

MINUTES
GPATS POLICY COORDINATING COMMITTEE
Called Meeting
August 13, 2012
Conference Room A – County Square
10:02 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Senator Thomas, Chairman, Senator Martin, Senator Verdin, Greenville Council Chair Kirven, Councilor Payne, Councilor Meadows; Mayor Long; Mayor Raines, Mayor Owens, Mayor Danner, Mayor Bagwell, Mayor Eichor, Mayor Sheriff, Commissioner Edwards, J. Barbare, J. Owings, C. Burgess and D. Mitchell

OTHERS PRESENT: K. Brockington, T. Wedmore; H. Hahn; P. Gucker, J. Wortkoetter, H. Gamble, T. Elrod, S. Gwinn, M. Sullivan, J. Hekter, J. Chasteen, B. West, F. Simmons and B. Jordon

The Chair called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

The Chairman reminded the Committee that as a result of the 2012 census, there must be additional area added to the GPATS area. Senator Thomas reminded his colleagues that with the addition of area to be included in the GPATS MPO, the Committee would be losing money per capita. He stated when GRATS became GPATS that is what happened; area was added with less per capita monies.

In addition, the Chairman reminded the Committee his last day in office would be November 12, 2012. He suggested the Committee discuss the appointment of a new Chairman at the September meeting in order to be prepared to vote on a new Chairman at the January GPATS meeting.

APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 18, 2012 MINUTES

MOTION: By Senator Martin, seconded by Senator Verdin to approve the minutes of June 18, 2012 regular meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

CENSUS 2010 URBAN AREA EXPANSION UPDATE

Keith Brockington addressed the Committee members with an update to the expansion of the Urban Areas of the GPATS MPO. He presented a draft boundary map which would be submitted to the SCDOT for analysis and funding determination providing the Committee was in agreement with the map.

After some discussion, the following motion was made.

MOTION: By Senator Martin, seconded by Mayor Bagwell to send forward to the SCDOT two boundary suggestions, one including Clemson, Pendleton, West Pelzer and Williamson and the other not including those areas. The motion carried unanimously.

BUTLER ROAD PROJECT UPSDATE

John Owings addressed the Committee members giving background information regarding the Butler Road project. He explained the anticipated high volume of traffic made Butler Road a high ranking project on the Long Range Transportation Plan along with the number of accidents at the intersection for a given year. Tommy Elrod, with the SCDOT presented the original proposal for the project as well as an alternative proposal, which had attempted to address Ms. Chandler's concerns. He explained the differences between the designs along with the cost differences, which indicated the alternative proposal was not cost effective nor was the design safer. Mr. Elrod and the Study Team both recommend the original Butler Road design.

Chairman Thomas asked questions for clarification regarding changing the configuration of the intersection. In addition, questions were asked if parking at the Open Air Market would be affected along with other questions regarding the Open Air Market property.

MOTION: By Mayor Danner, seconded by Mayor Raines to accept the original design submitted by the SCDOT.

The Committee had further discussion regarding the plan and the position the City of Mauldin had concerning the plan. Senator Verdin voiced his concern over the traffic flow going into the Open Air Market and stated he was not in favor of either design and made the following motion.

MOTION: By Senator Verdin, seconded by Senator Thomas to carryover the item until the next meeting.

Senator Thomas requested from the Committee a suggestion of how many people to allow speaking regarding the issue and the Committee suggested allowing two speaker with a 5 minute maximum speaking time.

Mr. Tony Fallaw with the SCDOT addressed the Committee with clarifications to the need of the right of way. He stated it was not the practice of the SCDOT to be overly hard on property owners and assured the Committee had there been any other options to minimize the impact on the property owner; the SCDOT would have worked to implement the option.

Joel Ann Chandler addressed the Committee with her concerns that the project would be detrimental to her business. She requested the Committee to do the right thing and allow her to be a blessing to the community.

Mr. Jerry Rice with the Mauldin Open Air Market spoke to the Committee in opposition to the right of way acquisition.

After a lengthy discussion Senator Thomas called a roll call vote on the motion to carry the item over to the next meeting. The motion failed with three in favor (Edwards, Verdin and Thomas) and eleven in opposition (Sheriff, Owens, Bagwell, Martin, Danner, Raines, Kirven, Meadows, Payne, Long, Eichor).

Senator Thomas called a roll call vote on the motion to accept the original SCDOT design. The motion carried with ten in favor (Sheriff, Owens, Bagell, Martin, Danner, Raines, Kirven, Meadows, Long, and Eichor) and four in opposition (Payne, Edwards, Verdin and Thomas).

BATESVILLE ROAD PROJECT UPDATE

Tommy Elrod addressed the Committee on several options for the Batesville Road Project. He illustrated the first option, which would widen the existing bridge, but did not meet the project purpose and need and was not feasible. The second option was as close as possible to the existing alignment. Mr. Elrod stated it would cross Rocky Creek at Skew and would require a 500 ft. bridge. He stated the design was more complex due to various reverse curves and it was more expensive to construct and maintain. The preferred design meets the project design criteria with safer alignment due to fewer curves and requires a 230 ft. bridge. Mr. Elrod stated there would be a public hearing in the fall, and the preferred design would be taken to the public hearing.

Mr. Meadows questioned the information regarding a roundabout which was requested the last meeting.

Mr. Elrod stated this project was not appropriate for a roundabout. He stated with morning commutes, a roundabout would have more backup than a signalized light.

Mr. Kirven stated in support of his colleague, a presentation showing the disadvantages of the roundabout might have been helpful to the Committee, allowing the Committee to be up to speed with the SCDOT.

Mr. Keith Denny, attorney representing Ms. Creel who is one of the property owners affected by this project addressed the Committee members stating he had not received any information from the SCDOT indicating a roundabout would be more complicated or expensive than what the SCDOT is proposing. He stated there were no numbers or dollar figures presented to make a comparison.

Mr. Carlos Cometto, Civil Engineer addressed the Committee members in favor of a roundabout for the proposed project.

MOTION: By Mr. Meadows, seconded by Mayor Eichor to request the item be returned to the Committee in January for discussion of the Public Hearing comments.

Mr. Lee Hornbeck another property owner affected by the project area addressed the Committee in favor of the SCDOT's recommendation. He stated he would not only be losing property, but would have to move his home. Mr. Hornbeck agreed with the SCDOT's recommendation.

The motion to have the item returned at the January Committee meeting carried with one in opposition (Danner).

SC 290 @ SC 253 INTERSECTION UPDATE

Tommy Elrod addressed the Committee members on the updated compromised plan for the SC 290 at SC 253 Intersection. He stated currently the SCDOT was wrapping up the environmental study and will be moving into the right of way phase later on this year.

Ms. Brenda Willis 113 Keller Road, spoke in opposition to the proposed design as it would take more of her property along with a rental home which is currently on the property. Mr. Willis also spoke in opposition to the proposed.

GPATS/SCDOT PROJECT UPDATES

Tommy Elrod stated he would be available after the meeting if there were any questions regarding the project update that was included in the agenda packets.

HAMPTON AVENUE EXTENSION BRIDGE

John Owings gave a presentation showing the Hampton Avenue Bridge, which has been closed to vehicular traffic and will be taken down the end of this month by Norfolk Southern Railroad. Since the closure of the bridge to vehicles, citizens have been using the bridge in order to get to the other side of the tracks. However, the bridge is rated fracture critical and is a danger to the community. In addition, Mr. Owings showed a picture of a pedestrian bridge located on the swamp rabbit trail over the Reedy River. He stated the foot bridge is about the same length that would be needed to replace the current Hampton Avenue Bridge and the funding needed would be about one million dollars.

Representative Chandra Dillard spoke to the Committee on behalf of her constituents requesting any assistance that could be given to the community in erecting a foot bridge to enable citizens to get to a bus stop to go to work, or just providing the connectivity to the other neighborhood. Without the ability to cross over the tracts, citizens in one neighborhood would need to go about a mile and half to get to the other side. Ms. Dillard stated she has spoke to a representative from Norfolk Southern and they are willing to attempt to work with the community. Additionally, Ms. Dillard recognized Commissioner Edwards for his assistance.

Dr. Ken Kolb with Furman University addressed the Committee on research he had conducted on the closure of the Hampton Avenue Bridge along with the construction of the Pete Hollis Boulevard. He stated in the past 15 years the Southern Side Community has had six points of entry and access closed off because of the closure of the bridge and construction. Dr. Kolb stated from his research 88% of people have a specific use of the bridge. Income and population has decreased in the area as a result of cutting off natural linkages between communities.

Mayor Pro Tem Lillian Brock Fleming briefly spoke to issue of a footbridge in the community.

Steve Gwinn with the SCDOT stated there was clear indication pedestrian access needs to be there. The bridge is failing and unsafe, and will be taken down by August 30, 2012.

LRTP UPDATE AND DRAFT PROJECT LIST

Keith Brockington addressed the Committee on the project list for the GPATS 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan.

County Council Chairman Kirven requested the Five Forks Road area, from Highway 14 to Woodruff Road, vicinity of Monarch Elementary School be added to the LRTP evaluation list.

Mr. Brockington stated the requested would be added to the list along with requests for Highway 183 at 178 in the city of Pickens and the reevaluation of Bridges Road. He asked the Committee contact him or Tiffany Wedmore with any additions as soon as possible.

Mr. Brockington stated at the September meeting there will be a final project list and the Committee will be asked to adopt the 2012 LRTP .

Mr. Owings noted also at the September meeting the Hampton Avenue Bridge replacement will be on the agenda. Attempts will be made to seek funding for the project and the Committee will be updated at that meeting as to funding options.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no additional public comments.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, without objection, Chairman Thomas adjourned the meeting at 12:23 p.m.

Submitted by Recording Secretary