

MINUTES
GPATS POLICY COORDINATING COMMITTEE
February 24, 2020
Suite 400 – County Square
10:00 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Butch Kirven, Senator Rice, Senator Cash, Senator Loftis, Senator Turner, Representative Burns, Representative Collins, Representative Smith, Commissioner Davis, Councilor Costner, Councilor Davis, Councilor Hudson, Councilor Meadows, Councilor Seman, Mayor Danner, Mayor Durham, Mayor McLeer, Mayor Merritt, Mayor Petersen, Mayor Shewmaker, Mayor Womack, Dick O’Neill, and Keith Brockington

OTHERS PRESENT: P. Gucker, H. Gamble, B. Groel, H. Hahn, A. Ikein, D. Montgomery, C. Lucas, C. Lewis, B. Revis, E. Hailey, R. Ward, D. Lackey, S. Jackson-Amell, M. Pleasant, B. Madden, D. Cooper, C. Brink, S. Limbaker, L. Estep, V. Holmes, C. Link, and J. Parkey

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME

Chairman Kirven called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. He welcomed everyone and recognized Mayor Butch Womack, Mayor Paul Shewmaker, Mayor G.P. McLeer, Mayor Fletcher Perry, Mayor Terry Merritt, and GTA Chair Dick O’Neill the newest members of the GPATS Policy Committee.

APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 21, 2019 COMMITTEE MEETING

MOTION: By Senator Rice, seconded by Senator Turner to approve the minutes of the October 21, 2019 Committee meeting as presented. The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no individuals signed up for public comment.

SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION PRESENTATION

SCDOT Secretary of Transportation, Christy Hall, gave a PowerPoint presentation to the Committee titled State of SC’s Roads. She Stated that, nationally, South Carolina is the fourth-largest state highway system and is serving the sixth-fastest population growth rate. She advised the Committee the SCDOT is making steady progress in addressing the thirty-year backlog of deferred maintenance on the state highway system. She explained, in the previous ten years, the SCDOT’s annual construction program was roughly \$1 billion and has increased to \$3.2 billion. This amount is expected to grow to possibly \$5 billion in the next two years. She stated she has recently signed contracts for an additional \$84 million in paving projects.

She briefly discussed the four main priorities for the SCDOT:

- Paving Projects – \$40 billion from thirty years of backlog
- Safety Projects – Rural Road Safety Program
- Bridge Replacement Projects – SCDOT identified 465 bridges
- Interstate Widening Projects – Greenville, Columbia, and Charleston

She stated South Carolina has the highest rural fatality rate in the nation. She advised once the State Gas Tax passed, SCDOT created the Rural Road Safety Program, which funds \$50 million annually to this program. She continued that SCDOT is in year 3 of the Phased-In 12¢ State Gas Tax increase and that one penny from the State Gas Tax generates \$34 million. She presented a slide showing infrastructure costs:

- \$1 million repave = 3 miles of two-lane highway
- Bridge replacement cost = \$1.5 million each
- Interstate Widening cost per mile = \$10 million rural & \$30 million urban
- Interchange Upgrade cost = \$60 to \$100 million each

She stated as of December 31, 2019, the State Gas Tax Trust Fund had a cash balance of \$478 million, with more than \$1.2 billion to invest in road and bridge projects, and has paid out \$566 million for projects. She explained that out of the State Gas Tax funds, \$854 million was for paving, \$124 million was for rural road safety, \$12 million went towards additional bridge projects, and \$247 million was for interstate widenings. She stated the State Gas Tax Trust Fund, along with the new State Gas Tax, includes additional funds the General Assembly gave SCDOT in 2016 to begin an Interstate Widening Program.

She advised the SCDOT 10-Year Plan combines Federal funds, existing funds, and State Gas Tax funds. She stated SCDOT is currently 2.5 years into the 10-Year Plan and is expecting to meet or exceed their goals on Rural Road Safety Projects, Bridge Projects, Interstate Pavement Conditions, Major Road Pavement Conditions, and Farm to Market Pavement Conditions. She advised the strategic approach to the Interstate Widening Program will be to target the three biggest pinch points that affect the movement of people and goods, which are the I-85/I-385 interchange, Malfunction Junction, and the I-26/I-526 interchange, and widen key rural stretches to target freight needs in the state. She stated the SCDOT Commission gave the SCDOT their approval to move forward on preliminary engineering for the first two phases of rural interstates for the Rural Freight Priority Projects. She invited the members and attending guests to visit the SCDOT webpage or to follow on social media for updates and explained how the SCDOT's webpage has a transparency tag showing how the new State Gas Tax and other funds are spent.

Secretary Hall made herself available for any questions.

There was a brief discussion on whether SCDOT would reconsider bringing back the Buyback Program.

Secretary Hall stated that SCDOT is aware of the desire from local governments for this program to continue.

Senator Rice asked what the ratio of match money is for Interstates and US Highways from the Federal Government.

Secretary Hall replied the allocations from the Federal government they receive have not increased, but SCDOT targets these funds toward projects that will involve the FHWA. She stated the SCDOT receives a 90/10 split instead of the usual 80/20 on Interstate projects and that FHWA reimbursement funds are then reinvested back into the Interstate Program. She advised that there are some exemptions, such as the Rural Freight Corridor Projects. She explained how the Tax Credit Rebate is due to expire after the State Gas Tax is fully phased-in, and when the Tax Credit expires, state funds will be allocated to the first two phases of the Rural Freight Corridor Projects.

Senator Rice asked has the SCDOT explored the idea of toll lanes or to add a third lane.

Secretary Hall replied the SCDOT has inquired into the possibility of toll lanes and found that it is not practical on I-85, I-26, and I-20. She stated a tolling option could be considered on I-95 bridges, as could a hot lane on I-526.

Chairman Kirven asked if the Guideshare funds that come through GPATS and other MPOs have been stable and if this was a direct relationship to the stability of the federal funding.

Secretary Hall confirmed this is correct.

Mayor Durham inquired about the safety concerns on I-29 between Anderson and Greenville, as well as the bridge problems in the area, and if the SCDOT Plan would include widening this highway to a continuous four-lane highway.

Secretary Hall stated the SCDOT defers to the MPOs or COGs to make these decisions and funding was based on their rating system for widening projects that do not involve the Interstate.

A question was asked if the SCDOT is projecting any increases to the County Transportation Committees (CTCs) funding from the State Gas Tax.

Secretary Hall advised the CTCs will be allocated more funding than MPOs or COGs once everything is fully phased-in.

Representative Smith asked if she would explain how the State Infrastructure Bank (SIB) funding works into projects, particularly with the additional State Gas Tax funds.

Secretary Hall answered the SIB and SCDOT are entirely separate, and the SIB is not getting any additional funding from the State Gas Tax.

Commissioner Davis wanted to take this opportunity to express what excellent work Secretary Hall is doing and that the SCDOT 10-Year Plan will not happen overnight, but will take some time to accomplish.

Chairman Kirven thanked Secretary Hall for accepting the GPATS invitation and giving the SCDOT update presentation. He recognized Stephanie Jackson-Amell, District Administrator with the SCDOT, at this time, who is retiring, and thanked her for her assistance with GPATS.

SCDOT PROJECT STATUS UPDATE

Casey Lucas, Program Manager with the SCDOT, addressed the Committee members with a slide presentation update on various projects within the GPATS area that was included in each member's packet.

- Butler Road Project contract was executed with Infrastructure Consulting and Engineering (ICE) for design services. She advised the SCDOT surveys were submitted to ICE.
- West Georgia Rd Improvements funding was received from the City of Simpsonville, and SCDOT can begin procuring a consultant.
- She stated there are five new Bridge Projects that have recently been added to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
- Roper Mtn Rd and Roper Mtn Rd Extension Projects will be in the April 2020 letting.
- SC-153 Intersection Improvement utilities are now certified, and the project will be placed in the June 2020 letting.
- S-164 Gibbs Shoals Rd Bridge Replacement was let in February 2020.
- Woodruff Rd Parallel National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document was submitted to FHWA and SCDOT for approval. She stated the SCDOT project website schedule was updated, and a public hearing will be held in Spring 2020. A decision from FHWA is expected in Summer 2020. She stated, excluding this project and the Butler Rd Project, that all active Guideshare projects would be in the construction phase this year.

- Riverside Middle School TA project has a utility conflict with the Town of Pendleton. She advised the Town of Pendleton qualifies for funds through the new Utility Bill, and the SCDOT Director of Utilities is assisting in securing these funds.
- The Fountain Inn Woodside Connector and Pickens Downtown Doodle Connector TA projects preliminary plans are in the final stages. She advised the Design Field Review (DFR) was held in February 2020 for the Fountain Inn Woodside Connector, and that designs for both projects are moving forward.
- Minor Street Sidewalks TA project was let in February 2020 to receive bids from contractors.
- S-164 Batesville Rd and SC-153 Extension Projects have experienced delays with construction due to the recent weather conditions.
- SC-146 Woodruff Rd Widening utility relocations are ongoing, and drainage installation will begin in March.
- SC-14 Improvements are continuing. She stated the widening and paving are underway. She advised new signal poles are being placed, and that the walls and sideline are completed.
- S-75 Mt Lebanon Church Rd Bridge is a Non-Guideshare project for two bridge replacements. She stated bents are being driven for both bridges, but the project has experienced minor setbacks due to recent flooding in February.
- S-272 West Georgia Rd Bridge Replacement is a Non-Guideshare project. She stated the bridge deck was poured in February, and asphalt is being laid along the new roadway alignment.
- She advised that the Fairview Street Bridge project over I-385 and the Hampton Ave Pedestrian Bridge project were complete.

Chairman Kirven announced there will be a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Hampton Ave Pedestrian Bridge on Friday, March 6th, at noon and everyone is invited.

Ms. Lucas made herself available for any questions.

FTA SECTION 5310 APPLICATIONS

Asangwua Ikein addressed the Committee members with a slide presentation about FTA Section 5310, Elderly and Disabled Services, applicants applying for available funds. He stated the Transit Coordinating Committee (TCC) evaluated applications from Senior Solutions, scoring 46.4/100, and Turning Point of SC, scoring 63.4/100. He stated after evaluating both projects, the TCC recommends the applicants resubmit their applications with better answers for the evaluation criteria. He advised the TCC will create a new 5310 application and policies to better evaluate future applicants.

He stated the current funds available are approximately \$579 thousand and that GPATS recently received notice that the FY2020 amount will be \$402 thousand. He advised Senior Solutions has requested a change to their previously approved application. He explained this is due to the reallocation of their local match from the leasing of a building to the purchase of a vehicle. He stated the allocation split for this requested change is 50/50 versus 80/20, which raises their federal match from approximately \$155 thousand to approximately \$167 thousand.

Mr. Ikein made himself available for any questions.

Chairman Kirven stated he noticed the Study Team recommends not to approve these items.

Mr. Brockington advised the Committee members that the Study Team recommended not to award funding due to the low scores on the applications. He stated that, additionally, Senior Solutions' request for an increase of funds from \$155 thousand to \$167 thousand changes the scope of the original application that was approved. He advised the Study Team recommended not to approve Senior Solutions' request for an increase in funding and to instruct them instead to apply in the future for the additional funding.

Senator Cash asked for clarity on voting for these action items.

Chairman Kirven advised it can be held or denied for future application opportunities.

Mr. Ikein reviewed with the Committee members the three recommendations TCC created and explained the evaluation process.

Representative Smith asked what caused the applicants' rating to be so low.

Mr. Ikein answered the TCC realized the answers given on the application were not sufficient for evaluating purposes and the TCC will update the current application to collect better answers.

Chairman Kirven asked if there would be a disruption to service for the population should the Committee hold these items over for the next Policy Committee meeting.

Mr. Ikein advised the TCC recommendation is to allow the applicants to resubmit the applications, and that it should not hinder operations at this time.

A question was asked if there is assistance for the applicant to understand the application process better.

Mr. Ikein stated he is available to the applicant.

MOTION: By Representative Smith, seconded by Senator Rice to reject the current applications and allow the Transit Coordinating Committee to request for new applicants under the revised application form. The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

GPATS TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AMENDMENT AC #2

Keith Brockington addressed the Committee members on the FY2020-FY2025 TIP Amendment AC #2 financial statement that was included in the Committee's agenda packet. He advised changes in the TIP are highlighted, including the FTA 5310 items in yellow from the Transit Coordinating Committee that were recently under review. He stated the FTA 5310 items would not be included in the final TIP due to the decision to not move forward from the previous item. The following changes were at the request of SCDOT:

- US-25, I-85 to Lily St - Safety Improvements
 - Add \$50k of ROW to FY2020
 - Add \$1.3mil of Const. to FY2021
- US-146 Roper Mtn Rd to Bagwell Rd - Safety Improvements
 - Add \$50k of ROW to FY2020
 - Add \$1.6mil of Const. to FY2021
- New Bridge Replacement Projects
 - Mill St (S-4-931) over Big Creek - \$2.95mil
 - Hunts Br. Rd. (S-39-140) over Shoal Creek - \$1.831mil
 - Hester Store Rd. (S-39-25) over Doddies Creek - \$1.741mil
- Correction of Section 5310 Overall Amounts in FY2018 and FY 2019

Mr. Brockington made himself available for any questions.

MOTION: By Representative Smith, seconded by Mayor Durham to approve the Transportation Improvement Program AC #2 Amendment. The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

TITLE VI DOCUMENTS UPDATE

Asangwua Ikein addressed the Committee members with a slide presentation on updates to the Title VI Plan documents. He stated these updates are at the request of FTA and are as followed:

- Public Notice to include reporting directly to FTA and how to report on the GPATS website
- Public Participation Plan (PPP)
- Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan
- GPATS Advisory Team (Study Team)
- Monitoring of Sub-recipients
- Demographics Data with the latest US Census data
 - ♦ Non-White
 - ♦ Hispanics or Latino
 - ♦ Average Median Income (AMI) of \$54,799 within GPATS region
 - ♦ Environmental Justice Area (EJA) – these are places where the populations is 50% Non-White and the (AMI) of \$54,799 is ≤ 80%

There was a brief discussion about the demographic data and maps shown from the slide presentation.

Mr. Ikein made himself available for any questions.

MOTION: By Mayor Danner, seconded by Mayor Petersen to approve the FTA requirements to the Title VI Plan, Public Participation Plan, and Limited English Proficiency Plan documents. The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

GPATS INTERACTIVE MAPPING SYSTEM UPDATE

Asangwua Ikein addressed the Committee members with a presentation from the GPATS website on the GPATS Interactive Mapping System. He gave a brief demonstration of the Corridor and Point Projects in the GPATS Region, Crash Data, and Upstate Regional Transit Systems maps.

Mr. Ikein made himself available for any questions.

Mr. Brockington advised that the Interactive Mapping System is always changing and being updated. He stated that if there are any corrections, suggestions, or projects in their area they would like added to the Interactive Mapping System, to contact Mr. Ikein.

A question was asked if municipalities can use this data to overlay on their maps.

Mr. Brockington advised GPATS would be able to share the shapefiles with their staff.

Mr. Ikein advised the municipalities would need Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping software to view the shapefiles.

TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM, FY2020 CYCLE

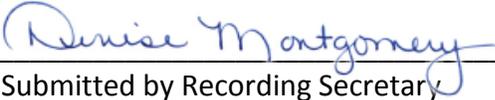
Keith Brockington addressed the Committee members with an update on the Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program for the FY2020 cycle. He explained GPATS would not be doing a “Call for TA Projects” at this time due to SCDOT undergoing considerable changes to the TA program. He advised there was a threat of rescission, but this has since been canceled. He further explained SCDOT is still looking at program lapses. He stated GPATS has not received the TA allocation amount for this year, but is working with the SCDOT TA office to get the allocation amount and will present this to the Policy Committee at the next meeting.

Mr. Brockington made himself available for any questions.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION:

By Representative Smith to adjourn, without objection
Chairman Kirven adjourned the meeting at 11:53 a.m.


Submitted by Recording Secretary