



**The Town of Hilton Head Island
U.S. 278 Gateway Corridor Committee
January 29, 2020, 3:00 p.m.
BENJAMIN M. RACUSIN COUNCIL CHAMBERS
AGENDA**

**As a courtesy to others please turn off/silence ALL mobile devices during the Meeting.
Thank You.**

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. FOIA Compliance** - Public notification of this meeting has been published, posted, and distributed in compliance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act and the requirements of the Town of Hilton Head Island.
- 3. Approval of Minutes** – January 22, 2020 Meeting
- 4. Discussion by Committee of Revised Committee Recommendation Document**
- 5. Discussion by Committee of Revisions to Mitigation Ideas Document**
- 6. Discussion by Committee of Aesthetics Recommendation Document**
- 7. Discussion by Committee of Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Recommendation Document**
- 8. Chairman's Comments**
- 9. Public Comment**
- 10. Adjournment**



Town of Hilton Head Island
U.S. 278 Gateway Corridor Committee
Wednesday, January 22, 2020 at 3:00 p.m.
Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers
MEETING MINUTES

Present From the Committee: David Johnson, Jr., *Chairman*; Sarah Stewart, *Co-Chair*; Frank Babel, Alex Brown, Tom Crews, Jerry Cutrer, Craig Forrest, David Lunka, Tom Peeples, Brendan Reilley, Kyle Theodore, *Members*; Larry McElynn, *Beaufort County Liaison*

Absent from Committee: Hannah Horne, John Taylor *Members*; Marc Grant, *Hilton Head Island Liaison*; Dan Wood, *Bluffton Liaison*;

Present from Town Council & Town Staff: Tom Lennox, Glenn Stanford, Tamara Becker, *Town Council*; Charles Cousins, *Assistant to the Town Manager*; Shawn Colin, *Director of Community Development*; Anne Cyran, *Senior Planner*; Sheryse DuBose, *Historic Neighborhoods Preservation Administrator*; Krista Wiedmeyer, *Exec. Assistant/Town Clerk*

1. Call to Order

Chairman Johnson called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

2. **FOIA Compliance** – Public notification of this meeting has been published, posted, and mailed in compliance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act and the Town of Hilton Head Island requirements.

3. Approval of Minutes – January 16, 2019

Mr. Crews moved to approve. Mr. Peeples seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved as written.

4. Discussion by Committee of Mitigation Ideas

Chairman Johnson reviewed the timeline for submitting a recommendation. He noted that one of the areas that the committee had been tasked with as part of the charter was to review and recommend ways to mitigate the project. Chairman Johnson stated that mitigation includes the entire corridor, environmental mitigation as well as land mitigation. He then opened the discussion up to Mr. Brown and Mr. Cutrer who discussed recommendations for mitigation to the impacted property owners on Hilton Head Island. Both reviewed the five recommended objectives within the submitted draft memo.

The committee as a whole discussed many of the items referenced in the draft memo, a primary discussion referencing the informing of the property owners, and how this will be administered. Mr. Cousins reported that the SCDOT is planning to schedule meetings with the property and business owners. Mr. Cousins confirmed that a list will be provided to the SCDOT from the Town with the names of the potentially affected areas.

Discussion was had about the funding source for any potential mitigation, and whether or not it would be coming out of the project fund or elsewhere. There was also discussion about timing for the mitigation efforts and if updated language needed to be included in the recommendation.

5. Discussion by Committee of the Next Steps towards Recommendation

Chairman Johnson stated that the committee had completed the review of the causeways, bridges, Pinckney, Jenkins, and Hilton Head Islands. He asked the committee if after the discussion of mitigation, if there was any further comments or updates to be made related to the Stoney Community area. With no further discussion or changes related to the Stoney Community, the committee went on to review the recommendations as they related corridor-wide. The committee reviewed all eleven items noted in the draft recommendation document. Making changes to items related to the signals/intersections, working with the Town and County related to the aesthetics, design, and the like. Changes were made to the items related to the impacts to residences and business during the construction phase, addressing emergency situations by creating roadway redundancy; and working with the Town and other agencies to develop a regional transportation plan. Lastly, changes were made/discussed with regards to traffic calming techniques. This included language related to intelligent transportation systems technology throughout the corridor. Chairman Johnson tabled any further discussion related to the finalization of the recommendation document.

6. Chairman's Comments

Chairman Johnson again reiterated the timing for submitting a recommendation to Council for review and consideration.

7. Public Comment

Chairman Johnson opened the discussion to questions and comments from the general public. The public at large addressed the committee, making statements as they related to their concerns of the project as a whole.

8. Adjournment – The meeting concluded and was adjourned at 5:04 p.m.

Submitted by: Krista Wiedmeyer, Exec. Assistant/Town Clerk

Approved: 01/29/2019

DRAFT

Causeways

There are three causeways within the corridor that serve as important links between the mainland and bridges and between islands to the east of Skull Creek. Due to the nature of these causeways (construction and elevation) the committee has a concern that significant storm events could result in damage or breaches of these structures. These structures should be engineered to reduce the potential of damage which could result in limited or loss of vehicular access to Hilton Head Island, Jenkins Island and Hog Island.

Bridges

All bridges should have a similar useful life post project.

Pinckney Island

Eliminate all left turns on Pinckney Island. Maintain the water oriented access, and preservation of the environment, minimizing impact to the wildlife and any historical landmarks throughout.

Jenkins Island

Improve safety on Jenkins Island, by eliminating left turn movements on 278 and maintain adequate access to all adjacent parcels.

Stoney

Mitigate impacts of route choice to property owners and businesses by considering frontage roads for improved access and opportunities for relocation of homes and business if the owner chooses. The use of Town owned property should be considered to accomplish this.

Provide for efficient traffic flow on/off the Cross Island

Consideration should be given to access improvement that will enhance the opportunity for economic development in Stoney. {mixed use}

Corridor-wide

1. Signals/intersections should be designed/programmed according to best practices, so they do not create backups on US 278 while at the same time providing adequate opportunities for traffic on side streets to enter/exit the highway.
2. Include intelligent transportation systems technology throughout the corridor.
3. Impact to the environment should be minimized and any mitigation should be met locally.
4. Work with the Town and the County to address aesthetics that reinforce the character of the community. This includes the user's transitional experience from the mainland to the islands, including but not limited to; bridge design, gateway improvements, and corridor landscaping.
5. Minimize the impacts to residences, businesses and traffic during construction phase – phasing of construction should consider seasonal needs.
6. Create roadway redundancy to address emergencies.
7. Enhance roadway's ability to meet community's needs resulting from natural disasters; including improving the causeways to address storm water events.
8. Provide safe pedestrian and bicycle facilities throughout the corridor as well as provide for safe crossings at strategic locations. Also provide connections to existing bike/ped facilities on each end of the corridor.
9. Work with the Town of Hilton Head and other governments in the region to plan for alternative transportation options – existing and future multi-modal needs, park and ride, etc.
10. Mitigate noise impacts.
11. Minimize visual impact of any expansion of lanes in the entire corridor {Take advantage of Town owned property on the north side of US 278 on Jenkins Island to create a major vegetative buffer between the eastbound and west bound lanes.??}

U.S.278 Gateway Corridor Committee

Framework for Aesthetics

We have been tasked with developing a framework of design issues and guiding principles that highlight the most important aspects of the completed corridor.

A primary aesthetic focus of the corridor should be creation of a sequence of experiences moving from the Mainland to the Islands. The visual and transitional experiences should create a Gateway; and the Island's "Blend with Nature" design standards should apply to all physical improvements that are constructed by SCDOT.

As a point of reference, the Town's Design Guide should be applied in determining appropriate bridge/roadway design; landscaping and tree protection; community character; materials and colors; lighting; signage; introduction of new bike and pedestrian paths, etc. Other characteristics that are not part of the specific road and road right-of-way design should acknowledge and celebrate the Communities' identity (i.e. Pinckney Island as a natural preserve area; Hog Island and Jenkins Island as distinct but connected components of the island hop from the mainland; and cultural/historical recognition of the Stoney Neighborhood).

As SCDOT provides options we suggest that the Corridor should be viewed as a canvas to be painted upon. All options should be reviewed for compatibility with this design philosophy.

Guiding Principles:

Bridge/Roadway Design:

- Understated
- Nature Blending
- Allows vista views from vehicles
- Utilizes "do no harm" approach to storm drainage
- Utilizes native materials & colors

Landscaping:

- Retains existing vegetation, whenever possible
- Includes replacement canopy trees
- Favors indigenous/native materials

Lighting:

- Utilizes low impact light sources (i.e. foot candles/color temp)
- Utilizes low profile fixtures (height)
- Limited to intersections and on pedestrian/bicycle pathways

Signage:

- Limited signage in the corridor
- Utilizes a unified package to minimize visual clutter & distractions

Community Design:

- Recognizes significance of Native Islander community
- Provides safe movement of pedestrians & cyclists within the corridor
- Provides a natural approach to noise abatement

US 278 Gateway Corridor Committee Recommendations for Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

Introduction:

The US 278 Corridor serves a vital role for Hilton Head as it is the only vehicular access between Hilton Head Island, Jenkins Island, Hog Island, Pinckney Island and the mainland. While this important link for motorized vehicles has been established since 1956, little consideration has been given to providing a similar link for both pedestrians and bicycles. The Town of Hilton Head Island began constructing a pathway network in the early 1990s with its initial emphasis being along the on-island route of US 278. Since then, bicycling has become an important island transportation element and amenity with significant growth anticipated on the mainland. This bicycle/pedestrian network on US 278 currently ends at the US 278/Gumtree Road intersection. A narrow sidewalk immediately adjacent to the highway extends from that point towards the bridges but ends at the western edge of the Stoney Community. On the mainland, a series of pathways and bicycle lanes have been created by the Town of Bluffton and Beaufort County to link many areas in Southern Beaufort County. However there is a gap in the two networks from the Buckingham Landing Rd./ Bluffton Parkway intersection to US 278 on the mainland to the US 278/Gumtree intersection on Hilton Head Island. The current planning process by SCDOT to address deficiencies in the US 278 Corridor between these two points offers a tremendous opportunity to eliminate this gap and take a much needed step in the creation of a safe, integrated roadway and pathway system connecting all potential corridor users throughout the jurisdiction of Southern Beaufort County. While SCDOT has stated that the replacement of the bridges over MacKay and Skull Creek will include pedestrian and bicycle facilities, the following recommendations should be included by SCDOT when addressing the existing network gap.

Recommendations:

- All efforts should be made to insure that SCDOT's planned pedestrian and bicycle improvements link the two existing networks at the terminus of the Bluffton Parkway pathways at Buckingham Landing Rd. to US 278/Moss Creek and US 278/Gumtree with a pathway system that is physically separated from the vehicular travel lanes. Further these improvements should provide a safe connection to all properties along the corridor.
- The pathway facilities should provide all users with a good experience by:
 - All improvements should be attractive and blend in with the architecture of the bridge and any other aesthetic considerations included in the corridor.
 - Physical barriers should be included on the bridge to separate vehicles from the pathway.
 - A trail head for bridge users with parking should be included on both Jenkins and Pinkney Islands.
 - Safety features should be included such as :
 - barriers on the water side of the bridge pathway,
 - directional signage,
 - pavement markings on the pathway bridge to separate pedestrians from bicycles,
 - The pathway on the bridge will offer excellent views. Provisions should be made so pathway users can stop and enjoy the views without blocking the pathway.
 - Educational signage should be included along the route.
 - Lighting meeting the International Dark-Sky Association standards should be considered.
- The existing sidewalk in the corridor should be eliminated and any sections of US 278 with raised curbing should be replaced with a 5 foot paved where practical, taking into account balancing the needs of property owners in the needed additional right of way. The addition of this shoulder is to accommodate on road active cyclists and e-bikes.