

Appendix Q

Section 4(f) Evaluation





FINAL SECTION 4(F) EVALUATION

INTERSTATE 526 (I-526)

FROM PAUL CANTRELL BOULEVARD TO VIRGINIA AVENUE
NORTH CHARLESTON AND CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA



JULY 13, 2022

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 REGULATORY BACKGROUND

Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, codified in federal law as 49 U.S.C. 303, declares, “It is the policy of the United States Government that special effort should be made to preserve the natural beauty of the countryside and public park and recreation lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites.” Section 4(f) also states, “The Secretary [of Transportation] may approve a transportation program or project... requiring the use of publicly owned land of a public park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge of national, State, or local significance, or land of an historic site of national, State, or local significance (as determined by the Federal, State, or local officials having jurisdiction over the park, area, refuge, or site) only if:

- (1) there is no prudent and feasible alternative to using that land; and
- (2) the program or project includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the park, recreation area, wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or historic site resulting from the use.”

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is being prepared for the proposed action.

Section 4(f) further requires consultation with the Department of Interior and, as appropriate, the involved offices of the Department of Agriculture and Housing and Urban Development in developing transportation projects and programs which use lands protected by Section 4(f).

2.0 PROPOSED ACTION

2.1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project consists of 3.5 miles of work on I-26 and 9.2 miles of work on I-526 for a total of 12.7 miles. The boundaries of the study area, shown in Figure 2.1, generally follow the section of I-526 from Paul Cantrell Boulevard to Virginia Avenue including the I-26/I-526 interchange. This segment of I-526 is currently identified as, and without action is forecasted to continue to be, one of South Carolina’s top ten most congested corridors. This is due to the high number of vehicles moving between I-26 and I-526, 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-26/I-526 interchange is an important junction for local and regional transit as it links downtown Charleston, Summerville, West Ashley, and Mount Pleasant. The project location can be seen in Figure 2.1.



Figure 2.1: I-526 LCC WEST Project Corridor

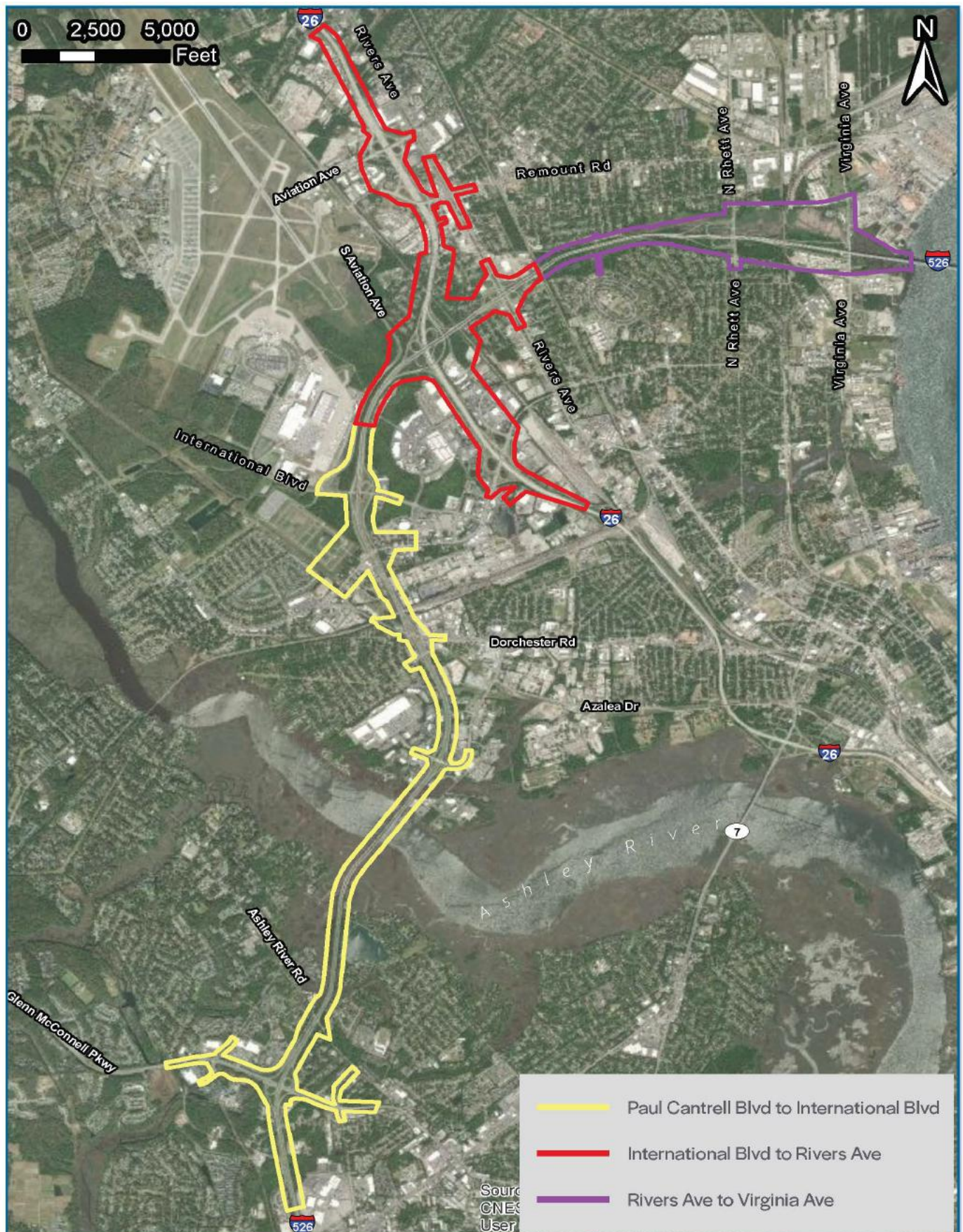


Figure 2.2: Proposed Reasonable Alternatives Sections of I-526 LCC WEST

The project was examined in several parts in order to provide unique alternatives for individual sections. These sections are shown in Figure 2.2. This Section 4(f) Evaluation focuses on impacts associated with the section of the project from International Boulevard to Rivers Avenue that includes the interchanges of I-526 at I-26 and Rivers Avenue, shown in red. Neither of the other two sections would affect Section 4(f) resources.

2.2 PURPOSE AND NEED

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 Paul Cantrell Boulevard to Virginia Avenue. The need for this project was identified in several different documents. The I-26/I-526 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 South Carolina Department of Transportation (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. Detailed information on the purpose of and need for the proposed project is contained in Chapter 2 of the combined Final Environmental Impact Statement-Record of Decision (FEIS-ROD).

3.0 DESCRIPTION OF SECTION 4(F) PROPERTIES

3.1 HIGHLAND TERRACE-LIBERTY PARK COMMUNITY CENTER

Type of Property: The Highland Terrace-Liberty Park Community Center is a publicly owned recreation area.

Ownership: The Highland Terrace-Liberty Park Community Center is owned and managed by the City of North Charleston.

Applicable Clauses Affecting the Ownership: None

Primary Functions: The center serves as an outlet for the neighborhood and provides the main source of entertainment for children in the community. It offers a safe place for children to be active after school and in the summer while providing quality supervision and guidance. Programs at the community center focus on academic enrichment and recreational activities designed to teach children valuable leadership and life skills to use in decision-making processes. The center provides a place for youth development, as well as a place where citizens can hold events and community gatherings. The City of North Charleston hosts after school programs for up to 30 children and a summer camp for up to 30 children. All children that attend these programs are from the Highland Terrace and Liberty Park communities and they often walk to this facility from their homes. A variety of groups, such as Boeing, M.A.D. (Men Against Domestic Violence), and the Charleston Center come to the afterschool program and summer camp to host educational, enrichment, and cultural activities. A few of these activities include a reptile program, library activities, and an anti-bullying program. It also serves as a Charleston County voting center. Community members use the center for social events, such as birthday parties, family reunions, and baby showers. The indoor community center is available to rent from 9:00am to 10:00pm, with a maximum capacity of 30 people.

Center usage varies throughout the year but increases during large events such as graduation. The center is not available for rent during summer months when summer camp is in session. According to the North Charleston Parks and Recreation Department Director, the facility's basketball courts are often utilized by community members on both weeknights and weekends, with approximately 150 people using the park per month.

Description of Property and Facilities: Facilities on the 0.87-acre property include a full-size basketball court, half-size basketball court, a playground, and a 1,947 square foot community center (see Photograph 1). There are several picnic tables and benches outdoors, as well as a picnic shelter. The center is staffed part-time and outdoor recreation areas are open dawn to dusk. Additional site photos can be found in Appendix A.



Photograph 1: Highland Terrace-Liberty Park Community Center (Google Street View)

Location: The Highland Terrace-Liberty Park Community Center is located at 2401 Richardson Drive and is directly west of I-26 adjacent to the Highland Terrace and Liberty Park neighborhoods, as shown in Figure 3.1. A rail corridor is located directly to the north of the property.

Access: The property is accessible from Richardson Drive and Taylor Street. There is a small parking lot adjacent to the community center at the corner of Richardson Drive and Taylor Street. A sidewalk runs along the eastern side of Taylor Street near the community center, providing access for pedestrians. Access points can be seen in Figure 3.1.

Relationship to Other Similarly Used Lands in the Vicinity: The property is adjacent to the Highland Terrace and Liberty Park neighborhoods. A rail corridor is located directly to the north and an overpass for I-26 is located east of the community center. There are no other similarly used lands in the nearby vicinity.

Unusual Characteristics Reducing or Enhancing the Value of the Property: The community center and associated recreational facilities are located within close proximity to I-26 and are bordered to the north by a rail corridor, both of which contribute to air quality effects and noise that detract from the overall intrinsic value of the property based on its location rather than any physical characteristics of the property itself. The property is located in a moderate flood hazard zone.

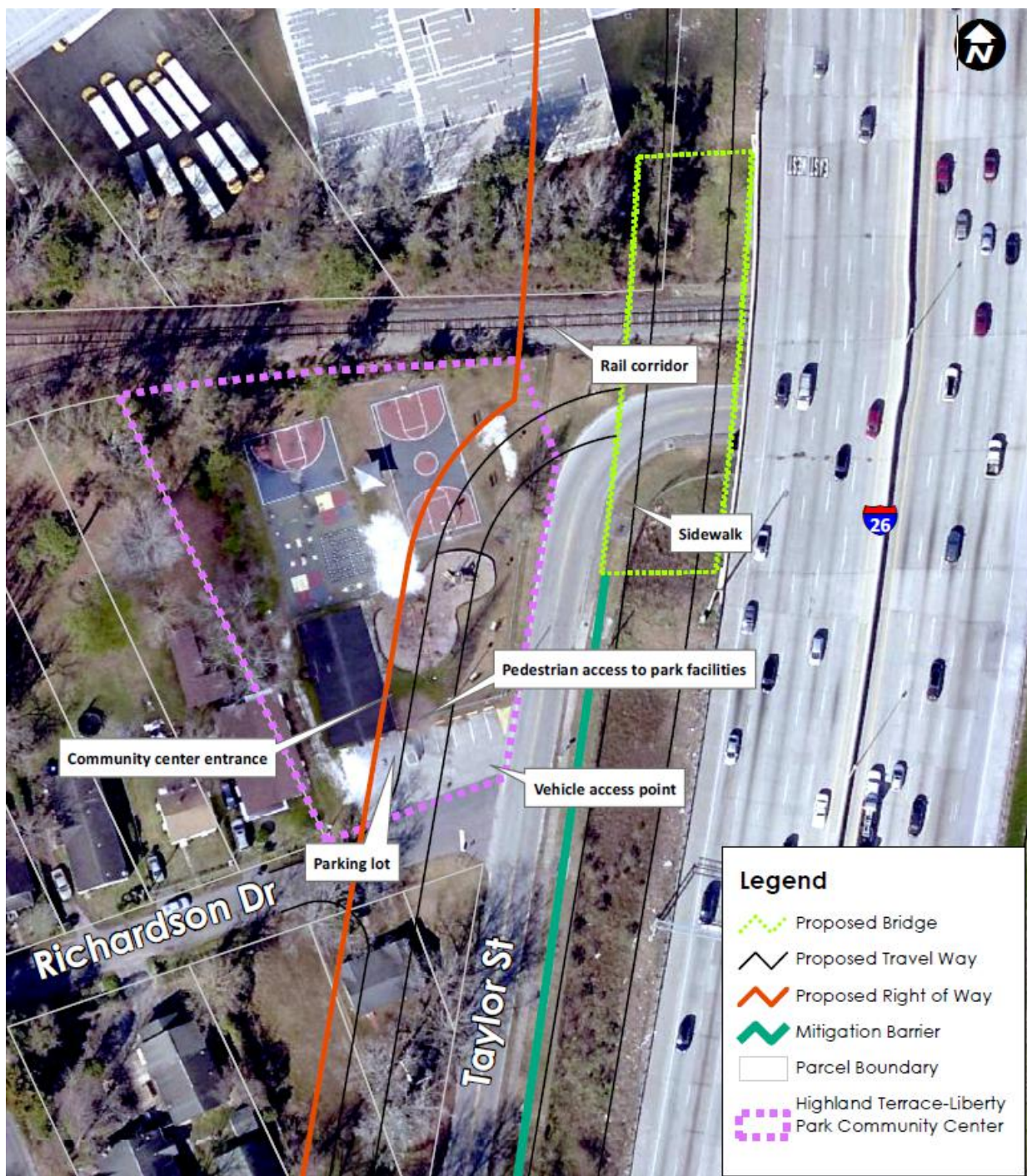


Figure 3.1: Highland Terrace-Liberty Park Community Center Site Layout (Charleston County GIS)

3.2 RUSSELDALE COMMUNITY CENTER

Type of Property: The Russelldale Community Center is a publicly owned recreation area.

Ownership: The Russelldale Community Center is owned and managed by the City of North Charleston.

Applicable Clauses Affecting the Ownership: None

Primary Functions: The center serves as an outlet for the neighborhood and provides the main source of entertainment for children in the community. It offers a safe place for children to be active after school and in the summer while providing quality supervision and guidance. Programs at the community center focus on academic enrichment and recreational activities designed to teach children valuable leadership and life skills to use in decision-making processes. The center provides a place for youth development, as well as a place where citizens can hold events and community gatherings.

The City of North Charleston hosts a yearly afterschool program for up to 30 children and a summer camp for up to 30 children at the Russelldale Community Center. All children that attend these programs are from the Russelldale community. A variety of groups, such as Boeing, M.A.D. (Men Against Domestic Violence), and the Charleston Center come to the afterschool program and summer camp to host educational, enrichment, and cultural activities. A few of these activities include a reptile program, library activities, and an anti-bullying program. When active, the Community Council would meet once a month at the center. The outdoor facilities are open to the public from dawn to dusk, with approximately 150 people using them per month, while the indoor event center is available to rent from 9:00am to 10:00pm, with a maximum capacity of 15 people per event. Community members use the center for social events, such as birthday parties, family reunions, and baby showers. Center usage varies throughout the year, but increases during large events, such as graduation. The center is not available for rent during summer months when summer camp is in session.

Description of Property and Facilities: Facilities on the combined 0.83-acre property include a full-size basketball court, a playground, and an approximately 1,500 square foot community center (see Photograph 2). The center is staffed part-time and outdoor recreation areas are open dawn to dusk. Additional site photos can be found in Appendix A.



Photograph 2: Russelldale Community Center (Google Street View)

Location: The Russelldale Community Center and its associated recreational facilities are located at 2248 Russelldale Avenue. The facility is at the north end of the Russelldale neighborhood, directly southeast of I-526, as shown in Figure 3.2. The facility was built on a 0.83-acre property adjacent to I-526 to mitigate impacts from the original construction of I-526 in the 1980s.

Access: As shown in Figure 3.2, the community center has multiple access points for pedestrians and vehicles. The access points allow residents to easily use the facilities when approaching from either the east or west on Russelldale Avenue.



Figure 3.2: Russelldale Community Center Site Layout (Charleston County GIS)

Relationship to Other Similarly Used Lands in the Vicinity: The property is at the north end of the Russelldale neighborhood. An overpass for I-526 is located directly to the northwest and rail corridor is located approximately 370 feet southwest of the center. There are no other similarly used lands in the nearby vicinity.

Unusual Characteristics Reducing or Enhancing the Value of the Property: The community center and associated recreational facilities are located within close proximity to I-526 and a rail corridor, both of which contribute to air quality effects and ambient noise that detract from the overall intrinsic value of the property based on its location rather than any physical characteristics of the property itself. A portion of the property, including the basketball court and adjacent undeveloped land, is located in a high-risk flood hazard zone.

4.0 USE OF SECTION 4(F) PROPERTY

4.1 HIGHLAND TERRACE-LIBERTY PARK COMMUNITY CENTER

Amount of Land to be Used: The proposed I-526 LCC WEST project would convert approximately 0.27-acre or 31 percent of the 0.87-acre Highland Terrace-Liberty Park Community Center and recreational facilities. As shown in Figure 4.1, the Highland Terrace-Liberty Park Community Center falls within the proposed right-of-way for the preferred alternative and would need to be relocated due to the proposed project.

The Highland Terrace-Liberty Park Community Center would fall within the right-of-way of each reasonable build alternative that was considered. See Figures 5.2 - 5.5 to see both Section 4(f) properties within the right-of-way boundaries for each of the reasonable build alternative.

Facilities, Functions, and/or Activities Affected: The proposed impacts to the Highland Terrace-Liberty Park facilities include the community center building (approximately 60 feet x 30 feet), one outdoor basketball court (84 feet x 50 feet), one half-size basketball court (37 feet x 42 feet), one multi-use court (60 feet x 42 feet), playground equipment on a mulch play area (approximately 60 feet x 50 feet), one picnic shelter (12 feet x 12 feet), a parking lot with eight parking spaces, and multiple benches and picnic tables throughout the park. The displacement of the community center would impact local community cohesion because this facility is often used to host events or gather as a group by residents living in the Highland Terrace and Liberty Park neighborhoods.



Figure 4.1: Proposed Right-of-Way at Highland Terrace-Liberty Park Community Center (Charleston County GIS)

4.2 RUSSELDALE COMMUNITY CENTER

Amount of Land to be Used: The proposed I-526 LCC WEST project would convert approximately 0.83 acres or 100 percent of the Russelldale Community Center and recreational facilities. The Russelldale Community Center falls within the additional Right-of-Way (ROW) needed for the proposed system-to-system interchange between I-526 and I-26 (shown in Figure 4.2) and would need to be relocated with the preferred alternative.

The Russelldale Community Center would fall within the right-of-way of each reasonable build alternative that was considered. Figures 5.2 - 5.5 show both Section 4(f) properties within the right-of-way boundaries for each of the reasonable build alternatives.

Facilities, Functions, and/or Activities Affected: The proposed impacts to the Russelldale facilities include the community center building (approximately 50 feet x 30 feet), an outdoor basketball court (84 feet x 50 feet), playground equipment on a mulch play area (approximately 60 feet x 40 feet), a multi-use field (approximately 100 feet x 60 feet), and multiple benches and picnic tables throughout the park.

The displacement of the community center would impact local community cohesion because this facility is often used to host events or gather as a group by residents living in the Russelldale neighborhood. Where the proposed project ROW and the Russelldale Community Center overlap, there is no potential for shared use or practical measures to minimize impact.

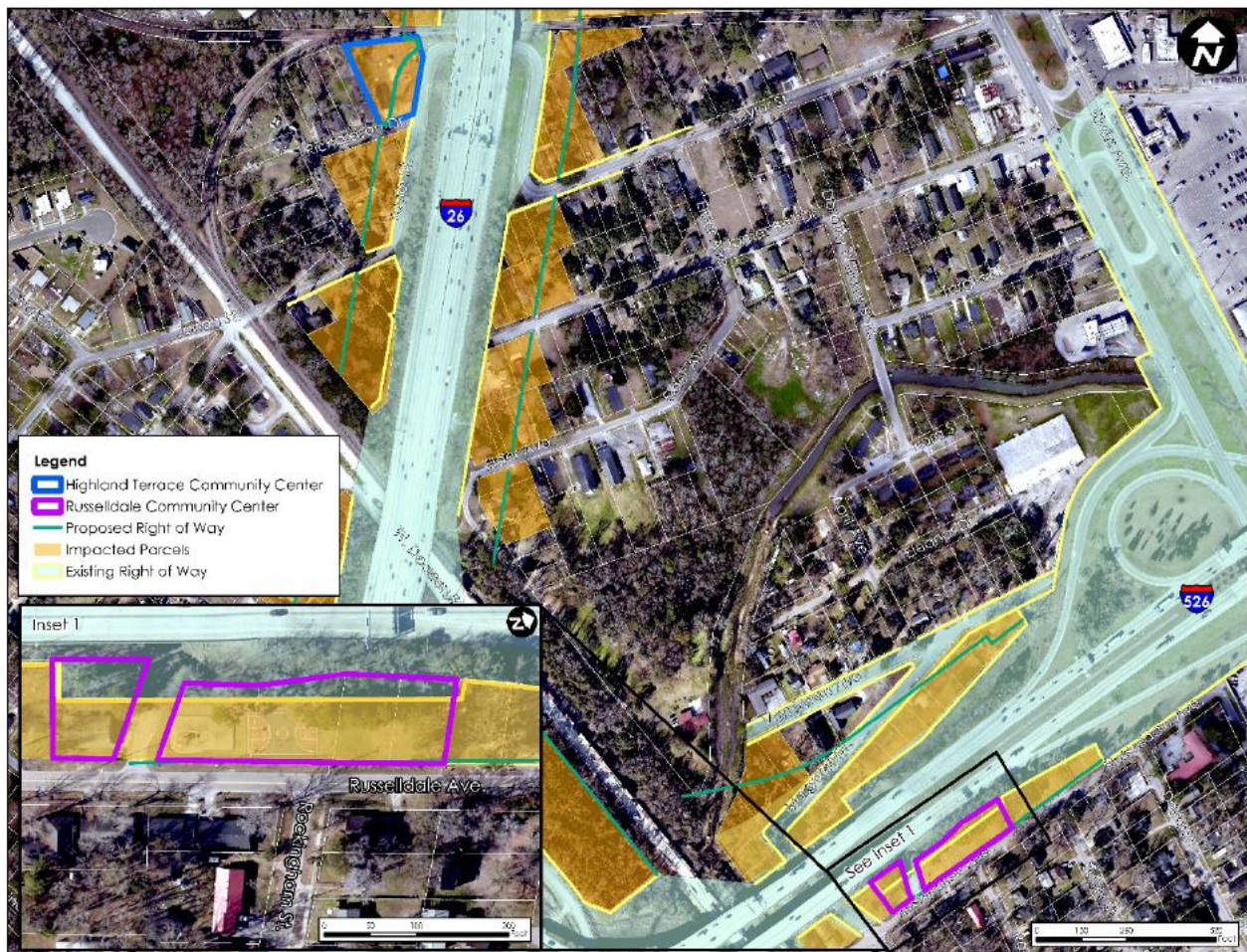


Figure 4.2: Proposed Right-of-Way at Russelldale Community Center (Charleston County GIS)

5.0 AVOIDANCE ALTERNATIVES

Under Section 4(f) evaluation guidance, state transportation agencies must consider alternatives that would avoid impacts to Section 4(f) resources. In some cases, alternatives that avoid impacting Section 4(f) resources may create impacts to other resources or the alternative may not be feasible and prudent.

Federal regulations (23 CFR 774.17) state that a feasible and prudent avoidance alternative:

- Avoids using Section 4(f) property
- Does not cause other severe problems of a magnitude that substantially outweighs the importance of protecting the Section 4(f) property. In assessing the importance of protecting the Section 4(f) property, it is appropriate to consider the relative value of the resource to the preservation purpose of the statute.

An alternative is considered **not feasible** if it cannot be built as a matter of sound engineering judgment.

An alternative is **not prudent** if:

- It compromises the project to a degree that it is unreasonable to proceed with the project in light of its stated purpose and need;
- It results in unacceptable safety or operational problems;
- After reasonable mitigation, it still causes:
 - Severe social, economic, or environmental impacts;
 - Severe disruption to established communities;
 - Severe disproportionate impacts to minority or low-income populations; or
 - Severe impacts to environmental resources protected under other Federal statutes;
- It results in additional construction, maintenance, or operational costs of an extraordinary magnitude;
- It causes other unique problems or unusual factors; or
- It involves multiple factors listed above, that while individually minor, cumulatively cause unique problems or impacts of extraordinary magnitude.

5.1 NO-BUILD ALTERNATIVE

The no-build alternative would serve as a total avoidance alternative; however, it is not prudent or feasible due to traffic implications and localized air quality impacts associated with congestion. These outcomes would not be compatible with the purpose and need of the proposed project and therefore the no-build alternative is not considered a prudent avoidance alternative. Further information about the no-build alternative can be found in [FEIS-ROD Appendix C](#).

5.2 ALTERNATE CORRIDORS

SCDOT initiated an evaluation of alternate routes that satisfy the purpose and need of the I-526 LCC WEST project. The study evaluated the enhancement of existing roadway facilities along with the creation of new alignment corridors, as shown in Figure 5.1. The enhancements include the development of alternate alignments which could be used to decrease interstate traffic volumes. The corridors listed do not include any options which provide an alternate route between I-26 and the Cooper River. Additional details on improvements to existing local corridors can be found in Section 3.5.2 of the FEIS-ROD.

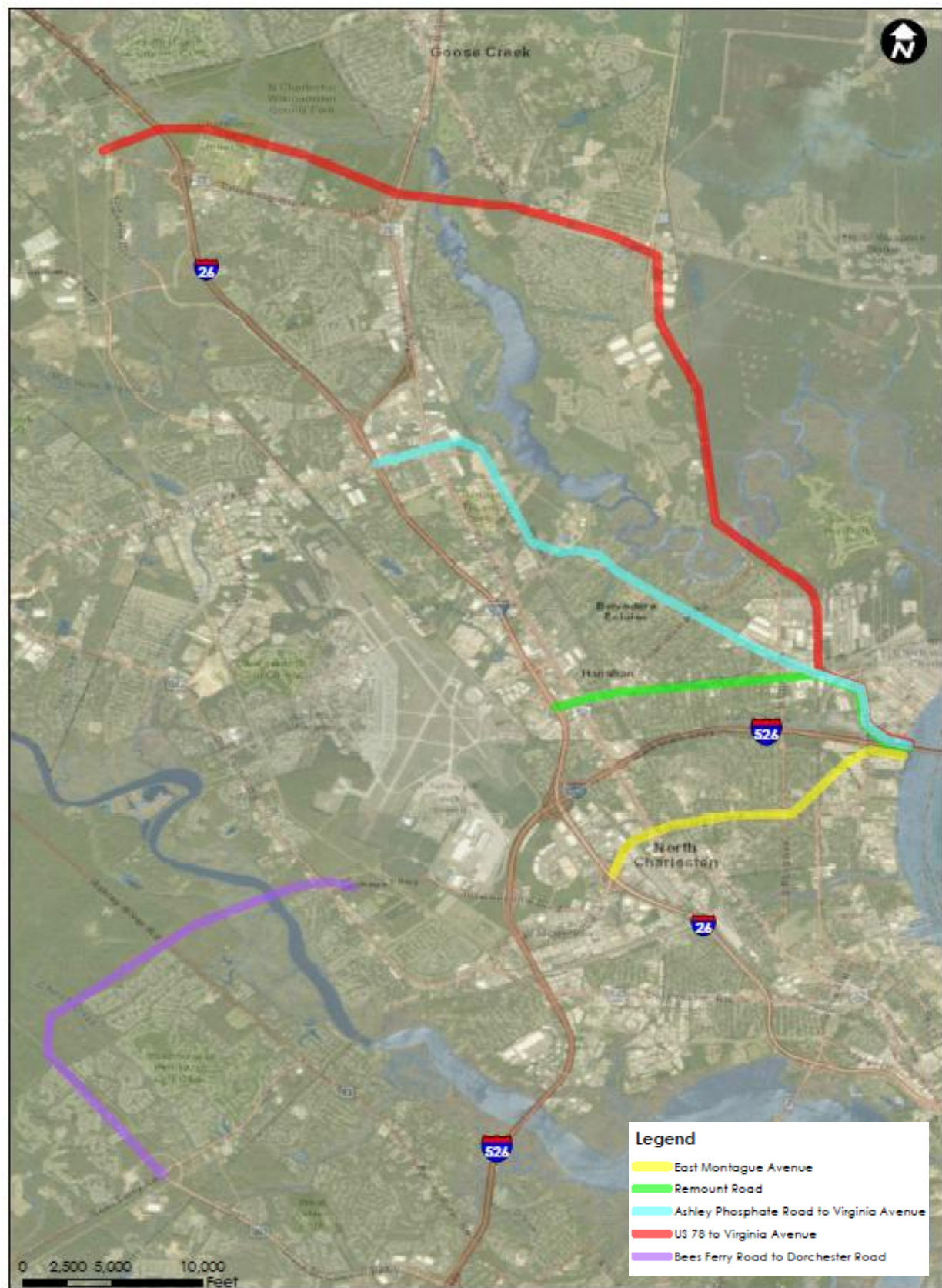


Figure 5.1: Alternate Corridors

5.2.1 Improvements to East Montague Avenue

This existing route runs nearly parallel to I-526 from I-26 to Virginia Avenue, and serves as a minor arterial facility connecting I-26 to the Park Circle area. East Montague Avenue, known as the old “Main Street” weaves through two of the city’s most historic neighborhoods. Liberty Hill stands as the oldest surviving neighborhood within North Charleston, while Park Circle represents one of the earliest concepts of a garden community in the United States. Other features along the route include North Charleston High School, North Charleston United Methodist Church, Royal Baptist Family Life and Banquet Center, and the Felix Pinckney Community Center. Residential development dominates along the western segment of the route from North Boulevard to Rivers Avenue, while commercial development is prevalent on the eastern segment from Jenkins Avenue to Virginia Avenue.

Traffic modeling, including the proposed improvements to the existing East Montague Avenue, indicate a 10-24 percent decrease in traffic volumes along the existing I-526 mainline. Although the 24 percent reduction may be substantial enough to meet the purpose and need if it were along the entire corridor, this decrease in traffic volume would only be applicable to approximately 0.5 miles along I-526 from I-26 to Rivers Avenue. As a result, this reduction in congestion would not be substantial enough to meet the purpose and need of the I-526 LCC WEST project, as I-526 would still operate at a level of service (LOS) E/F. Therefore, the improvements to existing East Montague Avenue were eliminated as a potential alternative because it does not meet the purpose and need for the I-526 LCC WEST project. Further, there would be large-scale impacts to development flanking the roadway. As such, this alternate corridor is **not a prudent avoidance alternative**.

5.2.2 Improvements to Remount Road

This existing route serves the area just north of the I-526 corridor and connects I-26 to the North Charleston Terminal (NCT) and its associated facilities along the Cooper River. The NCT sits on over 200 acres and handles nearly one-fourth of the Port of Charleston’s total container volume, necessitating a large volume of truck traffic along the roadway. Other features along this route include Matilda Dunston Elementary School, Remount Baptist Church, Aldersgate United Methodist Church, Revive Charleston, First Southern Methodist Church, Victory Missionary Baptist Church, and MWV/Kapstone Park. Residential development exists mainly along the south side of the road from Shelton Street to North Rhett Avenue, and commercial development runs along the entire length of the corridor.

Traffic modeling including the proposed improvements to the existing Remount Road indicate a 1-12 percent decrease in traffic volumes along the existing I-526 mainline; this reduction in congestion would not be substantial enough to meet the purpose and need of the I-526 LCC WEST project, as I-526 would still operate at a level of service (LOS) E/F. Therefore, the improvements to existing Remount Road were eliminated as a potential alternative because it does not meet the purpose and need for the I-526 LCC WEST project. Further, there would be large-scale impacts to development flanking the roadway. As such, this alternate corridor is **not a prudent avoidance alternative**.

5.3 NEW LOCATION ALTERNATIVES

The development of additional, new routes is restricted by several regional landmarks and environmental features. Impacts to these landmarks and features are detrimental to the community as a whole; and any alternate route containing such impacts are deemed unreasonable for improving congestion along I-526.

Charleston International Airport is South Carolina’s largest airport. It served nearly 4.5 million travelers in 2018 and is operated under a joint-use agreement with Joint Base Charleston. The combined airport area

of civilian facilities and the Charleston Air Force Base extends over 2,000 acres, covering most of the land to the west of the I-26/I-526 interchange between I-26/I-526 and the Ashley River, and extending north to Ashley Phosphate Road. The location and size of the airport prevent alternate route development to the west of I-26 for approximately four miles to the north of the Airport.

The Cooper River defines the easternmost boundary of the North Charleston city limits and remains a vital commercial channel for the region. Currently, the Don Holt Bridge and the Arthur Ravenel Jr. Bridge are the only two structures that provide vehicular access across the river. Any alternate route which involves the construction of a third roadway bridge increases the cost of the project drastically. In addition, many areas east of N Rhett Avenue are comprised of wetlands related to the Cooper River branch that connects to the Goose Creek Reservoir. Alternate routes constructed in this vicinity result in substantial impacts to the surrounding natural environment.

Interstate Realignment: SCDOT also considered completely realigning the interstate to avoid all impacts to these Section 4(f) properties. Realignment of the interstate would be restricted by the lack of open land and presence of dense existing development, regional landmarks and environmental features. Any option for interstate realignment would cause massive impacts to areas including environmental justice neighborhoods, the Charleston International Airport, the Cooper River, and many other community features. The severity of such impacts would be deemed unfeasible and unreasonable for improving congestion along I-526.

The Goose Creek Reservoir is situated just east of the Rivers Avenue business district near Hanahan and serves as the primary water supply storage for much of the Charleston region. The 600-acre reservoir area is also home to a wide variety of animal species and has become a popular destination for fishers and paddleboaters alike. The reservoir stretches from just northeast of Murray Drive to Goose Creek Road, impeding any new alternate alignment between Rivers Avenue and N Rhett Avenue.

Francis Marion National Forest/Bonneau Ferry Wildlife Management Area prevents new alternate four-lane routes north of I-526 which connect I-26 to US 17. Wildlife management is overseen by the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. As discussed in the paragraphs below, **there are no feasible and prudent avoidance new location alternatives.** Additional details on new location alternatives can be found in Section 3.5.3 of the FEIS-ROD.

5.3.1 US 78 to Virginia Avenue

The proposed new alignment is established to connect key points along I-26 and I-526 in the vicinity of the existing Cooper River crossing at the Don Holt Bridge. The US 78 to Virginia Avenue route utilizes portions of Red Bank Road and N Rhett Avenue to create a four-lane, controlled access facility with new interchanges. A new location roadway section running north of Charleston Southern University and North Charleston Wannamaker County Park connects US 78 west of I-26 to the Red Bank Road corridor. Upgrading the existing roadway impacts commercial and residential development along Red Bank Road and potentially impacts the North Charleston Terminal facilities.

Traffic modeling, including the proposed new alignment, indicates a 2 to 10 percent decrease in traffic volumes along the existing I-526 mainline; this reduction in congestion is not substantial enough to meet the purpose and need of the I-526 LCC WEST project, as I-526 still operates at a level of service (LOS) E/F. Therefore, the US 78 to Virginia Avenue route is eliminated as a potential alternative because it does not meet the purpose and need for the I-526 LCC WEST project and is **not considered a prudent avoidance alternative.**

5.3.2 Ashley Phosphate Road to Virginia Avenue

This proposed new alignment is a four-lane, controlled access facility which follows a short section of Ashley Phosphate Road east of I-26, then connects to Railroad Avenue and heads south before traversing on new location to run parallel to Murray Drive along the existing utility easement. A variety of features are impacted by this proposed route, including but not limited to commercial and residential development along Ashley Phosphate Road and Murray Drive, Hanahan Elementary School and Trident Technical College, and the City of Hanahan Recreation Center and its associated park areas. In addition, major utility relocations are required.

Traffic modeling, based on the proposed new alignment, indicates a 7 to 15 percent decrease in traffic volumes along the existing I-526 mainline; this reduction in congestion does not meet the purpose and need of the I-526 LCC WEST project, as I-526 still operates at a LOS E/F. Therefore, the Ashley Phosphate Road to Virginia Avenue route is eliminated as a potential alternative because it does not meet the purpose and need for the I-526 LCC WEST project and is **not a prudent avoidance alternative**.

5.3.3 Bees Ferry Road to Dorchester Road

A third new alignment route is being evaluated to the west of I-26 which establishes a new connector across the Ashley River. The proposed roadway is four lanes with controlled access but does not include an interchange at Ashley River Road. The proposed Bees Ferry Road to Dorchester Road alignment requires a new bridge over the Ashley River that could potentially impact the existing Shadowmoss Plantation residential development.

Incorporating this alignment into traffic modeling results in an estimated four percent decrease in traffic volume along I-526 near the Ashley River, while I-526 volumes to the east of I-26 have negligible reduction. Therefore, the proposed connector is also failing to meet the purpose and need of the I-526 LCC WEST project, as I-526 remains at a LOS F. Therefore, the Bees Ferry Road to Dorchester Road new alignment route is eliminated as a potential alternative because it does not meet the purpose and need for the I-526 LCC WEST project and is **not a prudent avoidance alternative**.

5.4 TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MANAGEMENT (TSM)/TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT (TDM)

5.4.1 Managed Lanes

Managed lanes, either as a stand-alone alternative, or in combination with other avoidance alternatives, would not meet the purpose and need for the project. Managed lanes were evaluated for I-526 in the 2013 Corridor Study and found to be not feasible without implementing a more regional system of managed lanes. Managed lanes may be feasible on I-526 if they extended westward on I-26 at least as far as the US 52 Connector near Ashley Phosphate Road. This regional study suggested improvements from the plan is the implementation of HOT managed lanes from Exit 199 (US 17 Alt – Summerville) to I-26 Terminus at US 17 and along I-526 the entire section. There are currently no programmed improvements to I-26 between I-526 and the US 52 Connector; therefore, managed lanes cannot be justified based on a committed improvement ensuring their functionality upon completion of the I-526 LCC WEST Project.

In addition, existing and geometric deficiencies on I-526 would require improvements to allow for managed lanes. Existing and projected traffic demand would not allow for conversion of existing general-purpose lanes to managed lanes; therefore, managed lanes could not be implemented within the existing footprint of I-526 and would not be an avoidance alternative for Section 4(f) resources. More recent

studies of managed lanes in the Charleston region include one additional general-purpose lane in each direction on I-526 in the No-Build or baseline condition. The managed lane No-Build condition in the I-526 corridor is equivalent to the 6-lane alternative that was evaluated as part of the I-526 LCC WEST traffic study. At the time that the managed lane study began, modeling had already determined that one general purpose lane in each direction would not reduce congestion to acceptable levels, so the managed lane build alternatives were evaluated in conjunction with one added general-purpose lane. The managed lane alternatives would have the same number of lanes as the I-526 LCC West Recommended Preferred Alternative. Therefore; even if funding were available, managed lanes would still require widening of existing I-526 and therefore is not considered a viable avoidance alternative by itself or in combination with other avoidance alternatives.

Whereas managed lanes alone do not meet the project's purpose and need and therefore not considered a viable stand-alone alternative, the 12-foot shoulders included in the proposed project could accommodate future managed lane options on I-26 or potential bus-on-shoulder transfers between the two interstates. As such, managed lanes are **not a prudent avoidance alternative**. Additional details on managed lanes can be found in Section 3.5.4 of the **FEIS-ROD**.

5.4.2 Other TSM/TDM Strategies

Transportation System Management (TSM) strategies include lower cost improvements to improve efficiency and safety. A few examples of TSM consist of improving signal timing, adding high occupancy vehicle lanes as well as adding turn lanes. Transportation Demand Management (TDM) focuses on lessening travel demand by reducing the number of vehicle trips and vehicle miles traveled on a roadway or redistributing this demand in space or time to decrease system deficiency. TDM regional strategies may include strategies such as encouraging drivers to carpool or ride the bus, and/or encouraging employers to allow non-standard work hours or telecommuting options for employees.

The following documents were reviewed to evaluate travel demand reduction TSM/TDM: I-526 Corridor Analysis Between North Charleston and West Ashley, SCDOT, 2013; The Public Transportation element of the Charleston Area Transportation Study (CHATS) Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), January 2019; Appendix D of the CHATS LRTP, Transit Needs Assessment, January 2019; Travel Market Analysis element of the BCDCOG Regional Transit Framework Plan, March 2018; Corridor Alternatives Evaluation & Recommendations element of the BCDCOG Regional Transit Framework Plan, March 2018; Congestion Management Process report, BCDCOG, January 2019 . These studies did not reference reductions in travel demand related to single occupancy vehicles.

According to the US Census Bureau American Community Survey, the percentage of commuters driving alone to work has only reduced by 0.4 percent between 2013 and 2019. The percentage of carpoolers and public transit users also declined by an average of less than one percent. This data indicated an increase in telecommuters, but not substantial enough to reduce congestion given the current and future traffic demand for the corridor. I-526 from Mount Pleasant to Savannah Highway was identified in the Regional Transit Framework Plan as a high capacity transit (HCT) corridor. This plan establishes the needs and makes recommendations based on public and stakeholder input, operations, and available funding. However, the plan does not provide forecasts. Based on the American Community Survey data through 2019, and the document review described above, the TSM/TDM recommendations from the 2013 Corridor Study are still applicable.

The TSM/TDM strategies evaluated in the 2013 Corridor Study are listed in Table 1. A total reduction of 5.2% of total overall traffic can be expected with the implementation of all 10 of the TDM programs evaluated in the 2013 Corridor Study.

Table 1: Transportation System Management/Transportation Demand Management (TSM/TDM) Strategies

STRATEGY	PERCENT REDUCTION
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%
Total Reduction Potential	5.2%

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

As a standalone alternative, TSM and TDM improvements do not adequately improve the corridor and meet the purpose and need to increase capacity and reduce congestion given the current and future level of service (LOS). TSM/TDM strategies alone do not meet the project's purpose and need and are **not a prudent avoidance alternative**. Additional details TSM/TDM strategies can be found in Section 3.5.5 of the FEIS-ROD.

5.5 RETAINING WALLS

The use of retaining walls was evaluated as an avoidance measure that would allow a more symmetrical widening of I-26 near the Highland Terrace-Liberty Park Community Center and could be paired with any of the reasonable alternatives described in Section 5.7. A retaining wall paralleling I-26 was considered along Taylor Street, near the Highland Terrace-Liberty Park Community Center, at a length of 550 feet, average height of 26 feet, and total cost of approximately \$715,000.00.

Construction of the retaining walls would avoid displacing the Highland Terrace-Liberty Park Community Center and four residences; however, there are several issues with this avoidance measure. Eleven homes along Taylor Street were displaced by the initial construction of I-26 and realignment of Taylor Street to its current location. Despite the number of relocations, a minimal amount of right-of-way was obtained for the freeway, leaving a number of remaining residents on Taylor Street within close proximity to I-26.

As discussed in Section 5.4.1, managed lanes were evaluated in the alternatives development process; although there are currently no programmed managed lane projects on I-26, there is still the potential for their implementation in the future. There is also the potential for additional lanes to be added on I-26 in the future.

The proposed improvements include wide shoulders to account for this possibility; however, future improvements could necessitate additional right-of-way, incurring relocations at a future date. The current proposed right-of-way was set in consideration of both past encroachment effects and the potential for future widening; as such, reducing the proposed right-of-way – although it would eliminate displacing the Highland Terrace-Liberty Park Community Center and several residences – creates the same encroachment effects by constructing new travel lanes closer to properties originally affected by construction of I-26. The community center and four residences that would be avoided by constructing the retaining wall would experience noise impacts from the proposed project, in an area where the addition of a noise wall was determined not to be feasible. In addition, the approximately 26-foot high

wall would create visual effects for adjacent residences and preclude any revegetating of the slope in the future.

The use of a retaining wall on I-26 would create a near-term solution by avoiding the relocation of a handful of homes and a community center but these properties would be exposed to new noise and visual effects and would still potentially be in jeopardy from future impacts, which contributes to the overall cumulative effects residents experienced from area transportation projects.

This avoidance measure also has the potential to alter mitigation plans to construct a larger community center to offset impacts to both the Highland Terrace-Liberty Park Community Center and Russelldale Community Center and mitigate broader disproportionate, adverse effects on Environmental Justice populations as part of a Community Mitigation Plan. It has been noted by residents that the current building at the Highland Terrace-Liberty Park Community Center is very small and limits the types of activities and number of participants in the Center's current programs. Under these circumstances, *preserving the Center provides limited benefit when compared to elements of the Community Mitigation Plan.*

Adding retaining walls on I-26 as part of any reasonable alternative was determined **not to be a prudent avoidance alternative** due to the unique problems associated with its construction, primarily the contribution of additional cumulative effects on Environmental Justice populations in the form of additional encroachment and the creation of noise and visual impacts on homes that would not be displaced through the construction of the retaining wall.

There are no similar options to evaluate retaining walls at the Russelldale Community Center.

2021 Update: After the publication of the DEIS in October 2020, design studies found that the I-26 bridges over the Norfolk Southern railroad are in need of replacement. This additional element would: raise the grade of I-26 approximately two feet to be able to use more standard and cost efficient structure types on the bridges; and necessitates the construction of wider approach ramps to and from I-526 to accommodate traffic while the bridges are being replaced. The I-26 bridge replacements would be included in all four Reasonable Alternatives (Alternatives 1, 1A, 2, and 2A) described in Section 5.7. Retaining walls were added to the preliminary design at this point to avoid the need for additional right-of-way. As discussed in the Environmental Justice Community Mitigation Plan (EJCMP) (FEIS-ROD Appendix H), mitigation barriers were added along I-26 in response to public comments received during the DEIS comment period as a measure to mitigate visual impacts associated with the freeway. Mitigation barriers are walls constructed along a highway to protect sensitive land-uses from visual impacts associated with transportation projects. The design modifications associated with the bridge replacements provides sufficient space for the mitigation barriers. Without replacement of the I-26 bridges, retaining walls would be required to construct the mitigation barriers to prevent the need for additional right-of-way acquisition.

5.6 MASS TRANSIT

The total potential reduction of these improvement strategies is estimated to be 7.4% with the implementation of short-term transit and freight improvements. Additionally, the addition of mass transit does not enhance safety, nor improve freight mobility. Because mass transit does not meet the purpose and need as a standalone alternative, it is not carried forward as an alternative for the I-526 LCC WEST Corridor project and is **not a prudent avoidance alternative**. Additional details on mass transit can be found in Section 3.5.6 of the FEIS-ROD.

5.7 IMPROVE EXISTING ALTERNATIVES: INTERNATIONAL BOULEVARD TO RIVERS AVENUE – REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES

Improving the existing I-526 LCC WEST mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard is proposed to accommodate the current and future vehicular demands, as well as population and employment increases. While the previously discussed avoidance alternatives did not meet the purpose and need, improving the existing corridor could meet the purpose and need by increasing capacity and thereby reducing congestion.

As shown in Figure 2.2, the affected Section 4(f) resources are located along the section of the project between International Boulevard and Rivers Avenue. Improvements to existing I-526 (Alternatives 1, 1A, 2, and 2A) were developed based on separating movements that create congestion caused by closely spaced ramps and less than desirable weave and merge lane lengths. Alternatives 1, 1A, 2, and 2A are illustrated below and are further described in Section 3.5.7 of the [FEIS-ROD and FEIS-ROD Appendix C](#). **All four build alternatives would impact the Highland Terrace-Liberty Park Community Center and the Russelldale Community Center, see Table 5.1 for further details on impacts anticipated for each alternative.**

Alternative 1: This alternative adds collector-distributor roads to the north and south sides of I-526 through the Rivers Avenue interchange. The eastbound I-526 to westbound I-26 directional ramp will be moved to cross over I-26 north of I-526. Access between Rivers Avenue and I-26 via I-526 is eliminated because the I-526 eastbound to I-26 westbound directional ramp prevents the slip ramp that leads to it. There is insufficient distance to grade separate all the existing movements. Figure 5.2 depicts the proposed improvements for Alternative 1.

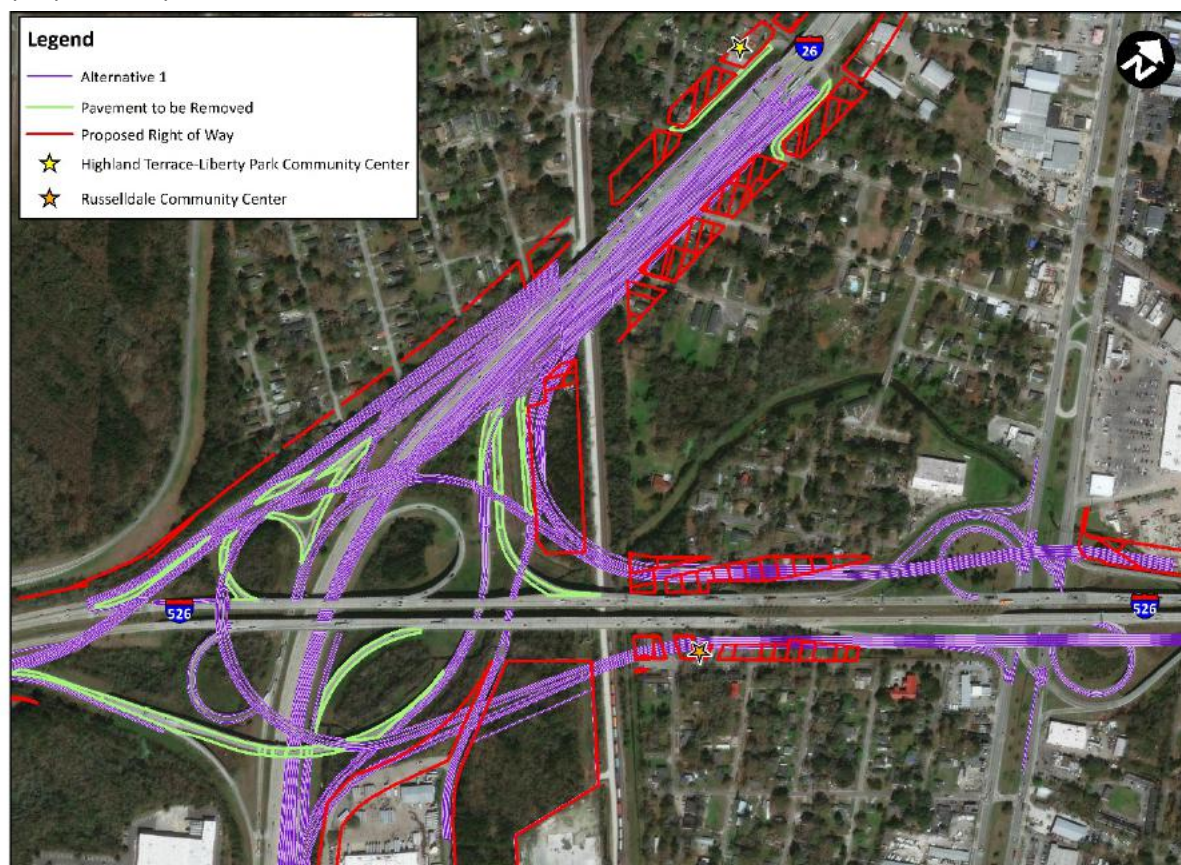


Figure 5.2: I-526 at I-26 and Rivers Ave: Alternative 1

Alternative 1A: This alternative adds collector-distributor roads to the north and south sides of I-526 through the Rivers Avenue interchange. The eastbound I-526 to westbound I-26 directional ramp will be moved to cross over I-26 north of I-526. Access between Rivers Avenue and I-26 via I-526 is maintained. Figure 5.3 depicts the proposed improvements for Alternative 1A.

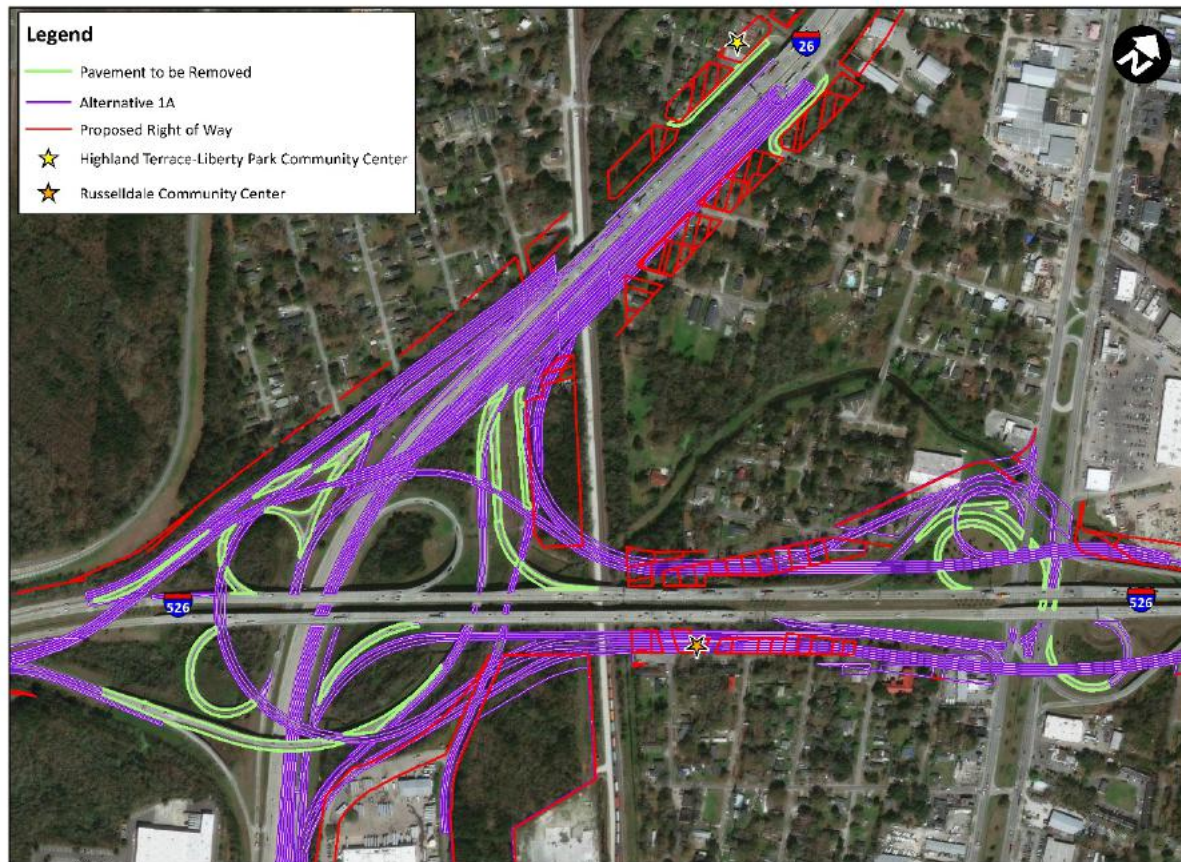


Figure 5.3: I-526 at I-26 and Rivers Ave: Alternative 1A

Alternative 2 (Preferred): This alternative adds collector-distributor roads to the north and south sides of I-526 through the Rivers Avenue interchange. Access between Rivers Avenue and I-26 via I-526 is eliminated. This alternative retains the I-26 eastbound to I-526 loop ramp which provides access for traffic entering the eastbound C-D road from Aviation Avenue and Remount Road to reach I-526 eastbound. This loop also serves as a redundant path if there is an incident on the new I-26 eastbound to I-526 eastbound directional ramp and serves to lessen the traffic pressure on Rivers Ave and Remount Road. Figure 5.4 depicts the proposed improvements for Alternative 2.

Alternative 2A: This alternative adds collector-distributor roads to the north and south sides of I-526 through the Rivers Avenue interchange. Eastbound I-526 to westbound I-26 will use the existing directional ramp. Access between Rivers Avenue and I-26 via I-526 is maintained. Figure 5.5 depicts the proposed improvements for Alternative 2A.

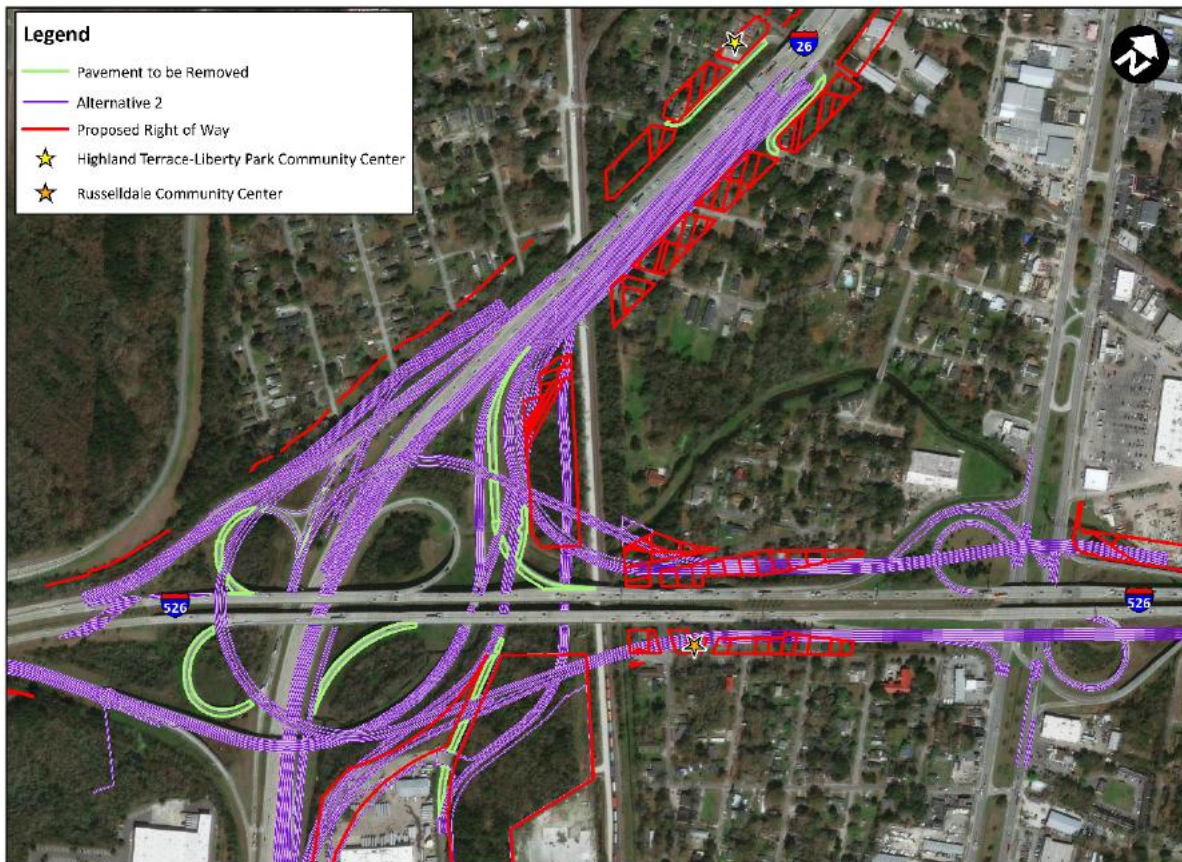


Figure 5.4: I-526 at I-26 and Rivers Ave: Alternative 2

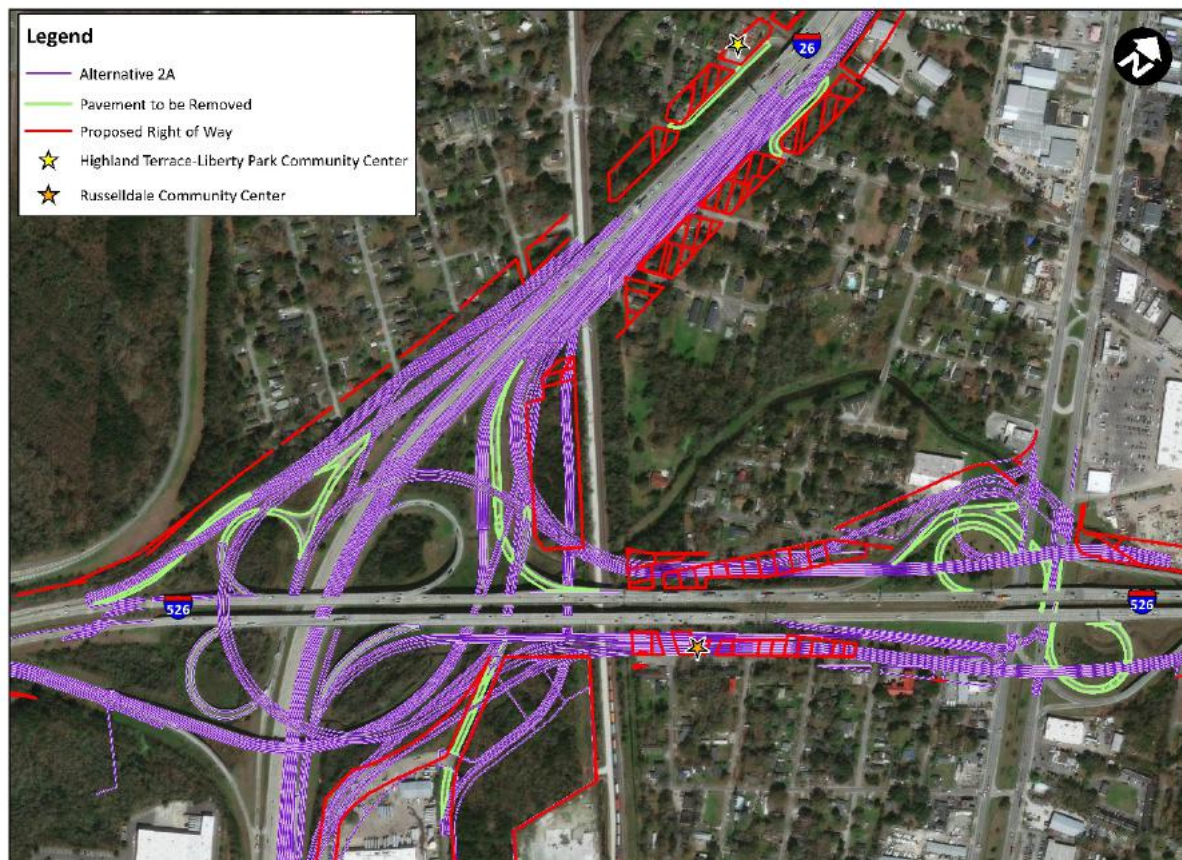


Figure 5.5: I-526 at I-26 and Rivers Ave: Alternative 2A

Alternatives 1, 1A, 2 and 2A each include a combination of the I-26/I-526 system interchange and the adjacent I-526/Rivers Avenue (US 52) service interchange. The two interchanges are combined in each of these four alternatives because they are close together. The distance between the painted gore points of the ramps between these interchanges is 1,600 feet in the eastbound direction and 725 feet in the westbound direction. Table 5.1 summarizes the functional differences between these four alternatives.

Operational Differences – Alternatives 1 and 2 are recommended over Alternatives 1A and 2A. This is because both 1A and 2A include ramps connecting Rivers Avenue to both the existing mainline and the proposed eastbound and westbound I-526 C-D roads. The connections to the new C-D roads present two operational issues. First, the proposed westbound C-D road carries all westbound I-526 traffic that is destined for I-26. Traffic entering from Rivers Avenue onto the westbound C-D must merge with this volume if bound for westbound I-26, or weave through it if bound for eastbound I-26. This weave fails, producing a LOS F, due to the limited weaving distance available between Rivers Avenue and I-26. Another consideration involves the forecast for future traffic queues in the northbound lanes of Rivers Avenue due to the expected growth in intermodal freight rail traffic crossing Rivers Avenue near Taylor Street. Traffic studies associated with Navy Base Intermodal Terminal Environmental Impact Statement indicate that these queues will impact traffic on I-526 near Rivers Avenue. If ramps are also connected to the proposed C-D roads, these same queues will impact the I-526 to I-26 system traffic due to traffic queueing up these additional ramps.

Table 5.1: Summary of Functional Differences between Reasonable Alternatives

Design Differences	Alt 1	Alt 1A	Alt 2	Alt 2A
EB I-526 to WB I-26	Crosses over I-526 in the NW Quadrant of Interchange, then over I-26.	Same as Alt 1	Crosses over I-26, then under I-526 on Existing Ramp.	Same as Alt 2
Access at I-526/Rivers Avenue Interchange	Maintains connection to I-526 existing mainline. Does not provide access to/from the new I-526 C-D lanes.	Maintains connection to I-526 mainline and adds connections to/from the new I-526 C-D lanes.	Same as Alt 1	Same as Alt 1A
Access from Remount Road and Aviation Avenue on west side of I-26 to EB I-526	Must cross over I-26 to Rivers Avenue, take Rivers Avenue to I-526.	Same as Alt 1	May follow same route at Alt 1 and 1A, or use EB I-26 C-D road to loop ramp accessing EB I-526.	Same as Alt 2

Alternatives 1 and 2 result in the diversion of traffic that currently accesses eastbound and westbound I-26 from Rivers Avenue via westbound I-526. Approximately 330 vehicles are diverted along Rivers Avenue toward Montague Avenue and 370 toward Remount Road in the AM peak hour to gain access to I-26. In the PM peak hour, approximately 240 vehicles and 320 vehicles are diverted toward Montague Avenue and Remount Road, respectively, to gain access to I-26. A comparison of LOS can be found in Tables 5.2 and 5.3. Table 5.2 shows a moderate increase in delay/reduction in LOS for Alternatives 1 and 2 compared to 1A and 2A due to the additional traffic diverted to the Rivers and Remount intersection. The freeway analysis results in Table 5.3 show the failure in the westbound section of I-526 between Rivers

Avenue and I-26 due to the added ramps and short weave for Alternates 1A and 2A. These reports are based on a static analysis, and do not account for the bottleneck effects that this failure will have on the westbound I-526 to I-26 system to system traffic.

Alternative 2 is recommended over Alternative 1 for traffic operations because Alternative 2 includes access to and use of the existing loop ramp that connects eastbound I-26 to eastbound I-526. Dynamic traffic assignment performed by the microsimulation traffic model assigns traffic to routes based on travel distance and time, incorporating congestion into the route choice. The availability of this ramp resulted in approximately 350 vehicles and 320 vehicles using this ramp in the AM and PM peak hours, respectively. This reflects the number of vehicles that chose not to use Rivers Avenue due to congestion and delays at the intersections on Rivers Avenue. This existing loop ramp, which becomes inaccessible in Alternative 1 because of a conflicting ramp, also provides a redundant path for eastbound I-26 to eastbound I-526 traffic, in the event that the new directional ramp that carries that movement is obstructed by an incident.

Table 5.2: Intersection LOS for I-26/I-526/Rivers Avenue Alternatives

Intersection Name	2050 No Build				2050 Build – Alt. 1 & 2 (Rivers Avenue Access to I-526 Mainline)				2050 Build – Alt. 1A & 2A (Rivers Avenue Access to I-526 Mainline and C-D)			
	AM Peak Hour		PM Peak Hour		AM Peak Hour		PM Peak Hour		AM Peak Hour		PM Peak Hour	
	LOS	Delay (s)	LOS	Delay (s)	LOS	Delay (s)	LOS	Delay (s)	LOS	Delay (s)	LOS	Delay (s)
I 526 at Rivers Ave												
Rivers Ave & Harley St	C	24.5	E	75.9	C	26.9	E	79.7	C	26.2	E	60.3
Rivers Ave & I-526 WB Ramps	C	26.4	B	12.3	A	7.7	A	6.3	B	18.9	A	6.3
Rivers Ave & I-526 EB Ramps	C	24.5	C	20.6	C	24.6	B	13.0	C	23.1	D	41.5
Rivers Ave & Mall Dr	B	11.5	C	22.6	B	11.5	C	23.1	B	11.1	C	22.8
I 26 at E Montague												
E Montague Ave & I-26 WB Ramps	C	27.7	D	37.2	D	38.8	E	70.0	D	38.8	E	70.0
E Montague Ave & Mall Dr	B	12.9	B	19.2	B	19.5	C	23.9	C	22.1	C	23.8
Rivers at E Montague												
E Montague Ave & Morningside Dr	A	6.6	A	6.8	B	12.3	A	7.4	A	7.0	A	6.4
E Montague Ave & Alton	A	5.5	A	6.5	C	23.6	B	11.6	A	7.9	A	7.2
I 26 at Remount												
Remount Road & Rivers Ave	F	433.3	F	214.5	E	62.2	D	49.8	D	49.4	D	40.6
Remount Road & I-26 EB Ramps	F	109.4	E	76.5	E	56.9	E	64.5	D	54.9	E	66.4
Remount Road & I-26 WB Ramps	D	35.6	D	46.1	B	18.0	D	51.5	B	17.0	D	52.6
I 26 at Aviation												
Aviation Ave & I-26 EB Ramps	C	20.1	B	13.9	D	51.9	C	21.6	D	49.8	C	20.6
Aviation Ave & I-26 WB Ramps	B	18.3	C	20.7	C	21.6	B	17.7	C	20.8	B	17.9
Aviation Ave & Rivers Ave	F	138.4	E	61.1	E	69.9	D	47.9	E	64.3	D	40.2

Table 5.3: HCM Freeway LOS for I-26/I-526/Rivers Avenue Alternatives

Interstate Element	2050 No Build				2050 Build – Alt. 1 & 2 (Rivers Avenue Access to I-526 Mainline)				2050 Build – Alt. 1A & 1B (Rivers Avenue Access to I-526 Mainline and C-D)			
	AM Peak Hour		PM Peak Hour		AM Peak Hour		PM Peak Hour		AM Peak Hour		PM Peak Hour	
	LOS	Density (pc/mi/ln)	LOS	Density (pc/mi/ln)	LOS	Density (pc/mi/ln)	LOS	Density (pc/mi/ln)	LOS	Density (pc/mi/ln)	LOS	Density (pc/mi/ln)
I 526 WB												
Mainline West of CD Off-Ramp	E	44.0	F	47.6	C	20.7	C	23.2	C	18.2	C	22.0
CD Merge from Rhett On-Ramp	NA	NA	NA	NA	D	31.4	D	32.2	D	33.9	D	33.3
Mainline Merge from Rhett On-Ramp	F	v/c > 1	F	v/c > 1	C	27.9	D	32.0	C	25.4	D	30.9
Mainline between Rhett & Rivers	F	88.0	F	85.8	C	24.5	D	30.1	C	21.7	D	28.6
CD between Rhett & Rivers	NA	NA	NA	NA	D	31.6	D	33.7	E	36.3	E	35.8
Mainline Off-Ramp to Rivers	F	v/c > 1	F	v/c > 1	C	26.9	D	31.5	C	24.1	D	30.4
CD Off-Ramp to Rivers ³	NA	NA	NA	NA	C	20.4	B	17.4	E	35.7	E	35.1
CD Weave between Rivers & I-26	F	v/c > 1	F	v/c > 1	D	31.2	D	32.5	F*	v/c > 1	F*	v/c > 1

Alternative 2 is recommended as the preferred alternative between International Boulevard and Rivers Avenue. Although Alternative 1 and 2 would remove access from Rivers Avenue to I-26 via I-526, both alternatives would result in lower relocations and potential impacts to Environmental Justice populations than Alternative 1A or 2A. Alternative 1 would require a traffic movement or weave that may result in overcapacity and failing LOS in the segment. The over-congestion of this segment in Alternative 1 may cause upstream backups along I-526 eastbound and I-526 westbound. Alternative 2 does not require this traffic movement or weave, which reduces the number of vehicles which must weave compared to Alternative 1. This results in traffic operations which are under capacity and with acceptable LOS C. Alternative 2 is the recommended preferred alternative between International Boulevard and Rivers Avenue.

As noted in Table 5.4, all reasonable alternatives presented in the DEIS, including Alternative 2, would impact both Section 4(f) resources. Table 5.5 shows anticipated impacts for the Preferred Alternative based on the preliminary design of the Preferred Alternative as of November 2021. Relocation numbers reflect a conservative estimate that will be refined as the project advances and additional measures are evaluated to help further minimize impacts.

Table 5.4: Impact Matrix for the Reasonable Alternatives: I-26/I-526 System-to-System & I-526 at Rivers Avenue (DEIS, October 2020)

Evaluation Factor		No Build	1	2 (Recommended)	1A	2A
Purpose & Need: 2050 Traffic Analysis	Deficient Movements ¹	11	3	1	10	8
	Geometric Deficiencies Resolved (#)	0/30	8/11		9/11	9/11
	Hurricane Evacuation Route Compatible (Yes/No)	Yes	Yes			
	Provides Direct Access to/from I-526? (Yes/No)	Yes	Yes			
	Weighted v/c Ratio ²	N/A	0.74	0.71	0.77	0.70
Total Relocations		0	106		132	
Relocations: Residential		0	35 single-family homes 17 mobile homes 16 multi-family complexes, 40 units total		39 single-family homes 16 mobile homes 19 multi-family complexes, 55 units total	
Relocations: Businesses		0	12 ³		13 ⁴	
Relocations: Churches		0	1 - Enoch Chapel Methodist		2 - Enoch Chapel Methodist, Life Changers Covenant Ministries	
Relocations: Community Facilities (#)		0	2 - Highland Terrace-Liberty Park Community Center and Russelldale Community Center			
Environmental Justice (Yes/No)		No	Yes			
Section 4(f) & 6(f) (Yes/No)		No	Yes Highland Terrace-Liberty Park Community Center - 4(f) & 6(f); Russelldale Community Center - 4(f)			
Freshwater Wetland Impact Based on R/W (acres)		0	28.5			
Freshwater Stream Impact Based on R/W (feet)		0	13,327.1			
FEMA Flood Designation Total Based on R/W (acres) ⁵		0	419		422	424
AE (acres)		0	37		38	
X (acres)		0	382		384	386
Threatened & Endangered Species		0	May effect, not likely to adversely affect 10 species ⁶			
Cultural Resources – Effects on NR/NR-Eligible Properties		N/A	No Effect: Eligible - Bethune School			
Utilities (\$)		\$0	\$37,082,500		\$43,582,500	
Cost (\$)		\$0	\$950,000,000	\$979,000,000	\$1,068,000,000	\$1,066,000,000
Recommended Alternative (Yes/No)		No	No	Yes	No	No

NOTES: Impacts associated with the Recommended Alternative are shaded blue. Evaluation factors with zero impacts for all reasonable alternatives in this portion of the project are not included in this impact matrix. A noise analysis was developed only for the Recommended Alternative, contained in FEIS-ROD Appendix G, Noise Analysis Technical Memorandum. It is noted that existing conditions approach or exceed the noise abatement criteria (NAC) for residential land use.

1. Defined as movements projected to have LOS E or F. For No Build Conditions, these include movements along I-526 and in the study area of the system-to-system interchange. For Build Conditions, these are movements along I-526, in the system-to-system study area, and in the Rhett Ave/Virginia Ave interchange study area.
2. Weighted v/c ratio taken from supplemental v/c analysis at the I-526 & I-26 and I-526 & Rhett/Virginia interchanges. Ratio is weighted based on volume processed and v/c for select, critical movements throughout the interchange(s), with comparable movements included for each alternative.
3. Staffmark, Warren Fastenings South, Inc., Charleston Dog House, Precision Cycle and Watercraft, Propac (2 buildings), Jones Ford Collision Center, Four Corners Woodworking, Custom Wood Gifts (3 buildings), Sanders Brothers Construction.
4. In addition to the business relocations listed in Footnote 3, Alternatives 1A and 2A would also displace Roper St. Francis Physician Partners - Primary Care.
5. Floodplain impacts based on proposed ROW; actual impacts to floodplains would be lower as much of proposed alignments are on structure which would limit actual earthwork in floodplains.
6. Atlantic sturgeon, Shortnose sturgeon, American wood stork, Bachman's warbler, Eastern Black rail, Piping plover, Northern long-eared bat, West Indian manatee, Canby's dropwort, Pondberry.

Table 5.5: Impact Matrix for the Preferred Alternative: I-26/I-526 System-to-System & I-526 at Rivers Avenue (FEIS, July 2022)

Evaluation Factor		Preferred Alternative (Alt 2)
Purpose & Need: 2050 Traffic Analysis	Deficient Movements ¹	1
	Geometric Deficiencies Resolved (#)	8/11
	Hurricane Evacuation Route Compatible (Yes/No)	Yes
	Provides Direct Access to/from I-526? (Yes/No)	Yes
	Weighted v/c Ratio ²	0.71
Total Relocations at the I-26/I-526 System-to-System & I-526 at Rivers Avenue		168
Relocations: Residential		40 single-family homes 11 mobile homes 14 multi-family complexes, 62 units total
Relocations: Businesses		17 commercial buildings, 52 units total ³
Relocations: Churches		1 - Enoch Chapel Methodist
Relocations: Community Facilities (#)		2 - Highland Terrace-Liberty Park Community Center and Russelldale Community Center
Environmental Justice (Yes/No)		Yes
Section 4(f) & 6(f) (Yes/No)		Yes Highland Terrace-Liberty Park Community Center - 4(f) & 6(f); Russelldale Community Center - 4(f)
Freshwater Wetland Impact Based on R/W (acres)		28.5
Freshwater Stream Impact Based on R/W (feet)		13,327.1
FEMA Flood Designation Total Based on R/W (acres) ⁴		419
AE (acres)		37
X (acres)		382
Threatened & Endangered Species		May effect, not likely to adversely affect 10 species ⁵
Cultural Resources – Effects on NR/NR-Eligible Properties		No Effect: Eligible - Bethune School
Utilities (\$)		\$22,312,257
Cost (\$)		\$850M – \$1.3B

NOTES: Evaluation factors with zero impacts for the preferred alternative are not included in this impact matrix. A noise analysis was developed only for the Recommended Alternative, contained in FEIS-ROD Appendix G, Noise Analysis Technical Memorandum. It is noted that existing conditions approach or exceed the noise abatement criteria (NAC) for residential land use. Relocation numbers reflect a conservative estimate that will be refined as the project advances and additional measures are evaluated to help further minimize impacts.

1. Defined as movements projected to have LOS E or F. For No Build Conditions, these include movements along I-526 and in the study area of the system-to-system interchange. For Build Conditions, these are movements along I-526, in the system-to-system study area, and in the Rhett Ave/Virginia Ave interchange study area.
2. Weighted v/c ratio taken from supplemental v/c analysis at the I-526 & I-26 and I-526 & Rhett/Virginia interchanges. Ratio is weighted based on volume processed and v/c for select, critical movements throughout the interchange(s), with comparable movements included for each alternative.
3. Budget Inn, Aviation Shopping Center (13 units), Aviation Center (5 units), Staffmark (5 units), Warren Fastenings South Inc., Charleston Dog House, Precision Cycle and Watercraft, Propac Exporter (2 buildings), Jones Ford Collision Center, Airbine Properties LLC (5 buildings), Bank of America Financial Center (15 units), and Borden Dairy Co.
4. Floodplain impacts based on proposed ROW; actual impacts to floodplains would be lower as much of proposed alignments are on structure which would limit actual earthwork in floodplains.
5. Atlantic sturgeon, Shortnose sturgeon, American wood stork, Bachman's warbler, Eastern Black rail, Piping plover, Northern long-eared bat, West Indian manatee, Canby's dropwort, Pondberry.

6.0 MINIMIZATION AND MITIGATION OF HARM

All four build alternatives would impact the Section 4(f) resources and as discussed in previous sections, there are no feasible and prudent alternatives to avoid impacts to these resources. The recommended preferred alternative (Alternative 2) is identified as the “least overall harm” alternative with efforts to minimize and mitigate impacts. See Table 6.1 for additional details on the screening process to determine the least overall harm alternative.

Minimization – Each reasonable alternative minimizes impacts to the Highland Terrace-Liberty Park Community Center, leaving 0.60-acre of the 0.87-acre property available for the redevelopment of recreational facilities. Current plans include the development of a pocket park at the existing site. The pocket park would replace the playground and one basketball court being impacted by the preferred alternative. Due to the location of the Russelldale Community Center and its parallel orientation to the I-526 corridor, there are no opportunities to minimize impacts to the facility for any of the reasonable alternatives.

Mitigation – Measures to mitigate impacts to impacted Section 4(f) resources include the in-kind replacement of impacted facilities as well as the construction of additional recreational amenities. Section 4(f) mitigation measures were developed through extensive coordination with the I-526 LCC WEST Community Advisory Council (CAC), the public, and the City of North Charleston. The CAC is comprised of 20 members from impacted neighborhoods and was developed as a means to gather input and feedback on project actions and proposed mitigation. The CAC was formed to facilitate meaningful engagement as intended under Executive Order (EO) 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice to Minority and Low-Income Populations* and United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) Order 5610.2 (a), *Final Order to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations* thereby ensuring full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process. Section 7.0 describes coordination efforts related to the development of Section 4(f) mitigation. CAC meeting minutes can be found in Appendix U Part 2 of this FEIS-ROD.

Proposed mitigation measures to address impacts to the Highland Terrace-Liberty Park and Russelldale Community Centers are detailed below. Details related to programs and amenities at the recreational facilities can be found in the final I-526 LCC WEST Environmental Justice Community Mitigation Plan (FEIS-ROD Appendix H).

Replacement Recreational Facilities:

- Through coordination with the CAC and the City of North Charleston, SCDOT will acquire parcels located within the affected neighborhoods to construct one large, modern, centrally located community center complex with expanded programs and operating hours and two pocket parks, one within the Liberty Park neighborhood and one within the Russelldale neighborhood. See Appendix B for draft facility and amenity renderings. The Russelldale pocket park location is preliminary and SCDOT is committed to continuing to identify additional locations within Russelldale and reviewing the options with community members. The community center will also be equipped with ADA compliant features as well as solar power and generator backup to enable the community center to be used as an emergency event distribution center. The community center will serve as a resource center during disaster preparation, response, and recovery operations within the community. Construction of the new centrally located community center and the pocket parks will be completed prior to the project

construction impacting the existing community centers.

- Infrastructure related to the replacement recreational facilities will include, but is not limited to:
 - Classrooms designed for flexibility, which include moveable panel divider walls allowing room size to be modified to meet program needs;
 - Basketball courts;
 - Facility approaches to be well-lit, and meet design requirements to provide safe lighting;
 - Community garden;
 - Maintenance of stormwater detention as an educational wetland;
 - Outdoor facility lighting above minimum requirements;
 - Covered shelters with grills;
 - Walkways and common spaces will be user-friendly and defined by vegetation or other natural definitions (i.e., fencing should not be first choice);
 - Facility to include shared use path to provide recreational opportunities for walking/biking and connectivity to North Charleston's greenway system;
 - Satellite parking on Dorothy Williams Boulevard and Margaret Drive, adjacent to the shared use paths, to provide additional access points for residents driving to the community center;
 - Audio/visual equipment;
 - Artwork and visual displays based on recommendations from the Community History Preservation Program;
 - Wayfarer/directional signs to help guide residents to new facilities; and,
 - Emergency generators and solar power to enable the community center to be used as a food and supply distribution center during emergencies or inclement weather.

Recreational Facility Programs and Activities:

- SCDOT and the City of North Charleston developed an intergovernmental agreement outlining the programs, services, structural components, and arrangements for long-term operation and maintenance of the replacement community center and pocket parks. The agreement includes language that gives residents of the surrounding neighborhoods priority in areas such as program enrollment/participation, reserving facility space, and volunteer opportunities.
- SCDOT will provide funding for the replacement community center to be designed and equipped to facilitate the new programs. The City will provide staff and have committed to implement these programs into the operations of the replacement community center.
- The City of North Charleston will continue to look for qualified candidates that live in the impacted environmental justice neighborhoods. The City of North Charleston will post job openings within the neighborhoods and encourage the CAC and neighborhood councils to submit qualified applicants.

- Programs and amenities include, but are not limited to:
 - Senior and youth-focused programs and activities;
 - A monthly programming/activity calendar that prioritizes programs for community seniors and youth such as meeting spaces, youth lunch programs, and tennis associations;
 - A yearly calendar of community center events that focuses on events that foster community cohesion such as those that highlight/preserve local history, involve meeting with government representatives, and cross-cultural activities;
 - Programming that provides access to educational and financial resources for community advocacy and self-advocacy;
 - Volunteer and job opportunities with priority on neighborhood residents;
 - 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,
 - Maintenance of stormwater detention as an education wetland to be used for educational purposes during summer programs.

Connectivity and Bike & Pedestrian Safety:

- SCDOT will fund infrastructure improvements to improve bike and pedestrian connectivity, safety, and mobility between the replacement community center, pocket parks, surrounding EJ neighborhoods, and transit stops along Rivers Avenue. These improvements include:
 - Shared-use pathways to provide connectivity to the community center;
 - Pedestrian safety measures at the railroad crossing on Taylor Street;
 - New sidewalks and improvements to existing neighborhood sidewalks;
 - Neighborhood lighting, traffic-calming measures, and crosswalks;
 - Construction of a pedestrian bridge over Filbin Creek connecting the replacement community center to Russelldale;
 - Construction of a pedestrian bridge over the Norfolk Southern Railroad tracks connecting Lacross Road to the replacement community center; and
 - Addition of amenities and improvements at the CARTA bus stops along Rivers Avenue between Taylor Street and Mall Drive.

Additional details related to proposed mitigation associated with impacts to recreational facilities can be found in the Community Infrastructure Enhancement Plan (CIEP), which is appended to the final I-526 LCC WEST Community Mitigation Plan (FEIS-ROD Appendix H).

Draft renderings for the replacement community centers and recreational facilities are shown in Figures 6.1 through 6.3. These plans are conceptual in nature but represent the potential layouts of the proposed facilities.

Table 6.1: Least Overall Harm Matrix for Each Reasonable Alternative at the I-526/26 Interchange

23 CFR 774.3(c)(1) Factors	1	2	1A	2A	Conclusion
i. The ability to mitigate adverse impacts to each Section 4(f) property.	Project impacts can be mitigated by reconstructing similar and improved recreational facilities on available property in logical locations and can be enhanced further by increasing the number of programs at the replacement facilities and improving bike/pedestrian connectivity and lighting through the affected neighborhoods along routes to and from the proposed replacement facilities.				All reasonable alternatives can be mitigated to the same degree necessary to offset impacts to each Section 4(f) property.
ii. The relative severity of the remaining harm, after mitigation, to the protected activities, attributes or features that qualify each Section 4(f) property for protection.	Minor indirect effects would remain simply by moving the facilities from their current locations. Care was taken to identify available land within close proximity to both Section 4(f) resources in an effort to minimize this effect. The proposed Community Center would be constructed between both existing facilities; approximately 0.4-mile away (via neighborhood roads) from both existing facilities.				All reasonable alternatives would result in the same minor indirect effect associated with displacing the existing facilities and necessitating a slightly longer walk (0.4-mile) to each community center compared to their current locations. This effect can be mitigated to the same degree for all reasonable alternatives through the use of improved bike/pedestrian sidewalk and greenway connections.
iii. The relative significance of each Section 4(f) property.	The Section 4(f) community centers serve as an outlet for the communities and provide the main source of entertainment for children in the community. They provide a safe place for children to be active after school and in the summer while providing quality supervision and guidance. Programs at the community center focus on academic enrichment and recreational activities designed to teach children valuable leadership and life skills they can use in their everyday decision-making processes. The centers provide a place for youth development, as well as a place where citizens can hold events and community gatherings.				Both Section 4(f) resources provide a high amount of value to the surrounding neighborhoods. Each of the reasonable alternatives would result in the same level of impact to each Section 4(f) resource.
iv. The views of the officials with jurisdiction over each Section 4(f) property.	The City of North Charleston Parks and Recreation Department has jurisdiction over the affected Section 4(f) resources. The City understands that all reasonable alternatives would have an adverse effect on the Highland Terrace-Liberty Park and Russelldale community centers.*				The City of North Charleston Parks and Recreation Department is agreeable to the proposed mitigation measures to offset impacts associated with displacing both Section 4(f) resources.
v. The degree to which each alternative meets the purpose and need for the project.	Provides greater congestion relief than Alternatives 1A and 2A.		Provides less congestion relief than Alternatives 1 and 2.		All reasonable alternatives meet the project’s purpose and need.
vi. After reasonable mitigation, the magnitude of any adverse impacts to resources not protected by Section 4(f).	All alternatives would have similar impacts to floodplains, wetlands, and streams after reasonable mitigation.*				Each reasonable alternative would result in impacts of similar magnitude to non-Section 4(f) resources.*
vii. Substantial differences in cost among the alternatives (DEIS Oct. 2020)	\$29 million less than the Recommended Alternative	\$979 million (Recommended Alternative)	\$89 million more than the Recommended Alternative	\$87 million more than the Recommended Alternative	Alt 1 has the lowest costs of the alternatives presented in the DEIS.
Conclusions of the least overall harm analysis	Each reasonable alternative would impact the Section 4(f) resources at Highland Terrace-Liberty Park Community Center and Russelldale Community Center to the same extent.* According to FHWA’s Section 4(f) Policy Paper Section 3.3.3.2 ¹ , “Pursuant to substantial case law, if the assessment of overall harm finds that two or more alternatives are substantially equal, FHWA can approve any of those alternatives.” As such, the Recommended Alternative can be selected as the Least Overall Harm Alternative based on it having the same or less impacts than the other reasonable alternatives, a lower cost estimate than two of the four reasonable alternatives, while best meeting the project purpose and need.				

*NOTE: See FEIS-ROD Table 3.8 for additional details on impacts associated with Alternatives 1, 2, 1A, and 2A.

¹ Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Section 4(f) Policy Paper – Environmental Review Toolkit, Section 3.3.3.2. US Department of Transportation. <https://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/legislation/section4f/4fpolicy.aspx#alt1oh>

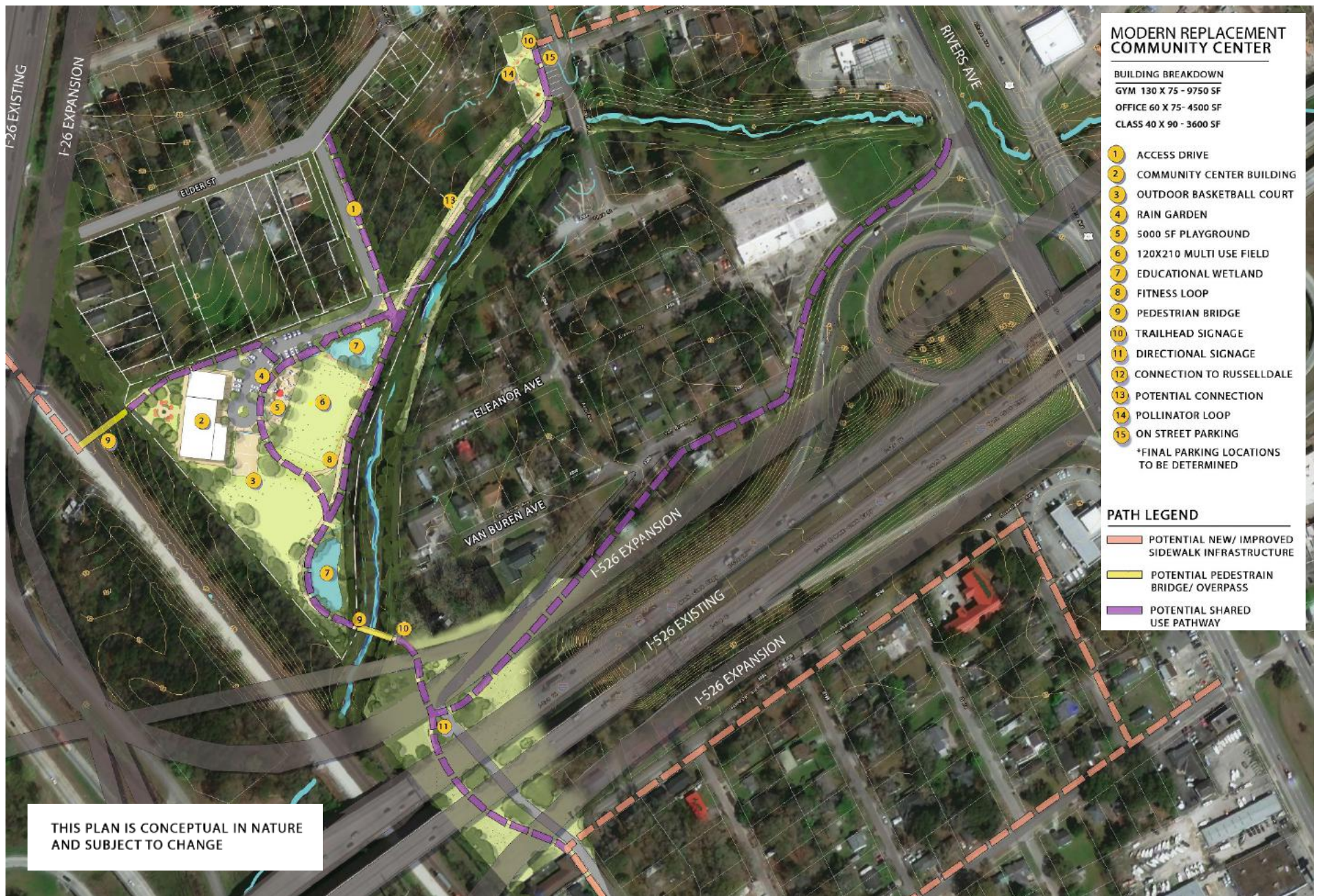


Figure 6.1: Rendering of the proposed replacement community center and recreational amenities on Filbin Creek in the Liberty Park neighborhood. These plans are conceptual in nature but represent the likely layout of the proposed facilities.



Figure 6.2: Rendering of the replacement recreational facilities on the remaining land at the current Highland Terrace-Liberty Park Community Center. These plans are conceptual in nature but represent the likely layout of the proposed facilities.



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

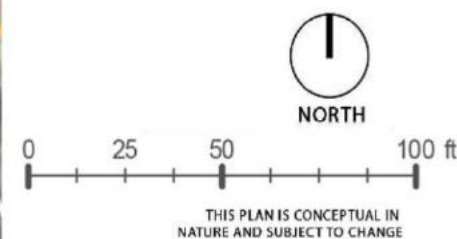


Figure 6.3: Rendering of the replacement recreational facilities in Russell Dale. *These plans are conceptual in nature but represent the likely layouts of the proposed facilities.*

Least Overall Harm Alternative – In consideration of the proposed mitigation measures described above, the preferred alternative would create the least overall harm to Section 4(f) resources. After mitigation measures are in place, the replacement facilities would reestablish the infrastructure, programs, and services that originally qualified the Highland Terrace-Liberty Park Community Center and Russelldale Community Center as Section 4(f) resources.

7.0 COORDINATION

As noted in Section 6.0, Section 4(f) mitigation measures were developed through extensive coordination with the I-526 LCC WEST CAC, the public, and the City of North Charleston through the Technical Review Committee (TRC). Coordination with the City of North Charleston can be found in Appendix B of this evaluation. All public input and materials from CAC meetings are documented in Appendix U of the FEIS-ROD.

Once impacts were apparent, SCDOT initiated coordination with the City of North Charleston to start identifying potential properties for replacement recreational facilities. The project team created an online GIS viewer to share visual representations of the potential properties that could be utilized for facility relocation. The map identifies parcels that are vacant or city-owned, and current listings for sale in the EJ neighborhoods. The City of North Charleston also provided data of previously identified parcels that were considered underdeveloped along Rivers Avenue.

Once identified, the proposed locations and conceptual renderings were reviewed by the CAC and the TRC. Coordination materials with the CAC can be reviewed in Appendix U Part 2 of the FEIS-ROD and TRC meeting materials can be found in Appendix B of this evaluation. The Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of North Charleston can be found in Appendix C of this evaluation.

8.0 REFERENCES

23 CFR § 774.3 - Section 4(f) approvals (2018).

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Section 4(f) Evaluations—Environmental Review Toolkit. US Department of Transportation.

https://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/env_topics/4f_tutorial/default.aspx

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Section 4(f) Policy Paper – Environmental Review Toolkit. US Department of Transportation.

<https://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/legislation/section4f/4fpolicy.aspx#altloh>



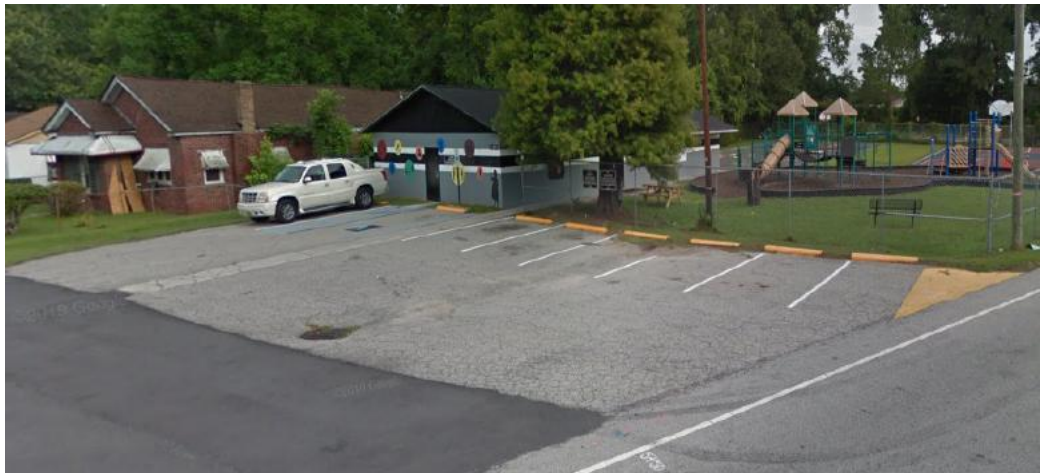
APPENDIX A

SITE PHOTOGRAPHS

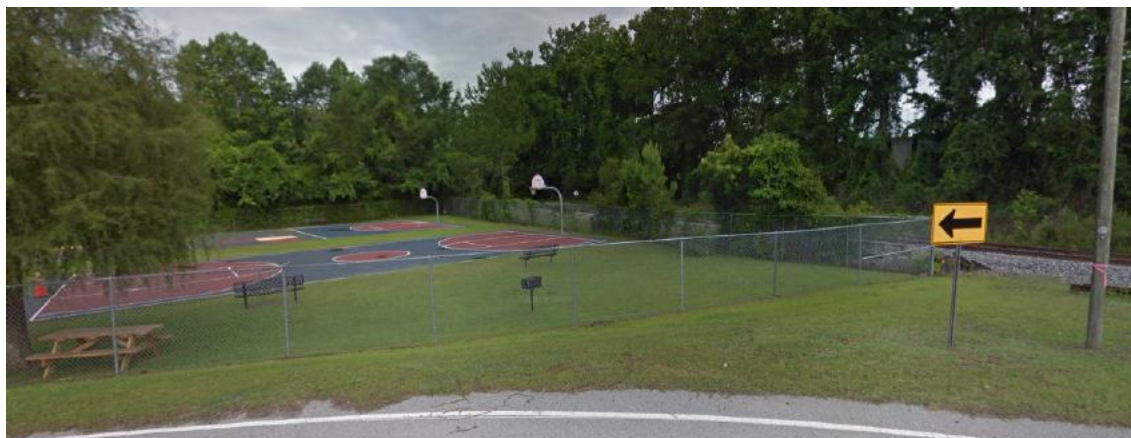
Highland Terrace-Liberty Park Community Center



Entrance to the community center and park (Google Street View)



Parking lot (Google Street View)



Outdoor courts and adjacent rail corridor (Google Street View)

Russelldale Community Center



View of the community center facing northwest (Google Street View)



Playground (Google Street View)



View of the community center facing west (Google Street View)



Basketball Court (Google Street View)



APPENDIX B

COORDINATION



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 ± 3.5 miles of work on I-26 and ± 9.2 miles of work on I-526 for a total of ± 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.

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 ± 0.27 -acres of the Highland Terrace Liberty Park and Community Center and would also displace ± 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.

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.

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

This information was prepared to provide the City of North Charleston with a high-level overview of SCDOT's progress on creating and implementing an Environmental Justice (EJ) Community Mitigation Plan for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST project. This document complements the presentation that will be given at the virtual meeting to be held on May 19, 2020. It includes explanations and updates on past/current efforts, as well as potential mitigation objectives that have been outlined by neighborhood representatives on the Community Advisory Council (CAC). The purpose of this meeting is to provide a status update for City of North Charleston representatives and to facilitate future coordination.

1.0 OVERVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

1.1 PURPOSE

The Community Advisory Council (CAC) was formed to provide input and help guide the project team as they navigated through unique challenges. The CAC provides a way for citizens to voice their opinions, feelings, and ideas on the project so the project will have a positive, local impact. CAC members provide input on actions to minimize and mitigate impacts.

1.2 CAC MEMBERS

The CAC is comprised of 20 members who were recommended to join the CAC based on their background and relationship to the community. The project team contacted local churches, schools, and other entities to help identify residents of the impacted Environmental Justice (EJ) neighborhoods that may be interested in participating in the CAC. The CAC's membership includes homeowners, tenants, business owners, property owners, and religious leaders across the demographic spectrum to fully represent the community's history and future goals. The boundaries of the following EJ neighborhoods (Figure 1.1):

- Ferndale
- Highland Terrace
- Liberty Park
- Russelldale

1.3 CAC MEETINGS

The CAC meets approximately monthly and has convened eight times since September 2019. The CAC will continue to meet throughout the course of the project. The initial meetings focused on member responsibilities, project specifics, and community issues. The CAC also provided feedback on the materials that were to be displayed at

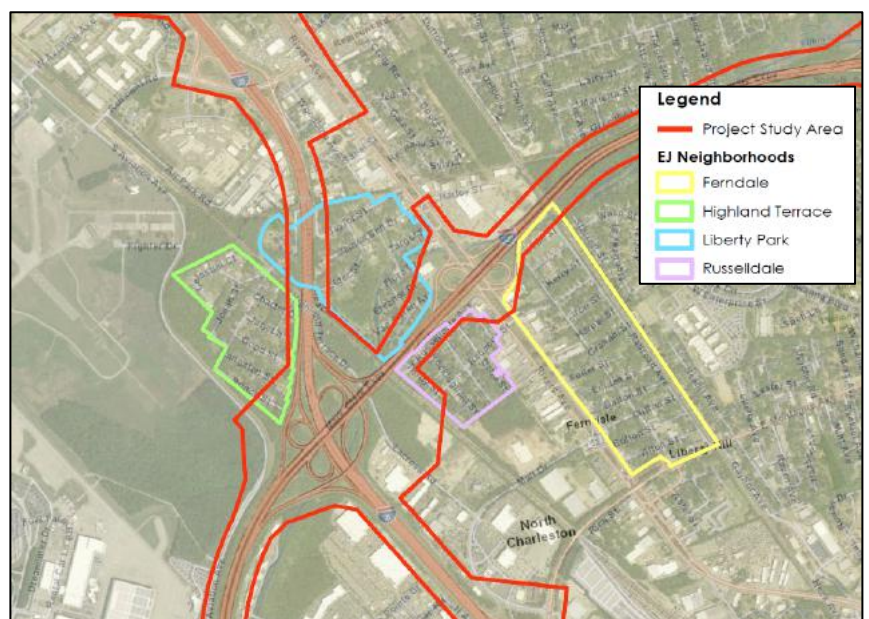


Figure 1.1: EJ neighborhoods near I-526 and I-26

the November 2019 public information and community meetings, and helped distribute meeting information to neighbors.

CAC meetings in March, April, and May have focused on CAC recommendations on potential measures to mitigate direct and cumulative impacts associated with the proposed project. An emphasis was placed on a potential replacement plan for their community centers and recreational facilities that would be displaced by the project. The CAC will continue to play an advisory role in the mitigation development process and transition to a Project Oversight Committee to provide oversight during implementation of the Community Mitigation Plan in early 2022 (*projected*).

2.0 OVERVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

2.1 PURPOSE

A Community Impact Assessment (CIA) is a technical report prepared as part of developing environmental documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The document is used to identify anticipated cultural, social, economic, historical, and physical impacts that a transportation project may have on nearby communities. It records and adds perspective on the possible effects of a project to determine the quality of life for nearby communities before, during, and after construction. Figure 2.1 identifies the study area for which the CIA was developed.

The CIA prepared for this project also includes an Environmental Justice analysis given the presence of low-income and minority populations. Executive Order 12898 directs federal agencies to take the appropriate and necessary steps to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse effects of federal projects on the health or environment of minority and low-income populations to the greatest extent practicable and permitted by law.

2.2 PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

2.2.1 Direct Impacts

Preliminary impact calculations estimate approximately **157 residential relocations**, many of which are disproportionately located in EJ neighborhoods closest to the existing

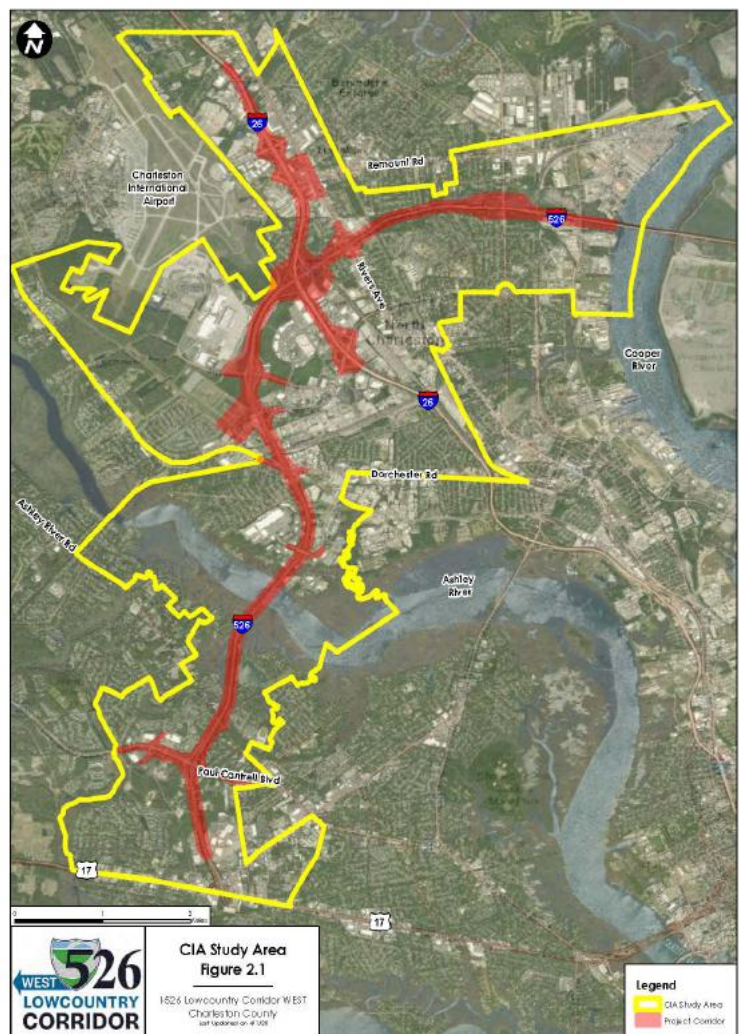


Figure 2.1: CIA Study Area

interstate. “Disproportionate impacts” refer to situations where there exists significantly higher and more adverse health and environmental effects on minority populations, low-income populations or indigenous peoples. **Without mitigation, the anticipated displacements are considered disproportionately high and adverse.**

2.2.2 Cumulative Impacts

The construction of I-526 in the 1980’s resulted in the bisection of neighborhoods and disruption of community cohesion. The original construction of I-26 impacted 26 residences in Highland Terrace along with 22 residences, three businesses, and one church in Liberty Park. The construction of I-526 impacted 16 residential structures (12 single-family homes, two apartments, two mobile homes), and 12 businesses. These previous relocations are seen in Figure 2.2 below. This physical barrier divided communities and disrupted existing community cohesion. Additional cumulative effects are anticipated to communities along the I-526 corridor. Further residential displacements associated with the proposed project serve to further separate these communities.

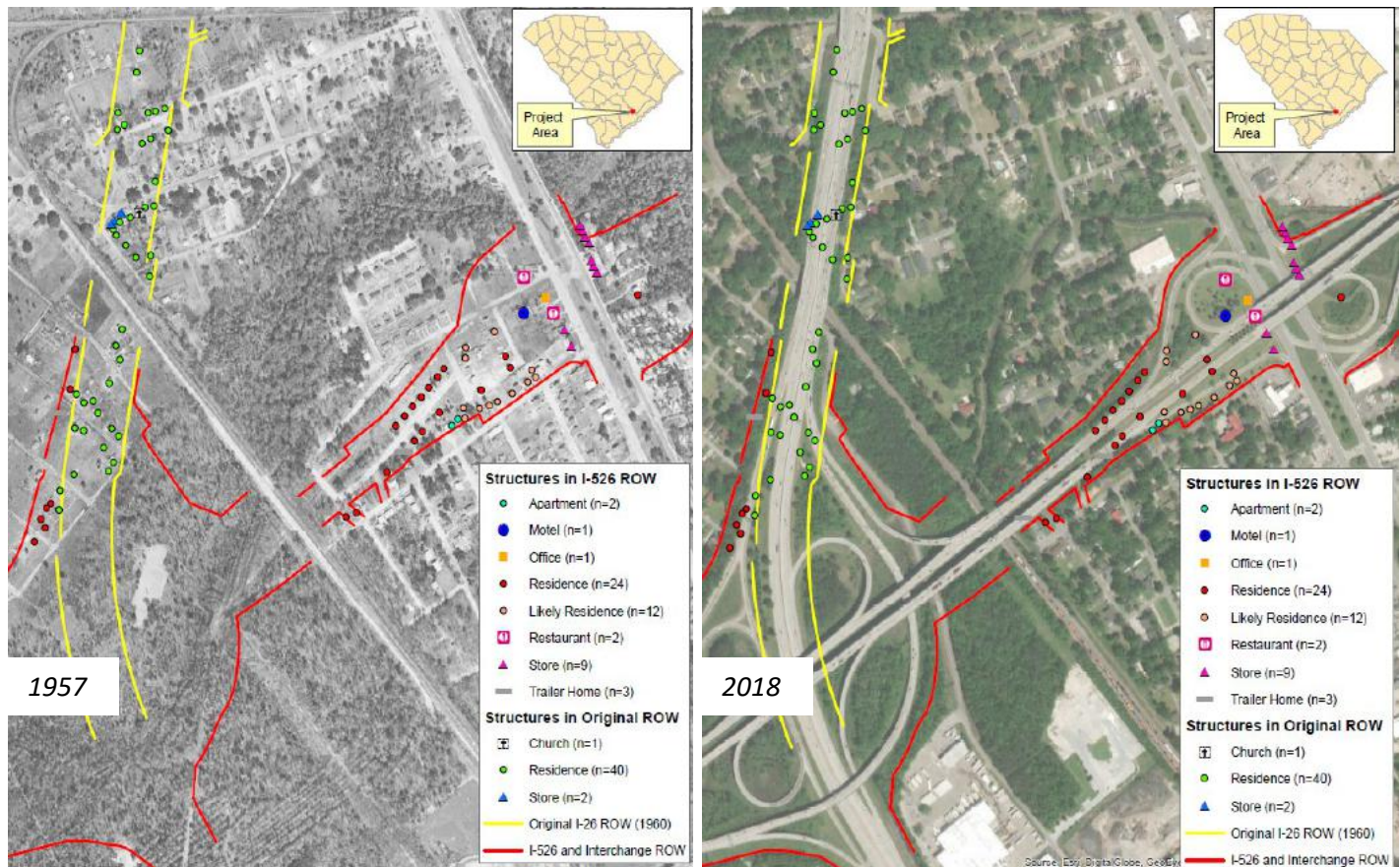


Figure 2.2: Past Impacts of I-526 and I-26

3.0 OVERVIEW OF MITIGATION EFFORTS IN PROGRESS

3.1 COMMUNITY CENTER/RECREATIONAL FACILITY MITIGATION

SCDOT sent letters of interest on March 19, 2020 to nine property owners in the impacted EJ neighborhoods to gauge potential interest in the sale of their homes or vacant/under-developed properties. SCDOT is interested in these properties for use as locations for replacement community center(s), recreational facilities, and/or pocket parks. The properties of interest are identified in Figure 3.1 below.

SCDOT is in the process of following up with these property owners to discuss potential opportunities to purchase their land for mitigation. If the project team is not successful in acquiring any of these 'first round' properties, additional letters will be sent out to other property owners in the EJ neighborhoods. The project team has prepared a desktop screening of the properties to identify wetlands, floodplains, lidar or topography of potential properties, and draft recreational facility drawings to share with interested property owners.



Figure 3.1: Vacant or underdeveloped parcels identified by the project team as potential recreation facility replacement parcels

3.2 OVERVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY MITIGATION FEEDBACK

On March 7, 2020, the project team hosted a workshop with the CAC members to discuss possible mitigation ideas that could be implemented in their neighborhoods by the I-526 LCC WEST project. This workshop was an opportunity to gather information that would assist in structuring replacement community centers and the desired recreational amenities, as well as discuss other forms of potential mitigation. The ideas voiced by the CAC are grouped by the Community Impact Mitigation pillars depicted in the image to the right and are detailed below.

Community Cohesion ideas include:

- Cross-cultural activities that engage the entire neighborhood
- Community gardens
- Neighborhood Clean-Up Day / Adopt-a-Street

Community Enhancement ideas include:

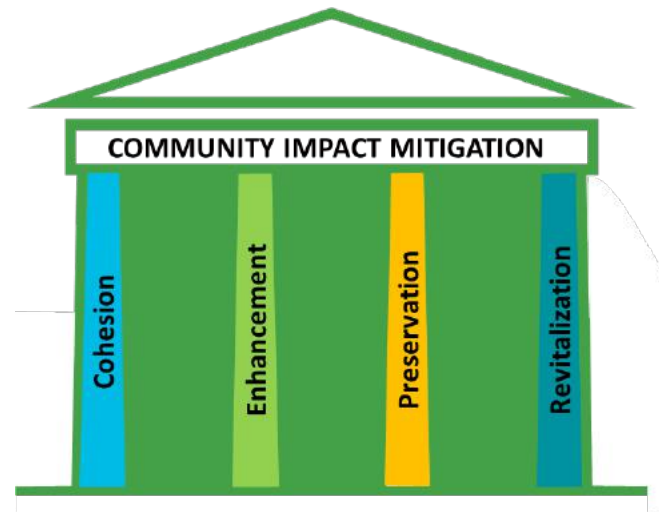
- Community centers as a structural foundation for community cohesion (e.g. a safe place for neighborhood kids to play)
- Possible pedestrian bridge across Filbin Creek to improve a connectivity to the proposed recreational facility
- Sidewalks with curbs

Community Preservation ideas include:

- Traffic calming infrastructure (like speed humps)
- Sidewalks
- Stormwater drainage
- Streetlights

Community Revitalization ideas include:

- Remove or renovate boarded up or abandoned housing
- Support small businesses/neighborhood businesses
- Explore rezoning opportunities



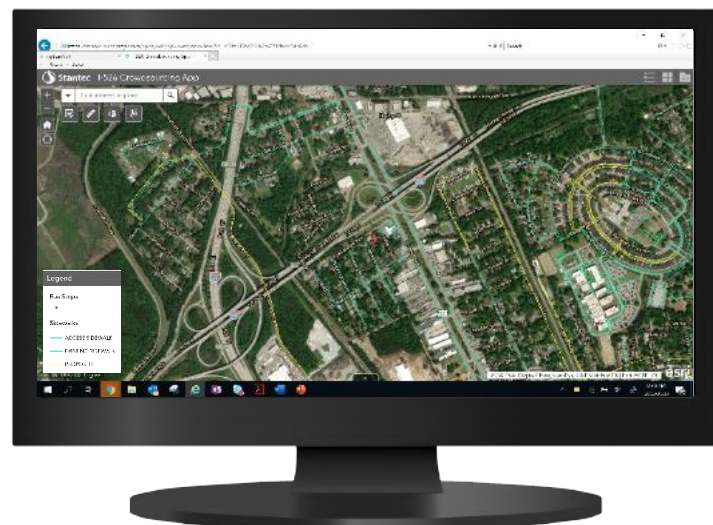
Areas with infrastructure needs
are shown in the comment layer
on the **ArcGIS Online Viewer**

HERE

Click "ArcGIS login"

Username: 1784_stantec

Password: Stantec1784



3.3 SOCIAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The CAC and other EJ neighborhood residents that participated in Community Drop-In Meetings, Public Information Meeting, and visits to the Community Office were asked to participate in a Social Needs Survey and rank the importance of, and satisfaction with, current services and programs. A total of 47 EJ neighborhood residents participated in the survey. All categories were considered important, with residents generally unsatisfied with current services and programs. The survey results show how residents rank the 25 social need categories included in the survey. **Top social needs priorities include infrastructure needs related to stormwater management, bike/pedestrian facilities, and quality affordable housing followed by services for seniors and youth.**

SOCIAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT: RANKED IN ORDER OF PRIORITY

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) Adequate stormwater management | 14) Adequate public transportation and facilities |
| 2) Adequate sidewalks/bicycle facilities | 15) City's response to requests related to public services |
| 3) Availability of quality housing | 16) Availability of employment-assistance services |
| 4) Availability of affordable housing | 17) Availability of nearby medical services |
| 5) Availability of agencies providing services for seniors | 18) Parks and recreation facilities |
| 6) Availability of agencies providing services for youth | 19) Employment opportunities |
| 7) Quality of teaching at schools | 20) Availability of opportunities for small businesses |
| 8) Well-lit streets/sidewalks | 21) Quality of daycare centers |
| 9) Appearance of neighbors' homes | 22) Ability to open a small business |
| 10) Safety of schools | 23) Emergency services response times (ambulance, police, fire) |
| 11) Availability of youth employment opportunities | 24) Availability of affordable daycare centers |
| 12) Availability of supervised after-school youth activities | 25) Garbage collection frequency |
| 13) Availability of good grocery stores | |

4.0 CITY OF NORTH CHARLESTON OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVOLVEMENT MOVING FORWARD

4.1 PARTICIPATE IN LISTENING SESSIONS WITH THE CAC

During several CAC meetings, members have expressed their desire to meet with representatives of the City to voice concerns, address expectations, and verify a spirit of cooperation with implementing relevant portions of the forthcoming mitigation plan. Meeting with the CAC will not only help build trust with the impacted communities, but will also provide an opportunity for the City to hear directly from constituents engaged in project mitigation discussions.

The CAC has identified specific feedback to be relayed to the City, specifically related to replacement recreational facilities. Their feedback includes:

- Full time staffing at the proposed Community Center with regular hours posted
- Readily accessible restrooms
- Consistent open "community play" hours at convenient times for residents
- A weekly programming/activity calendar that prioritizes programs for community seniors and youth such as meeting spaces, youth lunch programs, health/wellness programs and tennis associations

- Local resident priority for staffing needs
 - This item would serve to increase community cohesion and provide an economic benefit to the community
- Local resident priority for event space
 - For example, discounted fees for neighborhood residents and minimizing city league sports/activities that often take up event space slots

4.2 MEET MONTHLY WITH THE SCDOT PROJECT TEAM

To meet the project timeline and keep the City involved at every step of the community mitigation efforts, the project team would like to request regular coordination meetings. These meetings would be a vital part in ensuring continued communication and involvement in the project.

SCDOT would like to identify specific Parks and Recreation Department staff and other City staff members to stay involved with these meetings as the project team continues to discuss community facility mitigation and implementation.

4.3 PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT

The replacement community center facility, pocket parks, and other infrastructure or program-related mitigation will not have long-term success without intergovernmental coordination and cooperation. SCDOT mitigation for this project would provide for resources, land, and facilities, but agreements with the City will need to be developed related to mitigation implementation/operations and maintenance/or other City commitments.

4.4 FUTURE DISCUSSION ITEMS

Zoning and Future Land Use Designations

- Duplexes, mobile homes, and apartments options to facilitate a potential land trust
- Review housing options (i.e. auxiliary dwellings, microhomes) and any needed UDO change(s)
- Future land use designation for Russelldale - Light Industrial

Potential to Utilize “Complete Streets” Concepts

- Prioritization of bike/ped needs within neighborhoods and along transit routes
- Discuss proposed sidewalk projects in the vicinity of EJ neighborhoods

Filbin Creek Multiuse Path

- Past Ferndale Mobile Home Park and across Rivers Avenue
- Path could provide connectivity with new recreational facilities proposed in the Liberty Park and Russelldale neighborhoods
- Possible pedestrian footbridge over Filbin Creek

5.0 SCHEDULE, MILESTONES & GOALS

5.1 PROJECT MILESTONES

Overall project milestones can be seen in Figure 5.1.

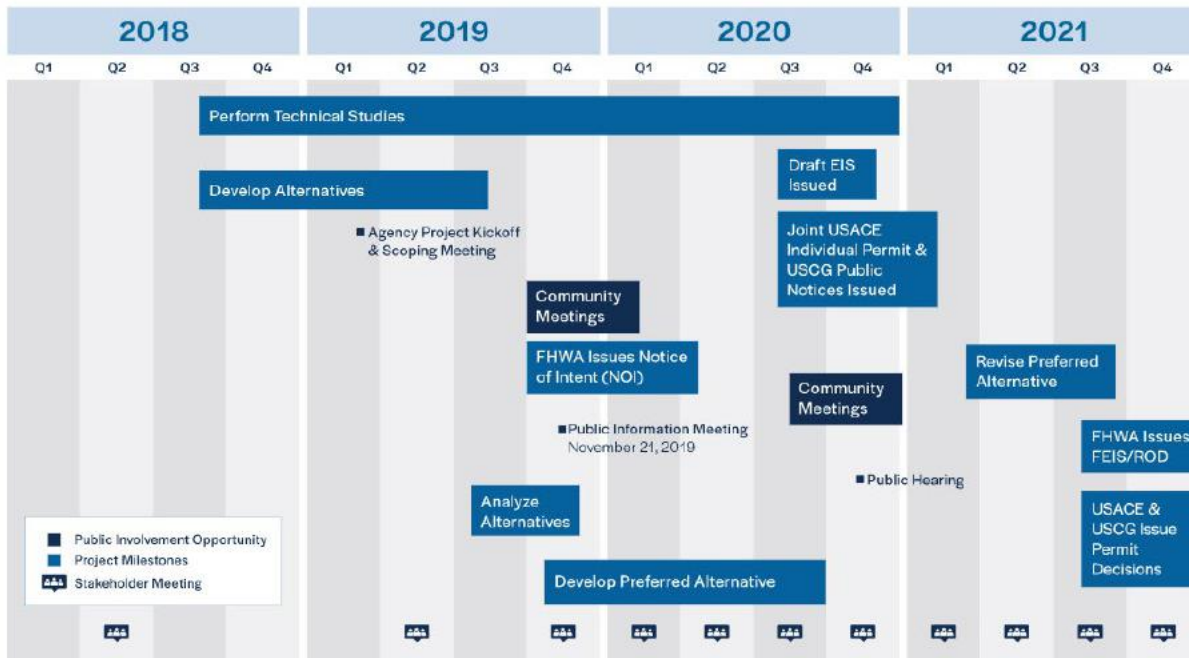


Figure 5.1: Project Milestones

5.2 ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION

A Community Impact Assessment is under development as part of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which is to be finalized in Fall 2020. Because proposed mitigation is a consideration when evaluating a project's overall impact on EJ communities, the Community Mitigation Plan is a vital component to the EJ impact assessment process. Coordination with the City will facilitate the development of the Community Mitigation Plan through the development of specific actions for each entity.

5.3 SECTION 4(F) AND SECTION 6(F) REQUIREMENTS

City-owned parcels are being considered for use to construct a replacement facility for potential impacts to the Highland Terrace-Liberty Park Community Center and Russelldale Community Center. The replacement facilities would mitigate project impacts in accordance with Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Act and Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Mitigation for impacts to both facilities are being addressed in a Section 4(f) Evaluation which is being developed concurrent to the Draft EIS. A stand-alone Environmental Assessment (EA) is being prepared in accordance with Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to address impacts to the Highland Terrace-Liberty Park Community Center. As such, City coordination will be instrumental to resolving details related to property acquisition and long-term ownership and operation of the replacement facilities.

Date: 5/19/2020

Time: 12:30pm – 2:10pm

Location: Conference Call via Skype

Purpose: Update the City on I-526 LCC WEST progress and gather initial feedback on mitigation concepts and ideas

Attendees:

Joy Riley – SCDOT	Chad Long – SCDOT	Ray Anderson – N. Charleston
Adam MacConnell – N. Charleston	Charles Drayton – N. Charleston	Mike Dalrymple – N. Charleston
Doyle Best – N. Charleston	Allyson All – N. Charleston	Robert Fludd – N. Charleston
Shane Belcher – FHWA	Pamela Foster – FHWA	Yolonda Jordan – FHWA
Rick Day – Stantec	LaTonya Derrick – Stantec	Ryan White – Stantec
Amy Sackaroff – Stantec	Hannah Clements – Stantec	

MEETING MINUTES:

- Draft Community Mitigation Plan - Fall 2020
- Refining recommendations for mitigation
- J. Riley
 - No parcels for the replacement recreation centers have been secured to date.
 - Indoor facility at the proposed Filbin Creek Community Center models the Ferndale Community Center and includes classrooms and office space
 - Potential exterior features include a bridge and greenway
- R. Anderson
 - Can you share the CAC Membership with the City?
 - J. Riley: Yes....we will provide prior to the meeting
 - R. Anderson: Are you far enough along to know the participation split between the City and SCDOT
 - J. Riley: SCDOT will purchase the property and construct the facility. City would leverage some of the properties that are city owned. Would ask the city to take ownership and commit to future staffing, operations, and maintenance.
- A. McConnell
 - City received NFWS grant to look at Filbin Creek. Impacts from previous discussion. Will need to discuss with SCDOT.... City owns 90% of land adjacent to Filbin Creek. Grant was received due to previous hurricanes and will be used to assess habitat, water quality, flooding, and public accessibility – mostly planning needs.
 - J. Riley: We have a lot of technical information. It may be easier/better to give mitigation money to a future city project for mitigation – such as Filbin Creek greenway extension.
- D. Best
 - Will review with staff and provide questions/comments prior to the next SCDOT/N. Charleston Meeting.
- R. Anderson
 - What was the community's concerns with indoor facilities?

- J. Riley: Noted concern with elderly residents and their ability to have events in the summertime. CAC is also concerned about not having enough access for community residents to enjoy open play time due to the City programming the space for recreational activities. Noted need for the listening session. City should consider being prepared to discuss the feasibility of these requests with the CAC.
- R. Anderson: Is there a concern about floor surface for games or spectator space?
- J. Riley: Noted the need for “betterment.” Noted concern for access for residents versus outside renters. Noted need to balance renters as they defray the costs
- R. Anderson: What is the extent of the roadway improvements – complete streets?
- R. Day: It would be to the extent of the communities impacted, not just within the ROW.
- J. Riley: Noted improvements to sidewalks and drainage would result in more impacts. Not aware of all the City of N. Charleston Plans. Need get clarity on what's happening on Rivers Ave, transit stops, important connections, pedestrian scale lighting, sidewalks. Target most important connection points and improve those as a part of the mitigation plan.
- R. Day: Connections to parks, transit stations, etc. with convenience and safety in mind.
- J. Riley: Technical Work Sessions may be needed to review and provide technical input on the various mitigation requests. Important connections, drainage improvements, Filbin Creek.
- A number of entities noting their desire to participate in the restoration of the Filbin Creek Watershed. Enables mitigation in the actual watershed.
- J. Riley: Working with BRT to see how connections across Rivers Avenue will be developed.
- A. McConnell: Effort to connect pedestrian traffic. Neighborhoods are restricted due to highways. Questioned connection across I-26---Possibly extend Taylor across to aviation?
- J. Riley: Would require boring under I-26 and disruptions traffic and the CAC has not expressed an interest in this topic. Would require federal permissions.
- R. Day: We have pondered pedestrian access here, but we can look into it further
- D. Best:
 - Consider looking at bigger indoor community buildings at Russelldale and Highland Terrace, with the possibility of sacrificing the full court basketball (half court instead).
 - J. Riley: As a last resort, we could also look at using excess ROW for the basketball courts. Do you have a recommendation for building size?
 - Doyle: Will provide follow-up comments. 800 sf is not large enough for post-COVID19 environment (summer camps and after school care)
- A. McConnell: Have you identified additional parcels for affordable housing?
 - J. Riley: Monitoring available properties various uses. With Housing Authority.....targeting 130 low income tax credit units for mitigation. Would use NOFA and allow contractors to bid. Thinking developers will help identify larger properties adjacent to project corridor. Need to meet with the City of North Charleston to discuss how displaced residents will get priority. Noted special waiting list for individuals impacted by federal actions for when low income property comes available so they can get priority. CAC members expressed desire to see duplexes and single-family homes. Framework will be prepared in the next few months.
- J. Riley: CAC/N Charleston listening Session --- City of N. Charleston is open?
- R. Anderson: Yes, let's evaluate dates....how many folks are to participate?
- J. Riley: Probably 30 people (CAC including consultants/staff/FHWA)
- R. Anderson: Will plan for 50 attendees...including City Staff? Which day of the week is preferred--Mid to Late June.
 - J. Riley: Saturday morning or 5:30 in the evenings-----except for Wednesdays.
 - R. Day: Need to set up recurring work session.
 - A. McConnell: will provide Mitigation Grant, Plans outside of Comprehensive Plan.

- D. Best: Review of Plans.....minimum building size.
- J. Riley: Set up late June N. Charleston/SCDOT Technical Group Meeting. Sidewalk connections, park and community center refinements....smaller group meeting.
 - R. Anderson: Later part of the week. **June 24 @ 2:30 pm --- verify date. In person meeting. Community Office**

ACTION ITEMS:

Assigned To	Description	Due Date
L. Derrick	Send the City a list of the CAC members	Complete
H. Clements	Send SCDOT/N Chas meeting invitation for June 24	Complete
D. Best	Send comments on rec facility renderings, including recommendation on indoor facility square footage	Prior to 6/24
A. McConnell	Send NFWS mitigation grant information and City plans outside of the Comprehensive Plan	Prior to 6/24
R. Anderson	Submit 2 potential dates for a CAC Listening Session at the Coliseum	ASAP
SCDOT/Stantec	Research connection under I-26, Taylor to Aviation?	Prior to 6/24

DISTRIBUTION:

Meeting Invitees

Date: 6/16/2020
Time: 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm
Location: Microsoft Teams (virtual)
Purpose: I-526 LCC WEST CAC Listening Session with the City of North Charleston

Attendees:	Name	Organization
	Allyson All	City of North Charleston
	Ray Anderson	City of North Charleston
	Margaret Duffy	City of North Charleston
	Gwen Moultrie	City of North Charleston
	Carolyn Varner	Community Advisory Council
	Gilbert Reeves	Community Advisory Council
	Jeanaris Bannister	Community Advisory Council
	Doris Twiggs	Community Advisory Council
	Geneva Swett	Community Advisory Council
	Angela Anderson	Community Advisory Council
	Ruth Mae Whitney	Community Advisory Council
	Earl Muhammad	Community Advisory Council
	Tina Baxley	Community Advisory Council
	Jamelle Ellis	Empowerment Strategies
	Chad Long	SC Department of Transportation
	Joy Riley	SC Department of Transportation
	Shane Belcher	Federal Highway Administration
	Yolonda Jordan	Federal Highway Administration
	Pamela Foster	Federal Highway Administration
	Clay Middleton	Maximum Consulting
	Rick Day	Stantec
	Ryan White	Stantec
	Amy Sackaroff	Stantec
	Hannah Clements	Stantec
	LaTonya Derrick	Stantec

Dr. Ellis – welcome, thanks, introductions, objectives

Recreational Facilities and Programs

J. Banister

- Computer classes, games, recreation and others are important for the facility
- Who will be using this center? 4 communities? North Charleston has the facilities on Remount Road.

Dr. Ellis – access is very important

C. Varner

- Build a positive relationship with members of their multi-ethnic community
- Want to reach and educate people, personal development
- When they have sports, she wants it to build positive relationships among the children
- The senior community needs programs for health and wellness

D. Twiggs

- Key person as a staffer who can help coordinate schedule and activities such as after school programs
- Leave open and adequate times so the community can see the benefit and enjoy it together

Dr Ellis

- Community cohesion has been a main focus for this group – how do we improve it?
- Programming is a key point in bringing the young people and seniors together
- Staffing the center with people who live in the community, specifically someone who has a vested interest in building programs that facilitate or increase cohesion
- Integrating a cultural component when employing

E. Muhammad

- Employment opportunities helps cohesion – role models for the youth
- You can always find qualified people in a neighborhood, you don't have to go outside the neighborhood. Make that a last effort resource.

G. Swett

- If we have easy access for community members, it will help bridge the gaps in our neighborhoods
- Our children are turned away from current community centers, we want structured hours
- Community pride and unity will make the community a better place – clean ups, place for the kids to go

Dr Ellis

- You may hear some themes of culture and services because the CAC understands it is more than just infrastructure

Ryan talks through Community Center concepts

J. Bannister

- Do we have a plan B for property?

A. Sackaroff

- Yes, we have talked to some privately owned parcel owners as a back-up. We will update the CAC once we get further along, hopefully in the next few weeks.

C. Varner

- Is it possible that the parcel of land can be a whole lot smaller?

A. Sackaroff

- The initial thought was to have one larger parcel since we are taking two community centers. We have to comply with some regulations, but we are looking at different privately owned parcels. I would be interested to hear why you think a smaller parcel would be more effective.

J. Bannister

- I really can't see a building at the Highland Terrace parcel – there isn't enough room

Public Safety

C. Varner

- Streetlights – lights are 300 ft apart and our dilemma is that the streets are so dark, especially with tree limbs. We would like to add more lights.

Dr. Ellis

- Residents want a feeling of protection – courtesy officers would be welcome

J. Bannister

- We would like to see patrolling on a constant basis, friendly communication with everyone

E. Muhammad

- Foot patrol is also encouraged so it doesn't look like the officers are scouting. Foot patrol allows face to face interaction, so people can have good interactions with police.

D. Twiggs

- It does something for a community when the police is a part of the community and not just for emergencies. If you are there with us and working together it lends itself to a friendly atmosphere.
- It could also help with traffic calming

A. Anderson

- The police used to do this and it was a good thing. They need to start again, it helps with overall communication
- There are also no speed limit signs in Russelldale

J. Bannister

- The City never came back to put the signs back up after adding sidewalks

C. Varner

- I believe that we need cameras at the beginning of the community or near stop signs – not sure how to accomplish this, but feel like we need it. It would also curb people from stealing.
- Maybe doorbell cameras?

J. Bannister

- The three way stop on Taylor – people just don't stop at the stop signs. They use this area as a drag strip. I got a speeding ticket in that same area 50 years ago, but the patrolling has stopped. Many trucks and cars are doing this.

C. Varner

- I am so concerned if a child runs into the street, they will be killed

A. Anderson

- Rebecca Street speeding is bad at all times of the day. The bus stop has kids out there and the speeding needs to stop

G. Swett

- Piedmont and Railroad too

J. Bannister

- Speed humps or bumps would slow people down tremendously

L. Derrick

- A lot of these issues are related to the replacement facilities – these concerns are not random. The whole session has been called a listening session, but we want to encourage the city to make a comment or ask a question

R. Anderson

- These issues are common to many neighborhoods in North Charleston. I have been taking notes and signs are not very hard to do. There is an opportunity here that the neighborhoods can become a better place to live. We will need to digest but thank you so much to the CAC for their effort and care for their community.

Stormwater

C. Varner

- I called several places in the City and had standing water in my neighbors yard. DOT did come out, but they discovered they could not work on it because it was a City problem. The City did a great job working with the drainage line and sewage job. I am well pleased and it's all because of the CAC meeting and pointing me in the right direction

G. Swett

- I am a long time Ferndale resident, Railroad and Harper have bad drainage. Because they don't have sidewalks, the dirt causes cars to get stuck and it looks so bad. Hoping to clean the ditches and drains to help with this issue.

A. Anderson

- When it rains, the corner of Rebecca and Rivers has a standing river.

R. White

- Livability plan will help us address stormwater and connectivity plan

Community Appearance

D. Twiggs

- We don't want the City to think we are just dumping with a lot of stuff, but we felt we would be remised if we didn't bring these topics up. Other than the safety issue, we know we will need your help with the community appearance maintenance. I would like to feel safe and enjoy walking through the neighborhood.
- The end of Deacon Street is overgrown and was once a dumping ground. If we could get a community day to clean up, that would be great. We want to make the neighborhood look nice. There are people who do not drive and have to walk through the neighborhood – it's just not safe! We would appreciate any help from the city to maintain common areas.
- Opportunity for the relationship to be stronger with the City

G. Swett

- In order for the community to have that appearance, the community has to want to work together. The community center will give us that foundation to become a closer community. This is an opportunity for betterment

D. Twiggs

- Thank you to North Charleston for sending out someone to Deacon Street to assess washout. The trees were pulling the topsoil and the City had a great response

J. Bannister

- I would like to see adequate sidewalks throughout all 4 neighborhoods. Handrails, speed bumps, ramps, etc.

Transit/Connectivity

Dr. Ellis

- Connectivity to transit stops is vital for those without other means of transportation in these neighborhoods. Providing connectivity through sidewalks, crosswalks, and other pedestrian accommodations will help this community keep its accessibility for all residents.
- Need to work with the City and CARTA to address transit stop frequency and facilities

Community Livability Plan

Ryan and Clay explain what a Community Livability Plan is and how a partnership with the College of Charleston Riley Center for Livable Communities would work.

Closing Remarks

R. Anderson

- Requested ample notice regarding logistics (dates and times) of upcoming meetings to allow for scheduling and identifying proper City representatives to attend meetings

J. Riley

- There are a number of opportunities for which the project team may be able to identify project resources to leverage in initiating some of the challenges discussed
- SCDOT looks forward to exploring mitigation opportunities and including them in the commitments and making a difference in the community.

C. Long

- Thanked the CAC and the City for participating
- Reiterated Ray's earlier comments regarding taking each concern and picking them apart to determine how to best address them
- Thought this was the start of good dialogue

R. Anderson

- Commended community advocacy, diplomacy of SCDOT and FHWA, and positive attitude of the CAC members
- Addressed Bus Rapid Transit – reducing the number of cars on the Interstate, creating redevelopment opportunities along the corridor
- Briefly addressed challenges of convergence in and migration through North Charleston area

R. Day

- This is a significant project for the entire region. We want to get it right. That's why we are taking the time to go through the extra effort.
- Thanked everyone for their participation.

Date: 6/24/2020

Time: 2:30pm – 4:30pm

Location: Conference Call via Skype

Purpose: Review replacement community center concepts, refine layouts based off requested amenities and programs, and address connectivity issues

Attendees:

Joy Riley – SCDOT	Chad Long – SCDOT	Shane Belcher – FHWA
Pam Foster – FHWA	Ray Anderson – N. Charleston	Allyson All – N. Charleston
Megan Clark – N. Charleston	Eileen Duffy – N. Charleston	Gwen Moultrie – N. Charleston
Adam MacConnell – N. Charleston	Doyle Best – N. Charleston	Rich Day – Stantec
LaTonya Derrick – Stantec	Amy Sackaroff – Stantec	Hannah Clements – Stantec
Jenny Horne – Stantec	Ian Duncan – Stantec	Ryan White - Stantec

MEETING SUMMARY:

Project Schedule Overview

- SCDOT:
 - Project mitigation will be implemented before construction; therefore, right-of-way activities will not begin before 2022.
- Stantec:
 - Goal is to conduct Technical Review Committee (TRC) meetings every two weeks. The need to continue to refine various mitigation components and incorporate them into the Mitigation Plan is driving the coordination need. We would like to conduct an additional Technical Review Committee Meeting before the July 11, 2020 Community Advisory Council (CAC) Meeting # 10.
 - TRC Meetings will continue to be scheduled into the fall to ensure commitments and mitigation items are refined as more detailed information becomes available.

Filbin Creek Community Center

- Stantec
 - Reviewed a map showing all the properties that have been identified as potential Section 6(f) replacement properties. Noted the USACE preliminary jurisdictional determination identified wetlands on Parcel #26 (2313 Elder Avenue), which was initially identified as the location for the proposed Filbin Creek Community Center. As such, the proposed location of the Filbin Creek Community Center has been moved to Parcel #30.
 - Noted the CAC would like a variety of youth and elder programs to be conducted at the Filbin Creek Community Center. Expressed the desire to maximize classroom size in order to accommodate the various programs.
 - Section 6(f) requires that the exact amenities located at the impacted facility be included in the replacement facility. As such, an outdoor basketball court is required even if indoor basketball court space is included in the community center.

- The City of North Charleston (or “City”)
 - There are no specific square footage requirements for community centers. Programming and amenities along with considerations for COVID precautions (as they continue to develop) are significant factors for space considerations.
 - Once there is a better understanding of the specific programs desired by the community, the structural sizing can be determined.
 - Because of the cost implications, the City needs the mitigation requests to be “clean and clear” including specifics per age group.
 - The City would need to conduct a demographic study to determine what the long-term (7 – 8 years) program needs would be. Additional conversations with the City’s Finance Department to discuss expenses for long-term operation and maintenance.
- SCDOT
 - There is opportunity to coordinate with USACE to reassess Parcel #26 which may result in a reduction in the wetland acreage on the parcel and identify more land on the parcel that is suitable for residential construction.

Highland Terrace-Liberty Park/Russelldale Pocket Parks

- Stantec
 - During previous discussions, City staff noted the size of the enclosed buildings on the pocket parks (approximately 800 – 900 square feet) would be inadequate for current programs.
 - The CAC noted the desire to exclude enclosed building space at the Highland Terrace-Liberty Park and Russelldale pocket parks in order to maximize the amenities to be included at the Filbin Creek Community Center.
- SCDOT
 - Parcel #34 (bounded by Rebecca Street and Rockingham Street) was being considered for the Russelldale Community pocket park. The parcel was sold to a developer and SCDOT is currently conducting title research to determine if there is still an opportunity to acquire the property. Requested help from the City to identify parcels in Russelldale where residents may be willing to voluntarily relocate, or the owners may be willing to sell.
- City of North Charleston
 - It is the City’s intent to continue offering after-school programs at as many sites as possible. Therefore, it would be beneficial to include enclosed buildings at these two locations as well.
 - Elimination of the half-basketball court included in Conceptual Plan Version 2 of the Highland Terrace-Liberty Park Pocket Park might create an opportunity for a larger enclosed building (Amenity 5, currently depicted as a 900-sf structure). The proposed conceptual structure could be reoriented parallel to the northernmost property boundary and use more of the footprint of the proposed half-basketball court. A larger building would provide for a wider range of uses.
 - The City questioned the minimum replacement requirements for the impacts to the Section 4(f) and Section 6(f) resources.

ACTION ITEM: *Stantec to develop and provide to the City of North Charleston a list of impacts to the 6(f) and 4(f) resources and the replacement requirements per each regulatory framework.*

ACTION ITEM: *Stantec will re-evaluate the site layout of the Highland Terrace-Liberty Park Community Center based off the recommendation to eliminate the half basketball court to create a larger enclosed building.*

ACTION ITEM: *The City of North Charleston will coordinate with its Code Enforcement Division to determine if there are any properties with ongoing or unaddressed violations, abandoned or condemned structures, etc.*

Hiring of Local Staff at Community Centers.

- Stantec
 - The CAC has requested that staff with a connection to the surrounding communities be hired at the new community centers.
- City of North Charleston
 - The City of North Charleston has hired and currently has on staff at its community centers residents of the neighborhoods in which the community centers are located. Standard hiring practices will be continued for both part-time and full-time positions.
 - Noted residing in the adjacent communities could not be listed as a “requirement” but could be included as a “preference” for hiring.

ACTION ITEM: SCDOT to provide language commonly found in State Agency job postings related to qualifications, i.e. “...preferred but not required” to encourage submission of applications from residents of the impacted communities.

Community Center Connectivity

- Stantec
 - Safe bicycle and pedestrian connectivity between the community centers and the surrounding communities are extremely important to the CAC members. Improved sidewalks, streetlights, and a connection to the proposed Filbin Creek Greenway have been noted as priorities. Additionally, improved crosswalks and traffic calming measures were identified as requests.
 - The area consists of a combination of city-owned and state-owned streets.
 - Stantec has been tasked by SCDOT to develop “Infrastructure Focus Area Mapping” which will be used to overlay requested infrastructure improvements with existing or planned infrastructure improvements. Requested improvements will also be added to the I-526 Online GIS Viewer tool. Stantec will provide the link to the Online GIS Viewer to City staff.
- City of North Charleston
 - Right-of-way width will be a challenge to adding sidewalks to some of the neighborhood streets. Sidewalks are required for new neighborhood streets.
 - The City is currently transitioning to LED streetlights. Expenses of street light maintenance are approximately \$2.5M.

SCDOT

- Drainage related to sidewalk improvements will be a challenge.
- The bridge along Dorothy Williams Boulevard does not currently facilitate sidewalks.
- The pedestrian bridge over Filbin Creek should be relocated to the southern end of Parcel #30. It would enable SCDOT to utilize proposed I-526 right-of-way and provide improved access between the proposed Filbin Creek Community Center and Russelldale via Bryant Street under the elevated I-526. There may be opportunities for drainage improvements along Margaret Drive near the south end of Parcel #30.
- The majority of traffic calming will be along City streets, thus SCDOT will lead the traffic calming studies.
- Further discussion of streetlights will be held at a future Technical Review Committee Meeting. Requested street light locations will be included on the infrastructure mapping.

ACTION ITEM: Stantec to provide the City of North Charleston with credentials to access the 526 GIS Crowdsourcing site.

ACTION ITEM: The City of North Charleston will discuss with its Finance Department expenses associated with additional streetlights in the impacted neighborhood.

Key Takeaways

- The City needs to know which specific programs are requested in order to identify square footage and amenity requirements and to determine long-term funding commitments.
- The City currently works to hire local residents in many of their community centers. It is unlikely that they can make being a community resident a *requirement*. However, they may be able to note being a community resident as a *preference for hiring*.
- The City would like to continue to run as many after-school programs as possible, so including indoor facilities at the Highland Terrace-Liberty Park and Russelldale locations would be a benefit.
- Consider eliminating the half-basketball court at the Liberty Park/Highland Terrace Community Center in order to construct a larger building.
- The City will work with SCDOT to identify parcels that could be used for replacement housing or community centers.

ACTION ITEMS:

Assigned To	Description	Status
Stantec	Develop and provide to the City of North Charleston a list of impacts to the 6(f) and 4(f) resources and the replacement requirements per each regulatory framework.	In-progress
Stantec	<i>Stantec will re-evaluate the site layout of the Highland Terrace-Liberty Park Community Center based off the recommendation to eliminate the half basketball court to create a larger enclosed building.</i>	In-progress. Details to be provided at next Technical Review Meeting
City of North Charleston	<i>Coordinate with its Code Enforcement Division to determine if there are any properties with ongoing or unaddressed violations, abandoned or condemned structures, etc.</i>	On-going
SCDOT	Provide language commonly found in State Agency job postings related to qualifications, i.e. "...preferred but not required" to encourage submission of applications from residents of the impacted communities.	In-progress Details to be provided at next Technical Review Meeting
Stantec	Provide the City of North Charleston with credentials to access the 526 GIS Crowdsourcing site.	Provided in email on 6/25/2020
City of North Charleston	Discuss with its Finance Department expenses associated with additional streetlights in the impacted neighborhood.	In-progress. Details to be provided at next Technical Review Meeting
City of North Charleston	Evaluate size of multi-use buildings based on requested program requirements	CAC to provide more detail regarding requested programs

DISTRIBUTION:

Meeting Invitees

Date: July 15, 2020
Time: 1:30pm – 2:30pm
Location: Conference Call via Skype
Purpose: The purpose of the meeting was to continue to discuss and refine the components of the Environmental Justice Community Mitigation Plan related to the replacement community and recreation centers. The focus for the meeting was to receive comments from the City of North Charleston on the Draft Environmental Justice Community Mitigation Plan components.

Attendees:

Ray Anderson – City of North Charleston	Joy Riley - SCDOT
Megan Clay – City of North Charleston	Chad Long - SCDOT
Charles Drayton – City of North Charleston	Rick Day - Stantec
Doyle Best – City of North Charleston	Amy Sackaroff - Stantec
Mike Dalrymple – City of North Charleston	Ryan White – Stantec
Jeffery Belcher - FHWA	LaTonya Derrick, Stantec
	Hannah Clements, Stantec

MEETING SUMMARY

- Stantec provided a review of the feedback received during CAC Meeting #10 regarding the programs and amenities requested to be included in the intergovernmental agreements related to the replacement community and recreation centers.
- Stantec reviewed updated conceptual renderings for the Highland Terrace Community Pocket Park and the proposed replacement community center.
 - The City of North Charleston noted a preference to minimize the number of community/recreation centers that they would need to staff. City staff noted that multiple communities could be served by one large, centralized community center.
 - The Highland Terrace Community Center serves as a voting precinct. If the Highland Terrace Community Center does not include an enclosed building, the voting precinct would need to be relocated. Stantec will coordinate with the Charleston County Board of Elections to determine the impacts of relocating the voting precinct from the Highland Terrace Community Center.
 - SCDOT recommended the removal of the multi-use path from the south side of Filbin Creek.
 - SCDOT prefers to remove playground facilities and parking from under the elevated structures. SCDOT would not be liable for damages to vehicles parked under bridges.
- Stantec reviewed the draft commitment text for the facilities, program and amenities, and connectivity and bicycle and pedestrian safety commitments.
 - The City of North Charleston noted they would conduct an internal review of the commitments and provide comments at a later date. This includes a conversation with Human Resources to determine how to address the CAC's request for preference in hiring for community residents.

CITY OF NORTH CHARLESTON COMMENTS AND RESPONSE

The City of North Charleston comments and responses to the draft commitment language is shown in the table below:

Focus Area	City of North Charleston Comment	I 526 LCC WEST Team Response
DEIS Draft Commitment - Facilities: <i>Community Garden</i>	Question: Did the CAC indicate how this would run?	No detailed conversations were conducted regarding the specifics of how the community garden would be run.
DEIS Draft Commitment - Facilities: <i>Educational Wetland</i>	Question: Is this part of [stormwater] detention/retention? The city will need to understand	Yes
DEIS Draft Commitment – Programs and Amenities:	Add the following text to the commitment: <i>The City will continue to look for qualified candidates that lie in the neighborhoods. The City will post job openings in the neighborhoods and encourage CAC/Neighborhood Councils to submit qualified applications.</i>	Revised commitment language added to the added to the EK Mitigation Plan and DEIS
	Revise bullet: <i>A weekly monthly programming/activity calendar that prioritizes programs for community seniors and youth such as meeting spaces, youth lunch programs, and tennis associations.</i>	Information will be updated in the EJ Mitigation Plan.
DEIS Draft Commitment – Programs and Amenities: <i>Volunteer opportunities</i>	Comment: <i>Would need commitment by community to be successful with these types of programs.</i>	Noted
DEIS Draft Commitment – Programs and Amenities: <i>Community Garden</i>	Comment: Need to discuss how the garden would be run.	Will need to continue to develop plan in coordination with the City of N. Charleston.
DEIS Draft Commitment – Programs and Amenities: <i>Educational Wetland</i>	Comment: Is SCDOT asking the City to maintain any detention created by the project?	The educational wetland would be a part of stormwater detention for the Filbin Creek community center only.
DEIS Draft Commitment – Connectivity & Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety: <i>Sidewalk Improvements</i>	Comment: Will project only look at SCDOT-maintained streets? If plan uses city-maintained streets, can state / federal dollars be used? Will need clarification on responsible part for long-term usage.	The primary focus is on SCDOT-maintained streets. There may be minor improvements along some city-owned streets. Clarification on long-term maintenance will be defined in the inter-governmental agreements.

DEIS Draft Commitment – Connectivity & Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety: Traffic Calming	Comment: There are multiple ways to affect traffic calming? Does SCDOT have recommendation on type [of traffic calming]? Each neighborhood is distinctive and different solutions may be necessary.	SCDOT will perform a traffic calming study to determine the appropriate type of traffic calming to be implemented.
DEIS Draft Commitment – Connectivity & Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety: CARTA bus stop improvements	Comment: City believes this is critical for connectivity to BRT.	Agree
Infrastructure Focus Area Mapping - Overview Map	Comment: Scope may adjust downward depending on widths of SCDOT existing R/W. Elimination of path on southside of Filbin Creek will adjust scope.	Agree. SCDOT/Project team will continue to develop the plan to identify the level of improvements identified in the Infrastructure Focus Area Mapping.
Infrastructure Focus Area Mapping – Focus Area 1, 2, 3, and 4	Comment: Data may change, depending on final direction taken.	Agree. SCDOT/Project team will continue to develop the plan to identify the level of improvements identified in the Infrastructure Focus Area Mapping.

ACTION ITEMS:

- SCDOT will conduct a study to determine the lighting needs along the roadways proposed to be improved as part of the community center infrastructure improvements.
- Stantec to coordinate with the Charleston County Board of Elections to determine the impacts of relocating the voting precinct from the Highland Terrace Community Center.
- Stantec to remove recreation amenities and parking from under the elevated structures.

DISTRIBUTION:

Meeting Invitees

Date: 8/19/2020
Time: 1:00 – 3:00 pm
Location: Virtual TEAMS Meeting
Purpose: Provide the City of North Charleston an update on the components of the Community Mitigation Plan and discuss the Inter-Governmental Agreements that will be needed for the project.

Attendees:

Ray Anderson – City of North Charleston
 Allison All – City of North Charleston
 Charles Drayton – City of North Charleston
 Doyle Best – City of North Charleston
 Eileen Duffy – City of North Charleston
 Allison All – City of North Charleston
 Jeffery Belcher - FHWA
 LaTonya Derrick, Stantec
 Hannah Clements, Stantec

Robert Fludd – City of North Charleston
 Gwen Moultrie – City of North Charleston
 Mike Dalrymple – City of North Charleston
 Adam McConnell – City of North Charleston
 Joy Riley - SCDOT
 Chad Long - SCDOT
 Rick Day - Stantec
 Amy Sackaroff - Stantec
 Ryan White – Stantec

MEETING SUMMARY

Review of Action Items

- Stantec provided a memorandum to the City of N. Charleston which provides an overview of the federal regulations that dictate how Environmental Justice Mitigation is being developed and applied on the project.
- Stantec provided a summary of the recreation and community center programs requests from the CAC.

Recreational Facilities Update

- Stantec:
 - SCDOT is still investigating the opportunity to construct a pocket park to replace the facilities and amenities currently located at the Russelldale Community Center, which will be impacted due to the I-526 widening. There are currently three options under considerations.
 - (1) A pocket part at the intersection of Rebecca Street and Rockingham Street;
 - (2) A pocket park in cul-de-sac of Rebecca Street, near Twitty Street; and
 - (3) Incorporating the park facilities into a parcel along Margaret Drive, adjacent to the proposed replacement community center.
 - The City has no preference regarding the location of the proposed Russelldale Pocket Park.
- SCDOT:
 - Investigating a property swap which would transfer SCDOT-owned, multi-family zoned property in Ferndale (Piedmont Avenue/Kerry Street) for the property at the corner of Rebecca and Rockingham Streets.

- Property located at the corner of Lakewood and Railroad Street was acquired for the construction of replacement housing (duplexes).
- If either of the Rebecca Street parcels can be secured, the recreation facilities along Margaret Street (as shown in the latest replacement community center rendering), would be relocated to those parcels. The connectivity improvements (proposed bridges, shared use paths, etc.) shown in the replacement community center rendering would not change. The inclusion of parking in the excess R/W instead of under the new I-526 ramps will be investigated.
- Currently negotiating an agreement with the South Carolina Housing Authority for a NOFA to developers and property owners for the construction of one hundred replacement housing units.
- The City of North Charleston: No objections to the property swap and noted that the Ferndale property is zoned R-2, which will allow for the construction of duplexes.
- City of North Charleston
 - No preference on which Russelldale site is selected for the pocket park.

Recreational Program Recommendations (CAC Survey)

- Stantec:
 - The CAC was polled to identify which existing North Charleston Parks and Recreation programs and other activities they would like to see implemented at the proposed replacement community center. The poll results and summary were included in the meeting packet. The survey results have not been discussed with the CAC yet because the August monthly meeting was postponed. Additional feedback from the CAC will be shared with the City after the CAC meeting on August 29, 2020.
 - City of North Charleston: No real concerns with the list currently provided. However, the City noted it has to be mindful of the obligations and staffing considerations related to the programs being requested.
- SCDOT:
 - SCDOT would provide funding for the design and construction of the recreation and community centers and provide funds for the equipment (chairs, computers, etc.) required to support the programs.
 - Funds for the facilities and programs would not be available until after the FEIS/ROD approved (12/2021) and the window for legal challenges has closed (mid-2022). The community center and recreation facilities will need to be completed and open for operation prior to the initiation of construct of the I-526 improvements in 2027.

Community Livability Plan

- Stantec:
 - Overall goal of a livability plan is to provide an opportunity for the communities to create a vision and build connections to identify community resources and needs. The City would be a key partner in the development of this plan.
 - TxDOT Corpus Christi Harbor Bridge Livability Plan would be a great example to read to gain a better understanding of the process.
- SCDOT
 - Could the development of the Livability Plan be beneficial or integrated into the City's planning process?

- City of North Charleston
 - Would like to the land use recommendations from the Livability Planning process.
 - Does not want to over promise through the development of the plan, but could see this document as beneficial in their planning process

UPDATE SINCE TRC MEETING #3: *SCDOT is no longer moving forward with the Community Livability Plan. SCDOT is proposing to develop a Community Infrastructure Enhancement Plan which will focus on improving the physical infrastructure in the communities and infrastructure-related concerns that are not being addressed by the improvements related to connectivity to the recreation and community centers.*

Potential Infrastructure Improvements

- Stantec
 - All potential improvements shown in the infrastructure Improvement maps are derived from input from the CAC.
- SCDOT
 - SCDOT will develop these improvements between 2022 and 2027.
 - The pedestrian bridge over the Norfolk Southern railroad tracks would be included in the highway improvements phase of construction.
 - SCDOT will maintain sidewalks on DOT-owned streets but requests that the City maintain shared-use paths and sidewalks on local roads. SCDOT will construct multi-use paths along SCDOT-maintained roadways.
 - SCDOT will pay for lighting improvements but requests that the City assume maintenance and operational costs.
- City of North Charleston
 - Would like to have input on the materials used in multi-use paths.
 - SCDOT: The shared-use paths would be included in the construction package for the replacement community center.
 - The City is in the process of switching their streetlights to LED which are brighter and have a wider lighting footprint.
- SCDOT
 - Street lighting will be a component of the community enhancements related to the community center connectivity improvements.
 - Requests that the City provide insight on lighting improvements they would like to be implemented as part of the infrastructure improvement plan. The CAC has made recommendations for areas needing lighting improvements, but it will be up to the City on how many lights they can take on in the long term.
 - It is recommended that an audit of the lighting in the communities be completed to identify the lighting needs.
- Need to ensure that pedestrian improvements are connecting to where the BRT is providing crosswalks along Rivers Avenue.

ACTION ITEM: *SCDOT will task Stantec to conduct a lighting audit of the four communities in addition to the traffic calming study.*

Intergovernmental Agreements

- Stantec
 - Pages 14-15 of the meeting packet provides a crosswalk of the various mitigation items, SCDOT's proposed commitment, and the requested role of the City of North Charleston in assisting in the development or implementation of the improvements.
 - The Draft EIS is planned to be published November 2020 and Final EIS/ROD will be published December 2021. The inter-governmental agreements (IGAs) would need to be finalized by the approval of the ROD.
- SCDOT
 - The FEIS/ROD Community Mitigation Plan will layout requirements for mitigation, but the City will have control in regard to ensuring the mitigation meets the City's design standards.
 - SCDOT is seeking to develop agreements with the city to fund the design, development, construction, and equipping the mitigation items that the City would ultimately take ownership of.
 - SCDOT would provide oversight on items related to transportation. SCDOT would provide limited oversight on vertical construction items to ensure mitigation commitments are being met.
 - From a timeline perspective, SCDOT would like to have the draft IGAs submitted for legal review this fall (2020). Anticipate 3 – 6 months of review and modifications between SCDOT and the City. The final signed IGAs would need to be completed prior to the ROD.
- City of North Charleston
 - Can SCDOT provide the City an example IGA commensurate to the scale of the project.
 - The City would like to have quicker turnaround timeframes for the IGA review.
 - Will send the meeting packet to City legal staff for them to be aware of what is going to be requested from SCDOT. The City will conduct internal discussions to identify any areas of concerns regarding ownership or maintenance of the proposed mitigation items.
- SCDOT
 - The development of the IGA will need to move quickly due to the need to get community centers constructed in order to progress highway improvements.
 - We will need to follow Local Programs guidelines. City will need to be qualified to administer the project. A staff level meeting will be scheduled to go through the details once the items are further developed.
 - Preference that the City of North Charleston maintains the two pedestrian bridges (over Filbin Creek and over the Norfolk Southern railroad tracks).
 - Presenting the Community Mitigation Plan to local officials in mid-late September. Requests that the City identifies areas of concerns as soon as possible.

ACTION ITEM:

- *SCDOT Legal to begin developing the draft IGA template which will be sent to the City. SCDOT anticipates that this will take several months to complete.*
- *City of North Charleston to review IGA items noted in the meeting packet and inform SCDOT of any potential areas of concern.*

ACTION ITEMS:

Assigned To	Description	Due Date
SCDOT	Ask SCDOT Legal Department to start a draft intergovernmental agreement template/framework to send to the City	Date to be determined
Stantec	Perform a streetlight audit in addition to the traffic audit	Scope development pending
Stantec	Additional recreational program feedback from the CAC will be shared with the City after the CAC meeting on August 29, 2020.	September 21, 2020
City	Review the proposed mitigation commitments for any deal breakers	September 21, 2020

DISTRIBUTION:

Attendees

Date: 2/10/2021

Time: 1:00 – 3:00 pm

Location: Virtual TEAMS Meeting

Purpose: Provide the City of North Charleston an update on feedback and comments received on the Draft Environmental Justice Community Mitigation Plan and discuss the recommendations identified in the Community Infrastructure Enhancement Plan.

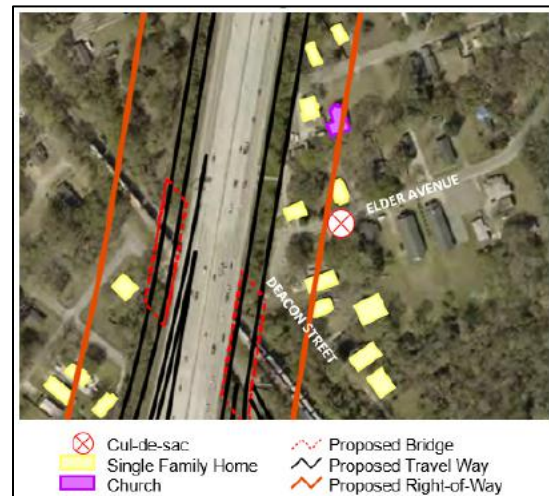
Attendees:

Ray Anderson – North Charleston (Asst. to the Mayor)	James Hutto – North Charleston (Public Works)
Adam McConnell – North Charleston (Project Manager)	Mike Dalrymple – North Charleston (Public Works)
Megan Clark – North Charleston (Planning and Zoning)	Alyson All – North Charleston (Recreation)
Eileen Duffy - North Charleston (Planning and Zoning)	Joy Riley – SCDOT (Project Manager)
Charles Drayton - North Charleston (Planning and Zoning)	Chad Long – SCDOT (Director of Environmental Programs)
Shane Belcher – FHWA (SC Environmental Coordinator)	Joshua Johnson – SCDOT (District 6 Traffic Engineer)
Rick Day - Stantec	LaTonya Derrick - Stantec
Ryan White - Stantec	Hannah Clements - Stantec
Dr. Maxine Smith – Maximum Consulting	Clay Middleton – Maximum Consulting

MEETING SUMMARY

Deacon Street Update

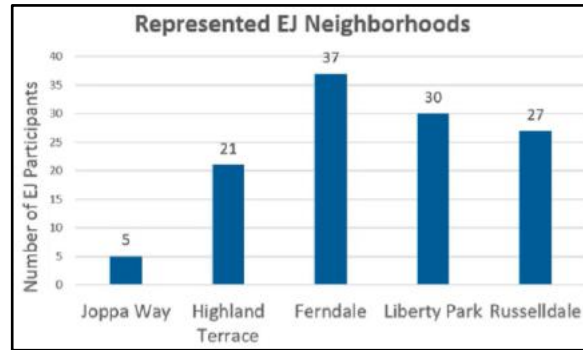
- **Stantec:** The current plans show an inability to access homes on Deacon Street via Elder Avenue after the project is complete due to the widening along I-26. Current plans call for constructing a cul-de-sac and the end of Elder Road. Deacon Street is a locally managed road.
- **SCDOT:** This proposal does allow for a “drive” to remain that can allow for a rear access to the proposed community center.
 - The closure will result in the acquisition of five (5) total structures and six (6) parcels impacted.
 - The land not incorporated into the proposed right-of-way will be available for incorporation into the community center. The City will have first rights to the property.
 - Access from the rear of the properties is the only option to retain the properties. The project and this approach are creating a situation which would require SCDOT to pay damages nearly the full amount of the value of the property.



- SCDOT would offer relocation first, because it would enable residents to receive the full relocation package. If a resident does not want to accept the relocation offer, SCDOT would explore other approaches.

EJ Community Mitigation Survey

- **Stantec:** Provided an overview of the outreach efforts to garner community input on the Environmental Justice Community Mitigation Plan (EJCMP). Outreach included an online MetroQuest survey and a return-mail survey.
 - 199 survey responses were received via online submission, mail, or provided during outreach events. Survey submissions by neighborhood noted in graphic to the right.
 - Top five recreational programs from the survey results: (1) After school program, (2) financial literacy programs, (3) GED classes, (4) Health/wellness classes, and (5) parenting programs.
 - Top five recreational amenities from the survey results: (1) Computer lab, (2) playground, (3) onsite library, (4) walking/biking trails, and (5) park sign (name and rules).



Community Advisory Council (CAC) Response to the EJCMP

- **Stantec:** CAC is preparing a formal response to SCDOT's request for them to provide feedback on the Draft EJCMP.
 - CAC noted the need to construct a pocket park within the Russelldale Community to replace the Russelldale Community Center which will have to be demolished due to the project.
 - Security cameras, increased street lighting, and safe pedestrian access are desired at either pocket park location.
- **SCDOT:** Still working to try to acquire one of two properties. The CAC noted their first priority is Pocket Park Site #1 at the end of Rebecca Street, a vacant parcel near the railroad tracks. SCDOT instructed Right of Way consultants to contact the owners of both properties.

Pocket Park Site #1

- The title for Pocket Park Site #1 has a stipulation that states it can only be used for residential use. If the property is purchased by SCDOT, the stipulation could be carried with the change in ownership.
- Condemnation eliminates all stipulations attached to the property. SCDOT could pursue a friendly condemnation. Concern is that it may be determined that SCDOT does not have jurisdiction to condemn for a park. SCDOT Legal has stated that the City of North Charleston may have jurisdiction to condemn for the purposes of a park. This may be an option if the property owner understands that this would be a means to acquire the property for construction of the pocket park.
- **N. Charleston:** Will have a follow-up discussion with the Mayor to determine if the City wants to further investigate condemnation.



○

Pocket Park Site #2

- The parcel at the corner of Rebecca and Rockingham Streets is currently owned by an individual who wants to develop it for multi-family housing. The owner has stated they would consider conducting a swap for SCDOT-owned parcels in Ferndale.

Community History Preservation Study

- **Stantec:** Provided a brief overview of the Community History Preservation Study.
- **N. Charleston:** Noted challenges for getting full community participation during the Liberty Hill History Project. Residents were concerned that there would be bias in how the history was collected. The City hired an outside consultant to minimize bias in the collection of information, but there was still perceived bias from the community.

Community Infrastructure Enhancement Plan (CIEP)

- **Stantec:** The CIEP was included as a component of the Draft EJCMP. The concept of the CIEP is based on feedback from residents and CAC members on existing infrastructure deficiencies in the four EJ communities. Additionally, as part of the EJ Analysis, a Social Needs Assessments (SNA) was conducted as a means for residents to identify and rank community needs. Based on the feedback from the SNA and information received during an FHWA Peer Project Exchange, SCDOT saw the CIEP concept as a means to address some of the wider community needs. The plan will provide improvements in the following focus areas:
 - Street and pedestrian scale lighting
 - Project-related and spot stormwater drainage improvements
 - Streetscaping and aesthetics
 - Traffic calming
 - New and improved pedestrian facilities

Street Lighting

- **Stantec:** Provided an overview of the preliminary lighting recommendations. Recommendations consisted of the following:
 - Increased frequency (higher density) of streetlights along (Railroad Avenue, Rockingham Street, Elder Avenue, James Bell Drive, Target Street, Taylor Street, and W. Deacon Street (a/k/a Highland Terrace Drive).
 - Pedestrian-scale lighting along shared use paths.
 - House-side light shields
 - Implementation of a vegetation management plan.
- **N. Charleston:** The memo recommended 30- to 40-foot high streetlights. The city code for lights in residential areas is 18-foot high.
 - The City depends on the utility provider to determine the proper spacing for streetlights. It is important to ensure that the streetlight spacing is consistent across all city managed lighting fixtures. Noted that the lighting along Railroad Avenue (in Ferndale) appears to be doubled.
 - The City recently signed the contract to convert all lighting to LED, which will improve existing street lighting conditions.

- The CIEP noted the need to conduct tree trimming (Vegetation Management Plan) to remove lighting obstructions but also recommended the addition of trees for aesthetic purposes. Need to ensure there is uniformity between aesthetic and lighting recommendations.
 - **SCDOT:** Will not implement a Vegetation Management Plan as there is no funding for routine maintenance.
 - **N. Charleston:** The City does have a tree crew that can address vegetation on a “As Needed” basis. However, funding is limited.
- **SCDOT:** The plan recommended reducing the spacing between lights. We can scale back the recommended lighting in the CIEP based on the fact that the City is already preparing to upgrade the lighting to LED.
 - SCDOT can commit to considering additional streetlights in isolated areas that currently do not have any or minimal lighting.
- **N. Charleston:** Regarding the shared-use path, are they along existing roadways or along new routes, as pedestrian-scale lighting is different from standard streetlights.
 - **SCDOT:** Margaret Drive will have a shared-use path along its entire route, so pedestrian-scale lighting would be appropriate. However, the existing lighting combined with the proposed interstate lighting and the pedestrian-scale lighting could result in over-illumination in the area.
- **N. Charleston:** Recommend not showing new streetlights as the City is moving forward with their lighting upgrade program, which will likely be completed before the CIEP lighting improvements are made. Instead, show locations of new pedestrian-scale lighting.
- **SCDOT:** Consider referencing Clements Ferry Road project.
- **Stantec:** Approach to workshop as follows.
 - Focus on pedestrian-scale lighting along shared-use paths.
 - Note City program to upgrade lighting to LED.
 - Work with residents to identify areas where there is a lack of lighting.

Stormwater Drainage

- **Stantec:** SCDOT conducted a field assessment to identify potential stormwater drainage improvements. Recommended improvements were along Taylor Street, Deacon Street, Willis Drive, Rebecca Street, Harper Street, and Railroad Avenue.
 - Recommendations include: re-establishing and cleaning existing ditches, installation of new drop inlets and catch basins, rebuilding the asphalt back-slope, bioswales along the roads paralleling the railroad tracks, and re-establishing and cleaning embankment with new curb.
- **SCDOT:** Concerns about the implementation of bioswales. They were recommended along railroad right-of-way. Recognizes that there are always complications when trying to conduct drainage-related improvements that encroach along railroad right-of-way. SCDOT has committed to addressing drainage issues along Deacon Street. SCDOT crews would not be able to conduct maintenance on something as specialized as bioswales and SCDOT would look to the City to conduct maintenance.
- **N. Charleston:** All of the drainage issues along Deacon Street are within the railroad right-of-way. The City has to continuously perform maintenance in that area because the railroad does not conduct maintenance routinely enough to meet the requirements.
 - The City has installed a number of bioswales but noted the level of maintenance required is intensive.
 - Recommend not including the bioswales due to maintenance and the low likelihood of the railroads allowing them to be installed in their right-of-way.

- **SCDOT:** In response to N. Charleston's question, SCDOT noted that a drainage study was completed for the project that incorporated the neighborhoods. SCDOT will make drainage improvements related to the project but will not do a comprehensive reconstruction of the communities' drainage system due to the large-scale property and utility impacts. A large portion of the stormwater goes into the Rivers Avenue drainage system, which will likely get upgraded as part of the BRT project.
 - Will continue to look for opportunities to improve drainage where possible as the project advances beyond the preliminary design stage.
 - **N. Charleston:** At the 90% stage for drainage design improvements along Van Buren Ave. N. Charleston will provide improvement limits for inclusion into the CIEP workshop packet.

Aesthetics

- **Stantec:** Provided an overview of aesthetic and landscaping recommendations. Recommendations consisted of the following:
 - 25-foot tall vegetative buffer along interstates
 - Colorful pollinator plants to reinforce each neighborhood's identity
 - Tree planting along community streets and landscaped intersections
 - Implementation of public art opportunities
- **SCDOT:** Expressed concern with the overall landscaping plan because of the inability to provide adequate maintenance. If tree buffers are placed along the interstates, they must be outside of the clear zones and drainage areas. These trees will not be maintained by SCDOT.
 - Noted spacing/ROW requirement included in the earlier comments necessary to be able to incorporate tree buffer along the interstate.
 - Along Margaret Drive, the shared-use path would have pedestrian-scale lighting. Consider low-maintenance art displays, which are also more durable, along the shared-use paths.
 - If residents want vegetation, consider allocating the area to community gardens that the residents can maintain.
- **N. Charleston:** Planting additional trees along the streets may be problematic due to the narrow width of the front yards. Also questioned if the right-of-way is wide enough to accommodate tree planting.
 - Residents often use areas where the trees would be placed for parking.
 - The City has installed a number of bioswales but noted the level of maintenance required is intensive.
- **SCDOT:** The CIEP should focus aesthetic enhancements in the vicinity of the community center, pocket parks, and community entrances.
 - For community entrances, we would need to include a stipulation that the residents would be responsible for maintaining the entrances.
 - Consider developing a funded resident tree planting program where residents could plant and maintain trees on their property.
 - Not clear on the pollinator program. Need to get a better understanding of what this consists of and the maintenance.
 - **N. Charleston:** Due to COVID-19 pandemic, the City had to cut back on its landscaping and maintenance budget. Cannot commit to maintaining additional landscaping.

Traffic Calming

- **Stantec:** SCDOT completed a speed study based off comments from residents. Noted speed bumps in Ferndale, Russelldale and Liberty Park, crosswalks in Liberty Park and Russelldale, and a mini roundabout in Liberty Park.

- **SCDOT:** Verify the location of the speed hump across Dorothy Williams Boulevard (Liberty Park). Additionally, need to verify the dimensions (cross-section) for the mini roundabout. If it is causing right-of-way impacts, then it will not move forward. The right-of-way required could cause set-back issues.
- **N. Charleston:** Expressed concern with service vehicles (school buses, waste collection trucks, and fire trucks) being able to navigate the mini roundabout.

Pedestrian Facilities

- **Stantec:** Noted the proposed sidewalk improvements are scaled back from what was initially considered during previous TRC meetings. In addition to sidewalk improvements, pedestrian bridges are proposed over the Norfolk Southern tracks, in the vicinity the proposed community center, and over Filbin Creek near Margaret Drive.
- **SCDOT:** Noted they instructed the project team to evaluate a pedestrian structure that crosses over Filbin Creek and the Norfolk Southern tracks. The preferred alternative will relocate a portion of Lacross Drive, which creates an opportunity to add new sidewalk which could also connect with the proposed structure over the railroad tracks.
 - When preparing the sidewalk recommendations, SCDOT identified areas and recommended not constructing sidewalks where there are parking conflicts, low pedestrian traffic, or trees that would need to be removed.
 - Focused new sidewalks and the shared-use path in areas where homes were being relocated, such as Margaret Drive or areas where there is not a lot of development.
 - Noted a conversation with Mr. Mitchell (2233 James Bell Drive) where he stated he would be open to an easement for a SUP as long as there was enough land to develop multi-family housing on the developable portions of his property.
- **N. Charleston:** Noted checking the SCDOT or Charleston Pavement Management System. Many improvements can be addressed when SCDOT schedules resurfacing projects. Particularly in regard to stamped concrete at crossings.
 - **SCDOT:** Improvements will be coordinated once the commitments are made. SCDOT does not make a comment to replace upgraded crossings and other pavement enhancements when it is time to resurface. Recommend using standard crosswalks instead of including enhanced crossings and pavement treatments.

Infrastructure Maintenance

- **SCDOT:** SCDOT will maintain all state roadways/sidewalks and pay for the construction of all proposed mitigation items.
 - Requests the City administer construction of: Community Center, 2 pocket parks, and the Filbin Creek shared use path. Preference is for the City to administer as one combined project.
 - Requests the City maintain: Community center, pocket parks, shared use paths, pedestrian bridges, lighting, and traffic calming facilities.
 - Requests that the City incorporate elements of the Final Community History Preservation Study into the community center design.
 - SCDOT will provide updated landscaping and lighting plan.
- **N. Charleston**
 - Will discuss construction and maintenance requests with Mayor.

Affordable Housing

- **SCDOT:** Partnership with SC State Housing Finance and Development Authority to administer developer-incentive financing programs for Multi-Family Housing. Goal is for housing to remain affordable for at least 30 years. SCDOT will provide gap financing.
 - Seeking partnership with a local non-profit to achieve long-term affordability for single-family housing. Twelve (12) lots have been secured to date.
 - SCDOT will update on the agreement with the SC Housing Authority. Working to develop methodology to prioritize locations. Will updated N. Charleston in a subsequent meeting.

ACTION ITEMS:

Subject	Assigned To	Description	Status
Lighting	N. Charleston	Send City Lighting Ordinance to Stantec	Complete
Lighting	Stantec	Provide N. Charleston an updated estimate of the number of new pedestrian-scale light fixtures	Included in revised CIEP recommendations summary
Drainage	N. Charleston	Provide plans for the Van Buren Avenue drainage improvements.	Complete – Incorporated into the update CIEP recommendations summary
Traffic Calming	Stantec	Provide a schematic drawing of the mini roundabout at Taylor Street and Elder Avenue.	Mini roundabout removed from consideration
Landscaping	Stantec	Revising landscaping recommendations to focus on landscaping at community entrances.	Recommendations incorporated into revised report
CIEP Recommendation Summary Memo	Stantec	Based off comments received during TRC Meeting #4, provide SCDOT and N. Charleston with an updated recommendations summary memo.	Revised memo submitted.

DISTRIBUTION:

Attendees

Date: 4/12/2021

Time: 2:00 – 4:00 pm

Location: Virtual TEAMS Meeting

Purpose: Review the comments and recommendations received during the Community Infrastructure Enhancement Plan (CIEP) workshop and review the Final Environmental Justice Mitigation Commitments

Attendees:

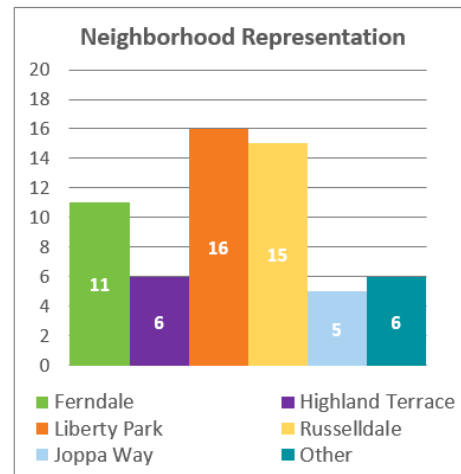
Ray Anderson – North Charleston (Asst. to the Mayor)	Rick Day - Stantec
Megan Clark – North Charleston (Planning and Zoning)	Ryan White - Stantec
Eileen Duffy - North Charleston (Planning and Zoning)	LaTonya Derrick - Stantec
Charles Drayton - North Charleston (Planning and Zoning)	Hannah Clements - Stantec
Doyle Best – North Charleston (Director of Recreation)	Michael Wray - Stantec
Joy Riley – SCDOT (Project Manager)	Dr. Maxine Smith – Maximum Consulting
Chad Long – SCDOT (Director of Environmental Programs)	
Shane Belcher – FHWA (SC Environmental Coordinator)	
Pam Foster – FHWA (Civil Rights Officer)	

MEETING SUMMARY

Community Infrastructure Enhancement Plan (CIEP) Survey

CIEP survey was available to EJ residents at the CIEP Open House, mailed to EJ residents, advertised on the project website and in the informational flyer boxes. Online and paper surveys were accepted from March 6 to March 27, 2021.

- 77 people attended the CIEP Open House
- 85 people completed the survey either on paper or online
- 89% of respondents lived in the EJ neighborhoods
- Infrastructure Needs Rankings
 - Stormwater Draining
 - Traffic Calming
 - Sidewalks
 - Lighting
 - Security Cameras
- Lighting Survey Comments
 - Security devices need lighting for systems to properly operate
 - Trees should be cut back
 - Majority of residents preferred the Shepherds Crook light posts for the shared-used paths (SUP)



- Additional streetlight locations identified in meeting packet (see page 6): Elder Avenue, Rebecca Street, and Taylor Street (9 new streetlight locations recommended)
- **City of N. Charleston:**
 - Recently completed streetlight upgrades in Brentwood and Dorchester Terrace. This included going back and installing “infill” lighting.
 - The city is good with adding infill lighting at the locations noted on Elder Avenue, Rebecca Street, and Taylor Street.
 - Will need to make sure appropriate levels of lighting is placed on the SUP.
- Stormwater/Drainage Comments
 - The culverts/bridges at the Rivers Avenue crossing of Filbin Creek need to be enlarged and maintained to prevent water upstream flooding.
 - Residents are in favor of stormwater detention that allows water to flow instead of remaining stagnant and ponding.
 - Life Changers Church: water backs up between interstate and church and floods church parking lot.
 - **SCDOT:**
 - SCDOT local maintenance was notified and will be meeting with church staff to determine what improvements can be made to address storm drainage.
- Traffic Calming Comments
 - Requested an early warning sign be placed on Rivers Avenue to alert drivers that the Taylor Street crossing is blocked by a passing train.
 - Speed humps were identified as the preferred mechanism for traffic calming.
 - Taylor Street received the highest number of comments regarding the need for traffic calming.
 - Additional locations for crosswalks were noted on the map on page 8 of the meeting packet.
 - Recommendations from the survey on page 9 of the meeting packet includes additional recommendations for speed hump locations.
 - **SCDOT**
 - Noted they would be coordinating with Norfolk Southern (NS) regarding upgrading pedestrian safety features at the Taylor Street RR crossing. We need to note that all improvements at the railroad crossings will be contingent on approval by NS.
 - A technical re-evaluation for traffic calming locations made via the survey will need to be prepared to ensure traffic calming criteria is met. This would need approval by the SCDOT Regional Traffic Engineer and final approval by the City of N. Charleston.
 - **Stantec:** Will send revised Traffic Calming Technical Memorandum with additional locations to SCDOT for review
- Landscaping & Aesthetics Comments
 - Seating at neighborhood entrances
 - Lighting at the neighborhood signs
 - Additional community entrance signs at James Bell Drive/Rivers Avenue intersection and Target Street/Rivers Avenue intersection.
 - Beautification between Life Changers Church and the I-526 westbound ramp
 - **SCDOT**
 - If recommendations meet SCDOT landscaping guidelines and signage is already in place, the Department can implement landscaping.

- SCDOT will be relying on the City of North Charleston to maintain and pay for lighting of community signs.
- SCDOT is placing the SUP along Filbin Creek between I-526 and Life Changers Church. SCDOT would place their standard fencing along Filbin Creek in this location. If non-standard fencing is used, SCDOT will construct. However, there will not be budget for repairing any damages.
- **N. Charleston**
 - Recommended placing a Ferndale neighborhood sign on Clifton Avenue. The intersection will align with Mall Drive once the LCRT Project is constructed.
 - The City will review internal recommendation and follow back up with SCDOT.
- Pedestrian Improvements
 - Top roads for pedestrian improvement recommendations: Piedmont Avenue, Railroad Avenue, Taylor Street, Rebecca Street, and in the vicinity of the SUP near Filbin Creek.
 - Recommendations outside of CIEP area at Aviation, Core Road, and Singing Pines community
 - Additional recommendation: Pedestrian improvements at the Taylor Street RR crossing, extending the sidewalk on Piedmont Avenue from Jason Street to Marson Street.
 - Pedestrian improvements at the Taylor Street railroad crossing.
 - **N. Charleston**
 - Requested verification of the location of the shared use path.
 - **SCDOT:** The homes along Margaret Drive will be relocated. As such, the path will go along the southern (eastbound) side of Margaret Drive.
- **SCDOT**
 - The new sidewalks being shown are areas where SCDOT is buying right-of-way.
- Personal and Professional Development Classes

Recommended Classes (votes)	
Computer Skills (29 votes)	Trade Certifications (11 votes)
CPR First Aid (21 votes)	Transportation Industry (11 votes)
Business Management (12 votes)	Resume Writing / Job Skills (11 votes)
Financial Planning (12 votes)	Construction Industry (9 votes)

- Additional classes suggested: Senior exercise classes, activities for older adults, Spanish language classes, and restaurant/cooking skills.
- Pedestrian Bridge (over the NS railroad tracks).
 - Recommended location is based on the following factors: direct access to new community center, footpath noting location currently used to travel across the tracks, and proximity to Highland Terrace and Joppa Way.
 - **N. Charleston:** No comments or concerns noted
 - **SCDOT:** The bridge over the RR would be constructed as part of the “Blue” phase which includes the construction of the additional I-26 additional bridges over the NS RR tracks. The Filbin Creek pedestrian bridge would likely be constructed during the “Red” phase. More efficient to complete pedestrian structures as part of the highway construction.



- IGA Schedule

IGA would be part of the submittal with the draft FEIS/ROD goes to FHWA for review.

- **SCDOT:** Draft IGA should be provided to N. Charleston within a few weeks. It would go through a modified version of the Local Programs Office process. SCDOT's review of the vertical project components would be limited. Would like to word the IGA in a manner that funding would be provided to the City and they would be responsible for acquiring property, preparing designs, and constructing the community center, pocket parks, and shared use path. Easement would be required for the parcel in the NE quadrant of the Dorothy Williams Drive/Filbin Creek crossing in order to construct the shared use path.
 - **N. Charleston:** Mayor is aware of this approach. In theory, the City is agreeable to the approach recommended by SCDOT.
 - **SCDOT:** SCDOT would be responsible for covering cost overruns. If there are upgrades that the City would like incorporated, an follow-up conversation regarding cost-share would be required.
- **Stantec:** Based on the current workback schedule, the Draft FEIS/ROD is schedule to be submitted to FHWA HQ in July 2021.
 - **SCDOT:** There may be two separate agreements: one focused on the construction of the community centers and one focused on the maintenance of items such as the sidewalks and traffic calming measures.

EJ Community Mitigation Plan Overview

- Recreational Amenities

- **Stantec:** On resolved amenities
 - Community garden, educational wetland, cover shelters and grills, walkways and adjacent vegetation, wayfarer/directional signage, audio/visual equipment and the mural to be incorporated into the community center.
 - Additional items: Police substation, cameras in the community centers
- **N. Charleston**
 - Will follow-up with the Police Department but not currently aware that the NCPD is looking to add substations at this time.
 - Concerned with maintenance and required upgrades of surveillance camera systems. Noted that the City does have surveillance cameras, but will need to verify that there is an established plan.
 - Will request that the community maintain the community garden.
 - Will need more clarity on the scope of the educational wetland.
 - SCDOT: The educational wetland and garden would be included in the scope for the community garden and would include educational signage.
 - The City is good with the remainder of these items

- SCDOT: It is DOT's intent to include the specific program requests into the IGA. It will be an expression of intent and desire but allows the Town to attempt to meet the requests and allow the City some flexibility.

- Project Oversight Committee
 - Project Oversight Committee will begin operating after the approval of the FEIS/ROD. A white paper was prepared and reviewed by SCDOT and FHWA describing the purpose and role of the POC. POC would remain active for the duration of the project.

Next Steps

- Based on these final recommendations for the CIEP and mitigation plan, SCDOT will be sending the City a draft Intergovernmental Agreement for review and comment.
- Project Oversight Committee – Training May-September, first meeting November 2021.
- Ongoing – Community History Preservation Program, FHWA sponsored Personal and Professional Development classes

ACTION ITEMS:

Subject	Assigned To	Description	Status
Traffic Calming Memo	Stantec	Submit updated traffic calming memo to SCDOT for review and approval. Final version to be sent to SCDOT.	
Police substation in Community Center	N. Charleston	Follow up with NCPD to determine if they are looking to establish new substations	
Surveillance Cameras	N. Charleston	Have internal discussion	

DISTRIBUTION:

Attendees

**Cooperative Intergovernmental Agreement Between
The City of North Charleston and
The South Carolina Department of Transportation
For Mitigation Efforts Related to the I-526 Improvement Project**

This Agreement is made this 15th day of October, 2021, by and between the City of North Charleston (hereinafter "City") and the South Carolina Department of Transportation (hereinafter "SCDOT") (collectively "the Parties").

WITNESSETH THAT:

WHEREAS, SCDOT is developing an interstate improvement project on the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor in the greater Charleston region; and

WHEREAS, SCDOT has determined that the project will have significant impacts to the communities surrounding the existing interstate corridor that will require mitigation; and

WHEREAS, SCDOT is committed to work with City in order to properly mitigate these potential community impacts; and

WHEREAS, City is agreeable to work with SCDOT in order to meet common goals regarding mitigation efforts in the North Charleston community; and

WHEREAS, SCDOT is an agency of the State of South Carolina with the authority to enter into contracts necessary for the proper discharge of its functions and duties; and

WHEREAS, City is a body politic with the authority to enter into contracts necessary for the proper discharge of its functions and duties; and

WHEREAS, the Parties wish to set forth herein the terms of their relationship to accomplish the purpose set forth above;

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual benefits accruing to each and to the State of South Carolina, the Parties agree as follows:

I. DESCRIPTION

This Agreement is for the replacement of community centers that will be affected by SCDOT's I-526 improvement project and for the construction of new sidewalks and shared-use pathways that will include pedestrian-scale lighting improvements that provide access to the new community centers from the connecting community streets. The work covered by this Agreement is a component of a larger mitigation plan for SCDOT's interstate improvement project.

II. OBLIGATIONS OF THE PARTIES

A. SCDOT WILL:

1. Identify an SCDOT employee to serve as SCDOT's Contact for City.
2. Through its normal right-of-way acquisition processes, acquire the two community centers, as applicable, and any associated real property that will be impacted by SCDOT's project. These properties are identified in Exhibit A, attached hereto and incorporated herein.
3. Acquire real property for locating a community center and pocket parks to mitigate the loss of those impacted by SCDOT's project. This property will be transferred to City from SCDOT upon acquisition by quitclaim deed. These properties are identified in Exhibit B, attached hereto and incorporated herein.
4. Secure any necessary Section 6(f) approvals required for impacts to the current community center.
5. According to the terms of the Local Public Agency (LPA) Agreement with City, incorporated herein by reference, fund the design and construction of the replacement community center, pocket parks, and shared-use paths as specified in the mitigation plan, incorporated herein by reference. This obligation also will extend to the initial equipping and furnishing of the community center. SCDOT's funding obligation is for the community center and pocket parks as outlined in the mitigation plan. City may elect to include discretionary items in the design and construction of these, but any such discretionary items will not be reimbursable by SCDOT.
6. Identify an SCDOT employee to participate in City's discussions that result in the selection of designs, plans, contractors, and consultants for the replacement community center and pocket parks.
7. Accept maintenance responsibility only for standard transportation materials, structures, and workmanship within SCDOT rights-of-way according to common local practices. For those items which will be maintained by SCDOT, SCDOT will accept maintenance responsibility after construction of the project is complete and the project is accepted by SCDOT. This will include the portions of the shared-use path that parallel State roadways.

8. Perform all services required of SCDOT in accordance with SCDOT guidelines and policies.
9. Within the limits of the South Carolina Tort Claims Act, be responsible for any loss resulting from bodily injuries (including death) or damages to property, arising out of any negligent act or negligent failure to act on SCDOT's part, or the part of any employee of SCDOT in performance of the work undertaken under this Agreement.

B. CITY WILL:

1. Become qualified through SCDOT as a Local Public Agency in order to manage the design and construction of the community center, pocket parks, and shared-use path.
2. Transfer the identified portion (see Exhibit A for further details) of the impacted community center tract to SCDOT.
3. Maintain or demolish, as appropriate, any structures and appurtenances on tracts conveyed to City from SCDOT.
4. Design and construct, through SCDOT's LPA Program, the replacement community center, two pocket parks, the shared-use path, and any sidewalks within the community center property complex or not parallel to a State maintained road.
5. Be responsible for maintenance of the community center, the pocket parks, lighting, landscaping, community entrance signs, traffic calming features (speed humps and raised crosswalks), pedestrian bridges, and portions of the shared-use path that do not parallel State roadways.
6. Develop and deliver enhanced programs and services at the community center in accordance with the mitigation plan (incorporated herein by reference).
7. Retain all records dealing with the Project for three years after the performance period of all agreements and covenants entered into for the Project. Such records shall be made available to SCDOT and FHWA upon request.
8. Comply with the audit requirements of 2 CFR 200, Subpart F.
9. Within the limitations of the South Carolina Tort Claims Act, be responsible for any loss resulting from bodily injuries (including death) or damages to property arising out of any negligent act or negligent failure to act on City's

part, or the part of any employee of City in performance of the work undertaken under this Agreement.

III. GENERAL TERMS

- A. This Agreement shall take effect upon its execution and shall terminate upon the earlier of: written notification for cause from one Party to the other, or satisfaction of all terms and conditions of this Agreement.
- B. The Parties hereto agree to conform to all applicable SCDOT policies, all State, Federal, and local laws, rules, regulations, and ordinances governing agreements or contracts relative to the acquisition, design, construction, maintenance, and repair of roads and bridges, and other services covered under this Agreement.
- C. The Parties, or their authorized agents, shall agree to hold consultations with each other as may be necessary with regard to the execution of supplements, modifications, or amendments to this Agreement during the course of the Project for the purpose of resolving any unforeseen issues that may arise or items that may have been unintentionally omitted from this Agreement. Such supplements, modifications, or amendments shall be subject to the approval and proper execution of the Parties hereto. No supplement, modification, or amendment to this Agreement shall be effective or binding on any Party hereto unless such supplement, modification, or amendment has been agreed to in writing by the Parties hereto.
- D. Any and all reviews and approvals required of the Parties herein shall not be unreasonably denied, delayed, or withheld.
- E. No waiver of any event of default by a Party hereunder shall be implied from any delay or omission by the other Party to take action on account of such event of default, and no express waiver shall affect any event of default other than the event of default specified in the waiver and it shall be operative only for the time and to the extent therein stated. Waivers of any covenants, terms, or conditions contained herein must be in writing and shall not be construed as a waiver of any subsequent or other breach of the same covenant, term, or condition. The consent or approval by a Party of any act by the other requiring further consent or approval shall not be deemed to waive or render unnecessary the consent or approval to or of any subsequent or similar act. No single or partial exercise of any right or remedy of a Party hereunder shall preclude any further exercise thereof or the exercise of any other or different right or remedy.
- F. In the event a dispute or claim in connection with this Agreement shall arise between the Parties, the Parties shall meet in good faith and attempt to resolve any issues prior to taking legal or equitable action. Any lawsuit arising out of or relating to this Agreement shall be filed for non-jury proceedings in Charleston County.
- G. All notices and other correspondence will be officially delivered as follows:

As to SCDOT:
Deputy Secretary of Engineering
South Carolina Department of Transportation
955 Park Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29202-0191

As to City:
Ray Anderson
Assistant to the Mayor
City of North Charleston
2500 City Hall Lane
North Charleston, South Carolina 29406

- H. The Parties each bind themselves, their respective successors, executors, administrators, and assigns to the other Party with respect to these requirements, and also agree that no Party shall assign, sublet, or transfer its respective interest in this Agreement without the written consent of the other.
- I. This Agreement is made and entered into for the sole protection and benefit of SCDOT, City, and their respective successors and assigns. No other persons, firms, entities, or parties shall have any rights or standing to assert any rights under this Agreement in any manner.
- J. Invalidation of any one or more of the provisions of this Agreement by a court of competent jurisdiction shall in no way affect any of the other provisions herein, all of which shall remain in full force and effect.
- K. This Agreement may be executed and delivered in counterparts, and if so executed, shall become effective when a counterpart has been executed and delivered by all Parties hereto. All counterparts taken together shall constitute one and the same Agreement and shall be fully enforceable as such. Delivery of counterparts via facsimile transmission or via email with scanned attachment shall be effective as if originals thereof were delivered.
- L. By executing this Agreement, the undersigned each affirm and certify that he or she has the authority to bind his or her principal thereto and that all necessary acts have been taken to duly authorize this Agreement under applicable law.
- M. This Agreement with attached Exhibits and Certifications constitutes the entire Agreement between the Parties. This Agreement is to be interpreted under the laws of the State of South Carolina.


[Signature blocks on next page]

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Parties have caused this Agreement to be executed on their behalf

SIGNED, SEALED, AND DELIVERED
IN THE PRESENCE OF

CITY OF NORTH CHARLESTON


Witness

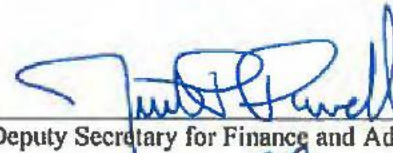
By: 
R. KEITH SUMMEY
MAYOR
Title

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION


Witness

By: 
Secretary of Transportation

RECOMMENDED BY:

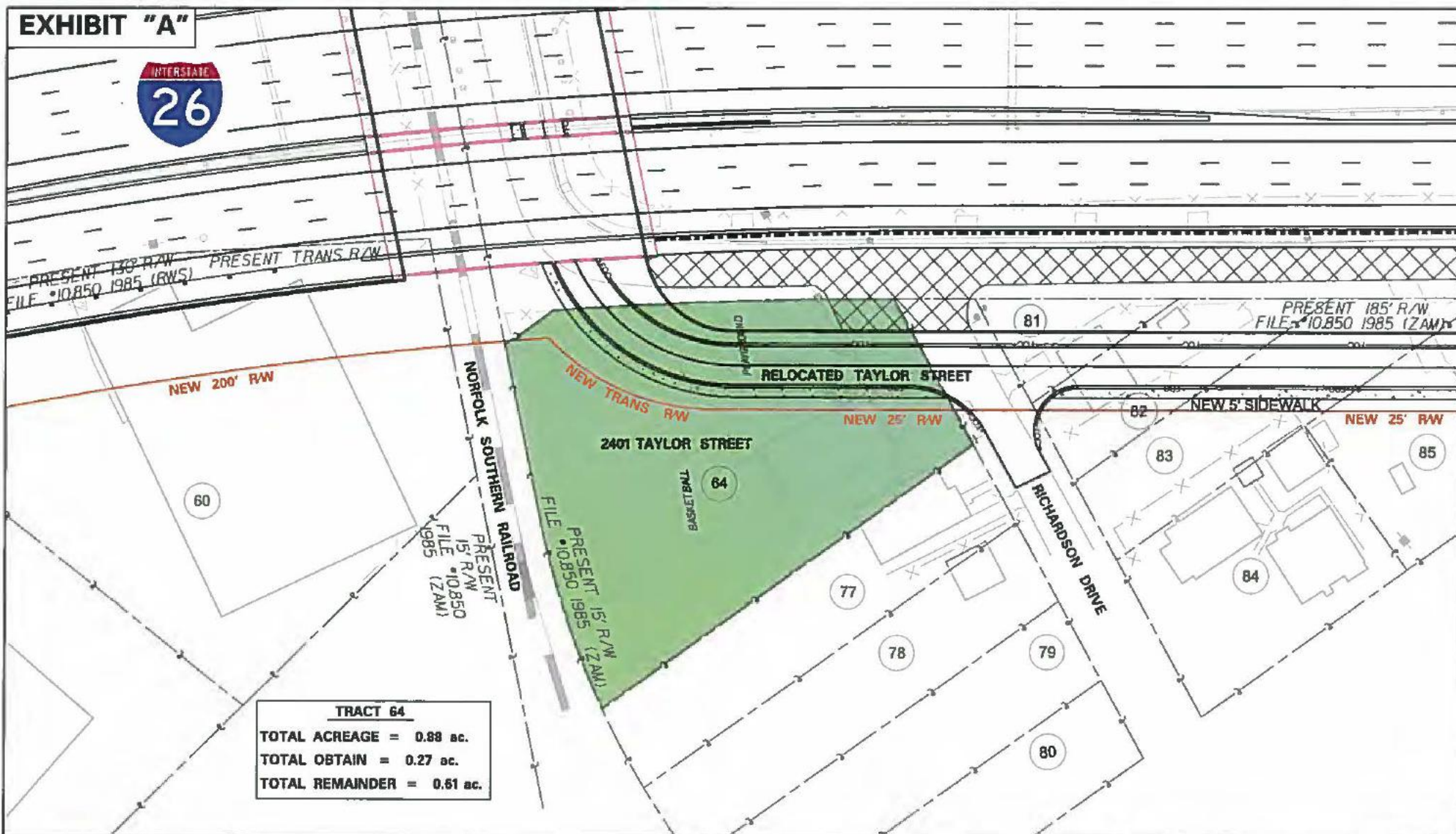

Deputy Secretary for Finance and Administration


Deputy Secretary for Engineering

EXHIBIT A

HT Community Center Property RW Exhibit Map

EXHIBIT "A"



TRACT 64	
TOTAL ACREAGE =	0.88 ac.
TOTAL OBTAIN =	0.27 ac.
TOTAL REMAINDER =	0.61 ac.



LEGEND	
	NEW EDGE OF TRAVELWAY
	NEW BRIDGE STRUCTURE
	NEW RIGHT OF WAY
	EXISTING RIGHT OF WAY
	EXISTING PROPERTY LINE
	COMMUNITY CENTER PARCEL



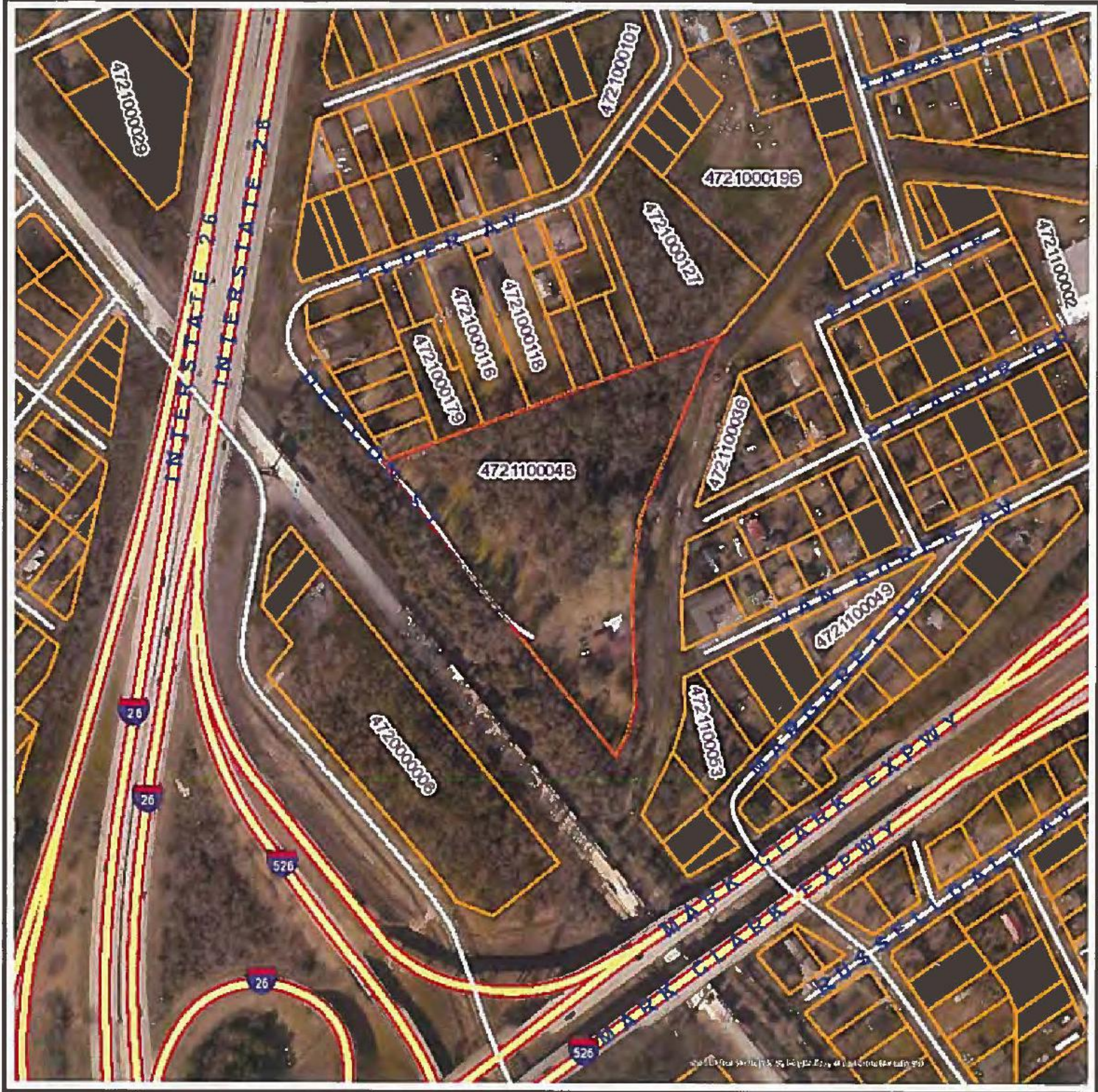
I-526 LOWCOUNTRY CORRIDOR
CONCEPTUAL IMPROVEMENTS AT
2401 TAYLOR STREET
HIGHLAND TERRACE COMMUNITY CENTER

04/30/2021

SHEET 1 OF 1

EXHIBIT B

Anderson Tract Property Map

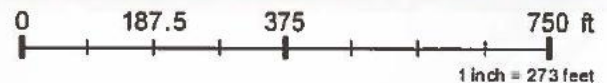


Charleston County Parcel Map

Parcel ID: 4721100048
OWNER1: ANDERSON HATTIE RUTH
LEVY
DEEDED ACREAGE: 5.72
PLAT BOOK PAGE: F-182
DEED BOOK PAGE: Y658-882
Jurisdiction: CITY OF NORTH

CHARLESTON

Tax Map #472-11-00-048



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Author: Charleston County SC
 Date: 3/18/2020