

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

November 12, 2025

A meeting of the Traffic and Transportation Committee was held on this date, beginning at 3:35 p.m. in person in the Council Chambers at 80 Broad Street and over Zoom.

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

Also Present: Michael Mathis, Robert Somerville, Elizabeth Dieck, Deja Knight-McMillan, Magalie Creech, Melissa Cruthirds, Councilmember Tinkler, Councilmember Appel, Julia Copeland, Councilmember Mitchell, Hampton Logan, Jason Kronsberg, Councilmember Parker, Philip Clapper, Katie Dahleim, Trace Whetsell, and Donna Constance

Chair Seekings called the meeting to order

Invocation

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

Approval of the October 28, 2025, meeting minutes

On a motion by Councilmember Gregorie, seconded by Mayor Cogswell, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the October 28, 2025, Traffic and Transportation meeting minutes.

Discussion Regarding City of Charleston Transportation Priorities for Potential Future Transportation Sales Tax Referendum

Mayor Cogswell said they wanted to discuss the priorities for downtown and West Ashley for the December 1st submission to Charleston County. Input from all municipalities would be considered, along with other analyses and public input. They needed to prioritize and stay within the \$2 billion budget to avoid diverting funds from other municipalities or areas. They were also required to analyze and examine the current entitlements where growth was occurring. The priority list for West Ashley included US 17 for specific widening, drainage, and other improvements. Projects such as the Glenn McConnell at the Magwood Intersection, partial raising of Ashley River Road, and other enhancements were considered. Greenbelt projects, public transportation, bike and pedestrian facilities, paving, and sidewalks were also on the list. The initial plan for Glenn McConnell at the Magwood Intersection was a flyover, but they may have identified alternative solutions based on discussions from their last meeting. Projects in Downtown included improvements on Lockwood Drive and Hagood, as well as upgrades for East Bay, Concord, Morrison Drive, and Huger Street. They recommended reallocating the Huger Street improvements more toward a bike and pedestrian-focused corridor to enhance bike-ped friendliness, allowing more attention to be given to Calhoun Street.

Councilmember Gregorie emphasized the importance of adding Calhoun Street.

Chair Seekings mentioned in their previous discussions that Calhoun Street should be included on the list.

Mayor Cogswell said Huger Street would still be included in this plan and would be shifted from a road project to a bike-pedestrian improvement.

Councilmember Mitchell said Calhoun Street was important, but they also needed to include Morrison Drive, East Bay Street, and Huger Street so that the corridor aligned with everything else.

Mayor Cogswell said they would move forward with the general language for the road projects on West Ashley, which would focus on bike-ped improvements and potential beautification.

Councilmember Mitchell asked if, since they were not abandoning the Huger Street improvements, they planned to widen the road or if that option was no longer considered.

Mayor Cogswell stated that this would extend from Meeting Street to the Citadel to connect everything.

Councilmember Mitchell said that, since a pump station, a school, and traffic would be present, they wanted to ensure the corridor aligned with all these elements.

Chair Seekings emphasized the importance of this issue because the public was paying attention and thinking about it. They will ultimately vote on it from all parts of the City and County. People had inquired about paving. The reason for the half-cent sales tax is that it will apply across all parts of the City and County, since the City does not handle paving. Instead, they partner with the County and the State, which manage the paving of roads they own. He asked if anyone could explain how the half-cent sales tax funds would be allocated to paving projects, enabling the completion of paving. They plan to work with the County, which sets the schedule for these paving projects. That's why people need to understand that when paving occurs, it is not the City doing it; it is the County and the State.

Mr. Adams said that the funding came from the first half-cent sales tax, which provided \$4 million annually, and approximately \$6 million was from the CTC. This funding was then allocated through their pavement management system, which covered State, City, and County roads. They did not consider jurisdiction or criteria; it was based solely on structural deficiencies.

Chair Seekings emphasized that residents in the city who are concerned about the road conditions should support the half-cent sales tax, which is vital at the County level for paving existing roads.

Mayor Cogswell said they want to prioritize locking down the West Ashley and downtown roads.

Councilmember Gregorie asked for clarification when they mentioned Lockwood Drive; it referred to the entire Lockwood Drive.

Mayor Cogswell said yes.

Councilmember Parker said they had a presentation at the James Island Intergovernmental on the paving process carried out by the County. Funding was crucial because the more funding they received for those programs, the more roads the County could pave.

Mayor Cogswell said most of the paving funding came from the State, which used a specific formula to allocate road paving funds. An important factor was the quality of the asphalt. Due to the transportation sales tax and efforts made by the County, along with their work, their asphalt quality was relatively good compared to other districts for the DOT because they used their own money to help pay for it. Other areas didn't have this advantage because they didn't have the half-cent sales taxes. One of the initiatives they were working on simultaneously, and the response from the State legislature, was to modify their funding mechanism so they wouldn't be penalized.

Councilmember Gregorie mentioned that after the paving was completed, flooding occurred. He observed that something had happened following the paving that led to water collecting in areas that had never flooded before. He was unsure whether any quality checks were performed to prevent this from happening.

Chair Seekings said quality control was definitely part of it.

Mayor Cogswell said he wanted the committee to start considering greenbelt, public transportation, paving, sidewalks, and the bike-ped initiative. They needed to determine their priorities and how to protect the urban growth boundary. They aimed to increase public access to water and fully establish the greenbelt around the city, not just the peninsula. They met with local advocacy groups, who organized and outlined their priorities. This would be a great opportunity to ask constituents about their priorities and areas they'd like to see protected. It would encourage people to think about potential opportunities and help develop a solid plan. This was especially important with the ARC Bridge and the investments made there, to figure out how they could integrate bike-ped infrastructure as much as possible.

Councilmember Gregorie said they believed they had established a comprehensive bike-ped trail, involving not just the City but extending to other jurisdictions.

Mayor Cogswell said there might be several plans, but they were discussing specific funding sources for those priorities.

Chair Seekings said that they have completed various planning efforts, including the People Pedal Plan, and they are currently building infrastructure for the bike-ped bridge across the Ashley. Many advocates across the city believe that a better north bridge depends on improving the crossing, whether by foot or bike. There are numerous areas where funds will be allocated for bike-ped projects.

Mayor Cogswell said they could compile a list of tasks, but funding was limited. They wanted to unite as a community, not just a council, but a broader community to identify the top priorities and ensure they were completed on schedule.

Councilmember Brady said the Sanders Road sidewalk connection as an example. It linked Halfshell Lane to the school district property with C. Williams, but it was discontinuous along that road, which connects to Bees Ferry. Extending the entire Sanders Road corridor to the Bees Ferry sidewalk would link many neighborhoods that previously were difficult to navigate on foot.

Councilmember Parker said that having sidewalks on James Island was a big deal because of the multiple jurisdictions. This was a perfect chance to unite voters around this issue, as closing the multi-jurisdictional gaps was a top priority.

Chair Seekings said that for those living in the city, there were three ways to become popular: build, fix a sidewalk, and pave a road. As they discussed the half-cent sales tax and focused on projects that people could see quickly, they benefited from it. The elected officials received more calls about fixing potholes, paving roads, and building sidewalks than about constructing highways, which was for the SCDOT to do, and their job was this, and this was the money that they put into it to get it done. For those who were interested in this, they needed the resources to do it. Without those resources to do it, they would be walking on sidewalks with cracks in them and driving on a road with potholes.

Mayor Cogswell emphasized that they pointed out the paving and roads to ensure citizens and the community understood how important this effort was. This was the primary source of funding for all these projects. If this did not pass, they would be moving from a deep hole to an unsustainable one. They owed it to their constituents to be organized, thoughtful, and attentive to their input. This was crucial for the future of their city and the region.

Councilmember Gregorie said they currently have 230 to 250 requests, which were rated and ranked based on the criteria established for connectivity. His top five may not meet the selection criteria because there was already a criterion for deciding who gets the sidewalks and who does not.

Mayor Cogswell said they would send him a list to see if his top five were included. There may be items that did not meet the criteria, but they could review those and understand what a priority for those constituents was and why it did not fit the criteria.

Councilmember Gregorie said that 230 were already ranked based on his review for funding priority.

Mayor Cogswell said they were, but this was more for the future and for perspective. Since funds were limited, everyone agreed that more sidewalks, additional improvements, and existing sidewalk repairs were needed, and this was to add to an organized list of those needs.

Chair Seekings said they did not talk about that part of the fact that the half-cent sales tax would also be for transit. This would be money that was allocated to an agency to build and administer transit. This would also allow for the use and expansion of transit in the region. The ridership on the regional transportation authority in Charleston County was up 30% in the last year.

Mayor Cogswell said if there were any ideas they had for public transportation routes, that was something that they could organize with and pass on to the County and CARTA.

With there being no further business, the Committee adjourned the meeting at 4:14 p.m.

Clerk of Council's Office

Donna Constance