Developing a Mega Transportation Project For the Region’s Future Travel Demand
Two Projects under development along the exiting I-526 Corridor:

**West:** Paul Cantrell to Virginia Ave, includes reconstruction of the I-26 and I-526 System to System Interchange
ENVIROMENTAL PHASE of WORK

**East:** Virginia Ave to US 17 in Mount Pleasant
PLANNING PHASE of WORK
Transportation Project Planning
How did the I-526 Corridor become a project?

• I-526 identified as one of SC’s most congested interstate routes in long range transportation plan

• I-526 Corridor Planning Study initiated in 2013
Regional Challenges – Rapid Growth

- 12th Fastest Growing Metro Area in the US
- 80% single occupancy vehicles
- Widening alone will not fully meet the region’s rapidly increasing traffic demand
Preliminary Modal Strategies Implemented

- Bus Rapid Transit
- Park & Ride Facilities
- Vanpool / Carpool Incentives
- Managed Lanes Study
- Transit Reliability

Changing the way commuters think about mobility options....
Establishing a REGIONALLY accepted approach for managing congestion that meets state and local needs.
How does the ICMP fit within the Transportation Planning Process?
Begin with the End in mind…. 

✓ Ensure that the **RIGHT** investments are made for the best **VALUE**

✓ Ensure that these improvements allow future congestion management options for the region
Project Delivery Plans
I-526 Lowcountry Corridor West

Project Termini

Virginia Avenue
North Charleston

Paul Cantrell Boulevard
West Ashley
Project Purpose: What is the reason for this project?

- Increase Capacity
- and
- Improve Operations

at the I-26/I-526 interchange and
along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard
Project Need: Why?

I-526 is one of South Carolina's most congested interstate segments

#2: 2035 CHATS LRTP
#6: SCDOT Interstate Capacity List
Top 20 most congested interstate segments (SCDOT 2014 Multimodal Transportation Plan)

Congestion
Project Development Process

We are Here

THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS FOR HIGHWAYS

This graphic demonstrates the general project development process for planning and building highways.

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**Project Planning**
Identify purpose and need for project

**Collect Data**
Conduct surveys and environmental studies

**Develop Conceptual Road Improvement Alternatives**

**Public Meeting**
Public input on conceptual alternatives

**Analyze Alternatives**
and select preferred alternative that balances transportation benefits while minimizing impacts

**Public Hearing**
Seek input on Preferred Alternative and Proposed Right of Way Impacts

**Refine Alternative**
Address public concerns and minimize impact

**Finalize Environmental**
Document and secure NEPA approval from FHWA

**Finalize Methods**
To mitigate community and environmental impacts

**If Design Build Project Delivery is selected:**
Award Project to contractor

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**Final Design, ROW, and Environmental Permitting**

**Right of Way (ROW)**
Preliminary contact with landowner and occupants by ROW agent for properties requiring new ROW acquisition

**Real Estate Appraisal**
of properties requiring new rights of way

**ROW Agent** makes a written offer and provides Relocation Benefits Package to Displaced

**Relocation Assistance**

**Negotiations and Settlement**

**Project Construction**
- If Design Build delivery construction activities can overlap with ROW & Final Design.
- If traditional Design Build, construction will not begin until ROW & Final Design is complete.
Where have we been?

2016
- Environmental Studies
- Crash Analysis
- Growth Studies
- Design Criteria
- Geometric Deficiencies
- Peak Hour Travel Studies

2017
- Traffic Modeling
- Managed Lanes Study
- Interchange & Mainline Alternative Studies
- Cost & Schedule Risk Analysis

2018
- Priorities Established
- Preliminary Relocation Impact Study
- Interchange Concepts
- NEPA Coordination for elevation to EIS
Where are we going?

2019
- Develop & Analyze Alternatives
- Community & Stakeholder Meetings
- Public Input on Alternatives
- Begin Developing Preferred Alternatives

2020
- Refine Preferred Alternatives
- Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
- Community & Stakeholder Meetings
- Environmental Permit Application

2021
- Public Hearing
- Revise Preferred Alternative
- Finalize EIS
- FHWA Record of Decision & USACE Permit Decision
What did the updated traffic studies tell us?

✓ I-526 & I-26 Interchange is the major source of operational issues on the Corridor

✓ Mainline capacity is inadequate and additional travel lanes are needed

✓ Some of the closely spaced interchanges require ramp modifications in order to improve operations
Reasonable Range of Alternatives
Finding Solutions that meet Purpose & Need

Alternative #1

• **Semi-Directional** System to System Interchange with CD system (Virginia to Montague)

Alternative #2

• **Turbine** System to System Interchange with CD system (Virginia to Montague)

Alternative #3 – **NO BUILD**

Mainline Typical Section includes 8 lanes with 12 foot inside and outside shoulders
Will there be Managed Lanes on I-526?

- Corridor Study included a regional managed lane feasibility study
- Critical corridor for viability is on I-26 between University Blvd to I-526
- Proposed typical section would not preclude addition of managed lane in the future
Future Corridor Operations Alternatives

- Active Traffic Management
- Hard Shoulder Running during Peak Times
- Restriped HOT/HOV lane
- Bus on Shoulder
How are improvement alternatives analyzed to find BALANCE of Purpose & Impacts?

- Initial Interstate Corridors
- Purpose & Need Screening
- Reasonable Alternatives
- General Impact Evaluation
- Alternatives Carried Forward
- Alternatives Analysis
- Preferred Alternative

Alternatives eliminated with each step in the process

Public input considered throughout the process
Preliminary Impact Analysis
Identification of Project Challenges

Rights of Way
Replacement Housing Inventory
Affordable Housing for Tenants
Available Vacant Lots for Sale
Relocation Options in Community
Environmental Justice Impacts
✓ Identified scale of potential ROW impacts
✓ Types of housing impacted
✓ Investigated availability of replacement housing in the community
✓ Recommended strategies to mitigate for challenges & potential opportunities
### Significant Environmental Justice Community Impacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Right of Way RELOCATION IMPACTS</th>
<th>I-526 WEST Project EJ Impacts</th>
<th>I-526 WEST Project TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apartment Units (16 Buildings/Duplexes)</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>68-90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Family Homes / Mobile Homes</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>48-67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks / Community Centers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td><strong>114</strong></td>
<td><strong>159</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant Residential Parcels</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
- **Russelldale Community**
- **Liberty Park Community**
- **Highland Terrace Community**
Environmental Justice is the **fair treatment** and **meaningful involvement** of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the transportation decision making process.

*Executive Order (EO) 12898*
Fair treatment means that no group of people should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, governmental and commercial operations or policies.

**What does Fair Treatment look like?**

**Equality**

The assumption is that everyone benefits from the same supports. This is equal treatment.

**Equity**

Everyone gets the supports they need (this is the concept of “affirmative action”), thus producing equity.

**Justice**

All 3 can see the game without supports or accommodations because the cause(s) of the inequity was addressed. The systemic barrier has been removed.
Meaningful involvement is created when decision makers seek out and facilitate the involvement of potentially affected communities so they can participate in the process, help identify community concerns, and influence decisions about activities that may affect their environment and health.

What is Meaningful Involvement?

- Transportation to Meetings
- Long Work Hours / Multiple Jobs
- Childcare & Family Commitments

Barriers to public participation in low income community
Disproportionate impacts refer to situations of concern on a project where there exists significantly higher and more adverse health and environmental impacts on minority populations and/or low income populations.

What are disproportionate impacts?

Air quality risk
These communities are more likely to be near higher levels of air pollution.

- Statewide average: 32% are above risk guidelines
- Low-income communities: 46% are above risk guidelines
- Communities of color and indigenous communities: 91% are above risk guidelines
Environmental Justice Evaluation Process

Environmental Justice Outreach Plan

Community Impacts Assessment
Community Advisory Council

Environmental Justice Mitigation Plan
Environmental Justice Outreach Plan

✓ Be Accessible
✓ Small Group Meetings
✓ Meet on Your Schedule
✓ Walkable Office Location
✓ Community Liaisons
✓ ROW Specialists
✓ Hotline to reach team
✓ Facilitate Council Meetings
✓ Access to Subject Matter Experts

We appreciate your input and feedback!
Next Steps: Community Impact Studies
Mitigation Agreements must be in place by Fall 2020

Ultimate Goal: Win-Win Community Mitigation Plan

- Identify **Opportunities** to Partner with local organizations
- Early ROW Program
- Organize **Community Advisory Council**
- Community members drive the decision making process on mitigation

*Mitigation Agreements must be in place by Fall 2020*
How do we approach disproportionate impacts?

AVOID  MINIMIZE  MITIGATE
Mitigation Strategies Under Development

- Develop a Construction Program for Replacement Housing in Community
- Early ROW phase to identify or create Section 8 Housing Rental Units
- Community Project Office
- Community Outreach Specialists
NEPA – Environmental Impact Statement Process

November 2019
NEPA: One Federal Decision

Goals:

✓ Completion of all NEPA and Permitting within 2 years
✓ Active communication between agencies
✓ Concurrent reviews
✓ Development of a permitting timetable
✓ A commitment to the process and improvements of the process
Upcoming Community Involvement

Community Meetings
Small groups in potentially affected communities
Early November

Public Information Meeting
Larger Meeting; Drop-in, informal style; Project team available to answer questions & hear concerns
Nov 21, 2019 | 11am-7pm
Charleston Area Convention Center

Virtual Meeting
Unable to attend in person? Join us online.
Nov 21 - Dec 21, 2019
526lowcountrycorridor.com
I-526 Lowcountry Corridor

Project Termini

Virginia Avenue
North Charleston

Bowman Road
Mount Pleasant
NEPA Update

Environmental Assessment (EA)

Planning & Environmental Linkages Study (PEL)
Planning & Environment Linkages (PEL) Study

- Combines Planning, Engineering & NEPA
- Minimizes duplication of efforts
- Meaningful public engagement
- Reduces delays in project delivery

Initiate in **Summer 2019**
Draft PEL Study Document in **Summer 2021**
New Website, Branding, Tools

- Both projects in one place
- Descriptions, timelines, FAQs, etc.
- New interactive resource maps and storyboards
- Educational Videos

www.526LowcountryCorridor.org
A Combined Public Involvement Effort

We value your input!

Public Information Meetings
Virtual Meetings

526Corridor
@526Corridor

Pop-up Community Meetings
Stakeholder Meetings

www.526lowcountrycorridor.com
Newsletters
Questions & Suggestions

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