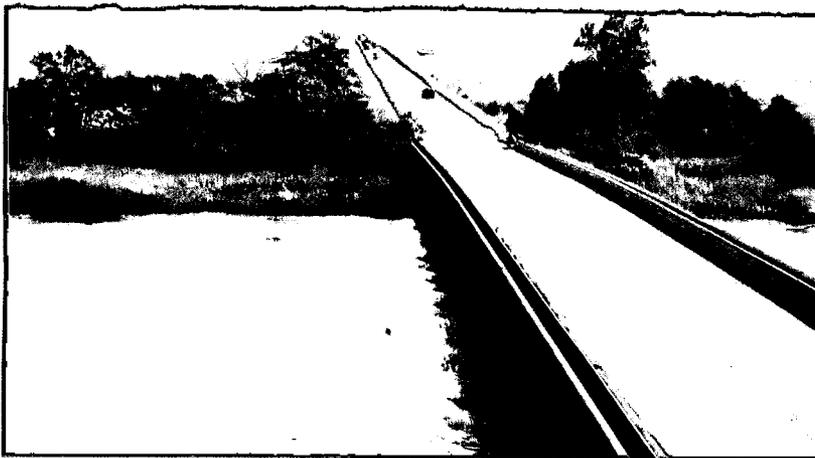


Application to the
**South Carolina State
Transportation Infrastructure Bank**

For the
**US 17 Widening
From Gardens Corner to Jacksonboro
Beaufort and Colleton Counties**



October 2005

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South Carolina
Department of Transportation

October 10, 2005

The Honorable Donald D. Leonard
Chairman, State Infrastructure Bank
955 Park Street, Room
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Mr. Leonard:

On behalf of the South Carolina Department of Transportation, Beaufort County, Colleton County and the Lowcountry Council of Governments, we respectfully submit a loan application for the widening of US Route 17 to the South Carolina Transportation Infrastructure Bank.

The widening of US Route 17 between Jacksonboro and Gardens Corner is a vital safety project for the South Carolina Department of Transportation, Beaufort County, Colleton County, and the Lowcountry Council of Governments. After much hard work, we are proud that the project is now ready to move forward, upon funding being secured.

With the recent attention and the continuous carnage on this stretch of highway, we request that your committee give expedient consideration for approving this application for funding. As we understand previous applications that received favorable consideration from the Bank Board provided a local match or other funding sources. Our application for US Route 17 provides a **48%** match, which is greater than many of the previously approved applications.

Also attached is the completed environmental assessment, which will provide the committee with additional information regarding this project.

We request that our group have an opportunity to make a presentation before your committee at the earliest possible date. We would be honored to host the Bank Board meeting in Walterboro or Beaufort County.

If you have any questions regarding the application, please contact Keith Bishop, the Chief Financial Officer for SCDOT at 803-737-1240.

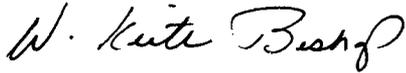


The Honorable Donald D. Leonard

-2-

October 10, 2005

Sincerely,



W. Keith Bishop, Deputy Director
South Carolina Department of Transportation



Ralph L. Tuten, Chairman
Lowcountry Council of Governments



Wm. Weston J. Newton, Chairman
Beaufort County Council



Steven D. Murdaugh, Chairman
Colleton County Council

Cc: SCDOT Commission
Tony Chapman
Keith Bishop
Wilson Elgin

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:

SCOPE

The ACE Basin Parkway (ABP) is located in two counties, Beaufort and Colleton. The ABP is on the National Highway System and is a primary component of the Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET) for defense preparedness. Additionally, the ABP is a rural arterial roadway that provides a convenient connection to I-95 and points south into Georgia and Florida. Because of this connection, the route attracts considerable truck and tourist traffic. In addition to the economic benefit to the trucking industry, the route also provides access to significant timber operations and services long distance trips across the lowcountry area.

In 1985, the SCDOT identified the need to improve the 22-mile, two-lane stretch of U.S. 17 through the ACE Basin National Estuarine Research Reserve from Gardens Corner to Jacksonboro to address the capacity needs of the corridor. Of the 211 miles of US 17 in South Carolina, 173 miles have been upgraded to a multi-lane highway (primarily 4 lanes separated by a grass median); the remaining 38 miles consist of two-lane roadway similar to the ABP. After difficulties in the environmental documentation process, the project was shelved. Some improvements were later implemented in the early 1990's to address arising safety concerns along the corridor; improvements included the addition of passing lanes at various locations along the ABP.

By the late 1990's, the ABP had become a significant concern of local politicians, residents, County officials, and the SCDOT due to the extraordinary accident statistics. This 22-mile segment of US 17 in Beaufort and Colleton counties is one of the most dangerous two-lane roads in South Carolina and was featured on national television as such (NBC Date Line Special: America's Most Dangerous Roads – May 15, 2005). The following data was collected on this segment during the period from 1997 to 2003:

“...the highest priority of this project is to improve the highway in an effort to end the unacceptable high rate of crashes, injuries and deaths that occur on these 22 miles of U.S. 17... Too many lives have been lost on this highway.”

Local Representative

- 895 total crashes
 - 58% of those crashes were vehicle-to-vehicle crashes
 - 38% of those crashes were rear-end accidents
 - 7.5% of those crashes were head-on collisions.
- 23% of all crashes were run-off-the-road (ROR) of which approximately one-third of the vehicles hit a roadside tree.
- Of the total crashes, approximately 2% resulted in fatalities with 23 persons killed, and 34% were injury accidents with 552 persons injured.

Compared with other sections of US 17 in the state, utilizing data between 1997 and 2003, the ABP has a death rate **233%** higher than its multi-lane, primarily 4-lane divided counterparts.

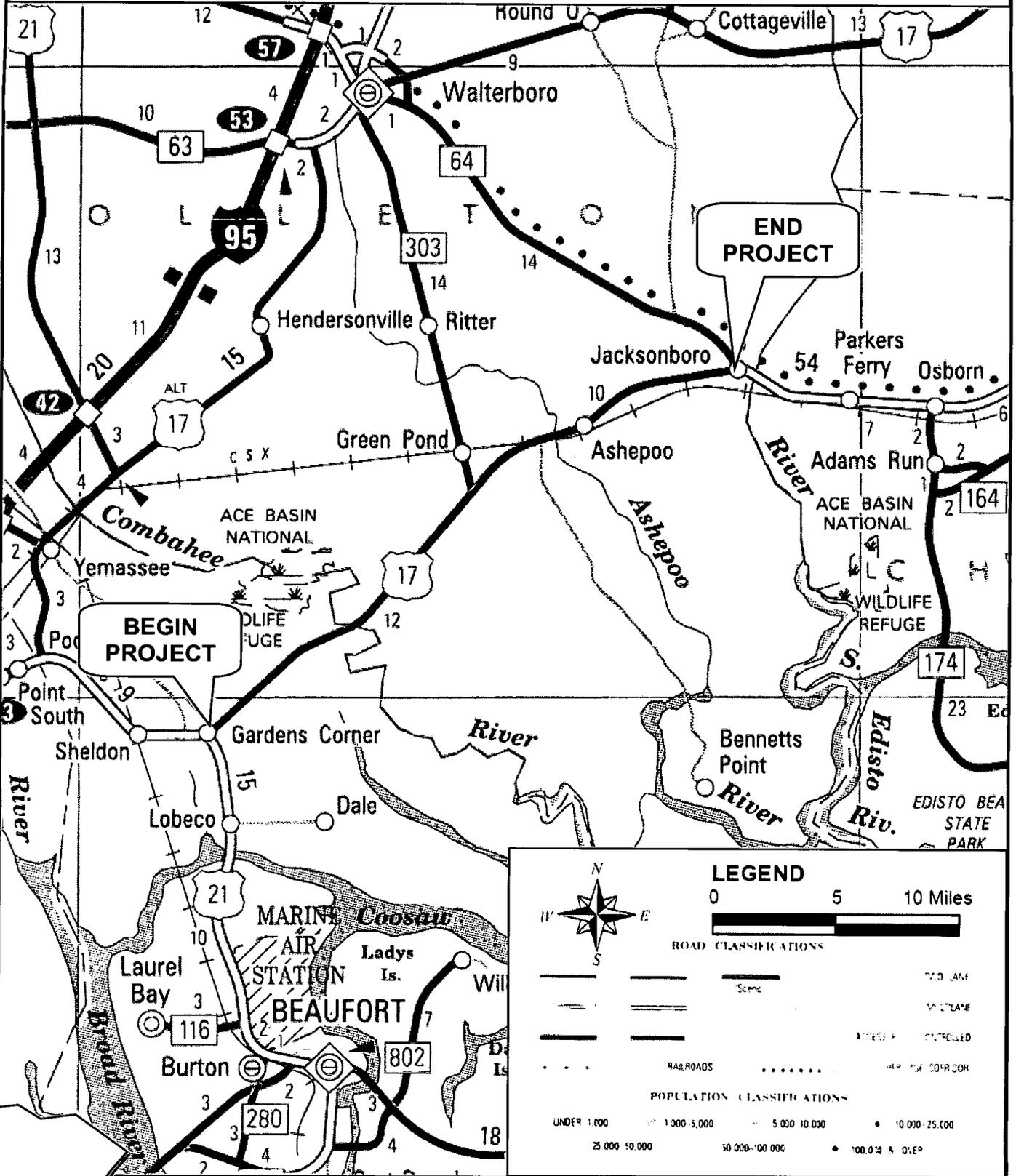
Continued safety concerns based on an extraordinary number of by accidents/ fatalities exacerbated by increased truck traffic (~18 % truck) have created an increased need to accelerate the implementation of additional safety improvements. The improvements to the ABP will provide adequate roadway geometrics to accommodate the increased traffic and upgrade bridges to current seismic codes.

INTENT

The intent of the ACE Basin Parkway project is to provide upgrades and improvements to the existing roadway through widening, improved alignments, upgrading geometric layout, implement current typical sections, and replace structurally deficient and obsolete bridges. Furthermore, the intent is also to minimize impacts to natural resources and preserve the aesthetic values of the ACE Basin corridor while implementing any improvements.

The project consists of three sections. Section 1, the first 5.5 mile segment, begins at Gardens Corner in Beaufort County, includes the interchange of U.S. 21 & U.S. 17 with two bridge structures, and terminates at the Combahee River (also the Colleton County line). Section 2, a 5.5-mile segment, begins at the Combahee River in Colleton County and terminates at S.C. 303 in Greenpond. Section 3, an 11-mile segment begins at S.C. 303 in Colleton County, includes bridges across the Ashepoo River/CSX Railway/Tupelo Swamp, and terminates at S.C. 64 in Jacksonboro. The maps included in the application focus on the limits of the U.S. 17 improvements.

Regional Map US 17 Improvements



BEGIN PROJECT

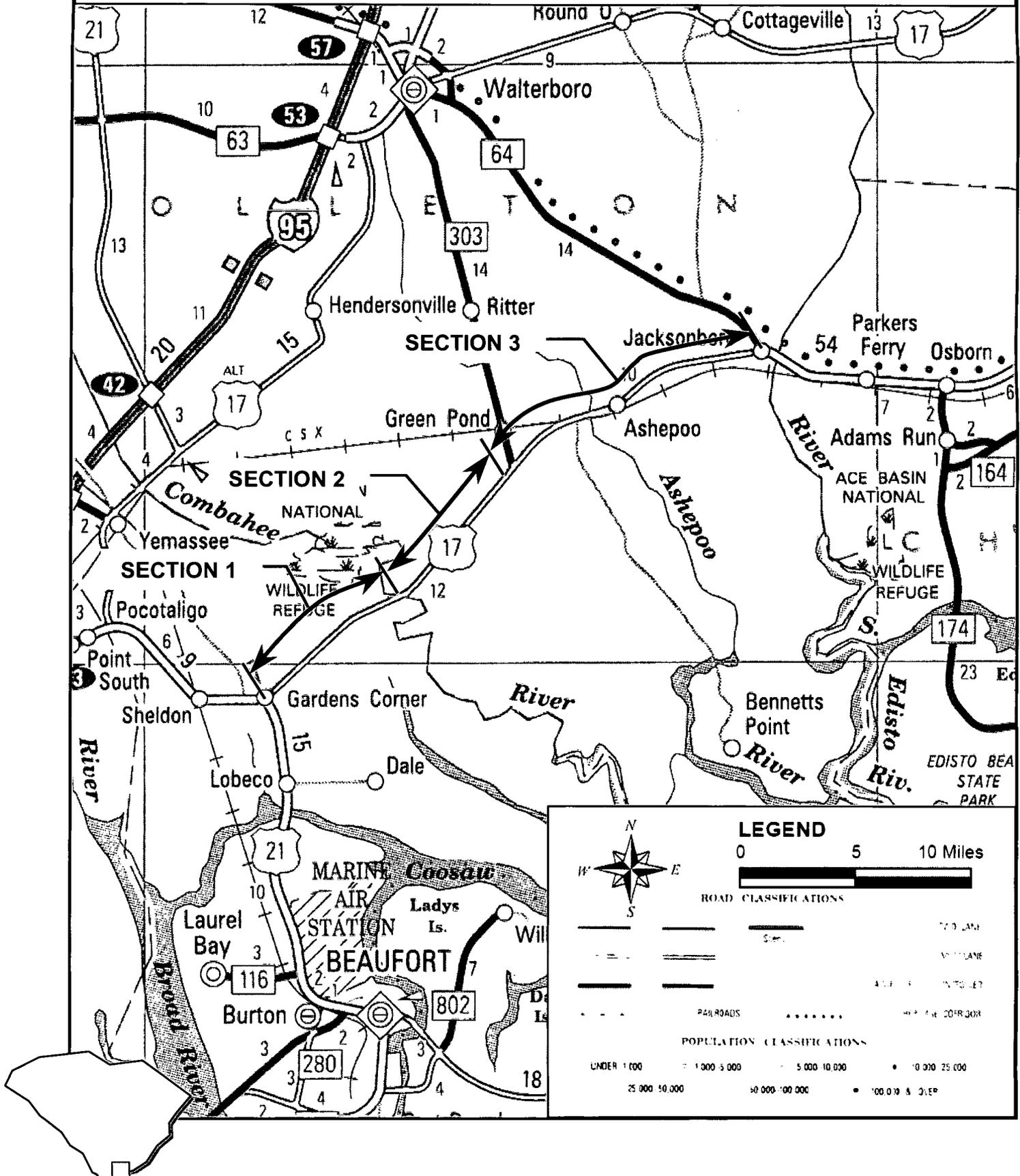
END PROJECT

LEGEND

0 5 10 Miles

ROAD CLASSIFICATIONS			
	TWO LANE		
	THREE LANE		
	ACCESS CONTROLLED		
	RAILROADS		
	PERMITS CORRIDOR		
POPULATION CLASSIFICATIONS			
UNDER 1,000	1,000-5,000	5,000-10,000	10,000-25,000
25,000-50,000	50,000-100,000	100,000 & OVER	

Section Map US 17 Improvements



LEGEND

0 5 10 Miles

ROAD CLASSIFICATIONS			
	TWO LANE		
	VILLAGE		
	UNPAVED		
	RAILROADS		
	PIPELINE CORRIDOR		
POPULATION CLASSIFICATIONS			
UNDER 1,000	1,000 - 5,000	5,000 - 10,000	10,000 - 25,000
25,000 - 50,000	50,000 - 100,000	100,000 - 250,000	250,000 - 500,000

PUBLIC BENEFIT:

(Resolutions and letters of support attached)

As stated above US 17 is considered to be one of America's most dangerous roads. The fatality rate along this two-lane stretch of highway is **233%** greater than similar highways throughout South Carolina. This project is about saving lives and improving the general welfare of those who travel US 17.

Safety / General Welfare

South Carolina roadways continue to be ranked as one of the deadliest. South Carolina has the **3rd** highest highway fatality rate in the Nation. In fact approximately 3 people die every day in a crash on our state highways. You are **5** times more likely to die in a crash on South Carolina's rural roads than on urban roads. US 17 would fall into this category, and is one of the reasons South Carolina continues to have such a dreadful fatality ranking.

In addition to the Safety concerns, the general welfare of all citizens of South Carolina are affected by this important route, because South Carolina's economy is driven by its geographic location to quality beaches and port access along the Atlantic Ocean.

- More than **90 percent** of the goods sold in South Carolina are moved on our state's roads.
- **80 percent** of our state's tourist travel by automobile to reach of our coastal vacation region.
- **132,400** South Carolinians are employed directly by the travel and tourism industry

US 17 is a key link for the ports in Charleston to Interstate 95, and is a strategic north-south route for moving tourist throughout the coastal region of South Carolina.

The improvement to US 17 will help improve the safety, and change our image as one of the deadliest states, which hopefully will improve our marketing effort to promote South Carolina's beaches. Travel and Tourism industry is the **#1** employer in South Carolina. One in Eight Jobs, or 12% of the state's employment is directly and/or indirectly related to travel and tourism.

The Port of Charleston is the busiest port along the Southeast and Gulf Coast. It is recognized as one of the nations most efficient and productive ports. The continued success of the State's port is greatly dependent upon the efficient and safe movement of freight by trucks to and from the port. In 2003, South Carolina's port ranked **4th** in the value of cargo that flowed through the port.



South Carolina
Department of Transportation

October 11, 2005

The Honorable Donald D. Leonard, Chairman
South Carolina State Transportation Infrastructure Bank
Post Office Box 191
Columbia, South Carolina 29202

Re: US Route 17 in Beaufort and Colleton Counties

Dear Mr. Leonard:

Enclosed is an application to the South Carolina State Transportation Infrastructure Bank requesting funding assistance on the above project. Since 1997 there have been thirty-three fatalities along this section of US Route 17 between Gardens Corner and Jacksonboro. The South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) in partnership with Beaufort and Colleton Counties requests that you please consider and approve this application.

It is an honor for us to represent the people of South Carolina as Commissioners on the South Carolina Department of Transportation Commission representing the Second and Sixth Congressional Districts.

Please feel free to contact us should you want to discuss this application or need additional information.

Sincerely,

John N. Hardee
SCDOT Commissioner
Second Congressional District

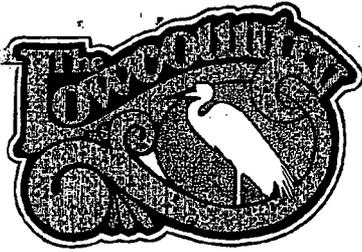
J. M. "Moot" Truluck
SCDOT Commissioner
Sixth Congressional District

WCE:wce

cc: Elizabeth S. Mabry, Executive Director
Tony L. Chapman, State Highway Engineer

File:PC/WCE





LOWCOUNTRY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS P.O. BOX 98 YEMASSEE, SC 29945-0098
OFFICE AT POINT SOUTH (I-95 EXIT 33 AT US HWY. 17)
PHONE (843) 726-5536 FAX (843) 726-5165 EMAIL: office@lowcountrycog.org
LOWCOUNTRY REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION • LOWCOUNTRY AREA AGENCY ON AGING
LOWCOUNTRY WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREA

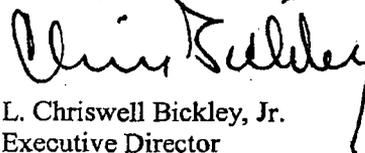
July 18, 2005

Mr. John N. Hardee
S.C. Transportation Commission
1221 Atlas Road
Columbia, SC 29209

Dear Commissioner Hardee:

The Lowcountry COG Board adopted the attached resolution at its last meeting concerning the deadly U.S. Highway 17 situation in Beaufort and Colleton Counties. We know the improvement and widening of this section of highway is a top priority of the Department and appreciate the recent planning funds approved for the project. We request your continued leadership in this matter and believe this widening project can be done in a timely manner only through the combined efforts of all local, state and federal officials and agencies. Please know the COG stands ready to work with you and assist in any way.

Sincerely,


L. Chriswell Bickley, Jr.
Executive Director

/cws

Attachment



LOWCOUNTRY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS P.O. BOX 98 YEMASSEE, SC 29945-0098
OFFICE AT POINT SOUTH (I-95 EXIT 33 AT US HWY. 17)
PHONE (843) 726-5536 FAX (843) 726-5165 EMAIL: office@lowcountrycog.org
LOWCOUNTRY REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION • LOWCOUNTRY AREA AGENCY ON AGING
LOWCOUNTRY WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREA

A RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, U. S. Highway 17 between Jacksonboro in Colleton County and Gardens Corner in Beaufort County is one of the most dangerous highways in South Carolina and, according to NBC News, one of the most dangerous in the nation, more than thirty people having been killed there in the past eight years, and:

WHEREAS, U. S. Highway 17 is the primary connector between Charleston and Savannah, as well as between Charleston and Beaufort, and carries a significant amount of commercial truck traffic in addition to serving the rural communities of Southern Colleton and Northern Beaufort Counties, and:

WHEREAS, the installation of passing lanes about ten years ago improved safety in those three individual areas, but isn't a comprehensive solution for the entire twenty-two mile section, and:

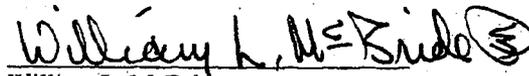
WHEREAS, highway improvement funding in South Carolina is, at best, inadequate, a fact only made worse in this case by environmental mitigation costs brought on by the project's location in the heart of the ACE Basin.

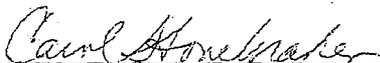
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Directors of Lowcountry Council of Governments that State and Federal officials are called upon to redouble their already substantial efforts to obtain funding to widen and improve this entire section of U. S. Highway 17 before more people die, and;

FURTHER, that Lowcountry COG hereby commits its support to all reasonable Federal, State and local funding proposals for this project, recognizing that success will come only through cooperation, and:

FURTHER, that all funding and permitting agencies are called upon to recognize that time is of the essence in this matter and that saving human life must be everyone's top priority.

DONE, this twenty-third day of June, 2005.


William L. McBride
Chairman


Attest

Jon Chapman
For file
Allen
Send note
of acknowledgment
of receipt
8/16
E

RESOLUTION # 2005-09

**RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL
OF THE CITY OF WALTERBORO, SOUTH CAROLINA**

**Regarding the Proposed Re-routing of Truck Traffic from
Highway 17 from Jacksonboro, SC to Gardens Corner, SC by Way of
SC Highway 64 from Jacksonboro, SC through Walterboro, SC**

WHEREAS, there have been several editorials, articles and letters to the editor in newspapers recommending that truck traffic be diverted from U.S. 17 to SC64 in order to reduce the hazardous conditions which exist on U.S. 17; and

WHEREAS, City Council recognizes the cost in human life and family suffering which have resulted from vehicular accidents on Highway 17; and

WHEREAS, Council is aware of the circumstances surrounding the numerous fatal accidents, which have occurred on Highway 17 as well as the physical conditions which exist on Highway 17 and Highway 64; and

WHEREAS, Council finds the following facts to be pertinent to the decision as to whether or not truck traffic should be diverted onto Highway 64.

1. According to the Average Daily Traffic Count of the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) for March, 2005, 11,100 vehicles traveled on Highway 17 between Jacksonboro and the Beaufort County line. Also, published reports have stated that SCDOT estimates that heavy truck traffic comprises 20% of the traffic on Highway 17. That equates to 2,200 trucks per day which would be diverted onto Highway 64 through Walterboro.
2. Highway 64 is a narrow, state highway with additional asphalt strips added to both sides to increase its width. The traveling surface is in poor repair and the joints between the original roadbed and the additional strips are uneven. This causes vehicle operators to drive too close to the center line or the edge of the road to avoid the uneven joint.
3. There is only one area on Highway 64 which is suitable for passing and that is the portion of the highway known as Horseshoe Straight. The remainder of the highway is restricted by curves or major intersections. The entire area is two-lanes. On Highway 17, there are several three-lane passing zones which are more safe than a two-lane road.
4. The traffic count for Highway 64 near Jacksonboro is 4,300, but that number increases to 5,400 and then to 12,300 through Walterboro.

5. All trucks entering Walterboro on Highway 64 have to be routed along the Highway 64 Bypass (Robertson Boulevard) to access I-95, U.S. Highway 17A, U.S. Highway 15, SC Highway 64 West, and SC Highway 63 West. The speed limit on that road is 45 mph, and here are four traffic signals at four major intersections. On Highway 17, there are no traffic signals or stops at all. School traffic is particularly heavy at the Highway 17-A and Highway 15 intersections. With the opening of the SuperWalmart Shopping Center, the traffic around the Highway 64/I-95 interchange will increase substantially.

6. The approximate distances and travel times from the intersection of I-26 and I-526 in Charleston to the I-95 interchange at Point South are as follows:

<u>Optional Route</u>	<u>Distance</u>	<u>Travel Time</u>
Via Hwy 17 (Through Gardens Corner)	*62 miles	1 hr. 10 min.
Via Hwy 17 (Through Walterboro)	72 miles	1 hr. 15 min.
Via I-26 and I-95 (West of I-26)	96 miles	1 hr. 20 min.

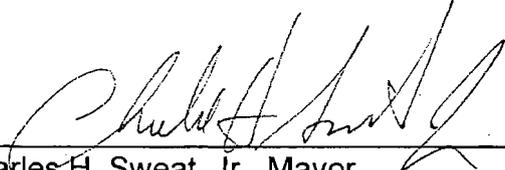
WHEREAS, City Council has carefully considered all of the factors involved in the decision as to whether or not truck traffic should be rerouted through Walterboro; and

WHEREAS, City Council believes that the effect of the re-routing of trucks would only serve to transfer any problems associated with truck traffic from a highway well-equipped for truck traffic to one particularly ill-equipped for truck traffic; and

WHEREAS, an additional 2,000 or more trucks per day would cause serious traffic problems through the heaviest traveled streets and intersections in Walterboro and would pose a significant danger to school buses and other school traffic.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Mayor and City Council of the City of Walterboro, South Carolina, in Council Assembled, request that the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) take whatever steps as may be necessary to insure the safety of the traveling public and the commercial truck drivers on Highway 17, but that truck traffic not be re-routed through Walterboro.

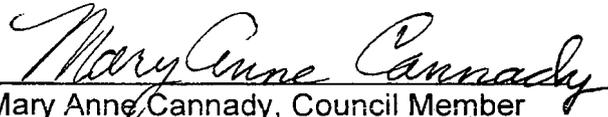
DONE, this 26th day of July, 2005.



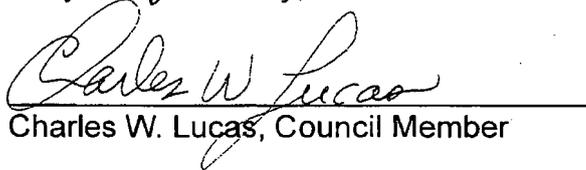
Charles H. Sweat, Jr., Mayor



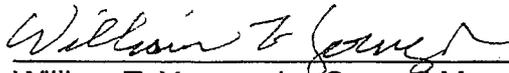
Fred E. Parker, Mayor Pro-Tem



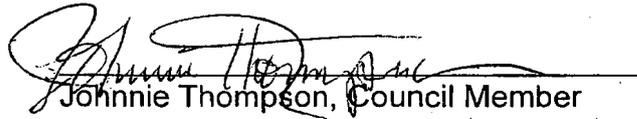
Mary Anne Cannady, Council Member



Charles W. Lucas, Council Member

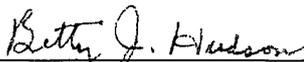


William T. Young, Jr., Council Member



Johnnie Thompson, Council Member

ATTEST:



Betty J. Hudson
Municipal Clerk

COUNTY COUNCIL OF BEAUFORT COUNTY
RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Beaufort County Council finds that U.S. Highway 17 long has been and will continue to be, a vital, historic route through the eastern coastal states;

WHEREAS, traffic along the approximate 22 miles of U.S. Highway 17 from Gardens Corner in Beaufort County to Jacksonboro in Colleton County, was projected to reach maximum capacity by 1996, according to SCDOT vehicle usage and accident statistics; and

WHEREAS, Beaufort County Council passed unanimous resolutions on June 4, 1990 and January 11, 1993, in support of the widening of U.S. Highway 17 in an environmentally sensitive manner; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Beaufort County Council offers its avid support of roadway and safety improvements along the approximate 22 miles of U.S. Highway 17 from Gardens Corner to Jacksonboro.

Dated this 26th of April, 2004.

COUNTY COUNCIL OF BEAUFORT COUNTY

By: Wm. Weston J. Newton

Wm. Weston J. Newton
Chairman

ATTEST:

Suzanne M. Rainey
Suzanne M. Rainey, Clerk to Council



**Advocates for Change
on Highway 17**
P. O. Box 306 ■ Sheldon, SC 29941

July 20, 2005

Governor Mark Sanford
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 12267
Columbia, SC 29211

Dear Governor Sanford:

The summer of 2005 will long remain in the minds of many as a time of loss. Unfortunately, for many of us, the means of this loss does not represent a new danger; but one that we have lived with constantly. We are the mothers, relatives, friends and/or co-workers of numerous deceased or injured persons who have been injured along U. S. Highway 17.

We are extremely appreciative of your visit to the low country on July 11, 2005. Also, we recognize that efforts have been made by your office and the Department of Transportation to take into consideration and implement suggestions from this community on short-term remedies to our problem until the long-term goal of four (4) lane widening of this stretch can be accomplished.

As announced at your news conference and in the media coverage of the same, residents living along Highway 17 along with interested travelers met at Booker T. Washington Community Center the evening of July 11, 2005. We are forwarding herewith, 1) minutes from that meeting 2) results of questionnaires distributed at that meeting and 3) signed petitions which are inclusive of the measures already considered by your office and the Department of Transportation along with additional measures which we feel will assist in saving lives in the interim while the State proceeds in the U. S. Highway 17 widening project.

Your review and consideration of this petition is urgently requested and by no means is seen by us as an "over reaction" as some not living with this daily danger may feel.

[Handwritten initials]
July 18, 2005
Page 2

Governor Sanford your attention to this matter is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

ADVOCATES FOR CHANGE ON HIGHWAY 17

<i>Marilyn Fields</i>	<i>Angela Young</i>
<i>Christina Jo Saxon</i>	<i>Antonia B. Gray</i>
<i>Lula M. Saxon</i>	
<i>Carrie R. Smiles</i>	
<i>Emily S. [unclear]</i>	
<i>Prendaz Ledbetter</i>	

/blp

- cc: Senator Clementa C. Pinkney
- Catherine C. Ceips, Member of the House of Representatives
- Wm. Weston J. Newton, Chairman, Beaufort County Council
- John Hardee, Transportation Commissioner
- Wilson C. Elgin, P. E., Program Manager, SCDOT

~~Approved~~

May 23, 2000

MW

JUN 01 2000

0002 1 0 NRP

0002 1 0 NRP

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mr. Thomas Davis III,

It is my hope that this letter will create a sincere inquiry of your counterparts in South Carolina—with the objective of making U.S. 17 south of Charleston a safer road. Divided highways save lives.

On election morning, 3 November 1998, my son (Andre) and his friend and driver (Jean Powell) passed away on U.S. 17 just north of Gardens Corner (west of Beaufort) in South Carolina. My son was a Junior at SCAD (Savannah College of Art & Design). Jean Powell crossed the poorly marked center line of the "2-lane" stretch of road and hit an 18-wheeler at 1:40am. Both young people were killed instantly.

On April 29th (this year), my wife and I visited the accident scene for the second time. I've since found out that several people have died on this roughly 2-mile stretch of unlighted, high-speed roadway. Presently, U.S. 17 is both divided and multi-laned at either end of this roughly 2-mile stretch of paved highway.

No one can bring either my son or Jean Powell back to life. My wife and I placed some beautiful wooden crosses on the south side of the road (where truck & car wound up).

Thank you for your concern.


BRUCE S. ROBINSON
Chief Petty Officer, USN (Ret.)
3206 Dashiell Road
Falls Church, Virginia 22042.

HOMAS M. DAVIS

11th District, Virginia

LEGISLATIVE GOVERNMENT REFORM

CONSTITUTIONAL
COMMISSION
OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
1100 COMMONWEALTH CENTER
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22304
703/684-1100

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4611

July 28, 2000

Mr. Bruce S. Robinson
3206 Dashiell Road
Falls Church, VA 22042

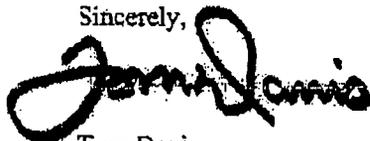
Dear Mr. Robinson,

Thank you for sharing the circumstances of your son's death with me. I appreciate your sharing your personal tragedy with me.

I have contacted Representative James Clyburn (D-SC), the Congressman for the district in which your son and Jean Powell died. I have relayed the circumstances of the accident, shared your observations and concerns, and asked Representative Clyburn to look into improving safety on the stretch of U.S. 17 where your son died and determine whether it complies with relevant federal and state laws. In addition, I forwarded your letter to the Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration. I hope these efforts prompt a thorough review of the road's safety record and careful consideration of ways to prevent similar accidents.

Again, I am very sorry for your loss. Please contact me in the future with any additional comments or concerns you may have.

Sincerely,



Tom Davis
Member of Congress

778 Cannon St. DC
Washington, DC 205
492

LETTER OFFICE
1018 E. BRIGHTON COURT
ANNAPOLIS, VA 21403
(703) 818-0878

730 ELYNN STREET, SECOND FLOOR
HARRISON, VA 22801
(703) 437-1728

19884 MANASSAS ROAD
WOODBRIDGE, VA 22192
(703) 690-4888

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Beaufort County Council supports the South Carolina Department of Highways and Public Transportation's proposed upgrading of U.S. 17 from Gardens Corner in Beaufort County to Jacksonboro in Colleton County from a two-lane roadway to a four-lane roadway with a maximum 48-foot grassed median; and

WHEREAS, U.S. 17 is vital in the logistical recovery following a hurricane or other natural or man-made disaster; and

WHEREAS, four-laning U.S. 17 from Gardens Corner to Jacksonboro is the final connector for linking Charleston County to Beaufort County and Hilton Head.

WHEREAS, Beaufort County Council is concerned that the four-lane roadway will cause the Combahee River Public Boat Landing (at Steel Bridge) to be inaccessible.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Beaufort County encourages four-laning U.S. 17 from Gardens Corner to Jacksonboro as expeditiously as possible; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Beaufort County Council proposes that in the event four-laning U.S. 17 from Gardens Corner to Jacksonboro leaves the existing Combahee River Public Boat Landing (at Steel Bridge) inaccessible, another boat landing will be constructed in the immediate vicinity and of similar quality.

Adopted this 4th day of June, 1990. -

COUNTY COUNCIL OF BEAUFORT COUNTY

BY: 

William M. Bowen
Chairman

ATTEST:


Clerk to Council

RESOLUTION

Adopted October 5, 1993

The board of directors of the South Carolina Trucking Association fully supports the widening of Highway 17 from Jacksonboro through Gardens Corner as a scenic and commercially valuable highway. The board opposes any attempts to transfer to other projects, those funds necessary for the widening of Highway 17. If additional funds are required to enhance traffic flow to other alternative routes, those funds should be allocated on an as needed basis by priority and availability. The trucking industry considers this project urgent for safety and economic reasons.

This resolution was approved by the board of directors of the South Carolina Trucking Association at its October 5, 1993 meeting.



G. Clifton Parker, Chairman of the Board

Attest:



J. Richards Todd, President

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
RANKING REPUBLICAN MEMBER
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
405 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-2452
FAX: (202) 225-2455
X: "H. L. "KEN" BLACK
CHIEF OF STAFF

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
2d District, South Carolina
March 29, 1993

ALLEDALE
BARNWELL
BEAUFORT*
CALHOUN*
COLLETON*
HAMPTON
JASPER
LEXINGTON
ORANGEBURG*
RICHLAND*
(* PARTS OF)

Lt. Col. Mark E. Vincent
District Engineer
US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P. O. Box 919
Charleston, SC 29402

Dear Col. Vincent:

The Beaufort Chamber of Commerce has contacted me regarding their concerns about the proposed improvements for US 17 from Jacksonboro through Gardens Corner. Over the past few months, I have met with many people who are concerned about this project, and I share their concern. Based upon the information gathered, I urge your approval of this project.

We must all be concerned about the impact projects such as this have on our environment, and I support the protection of our natural resources. However, it is my understanding that the Highway Department has identified 300 plus acres of land which have potential for mitigation sites for any wetlands which would be impacted. I am aware that the Highway Department is meeting with environmental groups to discuss the best ways to minimize wetlands impacts.

US 17 is the main route which connects Beaufort with Charleston. It is a highly traveled route and in its current configuration (2 lanes) presents serious safety problems. The heavy use of this route is well documented in the SC Department of Highways and Public Transportation's (SCDHPT) traffic study which shows approximately 10,000 vehicles per day use this route. Approximately 20% of the load is represented by heavy trucks traveling between the port cities of Savannah and Charleston.

STO DRIVE
SUITE 102
COLUMBIA, SC 29210
(803) 254-5120

1881 CHESTNUT STREET, NE
P.O. BOX 1509
ORANGEBURG, SC 29118-1609
(803) 536-4641

918 BAY STREET
P.O. BOX 1538
BEAUFORT, SC 29901
(803) 521-2530

66 EAST RAILROAD AVENUE
P.O. BOX 550
ESTILL, SC 29918
(803) 625-3177

1 TOWN CENTER COURT
40 PALMETTO PARKWAY
HILTON HEAD ISLAND, SC 29928
(803) 842-7212

Unfortunately, many Naval facilities in Charleston, including the Naval Hospital, are earmarked for closure by the Defense Department. It is reasonable to anticipate that the number of vehicles using this route will increase significantly as military retirees and others travel to Beaufort to use the military facilities in lieu of the current support provided in the Charleston area. This expected increase in traffic on US 17 will only exacerbate the concerns for traffic safety.

Route 17 is a key factor in bringing the tourism industry to the coastal areas of South Carolina. The proposed improvements to this very important coastal route are vital to our economy.

While I am aware there are many factors to be considered by the Corps in approving this project, such as minimizing the environmental impact on the wetlands, I am motivated to support the improvements to this route because of my natural concern for the traffic safety of my constituents and the many visitors to our area, as well as the economic well-being of the businesses that depend upon this transportation artery.

Your consideration of this matter will be most appreciated. If I can provide any information which the Corps of Engineers feels will be of assistance, please do not hesitate to let me know. Sara Breedlove, my Field Representative, in the Beaufort office can be reached at (803) 521-2530 or at P. O. Box 1538, Beaufort, SC 29902.

With kindest regards, I am

Sincerely,



FLOYD D. SPENCE
Member of Congress

cc: Commissioner W. Brantley Harvey, Jr.
Mr. Larry Marks

FINANCIAL PLAN:

On September 15, 2005, the South Carolina Department of Transportation Commission unanimously passed a resolution supporting the US 17 project. The resolution also approved funding up to \$5 million per year from SCDOT to service any debt needed to fund this project. (Resolution enclosed) SCDOT will pledge a non-tax source to the Infrastructure Bank for the purpose to service the \$48 million loan needed. The majority of the State/Local sources pledged to finance the project flow through SCDOT, and are immediately available.

- Estimated Project Cost:
\$173,400,000

- Assistance Needed:
\$90,000,000 Grant from SIB

\$48,000,000 Loan from SIB (to be repaid by SCDOT
from non-tax source)

- Local Participation and other funds:
\$23,000,000 SCDOT (Fed /State)
\$10,000,000 Congressional Earmark (Fed /State)
\$ 2,000,000 Beaufort County (Local Tax Revenue)
\$ 200,000 Colleton County (Local Tax Revenue)
\$ 200,000 Lowcountry Council of Governments (Fed
/State)

\$35,400,000

Total State / Local Participation and Rate

\$35,400,000
\$48,000,000 - Repayment of Loan from SCDOT (non-tax
source)
83,400,000

$$\$83,400,000 / 173,400,000 = \mathbf{48\%}$$

Estimated Cash Flow (calendar year)

	2006	2007	2008
PE	\$23,000,000	\$0.00	\$0.00
ROW	\$17,000,000	\$8,500,000	\$0.00
CON	<u>\$30,000,000</u>	<u>\$70,500,000</u>	<u>\$24,400,000</u>
TOTAL	\$70,000,000	\$79,000,000	\$24,400,000
	\$173,400,000		

Project Useful Life

The project will be built with a pavement design that will have a useful life of 20 years. With proper maintenance and resurfacing every 12 – 15 years, the project will have a perpetual life. The bridges associated with the project will have a useful life of 75 years.

Upon completion of the proposed project, the 22-mile roadway will have a pavement surface that will last approximately 12 years. In 2004, 6 miles of the proposed project was resurfaced, and the remaining 16 miles would have needed to be resurfaced by 2009. Due to the project, SCDOT will forgo the need to resurface this stretch of roadway and will realize a maintenance savings of **\$2.8 to \$3** million. This estimate is based on \$160,000 per mile and 5% inflation.

SECTION 11: On motion of Commissioner Hardee, seconded by Commissioner Truluck, the Commission unanimously passed a motion authorizing the Department to move forward with an application to the State Transportation Infrastructure Bank in the amount of a \$90 million grant and a \$48 million loan to be repaid from current and future federal funds. If the application is approved, SCDOT will commit up to \$5 million per year for the next 20 years to repay the \$48 million loan from the State Infrastructure Bank. The motion further included a request for the staff to do an analysis on Highway 64 to determine if this is a viable project to pursue in addition to Highway 17.

SECTION 12: On motion of Commissioner Jones, seconded by Commissioner Hardee, the Commission unanimously passed a motion urging the State Transportation Infrastructure Bank to call a meeting to consider the Highway 17 application as soon as possible

PROJECT APPROACH:

Legislative representatives and accident victims' families have worked closely with Beaufort County in channeling the underlying public support of the proposed roadway safety improvements. The result of such activities in concert with media coverage (newspaper, local television, and national television), newsletters, and multiple public information meetings has resulted in cooperation from most stakeholders to move the ABP project forward. Additionally, the connectivity benefit of the ABP relative to the lowcountry area helped to garner support from the trucking industry and residents. Through this collaborative effort the project sponsor, Beaufort County, has been able to garner financial contribution from local and other sources. Legislative support and concerns over the safety issues surrounding the ABP helped locate approximately \$10 million of United States congressional earmark funding in addition to moneys already appropriated.

CURRENT STATUS

To date, the SCDOT has finalized the Conceptual Layout, held four Public Information Meetings, and nearly completed the ROW plan submission. \$33 Million of the estimated \$200 Million Project Cost (including the bridge replacement at the Combahee River) has been obligated by SCDOT for:

- Engineering and Design for the Improvements (\$7.59M)
- Construction of the improvements (\$10.7M)
- Environmental work (\$0.95M)
- The Bridge replacement over the Combahee River (\$13.3M).
- The cost for additional State Troopers and Vehicles

The total remaining funding required includes roughly \$50M for Section 1, \$50M for Section 2 and \$80M for Section 3. This does not include the cost of additional mitigation, which is not anticipated; existing wetland banks (Sandy Island) are expected to be used for mitigation.

PROJECT COMPLETION INSURANCE

Preliminary design and ROW plans (70% plans) will be conducted by SCDOT for all three sections. ROW purchase for each section will be conducted by the construction team with SCDOT assistance. Actual highway construction, construction management, and annual operation & maintenance will be supervised/conducted by the SCDOT. In doing so, tort liability and highway ownership will be under the SCDOT. As part of an existing safety awareness plan, the S.C. Governor's office has already increased law enforcement on the ABP. S.C. State Highway Patrol will continue to administer law enforcement.

OBSTACLES

Strong local support for the ABP has been demonstrated by passage of the Beaufort County Sales Tax, as referred to in the Public Benefits and Financial Plan sections detailed above. Regarding environmental issues, the EA document from the early 1990's was abandoned and a new EA document is being prepared due to an increased emphasis on safety in the purpose and need statement. The new EA document will show that the existing corridor is not adversely impacted by the proposed improvements. The few potential environmental concerns include the displacement of some residences, the displacement of a couple of businesses, and jurisdictional wetland mitigation of approximately 50 acres. One other unique concern on the project revolves around the inclusion of an environmental buffer. Resource agencies have expressed interest in the SCDOT including the buffer as mitigation to the impacts to natural resources on the project corridor. There are some groups that are strongly opposed to the inclusion of 'required' conservation/environmental buffers. After coordination with representatives of the ACE Basin Task Force, it was agreed that buffers would not be a required part of the project. They agreed to seek the support of state and federal resource agencies for elimination of buffers on the project. Instead, a plan that would include accommodations for a separated bicycle and pedestrian lane on either or both sides of the roadway would be pursued. In addition, SCDOT would coordinate with local governments and property owners to limit access in some places for safety reasons. There is also a desire that some areas of the median retain trees and plant material where this can be accomplished safely. SCDOT agreed to preserve natural vegetation and trees where possible and where it can be safely done. Additional landscaping may be considered in the future using other sources of funds.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

It is the SCDOT's intent that all three sections of the project will be completed on the same schedule and released for construction at the same time. With ROW plans nearly complete and the EA Document complete, the ABP is anticipated to be let for construction in early 2006 and be completed in early-mid 2008.

Exhibit XXX
US 17 Improvements - ACE Basin Parkway
 Beaufort / Colleton Counties, South Carolina

