022.pdf](#)  
[I-526 LCC WEST Permitting Table 01282022.pdf](#)

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All,

Hope you all are doing well as we approach the second month of a new year. I wanted to bring you up to speed on the project and what's occurred during January. If you will recall from around last October, we had been working on addressing final comments from FHWA when we were informed additional comments were forthcoming but weren't sure when. We made a decision to postpone the FEIS/ROD date until January 31, 2022. Well, that date is upon us. Coordination on those final comments is still ongoing. FHWA made the determination to adjust the FEIS/ROD date on the federal dashboard. This adjustment affects the USACE and USCG permit due dates as well. In accordance with our Agency Coordination Plan, we met with them to discuss the current situation and establish a path forward for how to accomplish all of our goals and still meet federal reporting requirements.

It was determined that a new FEIS/ROD date be set for June 30, 2022, USACE permit for July 29, 2022, and USCG for August 30, 2022. While these dates appear to be far out, they do not preclude deliverables being approved/issued beforehand. Thus, if the FEIS/ROD were approved before the June deadline, the USACE and CG would still complete their assigned task in accordance with the original agreement of 30 days post the previous decision. This arrangement should provide room for the remaining coordination to occur without having to adjust the dates again. Having reached that agreement, we made the necessary updates to the Agency Milestone Table and Permitting Timetable. These are attached for your records and documentation.

Since we have not received the anticipated FHWA comments, there has been little change to the FEIS this month. It was determined that February's agency meeting would be cancelled due to the lack of updates available to share. However, if an agency would like to discuss any topics or feels necessary to discuss any issues, we are open to hosting that. If that is the case, please let me know by COB this Wednesday (2-2-22) so that I can let everyone know. Otherwise, I will have Mark Mohr send out a cancellation notice for February's meeting by the end of the week.

If you have any comments or questions, feel free to reach out to me or Shane.

Respectfully,

**Will McGoldrick, Assoc. DBIA**





*Alternative Delivery Environmental Coordinator*

**P** 803-737-1326      **E** [mcgoldriwr@scdot.org](mailto:mcgoldriwr@scdot.org)

955 Park Street, P.O. Box 191, Columbia, SC  
29202-0191

**LET 'EM WORK. LET 'EM LIVE.**

**From:** [McGoldrick, Will](#)  
**To:** [alexis\\_john@nps.gov](#); [Amanda.L.Heath \("Amanda.L.Heath@usace.army.mil"\)](#); [Andrew Herndon \(andrew.herndon@noaa.gov\)](#); [Anita Barnett \(anita\\_barnett@nps.gov\)](#); [bbarnes@estoo.net](#); [Beckham, Chris](#); [Belcher, Jeffery - FHWA](#); [BoylesR@dnr.sc.gov](#); [Bridges, Martin A CIV DHS \(USA\)](#); [caitlinh@ccppcrafts.com](#); [Stout, Christopher](#); [clowe@mcn-nsn.gov](#); [Connolly, Sean](#); [Cynthia Cooksey \("cynthia.cooksey@noaa.gov"\)](#); [Elizabeth Johnson](#); [hightocw@dhc.sc.gov](#); [jaclyn.daly@noaa.gov](#); [Jeremy.M.Kinney \(Jeremy.M.Kinney@usace.army.mil\)](#); [jhancock@scprt.com](#); [Karen Taylor](#); [Kelly Laycock \(laycock.kelly@epa.gov\)](#); [Kelly, David P.](#); [kelly.shotts@noaa.gov](#); [Ress, Logan D.](#); [Long, Chad C.](#); [lwendt@mcn-nsn.gov](#); [M Jamison](#); [Mark Mohr](#); [Mark\\_Caldwell@fws.gov](#); [Martin, James - FHWA](#); [mixong@dnr.sc.gov](#); [noah.silverman@noaa.gov](#); [pace.wilber@noaa.gov](#); [Randall Overton \(Randall.D.Overton@uscg.mil\)](#); [richard.fickley@noaa.gov](#); [Riggin Lori Ann \("RigginL@dnr.sc.gov"\)](#); [Riley, Joy S.](#); [Saint-Surin, Sandra \(FHWA\)](#); [Sarah Reed \(reeds2@dhc.sc.gov\)](#); [Singh-White, Alya](#); [Stacie Crowe](#); [Tess Trumbull trumbunt@dhc.sc.gov](#); [thomas\\_mccoy@fws.gov](#); [Tom Daniel \(danielt@dnr.sc.gov\)](#); [Wade, Blair](#); [wenonahh@ccppcrafts.com](#); [williabn@dhc.sc.gov](#)  
**Subject:** 526 LCC West Agency Coordination Meeting for March  
**Date:** Monday, February 28, 2022 9:37:36 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)

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Dear All,

Seems like a week ago I was sending out an update on 526 West. The month of February has passed quickly, at least for me. Hope all are well and being productive. We have not received final comments from on the draft FEIS and so are still waiting. In light of that, we will be not be having our monthly agency meeting as there is no new news to report or convey. That should free up an extra in your week. If anyone has any questions, please feel free to reach out to Shane or me anytime. Have a great week.

"Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence."—Helen Keller

Respectfully,



**Will McGoldrick, Assoc. DBIA**

*Alternative Delivery Environmental Coordinator*

**P** 803-737-1326      **E** [mcgoldriwr@scdot.org](mailto:mcgoldriwr@scdot.org)

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**Subject:** April 526 LCC West Agency Meeting  
**Date:** Monday, March 28, 2022 11:21:12 AM

---

All,

In short, the same situation remains in effect from the previous update I sent out. FHWA is still actively reviewing the draft FEIS document and developing comments. We will not have an agency meeting in April unless new information becomes available. Hope you have a productive and pleasant week. As always, please feel free to reach to me or Shane with any questions.

Respectfully,

Will McGoldrick, Assoc. DBIA | Program Manager  
Environmental Services Office  
SCDOT  
955 Park St Rm 506  
Columbia SC 29202-0191  
(o) 803-737-1326

**From:** [McGoldrick, Will](#)  
**To:** [alexis\\_john@nps.gov](#); [Amanda.L.Heath \("Amanda.L.Heath@usace.army.mil"\)](#); [Andrew Herndon \(andrew.herndon@noaa.gov\)](#); [Anita Barnett \(anita\\_barnett@nps.gov\)](#); [bbarnes@estoo.net](#); [Beckham, Chris](#); [Belcher, Jeffery - FHWA](#); [BoylesR@dnr.sc.gov](#); [Bridges, Martin A CIV DHS \(USA\)](#); [caitlinh@ccppcrafts.com](#); [Stout, Christopher](#); [clowe@mcn-nsn.gov](#); [Connolly, Sean](#); [Cynthia Cooksey \("cynthia.cooksey@noaa.gov"\)](#); [Elizabeth Johnson](#); [hightocw@dhec.sc.gov](#); [jaclyn.daly@noaa.gov](#); [Jeremy.M.Kinney \(Jeremy.M.Kinney@usace.army.mil\)](#); [jhancock@scprt.com](#); [Karen Taylor](#); [Kelly Laycock \(laycock.kelly@epa.gov\)](#); [Kelly, David P.](#); [kelly.shotts@noaa.gov](#); [Ress, Logan D.](#); [Long, Chad C.](#); [lwendt@mcn-nsn.gov](#); [M Jamison](#); [Mark Mohr](#); [Mark\\_Caldwell@fws.gov](#); [Martin, James - FHWA](#); [mixong@dnr.sc.gov](#); [noah.silverman@noaa.gov](#); [Olds, Melanie J \(melanie\\_old@fws.gov\)](#); [pace.wilber@noaa.gov](#); [Randall Overton \(Randall.D.Overton@uscg.mil\)](#); [richard.fickley@noaa.gov](#); [Riggin Lori Ann \("RigginL@dnr.sc.gov"\)](#); [Riley, Joy S.](#); [Saint-Surin, Sandra \(FHWA\)](#); [Sarah Reed \(reeds2@dhec.sc.gov\)](#); [Singh-White, Alya](#); [Stacie Crowe](#); [Tess Trumbull trumbunt@dhec.sc.gov](#); [thomas\\_mccoy@fws.gov](#); [Tom Daniel \(danielt@dnr.sc.gov\)](#); [Wade, Blair](#); [wenonahh@ccppcrafts.com](#); [williabn@dhec.sc.gov](#)  
**Subject:** May Agency Meeting  
**Date:** Wednesday, May 4, 2022 7:45:04 AM

---

Dear All,

Good news! SCDOT received comments from FHWA on the draft 526 Lowcountry Corridor FEIS. The majority of comments mainly center around Environmental Justice and Community Mitigation. We received these comments later in April and are working on reviewing, revising, and updating the relevant document sections. It was determined that it would be better to continue this process during the month of May and hold off one more month on an agency meeting. It is our plan to go through everything in detail and determine what sections in the document need to be updated/revised based on comments. We hope to be able to have a meeting in June to bring everyone up to speed on what has been revised and updated as well as the schedule moving forward.

If you have any questions please let Shane or me know. Look forward to be able to talk with you soon.

Respectfully,

Will McGoldrick, Assoc. DBIA | Program Manager  
Environmental Services Office  
SCDOT  
955 Park St Rm 506  
Columbia SC 29202-0191  
(o) 803-737-1326



# Meeting Summary

## I-526 LCC WEST Agency Coordination Meeting

Microsoft Teams

June 29, 2022 10:00AM

### Attendees

<b>FHWA</b>	Shane Belcher Sandra Saint-Surin	<b>NOAA</b>	Cynthia Cooksey
<b>NPS</b>	Alexis John	<b>USACE</b>	Jeremey Kinney
<b>USCG</b>	Randall Overton	<b>USEPA</b>	Alya Singh-White
<b>USFWS</b>	Mark Caldwell	<b>SCDAH</b>	
<b>SCDHEC</b>	Logan Ress Chuck Hightower	<b>SCDHEC OCRM</b>	Chris Stout Blair Williams
<b>SCDNR</b>	Stacie Crowe	<b>SCDOT</b>	Will McGoldrick Joy Riley
<b>SCPRT</b>		<b>HDR</b>	Blair Wade
<b>Three Oaks Engineering</b>	Mark Mohr Karen Taylor	<b>Stantec</b>	
<b>CDM Smith</b>		<b>CESC</b>	

### Introductions

The purpose of this meeting is to provide agencies with updates on the status of the FEIS-ROD review, project schedule and updated EJ Community Mitigation Plan. No agency coordination meetings have been held since December 2021, but SCDOT sent monthly emails providing updates on the project.

### Community Mitigation Updates

The EJ Community Mitigation Plan (EJCMP) for the project has been undergoing additional review and evaluation from FHWA headquarters and legal teams. SCDOT summarized the proposed changes to the plan.

- EJCMP Revisions Summary – new commitments/elements
  - Implement majority of EJCMP components prior to construction
  - Acquisition fairness program
  - Enhanced relocation mitigation - added an additional 18 months to the relocation assistance rental payments.
  - First time homebuyer program
  - Careers in transportation education
  - Small business development program
  - Community air monitoring during project construction
  - Expanded community office
- EJCMP Revisions Summary – updates to existing commitments
  - Affordable housing - increased from acquiring 20 vacant lots to construct affordable single-family housing to 45 vacant lots.
  - Community Center facilities and amenities – in addition to generators, added solar panels as another alternative power source during emergencies and/or inclement weather.
  - Educational and employment opportunities - increased scholarship fund from \$100,000 to \$500,000.
  - Internships – increased from 10 to 20 students to participate.
  - Mitigation barriers – added additional barriers to benefit EJ Communities.





June 29, 2022  
I-526 LCC WEST Agency Coordination Meeting  
Page 2 of 2

- Mitigation implementation schedule update
  - Community outreach will occur throughout the life of the project.

#### **Update on FEIS-ROD Review and Schedule**

- Recently received comments from FHWA. Current work includes updating the combined FEIS/ROD for a submission to SCDOT and FHWA in the next few weeks.
- SCDOT requested resource agencies submit a request to SCDOT/FHWA for review of their components of the FEIS/ROD within the next 2 weeks.
- Review of schedule included discussion of updated permitting timetables and milestone schedule.

#### **Discussion/Questions**

- USFWS – northern long-eared bat (NLEB) is being up-listed to endangered and tricolored bat may be listed
  - Prior to construction, additional Section 7 evaluations may be required.
  - USFWS recommends having an internal conversation between the agencies to determine best way to address the potential changes.
- USCG requested updates to FPISC dashboard that currently shows USCG permit due in July 2022.

#### **Deliverables/Due Out Items**

- FHWA to update dashboard to reflect current permitting timetable.
- SCDOT requested that agencies make a request for review of their section(s) of the FEIS/ROD within the next 2 weeks.

#### **Next Meeting**

- No meeting to be held in July 2022 since no updates are anticipated but will most likely have a meeting in August 2022.



# Agenda

## **I-526 WEST Lowcountry Corridor Agency Coordination Meeting**

TEAMS online meeting

June 29, 2022 10:00AM

---

- A. Introductions
- B. Community mitigation update
- C. Update on FEIS/ROD schedule
- D. Adjourn

---

## Microsoft Teams meeting

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Phone Conference ID: 121 725 07#

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# Community Mitigation Plan

Effectively mitigate direct, indirect, and cumulative (recurring) impacts on EJ communities by **establishing relationships, building trust, and gathering feedback that will inform decisions** on mitigative measures and other aspects of project development



# CMP Revisions Summary - New

- Implement majority of CMP prior to construction
- Acquisition fairness program
- Enhanced relocation mitigation
- First time homebuyer program
- Careers in transportation education
- Small business development program
- Community air monitoring



Expanded community office

**SCDOT**  
South Carolina Department of Transportation  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
American Highway & Transportation Builders Act

**ATTENTION Students!**

Contact the  
**I-526 LCC Community Office**  
Today to Learn More!  
843.258.1135  
info@526LowcountryCorridor.com

**INTERESTED IN A SUMMER INTERNSHIP?**

The following **PAID** transportation-focused internships are available through the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) in Charleston, SC for those 16+:

- **I-526 Lowcountry Corridor Community Office Internship**
- **SCDOT Charleston Office Internship**

**OTHER TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES:**

- **Summer Transportation Institute (STI)**  
A 4-week program this summer to introduce high school students to careers in the transportation industry. Learn how to apply today (843.258.1135). Must have a minimum 2.5 grade point average on a 4.0 scale.
- **CDL Training (18+)**  
Both a CDL Permit Preparation Class and CDL Full License Program will be offered.

Training and internships sponsored by the South Carolina Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration.

*Apply Today!*





# CMP Revisions Summary - Updated

- Affordable housing 20 ➡ 45
- Community center facilities and amenities
- Educational and employment opportunities
- Internships (School to work)
- Mitigation barriers

A recruitment flyer from SCDOT (South Carolina Department of Transportation) titled 'ATTENTION Students!'. It promotes summer internships and training opportunities. The flyer includes contact information for the I-526 LCC Community Office (843.258.1135, info@526LowcountryCorridor.com) and lists the following opportunities:

- I-526 Lowcountry Corridor Community Office Internship**
- SCDOT Charleston Office Internship**
- OTHER TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES:**
  - Summer Transportation Institute (STI)**: A 4-week program for high school students to learn about careers in transportation.
  - CDL Training (18+)**: Both a CDL Permit Preparation Class and CDL Full License Program.

The flyer also mentions that training and internships are sponsored by the South Carolina Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration. The text 'Apply Today!' is written in a green script at the bottom right.



# ADVANCE MITIGATION IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

PROPOSED  
SCHEDULE

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

DESIGN 2021-2027

RIGHT-OF-WAY 2023-2027

CONSTRUCTION 2028-2038



Community History Preservation Study (2021 - 2027)



Focused Community Outreach (2019 - 2038)



Affordable Housing (2022 - 2027)



Enhanced Right-of-Way Services (2022 - 2027)



Education, Employment & Economic Opportunities (2023 - 2038)



Community Infrastructure Improvements (2023 - 2038)

*Subject to Change*

Combined Final EIS ROD	
Milestone	Date
Resume CAC & Community Meetings	May-June 2022
Revise/update Combined FEIS-ROD per FHWA comments on EJCMP	5/2-7/1/2022
Submit Combined FEIS-ROD to SCDOT & FHWA-SC for review	7/1/2022
SCDOT & FHWA-SC review Combined FEIS-ROD	7/5-7/18/2022
Revise Combined FEIS-ROD per SCDOT & FHWA-SC comments	7/18-7/29/2022
Submit Combined FEIS-ROD to SCDOT & FHWA-SC to recheck final revisions	7/29/2022
SCDOT & FHWA-SC recheck final revisions for Combined FEIS-ROD	7/29-8/5/2022
Submit Combined FEIS-ROD to FHWA-HQ & FHWA-Legal to check revisions	8/5/2022
FHWA-HQ & FHWA-Legal to check revisions	8/5-9/5/2022
Finalize/Approve/Obtain Signatures Combined FEIS-ROD	9/5-9/9/2022
Complete ADA/Section 508 Compliance of Combined FEIS-ROD	9/9-9/22/2022
Upload Combined FEIS-ROD to USEPA Website	9/23/2022
Public Notice	9/30/2022
USACE Permit Decision	10/31/2022
USCG Permit Decision	11/30/2022

Milestone	Date
<b>FHWA / Section 4(f)</b>	
Determination of Applicability of Section 4(f)	November 2019
Coordination with /Concurrence from Officials with Jurisdiction	September 30, 2022
FHWA Approval/Conclusion of Section 4(f)	September 30, 2022
<b>State or Sponsor / Potential National Park Service / Section 106* Review</b>	
Consultation initiated with SHPO/THPO	June 18, 2019
Consulting Parties Invited	November 2019
Determination of effect made by FHWA	June 2020
ACHP Provided Opportunity to Comment	TBD
National Historic Landmark- National Park Service Concurrence	N/A
Section 106 Consultation Concluded	September 2020
*Conclusion of Section 106 can be: 1) No historic properties affected, 2) Finding of no adverse effect, or 3) Memorandum of agreement or programmatic agreement, or other conclusion to resolve adverse effects reached	
<b>U.S. Army Corps of Engineers / Section 404 Clean Water Act and Section 10 Rivers and Harbors Act, Individual Permit</b>	
Joint Application Received	August 2020
Publication of Public Notice	October 30, 2020
Response to comments	March 2021
Revised Permit Drawings Submitted	June 15, 2021
Permit Decision Rendered/Complete	October 31, 2022
<b>U.S. Coast Guard / Bridge Permit</b>	
Navigation Data Received	May 21, 2019
Issued Navigation Determination	June 11, 2019
Application Received	August 2020
Updated Application Received	October 15, 2020

Publication of Public Notice	October 30, 2020
Application Deemed Complete	October 31, 2022
Permit Decision Rendered/Issuance	November 30, 2022

<b>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service / Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act Review (Part of Section 404 CWA)</b>	
Process initiated by Public Notice	October 2020
Comments to USACE	November 2020
<b>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service / Section 7 Endangered Species Act Consultation</b>	
Request for ESA Consultation Report	October 30, 2020
Revised ESA Consultation Package submitted	December 1 2020
<b>National Marine Fisheries Service / Section 7 Endangered Species Act Consultation</b>	
Request for ESA Consultation Received	April 1, 2020
Consultation Package deemed complete (Formal or Informal Consultation)	July 1, 2020
Revised ESA Consultation Package received	December 1, 2020
Consultation Package deemed complete	January 4, 2021
Conclusion of Informal Consultation/Issuance of Biological Opinion	March 1, 2021 (received 2-16-21)
<b>National Marine Fisheries Service / Essential Fish Habitat Consultation</b>	
Draft EFH assessment submitted	May 8, 2020
Complete EFH assessment	July 8, 2020

Revised EFH assessment received	December 1, 2020
Consultation Package deemed complete	January 4, 2021
NOAA issues Response to revised EFH assessment	March 1, 2021 (issued 2-26-21)
<b>National Park Service / Section 6(f) Land and Water Conservation Fund Act</b>	
Initial Application Received	February 2020
Completed Application Received	September 2020
Issuance of Decision for Permit/Approval	November 30, 2021
Notice to Proceed	November 30, 2021
<b>State, Local, Other Non-Federal Agency / Dependent Action (CWA Section 401 WQC, Section 402 Permit, etc.)</b>	
Initial Application Received	August 2020
Response to comments	March 2021
Issuance of Approval/ Permit	June/August 2021

Permitting Timetable

Revised 06/13/2022

\* Unless specified, an action within a month will be completed by the end of the month. A 10-day comment period will be requested for each Concurrence Point.  
\*Adjustments to the proposed schedule may be made when sufficient information is available for an agency to proceed with an action so long as that action does not adversely affect the overall permitting timeline.



2019	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Action					CP ACP + Purpose and Need  USCG Navigation Data Report to USCG	USCG Preliminary Navigation Determination Issued  Consultation initiated with SHPO/THPO  Section 106 Consultation initiated (6/18)	Submit JD and CALP packages  NOAA Initially Contacted Regarding MMPA Consultation	Agency Meeting to Discuss Alternatives Evaluation Process/Criteria & Preliminary Range of Alternatives (8/14)  CP Agency Milestones and Permitting Timetable	Agency Meeting to Discuss Mitigation Needs Assessment (9/11)	Agency Meeting to Discuss Alternatives Analysis and Reasonable Alternatives (10/9)  JD + Critical Area Line Plat Approvals	NOI issued (11/8)  Det. of Applicability of Section 4(f)  Agency Meeting (11/13)  Section 106 Consulting parties invited  Public Information Meeting (11/21)	Agency Meeting to Discuss Mitigation Alternatives (12/11)
2020	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Action	Agency Meeting to review Public Comment (1/8)	CP Alternatives Carried Forward  Agency Workshop to Discuss Interchange Design Alternatives (2/12)  Initial 6(f) Application received	Agency Meeting to Discuss Update on Mitigation Needs Assessment (3/11)	Request for ESA Consultation Report (NOAA)	Agency Meeting to Discuss Proposed Preferred Alternative  Draft EFH assessment submitted (5/8)	CP Preferred Alternative  Section 106 determination of effect made by FHWA	NOAA receives Complete EFH Assessment to initiate EFH Consultation (7/8)  Pre-Application Meeting with Agencies (Fed & State) Public Hearing Agency Planning Meeting  Consultation with SHPO/THPO on Preferred Alternative  Section 7 Consultation Package complete (NOAA)	Application Submittal-Individual 404 Permit/USCG  Initial State Application received CAP, 401	Section 106 consultation concluded  NOAA issues response to EFH assessment (9/8)  Completed 6(f) Application received	DEIS Notice of Availability  Public Notice: USACE/USCG/CAP /401  FWCA Review initiated  Request for ESA Consultation Report (USFWS)	Public Hearing-Joint Notice to cover all agencies  FWCA Comments to USACE  Section 7 Conclusion of Consultation/Issuance of Biological Opinion (NOAA/USFWS)	Revised EFH Assessment to NOAA (12/1)
2021	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Action	Comments Due: 404b.1/401/CAP/USCG  Revised Section 7 Consultation Package complete (NOAA/USFWS)  Revised EFH Consultation Package complete (NOAA)	Agency Meeting to discuss Comments	Response to Comments due to USACE/OCRM /USCG/DHEC  Revised Section 7 Conclusion of Consultation/Issuance of Biological Opinion (NOAA/USFWS)  Revised EFH Conclusion/Issuance of Decision (NOAA)		Revised Permit Drawings due to Regulatory Agencies week of June 14th  401 Decision			Critical Area Permit			Section 6(f) Issuance of Decision for Permit/Approval & NTP	
2022	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Action									FEIS/ROD Approval (30 day wait period) USACE Prepares Draft ROD  FHWA Approval/Conclusion of Section 4(f)  4(f) Coordination with/Concurrence from Officials with Jurisdiction	USACE Permit Decision/Signs ROD 30 days after FEIS; Complete Application submitted to USCG	USCG Permit Decision	90 Day post ROD period ends





# Agenda

## **I-526 WEST Lowcountry Corridor Agency Coordination Meeting**

TEAMS online meeting

August 10, 2022 10:00AM

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- A. Introductions
- B. Update on FEIS/ROD schedule
- C. Agency Milestones & Permitting schedule update
- D. I-526 East PEL Study update
  - a. <https://www.526lowcountrycorridor.com/east/pel/>
- E. Adjourn

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# Meeting Summary

## I-526 LCC WEST Agency Coordination Meeting

Microsoft Teams

August 10, 2022 10:00AM

### Attendees

<b>FHWA</b>	Shane Belcher Sandra Saint-Surin	<b>NOAA</b>	Cynthia Cooksey
<b>NPS</b>	Alexis John Anita Barnett	<b>USACE</b>	Amanda Heath
<b>USCG</b>	Randall Overton	<b>USEPA</b>	Alya Singh-White
<b>USFWS</b>		<b>SCDAH</b>	
<b>SCDHEC</b>	Logan Ress	<b>SCDHEC OCRM</b>	Chris Stout
<b>SCDNR</b>	Maggie Jamison	<b>SCDOT</b>	Will McGoldrick David Kelly
<b>SCPRT</b>		<b>HDR</b>	Blair Wade
<b>Three Oaks Engineering</b>	Mark Mohr Karen Taylor	<b>Stantec</b>	
<b>CDM Smith</b>		<b>CESC</b>	Kally McCormick

### Introductions

The purpose of this meeting is to provide agencies with updates on the status of the FEIS-ROD review, project schedule and the I-526 East PEL Study.

### FEIS-ROD Review and Schedule

- Updated FEIS-ROD submitted for review to FHWA Headquarters and Legal on 07/26/2022.
- A copy of the FEIS-ROD (draft) was sent to all Cooperating Agencies and any other agency upon request.
- Review of schedule included discussion of updated permitting timetables and milestone schedule based on FEIS/ROD final review and anticipated signature date.

### Agency Milestones & Permitting Schedule

- Post FEIS-ROD, there are two permitting actions left to be taken. The USACE 404 permit and the US Coast Guard permit decisions. Reviewed schedule to confirm proposed permit decisions are still on schedule for October and November respectively.

### I-526 East PEL Study

- SCDOT gave an update on the Planning and Environmental Linkage Study for I-526 that has been completed and more information can be found at the project website- [Planning & Environmental Linkages | I-526 Lowcountry Corridor EAST](#)

### Discussion/Questions

- EPA – EPA requested a copy of the FEIS-ROD to review the enhanced EJ mitigation plan and associated commitments.
- USCG- noted that although the FEIS-ROD is not signed, project team will need to send the revised and updated USCG permit package in advance, and they could confirm receiving a completed package.
- An item that was not discussed in meeting but came to light afterwards is that Alexis John with NPS will be transitioning to a different agency after 8-18. SCDOT expressed



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congratulations on the new opportunity and appreciation for the extra coordination effort by her on this project. She was a great asset in shepherding the 6(f) approval through the process and was very responsive and flexible. We look forward to working with her again in a different capacity. SCDOT and Team will continue to coordinate with Anita as needed for the project.

**Deliverables/Due Out Items**

- FHWA to send FEIS-ROD to EPA. - Completed 8/10/22 by FHWA
- SCDOT to provide updated USCG Package to USCG. – SCDOT and Team working on

**Next Meeting**

- The next meeting is scheduled for September 14. This meeting is tentative in case we need to discuss/address any comments received from the FEIS-ROD review.