

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

September 23, 2025

A meeting of the Traffic and Transportation Committee was held on this date, beginning at 3:30 p.m. in person in the Council Chambers at 80 Broad Street and over Zoom.

Committee Members: Councilmember Seekings (Chair), Councilmember Gregg, Councilmember Gregorie, Councilmember McBride, and Mayor Cogswell

Also Present: Michael Mathis, Robert Somerville, Elizabeth Dieck, Deja Knight-McMillan, Julia Copeland, Josh Martin, Magalie Creech, Amy Wharton, James Wallace, and Donna Constance

Chair Seekings called the meeting to order

Invocation

The meeting was opened with a moment of silence led by Chair Seekings.

Chair Seekings asked the committee if they could amend the agenda to add the Financial Participation Agreement between the SCDOT and the City for \$245,680 for the completion of the Morrison Drive Median Safety Project.

On a motion by Councilmember Gregorie, seconded by Mayor Cogswell, the Committee unanimously approved to amend the agenda to add the Financial Participation Agreement between the SCDOT and the City for \$245,680 for completion of the Morrison Drive Median Safety Project.

Approval of the August 19, 2025, meeting minutes

On a motion by Mayor Cogswell, seconded by Councilmember Gregg, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the August 19, 2025, Traffic and Transportation meeting minutes.

Discussion on Transportation Sales Tax Initiative

Mayor Cogswell said the county provided them with their schedule for the 2026 TST. They asked the municipalities to give them their targeted corridors or projects and how they would like to see funding spent in their respective areas. They requested an initial draft for a meeting scheduled on Thursday. He wanted to present some ideas to the Traffic and Transportation Committee for consideration as they develop a more detailed list by the end of October. This was a collaborative effort with the county, something they had been planning citywide for over a year, including traffic improvements along major corridors, bike and pedestrian enhancements, green belt opportunities, and infrastructure related to flooding on roadways across the board. They aimed to start with the county's original plan from 2024, which estimated costs at around \$5.4 billion. A major component, 526, was no longer part of the project, freeing up funding for other initiatives. About \$811 million was available for road projects, excluding 526. In May, the county reviewed initial traffic models and provided a more detailed breakdown of some projects. Key traffic concerns included Maybank Highway, Bees Ferry, Route 17, and Glenn McConnell, indicating the traffic pinch points.

The presentation for TST 26 outlined how all funding would be allocated among projects in Charleston, Mount Pleasant, and North Charleston. They aimed for transparency and detail in fund distribution to help promote support among residents across the region and allow for customization of the remaining funds. Flexibility would enable each municipality's council members to tailor their presentations to their constituents, rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all approach. Additionally, they partnered with the Army Corps of Engineers not only for flooding on the peninsula but throughout the entire city. Flooding affected roadways, and the TST needed to address these critical issues. The state's TST funding included, but was not limited to, drainage facilities related to highways, roads, streets, bridges, and other transportation infrastructure. They consulted the attorney general's office, which indicated there was considerable discretion for local governing bodies in defining these projects. They believed that installing infrastructure to keep water off roads naturally protected them from flooding. Their priority was to determine how to prioritize, get into the details, and organize their efforts. The more thoughtful and transparent they were with the public, the higher the likelihood of gaining approval.

Councilmember McBride emphasized that the flexibility and transparency of this were crucial, and the breakdown made sense. Population growth was also a factor, and it continued based on permitting data.

Mayor Cogswell said they needed a baseline to rely on and that data would influence much of their decision-making, but they should exercise caution. For instance, John's Island urgently requires funding due to its growth corridor.

Councilmember Gregorie asked if they would be able to include streets such as Rutledge and Gordon because Rutledge was a main thoroughfare.

Mayor Cogswell said yes, and if Rutledge was something that needed that kind of attention, they would inform Charleston County.

Chair Seekings said the future of the region depended on many factors, including the ability to fund infrastructure, which would become more challenging if they decided to sunset the existing half-cent sales tax and give up the opportunity to collect billions of dollars. They encouraged everyone to get engaged, get involved, and support the existing tax because this was not a new tax, but a renewal of the current one. City Council and MUSC would discuss the Calhoun Lockwood corridor, which also includes Rutledge, for opportunities to improve accessibility and mobility with the MUSC building. The Calhoun corridor is something they need to consider as a beneficiary of the TST, specifically for moving water out of that roadway. Partnering with MUSC and the county is essential to ensure they examine the corridors and seize those opportunities. They must consider what the future holds for growth in terms of population, not just for the roads but also for transit.

Mayor Cogswell said that the public's responsibility was to engage, but they also needed to be open and transparent with their voters. They would encourage public comment, but expected the public to do their homework. Since traffic and flooding were their top concerns, they would need to collaborate with other governments, including the county and neighboring cities, as well as review internally their land use plans, zoning, and entitlements. These steps are necessary to guide decisions on zoning and growth. This would also influence how to allocate green belt funds to protect against development and transportation issues. It's an opportunity to transform the region into a more livable area, turning transportation from a nightmare into something that improves quality of life. The city must do its part to ensure that efforts complement both

transportation and public transit initiatives, guiding growth along corridors where development is already happening and preventing it where it is unwanted.

Councilmember Gregorie asked where the Calhoun Drainage Project would fall.

Chair Seekings said the Calhoun corridor.

Councilmember Gregorie asked if they were at 250 to 300 million.

Mayor Cogswell said that was to be determined. They needed to be thoughtful and strategic about this because it was important to the county. After all, every municipality would have a wish list, and there was only so much to go around. They would have to prioritize and determine their primary objectives.

Chair Seekings said the committee would serve as a clearinghouse for those ideas and refine the lists that went together.

Mayor Cogswell said he would like the committee to be just that. They would also need several more special meetings within the next 45 days, so that they could get their corridor and project lists to the county in time for them to start running models.

Target Zero Resolution

Mr. Wallace explained that this was part of their Safe Streets and Roads for All grant action plan. It was a federally required component to secure funding for future implementation phases. They were currently finalizing the draft action plan to present to the Traffic and Transportation Committee for approval. They plan to apply for \$13 million in safety projects next year, which would be federally funded. This would require a 20% match, with the City contributing \$2.5 million.

Chair Seekings asked if there was an example of the kind of safety projects they were discussing.

Mr. Wallace said these were for RFB projects, flashing beacons, curb extensions, as well as signal upgrades and pedestrian signals.

Chair Seekings said these were things they could do now to ensure safety.

Councilmember McBride asked how this interfaces with the SCDOT.

Mr. Wallace said most of the high-crash areas were SCDOT roadways because they were higher-speed and higher-volume roadways, so their approval was needed for those projects. They identified these through national countermeasures databases.

Councilmember McBride said they needed to present the data, and they would have the SCDOT approval.

Mr. Wallace said that was correct.

On a motion by Mayor Cogswell, seconded by Councilmember Gregg, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the Target Zero Resolution Policy.

Traffic Calming

**Grand Bay Lane - Johns Island
Timberline Drive - Johns Island**

Mr. Mathis said they had a couple of items up for traffic calming, which had been reviewed by staff and by the fire department, and they were recommending approval.

Councilmember McBride said they wanted to thank the neighborhood HOAs for their patience during this process they have in place. He thanked the Traffic and Transportation Department for gathering the data to justify the speed humps.

Chair Seekings asked what their budget was for traffic calming devices as of September 2025.

Mr. Tisdale said they had about \$95,000 left out of a budget of \$140,000.

On a motion by Mayor Cogswell, seconded by Councilmember Gregg, the Committee voted unanimously to approve traffic calming for Grand Bay Lane and Timberline Drive on Johns Island.

Approval of Code Enforcement Officer - Ms. Eliza Story

Mr. Mathis said the committee's approval was needed for Ms. Story to become a Code Enforcement Officer.

On a motion by Mayor Cogswell, seconded by Councilmember Gregg, the Committee voted unanimously to approve Ms. Story as a Code Enforcement Officer.

Financial Participation Agreement with the SCDOT for the Morrison Drive Median Safety Project

Mr. Somerville said that the DOT was working on a median project on Morrison Drive. It will be the City's responsibility to handle the landscaping, irrigation, and median drainage installation. The \$245,680 will cover the difference.

Chair Seekings asked if this had been budgeted for.

Mr. Somerville said yes.

On a motion by Mayor Cogswell, seconded by Councilmember Gregg, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the Financial Participation Agreement between the SCDOT and the City for \$245,680 for completion of the Morrison Drive Median Safety Project.

Councilmember Gregorie asked (inaudible)

Mr. Somerville said Mr. Kronsberg and his staff reviewed all the planning for the island.

Director's Update

Mr. Mathis said that they are working internally and wanted to share information regarding a request from the last meeting. For Maybank Highway at Riverland Drive, they contacted the SCDOT to discuss potential low-cost improvements at that intersection and are awaiting a response. They also have updates about the pedicabs and bids. The pre-qualifying inspections were completed the week of August 25th, and all four companies met the requirements. The next step is to coordinate with their Legal and Procurement Departments to proceed with those requests. They discussed traffic and transportation improvements, including how to enhance efficiency along corridors using timing signals. Currently, signal timing projects are underway. This year's budget approved studies of Maybank Highway, Folly Road, Harborview Road, and the Herbert Field and Connector, or the SE61 Connector. These projects are ongoing and are

expected to be completed soon, with a report to the committee scheduled for later this year. Another project set to start this fall is the Clemens Ferry Road project, which is included in the budget. They completed signal retiming on Daniel Island. The CHATS has funded an ongoing signal timing improvement project for the Charleston Peninsula.

Chair Seekings asked whether they were retiming or studying it.

Mr. Mathis said part of it was being studied, part of it was being reviewed, and part of it was changing the timing. They would also be taking into consideration all ped phases, which would be part of this, and construction would come later.

Chair Seekings asked if the first ped phase would be Calhoun by the medical university.

Mr. Mathis said yes, which would be implemented first. There were six other locations that would be across the peninsula. The total amount for that signal improvement was \$610,000, which the City would not have to pay for. As part of the CHAT's Carbon Reduction Program, they had future signal timing projects coming to West Ashley, which would cover all of West Ashley and should be completed by 2027. They received approval from the SCDDOT to be the local public agency administrator, so they would be managing those projects in-house.

With there being no further business, the Committee adjourned the meeting at 4:06 p.m.

Clerk of Council's Office

Donna Constance