

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

John B. White, Jr., *Chairman*

Ernest Duncan, *Vice Chairman*

Tony K. Cox

Senator Hugh K. Leatherman, Sr.

H.B. "Chip" Limehouse, III

David B. Shehan

Representative J. Gary Simrill

South Carolina
Transportation Infrastructure Bank



955 Park Street
Room 120 B
Columbia, SC 29201
P: (803) 737-2875
Fax: (803) 737-2014

July 16, 2020

Brittane Fields
Engineering & Infrastructure
Beaufort County Engineering Division
P.O. Box 1228
Beaufort, SC 29901-1228

Re: Status of Beaufort County, U.S. 278 Corridor Improvement Project Application for Financial Assistance from the South Carolina Transportation Infrastructure Bank (the Bank)

Dear Ms. Fields,

I am pleased to report that, at its meeting of July 7, 2020, the South Carolina Transportation Infrastructure Bank Board (the Board) approved providing financial assistance for your application, the U.S. 278 Corridor Improvement project, subject to certain conditions. After a thorough analysis of your application, the Board approved a grant in an amount up to \$120 million to construct improvements to U.S. 278 as described in the application for financial assistance. The local match for the project is from the Beaufort County Sales Tax and Beaufort County Road Impact Fees, as explained in the application. The Bank's provision of financial assistance also requires approval of the Department of Transportation Commission (Commission) and the Joint Bond Review Committee (JBRC), and an executed *Intergovernmental Agreement* (IGA) between the parties in a form determined by the Bank. It is my understanding that the Commission approved Bank-approved applications at their meeting July 16, 2020, and that the JBRC potentially plans to review Bank-approved applications at its next meeting currently scheduled for August 11, 2020. Please note that, due to COVID-19 concerns, these dates are tentative and subject to change.

The next step will involve the Bank, Beaufort County, and possibly SCDOT, beginning the process of executing an IGA. At the appropriate time, counsel for the Bank will prepare the IGA between the Bank, Beaufort County, and possibly SCDOT and distribute to all parties for review. As time progresses, the Bank will ask for updates to the project status and timeframe in which the Bank's financial assistance of \$120 million will be needed. The Bank also will need the contact information for the County's representatives who will work with us on preparing the IGA and providing project updates in the future. You may send this information to Tami Reed by email at reedtb@scdot.org.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have other questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "John B. White, Jr.", is written over the word "Sincerely,". The signature is fluid and cursive.

John B. White, Jr.
Chairman



Beaufort County - US 278 Corridor Improvement Project

STATE INFRASTRUCTURE BANK APPLICATION



Date: July 24, 2019





Beaufort County - US 278 Corridor Improvement Project

STATE INFRASTRUCTURE BANK APPLICATION

This page is intentionally left blank.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The US 278 Corridor Improvement project is in Beaufort County, SC and includes the consideration of improvements for the US 278 Corridor from Moss Creek Drive to Spanish Wells Road. The project corridor is a SC Department of Transportation (SCDOT) owned and maintained facility and is a part of the National Highway System (NHS). In addition, US 278, including the entire project limits, is within the Strategic Statewide Freight Roadway Network in the SCDOT South Carolina Statewide Freight Plan. US 278 is the only access onto and off Hilton Head Island, and improvements to this corridor provide a public benefit to the residents, employees, and the large amount of tourism that not only benefits the region, but the entire state.

The estimated cost for this project is \$246 million, with an additional \$26.4 million in project risk, resulting in the need for a total of \$272.4 million. South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) budgeted \$43.5 million to replace the eastbound span of the Karl Bowers Bridge. In addition, Beaufort County voters have implemented a 1 cent transportation sales tax to raise \$80 million for this project and additional local matches (described further in the Financial Plan) have provided an additional \$12.35 million to ensure that this project does not simply address a structural issue but truly solves a long-term capacity concern for the corridor. **Beaufort County is respectfully requesting that the State Infrastructure Bank (SIB) provide the remaining funds for this project in the amount of \$120 million, less than 50% of the total cost, bringing the full funding allocations of this project, including assessment of project risk, to \$272.4 million.**

The purpose of this project is to address structural deficiencies at the existing eastbound Karl Bowers Bridge over MacKay Creek, to increase capacity, and reduce congestion along US 278 from Moss Creek Drive to Spanish Wells Road. US 278 is part of the National Highway System (NHS).

Public Benefit

The US 278 Corridor Improvement Project is a project of statewide significance.

The implementation of this project will:

- Increase mobility of people and goods.
- Increase reliability and capacity of the transportation network by decreasing congestion and delay.
- Improve or replace the deteriorating conditions of existing bridges.
- Improve public safety and improve hurricane evacuation routes.
- Improve the quality of life for the region's population and visiting guests.
- Support local, regional, and statewide economies

The improvements proposed along this section of the US 278 corridor will address the bottleneck caused by the reduced 2-lane roadway (per direction) where it is joined by 3-lane improvements at both ends of this project. This bottleneck has caused crippling traffic congestion which has impacted local economies, increased crash rates, and impaired hurricane evacuation efforts that have plagued this stretch of roadway for decades.

This project supports all the goals and objectives listed in the South Carolina Department of Transportation, South Carolina Multimodal Transportation Plan (MTP). This project is consistent with all local land use plans and will include the required transportation network enhancements to keep pace with the growth this area is experiencing and will continue to see. The County, MPO, and Town of Hilton Head Island have all passed resolutions supporting this important project in the regional infrastructure.

The SIB Criteria states that "the ranking and scoring is done as part of the program categories Long Range Plan." This project has met the criteria and is listed in the priority list by SCDOT as well as being the number one priority in the LATS MPO. Through the LATS MPO criterion scoring of projects, this project, identified as the **number one priority**, has a score of 74. Based on the provided criteria for Public Benefit, as well as identifying that these improvements are part of **both the National Highway System and the State Freight Network**, the resulting score is a 74/100 which equals 37 points x 1.1=40.7. As the maximum number of points within the Public Benefit section is capped at 50, **this project scores 40.7 points for the Public Benefit criteria.**

Financial Plan

This project is in excess of \$50 million and will follow the guidelines as described in the SIB criteria requiring a local contribution of at least 25% of the total project costs with additional credit provided for the grant application for each additional 5% of local contribution and non-Bank funding. **The \$246 million project, including project risk, is broken down as follows:**



AMOUNT OF LOCAL CONTRIBUTIONS

FUNDING SOURCE	AMOUNT
Beaufort County one-cent tax referendum, as approved by the voters on November 6, 2018	\$80,000,000
Beaufort County Road Impact Fees	\$12,300,000
<i>Per Section 5.25</i>	
Federal Guideshare / Local money for the Environmental Assessment/Preliminary Engineering	\$4,200,000
SCDOT Bridge Replacement Funds	\$43,521,112
Beaufort County Funds for Jenkins Island Work	\$9,000,000
Town of Hilton Head Island Right-of-Way Dedication	\$3,350,000
Total Local / Non-Bank Funded Match including Project Risk (see Table 8)	\$152,370,112
SCIB Grant Request	\$120,000,000
Total Project Risk	\$272,370,112

Based on the points calculation within Section 5.2.a, the following points are allocated for this project:

For a project over \$50 million, the amount of local contribution must be at least 25%. With a \$246 million project, 25% of the total cost is \$61.5 million. The Beaufort County one-cent tax provides \$80 million specific to this project, thereby meeting the 25% local fund commitment, and exceeding the match with an additional \$18.5 million. This equates to **15.04 points**.

The Beaufort County Road Impact Fees provide an additional \$12.3 million equating to an additional **10 points**.

Per Section 5.24, the additional elements as noted in Table 8 provide an additional local match / non-Bank funded amount of \$60.1 million. This equates to **24.42 points**.

The committed funds in both local match as well as non-Bank funds result in a total score of **49.46 points of the available 50 points**.

Point of Contact: Robert McFee, PE, Director
Engineering & Infrastructure
Beaufort County Engineering Division

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1228
Beaufort, SC 29901-1228

Street Address: 104 Industrial Village Road
Beaufort, SC 29906

Telephone: 843-255-2730

Facsimile Number: 843-255-9420

E-Mail Address: RMcFee@bcgov.net

Relationship to Applicant: Beaufort County on behalf of the South Carolina Department of Transportation

Application Prepared by: JMT
Jennifer J. Ray, AICP

Address: 952 Houston Northcutt Boulevard
Suite 100
Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464

Telephone: 410-316-2231

E-Mail Address: JRay@JMT.com

Total Cost to Prepare: \$125,000



TABLE OF CONTENTS

(Section Numbering corresponds to the Application Criteria)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
III. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT.....	5
PROJECT SCOPE.....	5
PROJECT INTENT	7
IV. PUBLIC BENEFIT	11
4.1 TRAFFIC STUDIES & SUPPORTING DATA	12
4.2 URGENCY OF PROJECT	18
4.3 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESOLUTION.....	19
4.4 CERTIFICATE FROM THE ADVISORY COORDINATING COUNCIL FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE	19
4.5 CURRENT AND FIVE-YEAR HISTORY OF UNEMPLOYMENT DATA.....	20
4.6 LOCAL SUPPORT FROM RESIDENTS THROUGH PETITIONS OR COMMENTS AT PUBLIC HEARINGS.....	21
4.7 LOCAL RESOLUTIONS	26
4.8 REGIONAL AND STATEWIDE SIGNIFICANCE	29
4.9 PROS AND CONS OF ALL ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION PLANS TO THE PROJECT	41
4.10 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF PROJECT	42
4.11 EVENTS/MILESTONES TO IMPLEMENT PHASES OF PROJECT	44
4.12 CURRENT STATUS OF THE PROJECT	44
4.13 ENTITY STATEMENT AGREEING TO RESPONSIBILITIES	45
4.14 PROJECT SCORE	45
4.15 CONSULTATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE	45
V. FINANCIAL PLAN	46
5.1 TOTAL PROJECT COST.....	46
5.2 PROJECT WITH TOTAL COST: IN EXCESS OF \$50 MILLION.....	46
5.3 SOURCE OF LOCAL CONTRIBUTION	47
5.4 AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE REQUESTED FROM BANK.....	47
5.5 FORM OF ASSISTANCE REQUESTED	47
5.6 OTHER PROPOSED SOURCES OF FUNDS.....	47
5.7 ANTICIPATED SCHEDULE OF FUNDS DISBURSEMENT.....	47
5.8 SCHEDULE OF PROJECT RECEIPT FOR LOCAL CONTRIBUTIONS.....	48
5.9 COMMITMENT TO FUTURE MAINTENANCE	48
5.10 CONTINGENCY PLANS SHOULD THE BOARD APPROVE LESS THAN THE REQUESTED FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE OR ACTUAL PROJECT COSTS EXCEED ESTIMATED PROJECT COSTS.....	48
5.11 IMPACT FEES	48
5.12 HOSPITALITY TAX.....	49



Beaufort County - US 278 Corridor Improvement Project

STATE INFRASTRUCTURE BANK APPLICATION

5.13 LOCAL SALES TAX.....	49
5.14 USER FEE.....	49
5.15 TAX INCREMENT FINANCING DISTRICTS.....	49
5.16 ASSESSMENT PROGRAM.....	49
5.17 DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT PROGRAM.....	49
5.18 ZONING & LAND USE CONTROLS TO FOSTER USE OF EXISTING ROADS TO CONNECT DEVELOPMENTS.....	49
5.19 CASH FLOW ANALYSIS.....	49
5.20 INFLATION RATE.....	50
5.21 CONDEMNATION PROCEEDINGS.....	50
5.22 OTHER FUNDING SOURCES SOUGHT.....	50
5.23 POTENTIAL OBSTACLES.....	50
5.24 LOCAL MATCH OR CONTRIBUTION.....	50



IMAGE 1: US 278 BRIDGES TO HILTON HEAD ISLAND

III. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The US 278 Corridor Improvement project is in Beaufort County, SC and includes the consideration of improvements for the US 278 Corridor from Moss Creek Drive to Spanish Wells Road. The project corridor is a SC Department of Transportation (SCDOT) owned and maintained facility and is a part of the National Highway System (NHS). In addition, US 278, including the entire project limits, is within the Strategic Statewide Freight Roadway Network in the SCDOT South Carolina Statewide Freight Plan. US 278 is the only access onto and off Hilton Head Island, and improvements to this corridor provide a public benefit to the residents, employees, and the large amount of tourism that not only benefits the region, but the entire state.

PROJECT SCOPE

The purpose of this project is to address structural deficiencies at the existing eastbound Karl Bowers Bridge over MacKay Creek, to increase capacity, and reduce congestion along US 278 from Moss Creek Drive to Spanish Wells Road. US 278 is part of the National Highway System (NHS). The eastbound Karl Bowers Bridge will be replaced; it was originally built in 1956 and is scheduled for replacement. Additional potential improvements include:

- Modifications to the remaining three bridge structures;
- Improved access to Pinckney Island National Wildlife Refuge; and
- Improved access to the C.C. Haigh, Jr. boat ramp.

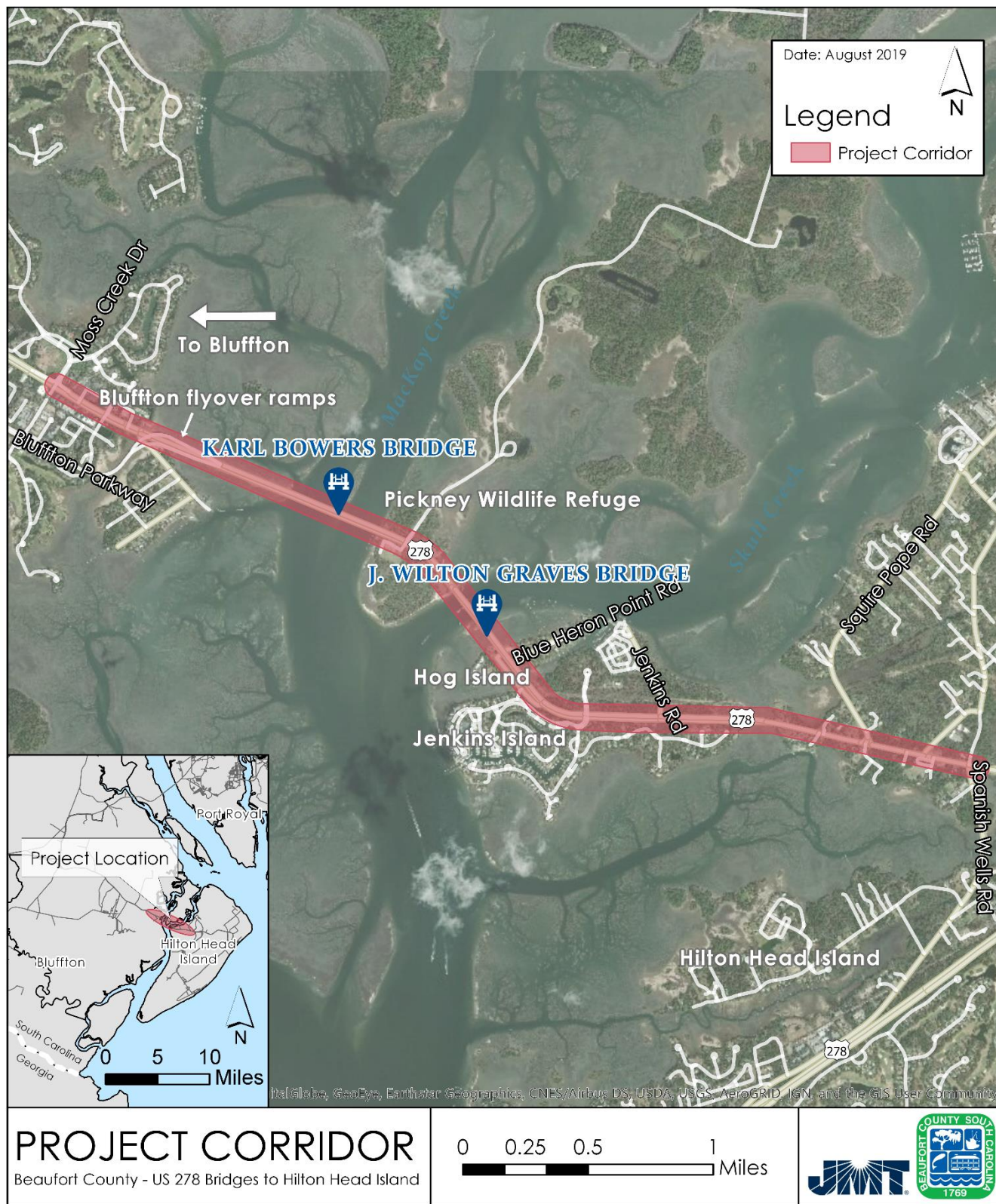
Considerations for multimodal transportation improvements for this corridor will also be included.

Prior to the western limit at Moss Creek Drive, this project will tie into the Bluffton Parkway flyover ramps that were constructed in 2015. At the eastern limit, the project will tie into the Cross-Island Parkway, which begins just east of the intersection with Spanish Wells Road and Wild Horse Road on Hilton Head Island. The Karl Bowers Bridge and the J. Wilton Graves Bridge each contain two separate structures for the eastbound and westbound travel lanes, adding up to four structures in total that will be modified for improvement or replacement. Multimodal transportation improvements will be considered to provide better connectivity between existing networks and facilities. The at-grade intersections at Pinckney Wildlife Refuge, Hog Island, Jenkins Island, Squire Pope Road, and Spanish Wells Road will be evaluated for necessary intersection safety improvements. Any needed upgrades will be included in this project.

The estimated cost for this project is \$246 million, with an additional \$26.4 million in project risk, resulting in the need for a total of \$272.4 million. South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) budgeted \$43.5 million to replace the eastbound span of the Karl Bowers Bridge. In addition, Beaufort County voters have implemented a 1 cent transportation sales tax to raise \$80 million for this project and additional local matches (described further in the Financial Plan) have provided an additional \$12.35 million to ensure that this project does not simply address a structural issue but truly solves a long-term capacity concern for the corridor. **Beaufort County is respectfully requesting that the State Infrastructure Bank (SIB) provide the remaining funds for this project in the amount of \$120 million, less than 50% of the total cost, bringing the full funding allocations of this project, including assessment of project risk, to \$272.4 million.**



MAP 1: PROJECT CORRIDOR MAP





PROJECT INTENT

The US 278 Corridor Improvement Project is a project of statewide significance.

The implementation of this project will:

- Increase mobility of people and goods.
- Increase reliability and capacity of the transportation network by decreasing congestion and delay.
- Improve or replace the deteriorating conditions of existing bridges.
- Improve public safety and improve hurricane evacuation routes.
- Improve the quality of life for the region's population and visiting guests.
- Support local, regional, and statewide economies

The improvements proposed along this section of the US 278 corridor will address the bottleneck caused by the reduced 2-lane roadway (per direction) where it is joined by 3-lane improvements at both ends of this project. This bottleneck has caused crippling traffic congestion which has impacted local economies, increased crash rates, and impaired hurricane evacuation efforts that have plagued this stretch of roadway for decades.

The US 278 bottleneck has not only become a transportation challenge for residents and visitors in the immediate project vicinity, but it has also hampered the movement of people and goods impacting both local and regional economies. A large portion of Beaufort County's labor force must face long delays every day on their commute to and from work across these bridges. Eliminating this bottleneck will promote employment in the area by improving mobility and decreasing congestion.

This project builds upon work that has been in motion for years and is the inevitable next step and missing link to complete both the US 278 Corridor Improvements as well as the Bluffton Parkway Project, providing an improved connection from Hilton Head Island to the mainland. (Refer to Map 2) This project has been listed in master plans by the State, County, MPO, and Local Governments.

US 278 CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS

The transportation network in Beaufort County has been undergoing significant improvements to accommodate the growing population (16.3% increase from 2010 to 2018)¹, a booming tourism industry and supporting economies, such as recreation, dining, and hospitality. To keep pace with transportation demand, US 278 has undergone a variety of improvements including widening of US 278 from four lanes to six lanes (from Okatie Highway SC 170 to the eastern approach to the US 278 bridges to Hilton Head Island and from Squire Pope Road to Wilborn Road).

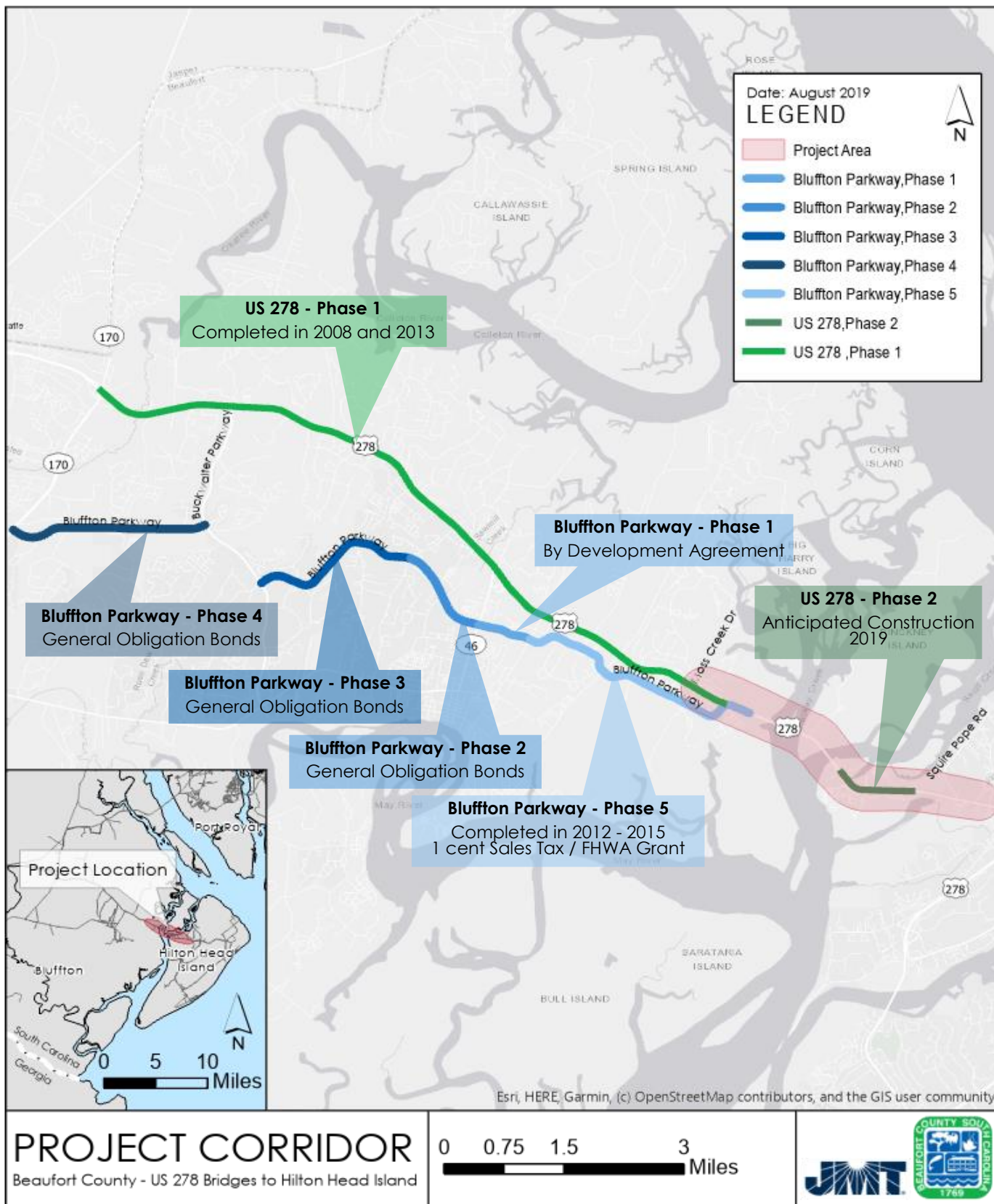
US 278 Phase 1 (Funded by Beaufort County and SCDOT) – Construction completed 2008 - 2013, the mainland portions of US 278 were widened from four to six lanes from SC 170 to the approaches to the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway. This section of roadway was widened to increase safety and capacity resulting from the increasing residential and retail growth of the area and tourism on Hilton Head Island.

US 278 Phase 2 – Anticipated Construction 2019, includes improvement or replacement of US 278 on Jenkins Island. This roadway project will widen US 278 from four lanes to six lanes. It will include a multiuse path and will follow a super street design to eliminate left turns and allow only right in and right out entry.

BLUFFTON PARKWAY PROJECT EXPANSION - The Bluffton Parkway Project was an effort led by Beaufort County to address the traffic and safety issues along the congested US 278 corridor leading onto Hilton Head Island by creating the Bluffton Parkway as an alternative route to US 278 to alleviate delays and congestion and serve as a hurricane evacuation route. The 12-mile parkway was completed in 2015 and connects to US 278 at the western side of the Karl Bowers Bridge and includes two 12 ft. travel lanes in each direction, a 24 ft. landscaped median, and eight ft. multiuse pathways paralleling both sides of the roadway.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, *Population Estimates, Percent Change – April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2018*

MAP 2: US 278 CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS & BLUFFTON PARKWAY PROJECTS MAP





SUPPORTS SCDOT'S MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN (MTP) GOALS

This project supports all the goals and objectives listed in the South Carolina Department of Transportation, South Carolina Multimodal Transportation Plan (MTP). (See Table 1)

TABLE 1: SCDOT MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN GOALS & OBJECTIVES (EXCERPT)

OBJECTIVES:	ACHIEVED BY THIS PROJECT
GOAL: MOBILITY AND SYSTEM RELIABILITY	
Reduce the number of system miles at unacceptable congestion levels.	✓
Utilize the existing transportation system to facilitate enhanced modal options for a growing and diverse population and economy.	✓
Improve travel time reliability (on priority corridors or congested corridors).	✓
Reduce the time it takes to clear incident traffic.	✓
Utilize the existing transportation system to facilitate enhanced modal options for a growing and diverse population and economy.	✓
GOAL: SAFETY AND SECURITY	
Reduce highway fatalities and serious injuries.	✓
Reduce bicycle and pedestrian and other vulnerable roadway users' fatalities and serious injuries.	✓
Reduce roadway departure related fatality and serious injury crashes.	✓
Reduce fatal and serious injury crashes within work zones.	✓
Reduce highway - rail grade crossing crashes involving fatality or serious injury.	N/A
Reduce fatal and serious injury crashes at intersections.	✓
Reduce fatal and serious injury crashes involving commercial motor vehicle.	✓
GOAL: INFRASTRUCTURE CONDITION	
Maintain or improve the current state of good repair for the NHS.	✓
Reduce the percentage of remaining state highway miles (non-interstate/strategic corridors) moving from a "fair" to a "very poor" rating while maintaining or increasing the % of miles rated as "good".	✓
Improve the condition of the state highway system bridges.	✓
Improve the state transit infrastructure in a state of good repair.	✓
GOAL: ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY VITALITY	
Utilize the existing transportation system to facilitate enhanced freight movement to support a growing economy.	✓
GOAL: ENVIRONMENT	
The SCDOT's Multimodal Transportation Plan (MTP) does not include objectives under this goal but does include guiding principles to implement this goal. This project will implement these guiding principles as appropriate throughout the lifecycle of this project.	✓
GOAL: EQUITY	
The SCDOT's Multimodal Transportation Plan (MTP) does not include objectives under this goal but does include guiding principles to implement this goal. This project will implement these guiding principles as appropriate throughout the lifecycle of this project.	✓

Source: South Carolina Department of Transportation, South Carolina Multimodal Transportation Plan (MTP) (2014)

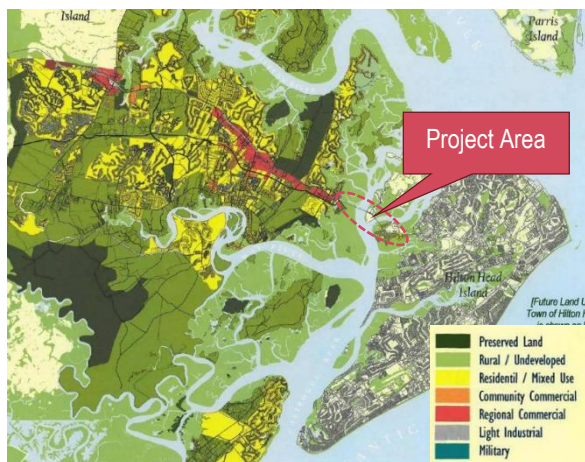
CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL LAND USE PLANS

Consistent with local land use plans, this project represents tangible progress towards achieving goals and objectives set by the state and municipalities across the region.

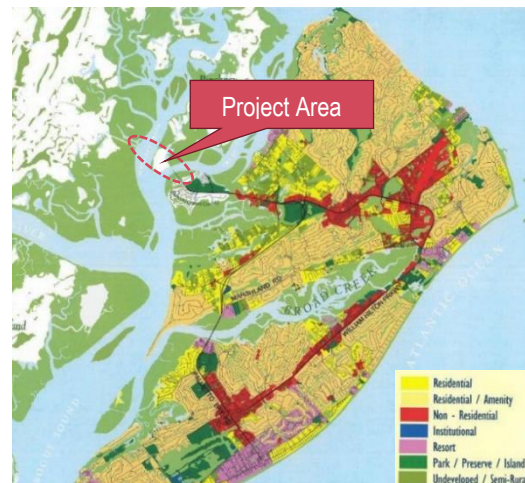
The project is located within a rural / undeveloped land use area providing the transportation linkage between regional commercial land along the US 278 corridor in Bluffton and a mix of lands use types on Hilton Head Island including park, non-residential, and residential land.

Maps 3 – 6, extracted from the 2010 *Beaufort County Comprehensive Plan*, depict that this project is consistent with both the existing and future land use plans for the area. This project will include the required transportation network enhancements to keep pace with the growth this area is experiencing and will continue to see.

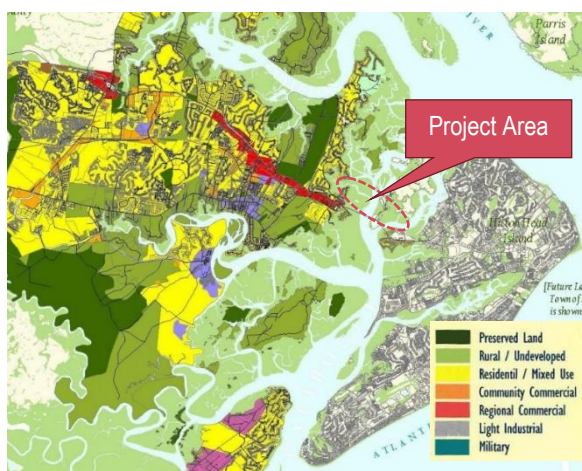
MAP 3: EXISTING LAND USE / BLUFFTON AREA
BEAUFORT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2010)



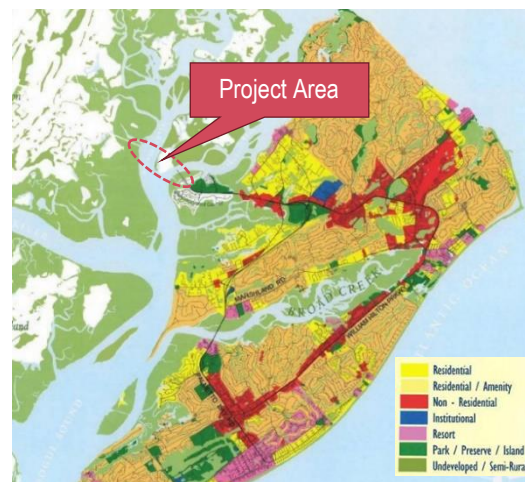
MAP 4: EXISTING LAND USE / HILTON HEAD ISLAND
BEAUFORT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2010)



MAP 5: FUTURE LAND USE / BLUFFTON AREA
BEAUFORT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2010)



MAP 6: FUTURE LAND USE / HILTON HEAD ISLAND
BEAUFORT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2010)



IV. PUBLIC BENEFIT

ENHANCEMENT OF MOBILITY AND SAFETY

US 278 is an essential urban principal arterial and the only connection between Hilton Head Island and the mainland, carrying 56,300 vehicles per day², making it one of the most congested roadways in South Carolina. There is more traffic on this section of US 278 than nearby Interstate 95 as it crosses into Georgia, which carries an average of only 55,300 vehicles daily.³ The bottleneck on US 278 created by the narrow bridges is quite significant, making traveling US 278 to and from Hilton Head Island no leisurely task. On a busy summer weekend, it can take hours to get on and off the island. Each day, residents, tourists, retirees, hospitality workers, and beachgoers all face the congested roadway and the bottleneck that occurs on both ends of the project. This bottleneck leads to heightened occurrences of traffic incidents and higher crash rates. This corridor experiences an elevated number of rear-end type crashes, which are typical in bottleneck areas.

Decreasing congestion will allow travelers to get to their destinations in a more efficient manner and increase the safe passage of people and goods to and from Hilton Head Island. This is imperative, especially for the work force that travels every day from Jasper, Hampton, and Allendale Counties. Every delay impacts their livelihood as well as their ability to support their own local economies, which then ripples into regional and state impacts. The supporting evidence that substantiates this project provides the public benefit of enhancing mobility and safety is included throughout Sections 4.1 – 4.15 of IV. *Public Benefit*.



IMAGE 2: US 278 APPROACHING BRIDGES

INCREASE IN THE QUALITY OF LIFE AND GENERAL WELFARE OF THE PUBLIC.

The regional population of the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton-Beaufort MSA and Beaufort County is projected to continue to see growth rates higher than the overall growth rate of the state. Beaufort County is the 7th fastest growing county in South Carolina. This population growth has added and will continue to add increased pressure to the transportation system leading to more congestion, delay, and safety issues unless the transportation network is enhanced to accommodate the increased mobility needs of the growing population.

This project provides an opportunity to improve the quality of life for employees, residents, and visitors of Beaufort County, providing the opportunity for enhanced recreation, improved public health, and air quality. The supporting evidence that substantiates this project provides the public benefit of increasing the quality of life and general welfare of the public is included throughout Sections 4.1 – 4.15 of IV. *Public Benefit*

PROMOTION OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Hilton Head Island is a vacation destination for tourists from across the state and around the country. According to a 2017 study, over 3,020,000 tourists visit Beaufort County each year. In 2016, tourism in Beaufort County was estimated to contribute an economic impact (output) of approximately \$1.53 billion within the County; and approximately 7% of the statewide tourism industry in South Carolina. Not only is Hilton Head Island rated as the #1 Best Island in the Continental U.S., according to Travel and Leisure's World's Best Award, the area is also known for a variety of world-class golf courses, scenic natural features, historic architecture, plantation homes, historic forts, fine seafood, famed landmarks, recreational amenities, and a temperate climate. Beaufort County contains one of only three National Historic Landmark Districts in South Carolina. Because this area's tourism generates a substantial amount of revenue for South Carolina, improving the efficiency of the region's transportation network should be a high priority for additional state investment.

² SCDOT, *Average Annual Daily Traffic Sheets, Beaufort County* (2018)

³ SCDOT, *Average Annual Daily Traffic Sheets, Jasper County* (2017)



4.1 TRAFFIC STUDIES & SUPPORTING DATA

TRAFFIC VOLUMES

US 278 is an essential urban principal arterial on the National Highway System (NHS) and the only connection between Hilton Head Island and the mainland. SCDOT estimated Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) for the project area of US 278, roughly between S-242 (FORDING ISLAND RD EXT) to S-79 (SPANISH WELLS RD) is 56,300 AADT, based on 2018 data² and the estimated truck traffic accounts for 8% of the total traffic based on SCDOT 2017 truck traffic data. This high percentage of freight traffic comes as no surprise being that US 278 is part of the State's Strategic Freight Network and the only land route for freight traveling to and from Hilton Head Island. SCDOT estimates that by 2040 this section of roadway will have an AADT of over 65,600 vehicles, increasing the urgency of improving the capacity of the corridor.

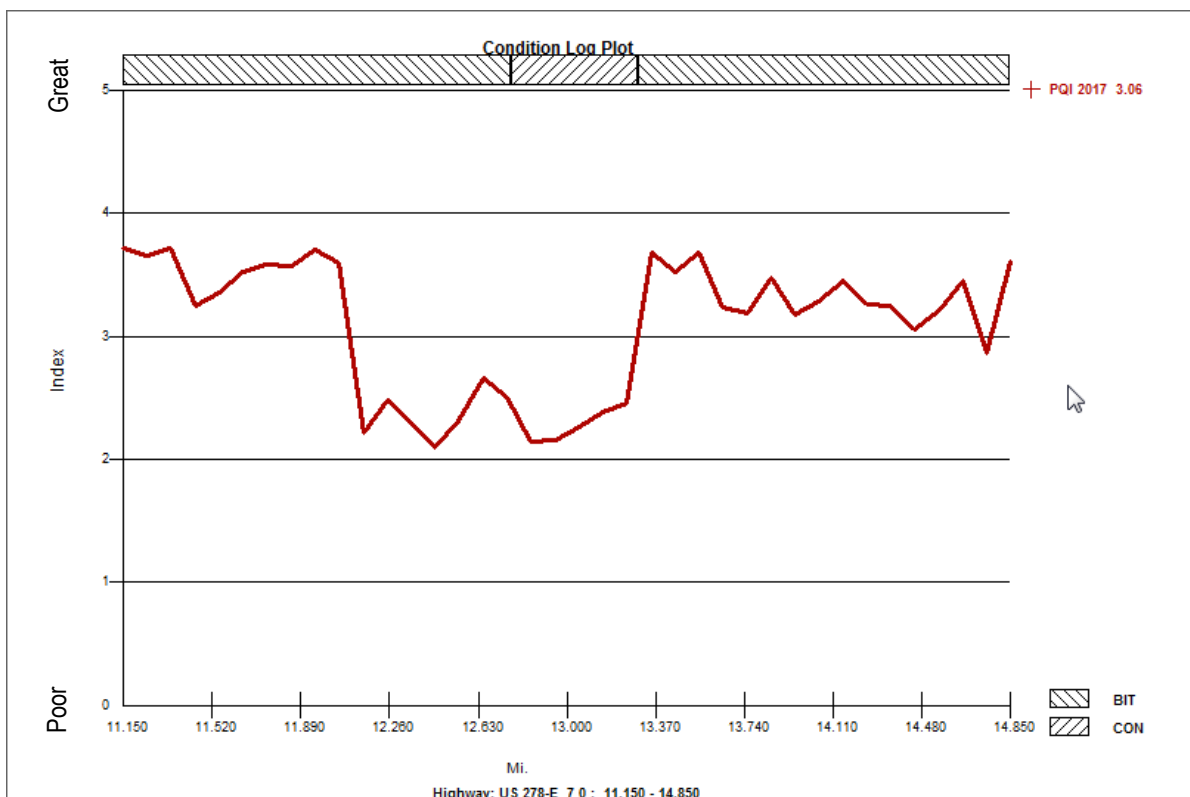
With an average of 56,300 vehicles per day, this is one of the most traveled corridors in South Carolina. The traffic volumes on US 278 often exceed those of I-95 and are routinely above 60,000 vehicles per day.

PAVEMENT QUALITY

SCDOT's Pavement Management Department collects pavement condition data and calculates a Pavement Quality Index (PQI) to communicate the pavement's condition rating. A surface's PQI is given a range between the 0 - 5, higher PQI's equate to better pavement quality while a low PQI indicates poorer pavement quality. As shown in Chart 1; the average PQI for this section of US 278 is 3.06, with some fluctuation throughout the "fair" range. As determined by SCDOT, "fair" is a general term used to describe the condition of the pavement that has a Remaining Service Life (RSL) of five to nine years.⁴ Chart 1 shows a noticeable decrease in pavement quality in the approximate area that corresponds with the structurally deficient eastbound span of the Karl Bowers Bridge. More information on structural conditions of the bridges is in Section 4.2.

CHART 1: US 278 PAVEMENT QUALITY INDEX

Source: South Carolina Department of Transportation (2017)



⁴ SCDOT, *The State of the Pavement Report*, (2014)



IMAGE 4: TRAFFIC CRASH

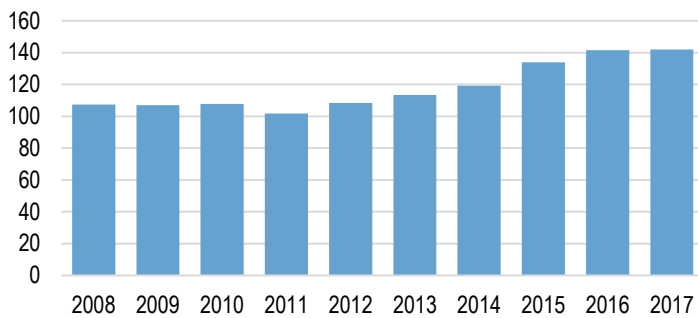
SOUTH CAROLINA CRASH STATISTICS

South Carolina has one of the highest rates of traffic fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled in the country⁵

- **One person is killed** every **8.9 hours** on South Carolina roadways.⁶
- **One person is injured** every **8.7 minutes**.⁶
- **One traffic collision** occurs every **3.7 minutes**.⁶

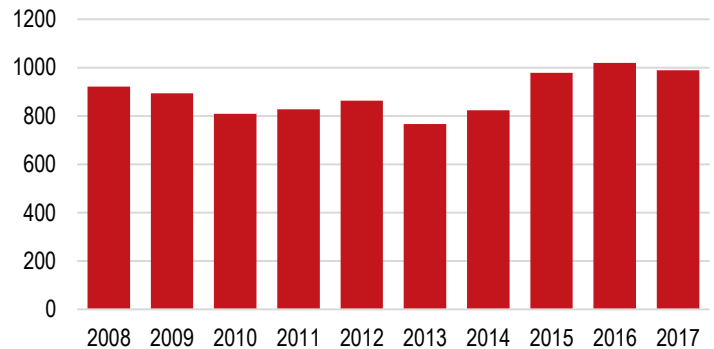
Collisions, resulting injuries, and fatalities are on the rise in South Carolina (Charts 2 & 3), these trends are far exceeding the national average (See Chart 4).

CHART 2: SOUTH CAROLINA 10 YEAR MOTOR VEHICLE COLLISIONS (THOUSANDS OF COLLISIONS)



Data Source: South Carolina Traffic Collision Fact Book 2017

CHART 3: SOUTH CAROLINA 10 YEAR TRAFFIC FATALITIES (NUMBER OF FATALITIES)



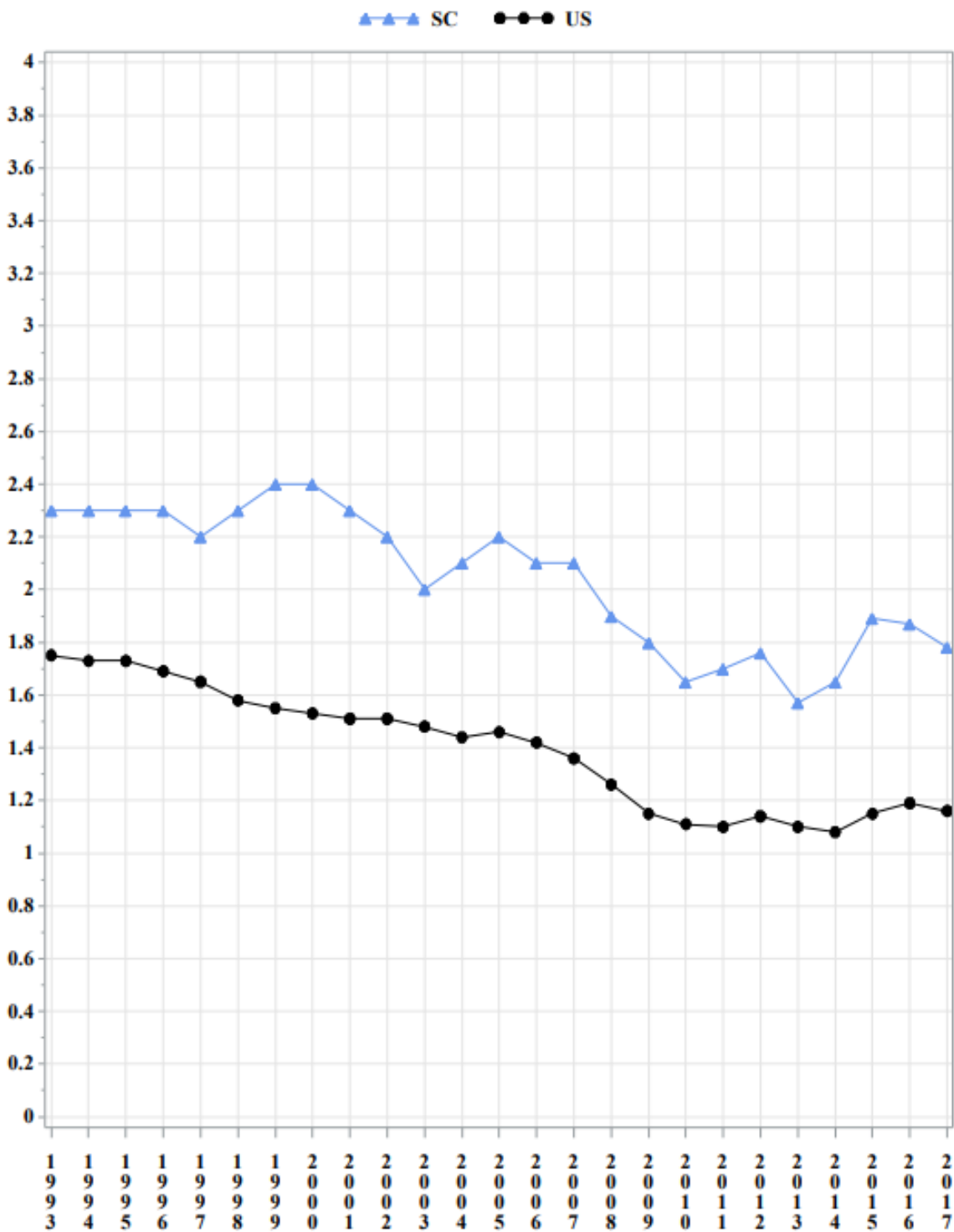
Data Source: South Carolina Traffic Collision Fact Book 2017

⁵ Insurance Institute for Highway Safety Highway Loss Data Institute, *General Statistics Based on 2016 US DO T FARS Data* (2017) <https://www.iihs.org/topics/fatality-statistics/detail/state-by-state>

⁶ South Carolina Department of Public Safety, *South Carolina Traffic Collision Fact Book* (2017)



**CHART 4: MILEAGE DEATH RATE (FATALITIES PER 100 MILLION VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED)
SOUTH CAROLINA vs. NATIONAL AVERAGE
25 YEAR TREND 1993 - 2017**



Source for U.S. data: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)

South Carolina Traffic Collision Fact Book 2017
South Carolina Department of Public Safety



PROJECT AREA CRASH DATA SUMMARY

South Carolina led the country in most traffic fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled in 2017.⁵ The state’s roadway network continues to be one of the deadliest in the United States. This section of roadway is one of the heaviest traveled corridors in the state often experiencing congestion, delay, and increased amounts of traffic related crash incidents. At the project limits, travelers are wedged from six lanes into four lanes. This bottleneck leads to increased congestion and results in heightened numbers of crashes, especially rear-end crashes caused by the abrupt accelerating and decelerating of vehicles traveling through the congested area. As illustrated in Chart 5, **this section of US 278 experienced 648 total crashes** over just a five-year period (2014-2018).⁷

According to the SCDOT, the statewide average for rear-end type crashes is approximately 35%. This section of roadway **experienced a five-year average rear-end crash rate of 63%**, demonstrating that this section is **well above the statewide average** for similar roadways.

The US 278 Bridges as they currently exist present a hazardous gateway into a well-visited tourist attraction and massive economic contributor to the entire state. Regarding Urban Principal Arterials, one way that SCDOT mitigates for rear-end crashes in bottleneck areas is by implementing roadway widening and additional lanes to increase capacity and decrease congestion. Expanding this section of US 278 to 6-lanes would likely reduce the total number of crashes along US 278 and increase the safety of the traveling public.

CHART 5 – FIVE-YEAR CRASHES WITHIN PROJECT LIMITS (2014 – 2018)
Source: South Carolina Department of Transportation

CRASH SUMMARY US 278	
Project Area (From Fording Island Rd. Intersection to Squire Pope Rd. Intersection)	
01/01/2014 – 12/31/2018	
<i>Approximately 3.7 miles</i>	
Fatality Crashes	5
Injury Crashes	149
PDO Crashes	494
2014-2018 Total Crashes	648
Rear End	412
Angle	93
Sideswipe	59
Head On	4
Run Off Road	60
Animal	1
Bicycle	0
Pedestrian	2
Other	17
Total Crashes	648

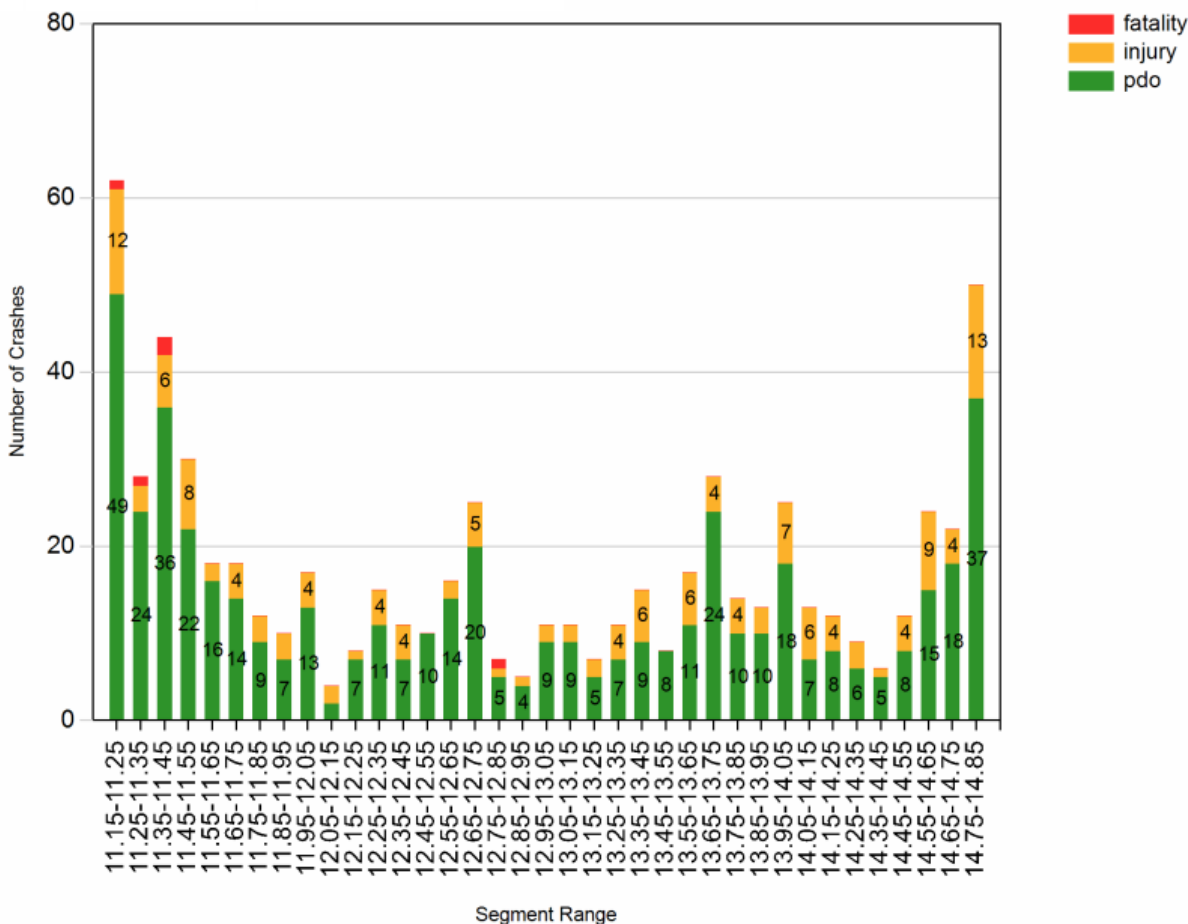
⁷ SCDOT, *Five-Year Crash Summary – Beaufort County US 278 (FORDING ISLAND RD) to (SQUIRE POPE RD)*, (2018)



Not only did this portion of US 278 have elevated numbers of crashes, but these crashes resulted in heightened reports of fatalities and injuries. As depicted in Chart 6, in five-years' time there were **5 fatalities** within the project limits and **149 crashes that resulted in injuries**. This dangerous roadway is causing injury for residents, commuters, and tourists. On top of these life-threatening accidents, 494 crashes that resulted in personal damage only (PDO) were also recorded.

According to the SCDOT, this portion of roadway has a significantly higher amount of crashes than other 4-mile stretches of similar roadways. As illustrated in Chart 6, the spikes in crashes over the past five years are mostly occurring near the western ends of this project's limits, which corresponds to the beginning points of the bottleneck at the western end of the approach to the US 278 bridges. Segment 11.15 – 11.25 is located near the intersection of US 278 and Moss Creek Drive. Segment 11.35-11.45 is located near the intersection of US 278 and Salt Marsh Drive. Four out of five fatalities in the project limits took place near the bottleneck at the west end of the bridge. This narrowing roadway is causing a bottleneck in traffic and is fueling the elevated numbers of injuries and fatalities along this section of US 278. The traffic bottlenecks are creating a hazardous section along one of the most well-traveled corridors in South Carolina, a state that already yields one of the highest numbers of traffic fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled in the country.

CHART 6: FIVE-YEAR CRASHES WITHIN PROJECT LIMITS (2013 – 2017) BY SEGMENT
US 278 (FORDING ISLAND RD) from MPT 11.150 to MPT 14.850 (SQUIRE POPE RD)
BEAUFORT COUNTY
01/01/2014 - 12/31/2018 (5.0 years)
Length = 3.700 miles AADT = 54,765
Functional Class = Urban -- Principal Arterial - Other



4.2 URGENCY OF PROJECT

The current state of the US 278 bridges to Hilton Head Island is producing severe congestion, promoting unsafe travel, limiting mobility for freight and goods, and ultimately hindering the economic stability of the region. All four of the US 278 bridge structures are listed as functionally obsolete. The eastbound structure of the Karl Bowers Bridge is also rated as structurally deficient, with a Sufficiency Rating of only 53.7. As a structurally deficient bridge, the eastbound bridge over Mackay Creek requires repairs or replacement to avoid future weight restrictions for this important freight corridor. US 278 has been listed as a system upgrade project in the 2018 SCDOT Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (2017-2022) to improve the US 278 corridor⁸ and is ranked as the #1 priority project in the Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS) 2015-2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)⁹

SCDOT has allocated \$43.5 million to be used to remediate the structural deficiencies of the eastbound structure of the Karl Bowers Bridge. Improving only the structural deficiencies of the eastbound structure of the Karl Bowers Bridge will resolve the existing structural issues through rehabilitation or reconstruction, but it will not address the pressing capacity and congestion issues stemming from all four of the 2-lane bridges. **If the structural deficiencies of the eastbound structure of the Karl Bowers Bridge are not repaired or improved, weight and use restrictions will need to be added to the bridges.** Weight and use restrictions on the bridge will result in impaired movement of supplies and goods that fuel the thriving tourism-based economy on Hilton Head Island. **With the tourism industry in the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton-Beaufort MSA contributing such a significant amount to South Carolina's total revenue, these weights and use restrictions would lead to notable statewide impacts.**

It is crucial that this project be approved now for the full funding amount so that the \$92.35 million in local funds and the \$43.5 million from the SCDOT can be used concurrently with the SIB grant funds to appropriately develop a scope for the project improving all four bridge spans and addressing both the structural deficiencies of the Karl Bowers Bridge as well as the capacity issues caused by all four of the narrow bridge spans and associated roadways. This will enhance the flow of commuters, tourists, labor force workers, and freight across the region.



IMAGE 5: CRACKS AND RUST STAINS ON A PILE UNDER US 278 WBL OF KARL BOWERS BRIDGE OVER MACKAY CREEK
Source: Collins Engineer Inc. 2010

DETERIORATING CONDITIONS OF EXISTING BRIDGES

According to the American Road and Transportation Builders Association *2018 Deficient Bridges Report*, the US 278 eastbound lane of the Karl Bowers Bridge over Mackay Creek is ranked #15 on the topmost traveled structurally deficient bridges in South Carolina; ranked #1 on this list for the Lowcountry region.¹⁰

During an inspection of the bridges over eight and a half years ago, Collins Engineers, Inc. found corrosion of the steel girders, cracks in the concrete girders and footings, loss of protective coating in the superstructure, exposure of the footings, undermining at the channel piers and more.¹¹ Repairs have included routing cracks and filling them with flexible mastic sealant, cleaning corrosion off steel girders and spraying with a protective coating, repairing the spall at the bottom of some pile caps, and many more.

⁸ South Carolina Department of Transportation, *Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (2017-2022)*

⁹ Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS) Metropolitan Planning Organization, *2015-2019 Transportation Improvement Program (2016)*

¹⁰ American Road and Transportation Builders Association, *2018 Deficient Bridge Report (2018)*

¹¹ Collins Engineer Inc., *Cursory Above Water and Underwater Investigation of US 278 East and West Bound Over Mackay Creek and Skull Creek (2010)*

Bridge inspections performed in 2018 found that the superstructure and substructure of the eastbound bridge over Mackay Creek are in poor condition.¹²

The bridges are facing structural challenges as well as roadway congestion and mobility challenges. Therefore, the replacement of these bridges is a priority for the region. In addition, while the bridges are being replaced due to the structural condition, consideration for the alleviation of congestion with the new structures would ensure strategic use of funds. More information regarding the urgency of this project is in **Section 4.8 - REGIONAL AND STATEWIDE SIGNIFICANCE.**



IMAGE 6: CRACKS ON SUPPORTING CONCRETE BENEATH BRIDGE.
Source: Collins Engineer Inc. 2010

4.3 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESOLUTION

Not applicable. The South Carolina Transportation Infrastructure Bank (the Bank) criteria states: *“If applicable, a resolution from the local governing body or bodies which make a finding, with supporting information, that the project is essential to the economic development in the area or state and consistent with applicable local land use plans. Must be submitted if applicable as an Economic Development project.”* This project is not an Economic Development project.

4.4 CERTIFICATE FROM THE ADVISORY COORDINATING COUNCIL FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Not applicable. The South Carolina Transportation Infrastructure Bank (the Bank) criteria states: *“If applicable, a certificate that the project is essential to the economic development in the state from the Advisory Coordinating Council for Economic Development of the Department of Commerce. Must be submitted if applicable as an Economic Development Project.”* This project is not an Economic Development project.

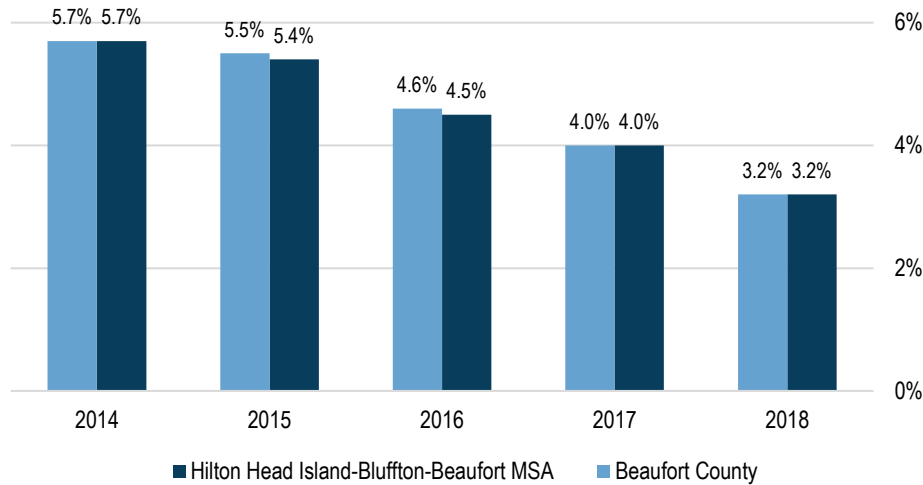
¹² SCDOT: The Office of Bridge Maintenance, *National Bridge Inventory Structure Inventory and Appraisal Report* (2018)



4.5 CURRENT AND FIVE-YEAR HISTORY OF UNEMPLOYMENT DATA

According to the *Bureau of Labor Statistics, SC Dept of Employment & Workforce*, Beaufort County and the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton-Beaufort Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) are both tied for having the 10th Best Unemployment Rate (3.2%) compared to all South Carolina Counties.¹³ The unemployment rate has been steadily declining for each jurisdiction, as shown in Chart 7.

CHART 7: FIVE YEAR UNEMPLOYMENT RATE



The civilian labor force and overall employment has been on the rise in the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton-Beaufort MSA, while unemployment is on the decline, as shown in Table 2. Beaufort County has seen a steady increase in the number of jobs that are provided through the tourism industry, up 300 jobs between 2015 and 2016.¹⁴ Tourism and the military installations are the driving force behind the low unemployment rates of the County and the MSA. As employment rises in the region, the mobility and efficient flow of goods and people become heightened priorities for the economic preservation of the area. The effectiveness of the roadway network must be constantly evaluated and improved upon to ensure the economic viability of the region remains intact.

TABLE 2: CURRENT & FIVE-YEAR EMPLOYMENT DATA

HILTON HEAD ISLAND-BLUFFTON-BEAUFORT MSA				
YEAR	CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE	EMPLOYMENT	UNEMPLOYMENT	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE
2018	87,731	84,927	2,804	3.2%
2017	86,333	82,896	3,437	4.0%
2016	84,375	80,834	3,841	4.5%
2015	83,519	78,979	4,540	5.4%
2014	80,930	76,345	4,585	5.7%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, S.C. Dept of Employment & Workforce

¹³ Bureau of Labor Statistics, *SC Dept of Employment & Workforce Data* (2018)

¹⁴ Regional Transactions Concepts, LLC, *Estimate Total Impact of Tourism in Beaufort County, SC, 2016* (2017)



4.6 LOCAL SUPPORT FROM RESIDENTS THROUGH PETITIONS OR COMMENTS AT PUBLIC HEARINGS

Local support for the project is reflected in the passage of the 1 cent tax referendum by the citizens in November 2018 that is providing \$80 million dollars for the US 278 project. In addition, there have been multiple public information meetings held to inform the public about this project.

The Town of Hilton Head Island sponsored the first two public meetings with support from the Town of Bluffton and Beaufort County. The first public meeting was on July 18, 2018 from 6 pm – 8 pm at the Hilton Head High School; 70 Wilborn Rd, Hilton Head Island, SC 2992. The second was held on August 15, 2018 from 6 pm – 8 pm at the Bluffton Branch County Library; 120 Palmetto Way, Bluffton, SC 29910. At these meetings attendees participated in visioning sessions to discuss the transportation needs of the U.S. 278 corridor to Hilton Head Island. Public attendees generally supported the US 278 Corridor Improvement Project and demonstrated a desire for increased multi-modal facilities along US 278, highly supporting pursuing ways to decrease congestion along the US 278 corridor and across the region. They also demonstrated support for more alternative routes to US 278 to improve regional mobility.

SCDOT held the NEPA Scoping Public Meeting on Thursday, September 27, 2018, between 6:00 pm and 8:00 pm at the Hilton Head High School; 70 Wilborn Rd, Hilton Head Island, SC 29926. The purpose of the meeting was to officially introduce the project to the community, gather initial comments from the public, identify the needs for the project, and help identify concerns people may have about the improvements or the project's impact to the natural and human environments. The formal public comment period for the meeting was open from September 27 through October 12, 2018; including an online comment forum. SCDOT has left the online comment forum available on the project website and it will remain open throughout the project development process. There is a second public information meeting planned for September 19, 2019 to present the range of alternatives as well as the reasonable alternatives.

The following lists the **102 comments received as a result of the September 27, 2018 public meeting to date:**

TABLE 3: COMMENTS FROM SEPTEMBER 27, 2018 PUBLIC MEETING

NO.	GENERAL COMMENT
1	In favor of project, sales tax; wants replacement of all 4 bridges, or at least replacement of oldest one and widening of others
2	Concerned about bridge architecture
3	Traffic lights are a main source of the congestion; only look to widening to 3 lanes;
4	Would like a segregated bike/ped facility
5	Questions regarding the boundaries of the project (where will the highway come in and question about turning right from the service station)
6	Wants to end the toll on the cross Island parkway
7	Would like to widen to 3 lanes and limit growth
8	Wants to route the highway away from the native islander property; wants cross island rout expanded; wants to exempt Gullah natives from the toll
9	Add an underpass to connect the boat ramp side to the refuge side, close the median and restrict traffic movement on existing curb to right in/right out
10	Lives in Windmill Harbor; concerned about entry/exit design; likes the east bound acceleration lane length and width; should keep a consistent 45mp speed throughout
11	Should have a pull-off lane for accidents; 2 access points to the island; need a safer way for residents at Mariners Cover/Windmill Harbor to enter 278
12	Interested in road/bridge re- alignment at start of the bridge (assume Bluffton side); continue lanes all the way to Cross Island
13	Need safer exit/access at Windmill Harbor; remove left turn access at several intersections; separate bike path the entire corridor
14	Night work wanted; build one bridge at the time; residents need viable lanes for use on the bridge during high tourist season



Beaufort County - US 278 Corridor Improvement Project

STATE INFRASTRUCTURE BANK APPLICATION

15	Thanks for meeting; handouts and displays amazing
16	Thanks; wider shoulders, 3 lanes for traffic each way, aesthetically impressive architecture, hidden power lines, bike lanes
17	Funding; create programs to reduce commute traffic like rideshare, working with major employers
18	Wants it to stay true to native islanders; native islander sign should be larger; crosswalk over head to the Stoney community; flyover at Windmill Harbor; not a fan of this meeting format
19	More meetings wanted for the Islanders, ways to get off the island, drainage, more sewer in native community, limb up trees
20	Concerned if we widen bridges and not all the roads there is no point; would like another bridge from the south end to Daufuskie Island and then there to Bluffton
21	Was hoping to see how it would be done.
22	open up toll road; be considerate of Gullah community
23	Important to include bike/ped trail
24	include bike lanes on new bridge
25	New bridge separate from existing one; 3 lanes each way
26	Safety concerns regarding signage at the exit for the Cross Island Roadway
27	Disappointed in lack of presentation; would like a presentation for a group of churches
28	wide safe lanes for cycling including access to/from bridge
29	Reverse lanes during specific hours/seasons; work with employers to implement a 15 min clock for employees
30	Reverse lanes during specific hours/seasons; work with employers to implement a 15 min clock for employees
31	Questions about impacts to native islanders; wants consideration of a toll; look at advanced construction techniques
32	Continue on the Bluffton parkway exit lane as free flow instead of merge; night work during tourist season
33	More lanes & wider bridges needed; reverse a lane
34	Need another bridge
35	need 3 lanes in both directions; environmental impact should be a minimum
36	Concerns about traffic at intersection of 278 and Squire Pope Road
37	Wants improvements
38	Build suspension bridge from new flyover
39	New bridge
40	Noise wall wanted
41	maintenance in Bluffton on 278 medians is poor
42	Continue flyover express to the HHI bridge; include landscaped safe haven medians including the native island community; make the total island pedestrian friendly, improve intersection at Squire Pope Road
43	Wanted to know where the plan was
44	Concerns about Gullah people; does not want to widen but instead reduced speeds
45	Preferred a presentation
46	Preferred a presentation
47	Concerned about timing of project and ability to enter into her family property off of 278 across from the Crazy Crab
48	New bridge to the cross island; suggested a parallel road along 278 over hog island and that others at the Town of HHI had already designed a plan for this
49	Concerned about access to 278 from property along 278 across from Crazy Crab. Suggests additional traffic light between the bridge & Squire Pope Road; extend the bridge from Bluffton parkway to the Cross Island; tunnel; concerned because they've lost land previously to widenings and are faced with this again.
50	Comments regarding the Jenkins Island project



51	Lives in Windmill Harbor; concerned about noise; would like softer pavement materials and a wall
52	Wants to know if citizens really have input on the project and worries about the inconvenience to the native islanders with the widening of the road
53	wants additional bridge; widening to 3 lanes
54	Wants to widen throughout project area because of congestion
55	Would like to see Gatherings neighborhood protected from traffic noise. Upset that the wall built around the community was shortened and so several homes are exposed
56	Would like bike and ped pathways
57	Thinks it should be 4 lanes both ways; would like to know costs of 4 lanes both ways
58	Wants bike lane; seams in bridge joint should be better maintained in the future
59	Bluffton to blue heron tying into south side of 278 east of existing abutment. A better solution during engineering phase would be to create a ramp exit for blue heron right at attachment to 278 even if using part of shoulder as deceleration lane with shoulder ends sign, allowing existing deceleration lane acquired for three lane expansion. Also extend blue heron east acceleration lane as allowed. Bridge will level on pickney like existing and curve between existing road and power line approximately 114 feet of room. Park area will be closed during construction and boat ramp should have to be relocated. During construction and fill of pickney for new three lanes a pass through pre-cast cement tunnel should be installed with a temporary end wall and as other lanes are closed it can be extended for a way to get to the national refuge and return to Bluffton. Tunnel may need a pump
60	Concerned about widening because of its impact to her property. It is difficult to exit her property now. Would like to have a way to slow traffic - whether through speed limit or traffic light. Wants a meeting with Stoney Community.
61	Opposes RVs having to do U Turns to get to the Hilton Head Harbor RV Resort
62	It is imperative that bicycle and pedestrian accommodations be made for the entire Moss Creek to Squire Pope Rd stretch. This connectivity should stretch all the way to the existing pathways on the island, on the Bluffton Parkway and to Moss Creek.
63	I am in favor of replacing the bridge for safety but am opposed to native islanders' land being assumed for this project. I am opposed to widening the road to include more lanes. The project should not displace any residents of any historical properties.
64	Please include a bicycle lane on the bridge.
65	I do not want any new bridges to have more than the present two lanes onto the Island. We do not have enough room on the Island for any more visitors--we are like a balloon, and it will pop. I also agree with the Coastal Conservation League's position: a new bridge that avoids impacts to the multi- generational Gullah community in the Stoney neighborhood, accommodates future transit, provides a safe way onto the island for bike and pedestrian traffic and integrates into the existing neighborhoods on both sides of the river.
66	Please make sure that we include bicycle and pedestrian lanes on the new bridges. It is absolutely imperative that this is included. our bridge improvements. Currently HHI is a "gold medal bicycle community" but there is no way a sane person would consider riding through the area being discussed for improvement. Thank you.
67	Windmill Harbour is a well-established residential community and must continue to have safe and practical ingress and egress. Please add me to any email group that deals with this topic.
68	I hope we can move forward in renovating these aging (but critically important) bridges. After many years of service in this harsh marine environment, where any metal corrosion (such as at bridge expansion joints, arch and deck support points, etc.) will be accelerated, SCDOT is correct in bringing this issue up now and pushing it to successful completion.
69	Any new bridge should avoid negative impact to the multi- generational Gullah community in the Stoney neighborhood, accommodates future transit, provides a safe way onto the island for bike and pedestrian traffic and integrates into the existing neighborhoods on both sides of the river.
70	Lane access to the Island is totally inadequate and traffic is insane in the morning going to the Island and in the evening coming off the island. Medical appointments in am to doctors or the hospital causes us to leave several hours early to get there on time. It's a bottleneck and it gets worse when come in on Friday and Sat for check in.
71	Email Included 8 pages of further description from previous comment



Beaufort County - US 278 Corridor Improvement Project

STATE INFRASTRUCTURE BANK APPLICATION

72	CCL: Summary of letter includes: (1) increased roadway safety for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians; (3) (2) anticipation and accommodation of future state and local investments in mass transit; (4) avoidance of adverse impacts to the existing native islander community in the Stoney neighborhood; (5) protection of important environmental resources, including Pinckney Island Wildlife Refuge.
73	Concerned about the oil and pollution that go into the waterway from 278, especially into Jarvis Creek if there are additional lanes. Would like to limit expansion to the current lanes already there.
74	The road should be redirected because of the direct impact on the Gullah family properties: redirect the highway to follow the existing power lines or to go over the marsh behind the Crazy Crab and tie back into the cross island parkway.
75	Does not want to widen the road because of all the traffic and it would take away from the yards and make it more dangerous for pedestrians.
76	Asked questions - if SCDOT study was incorporating improvements from Beaufort County on Jenkins Island and if there was enough land to have 3 lanes in both directions underneath the Bluffton Parkway flyover
77	Disagrees with widening from 4-6 lanes because of the impact to the Stoney community and also that it will change the character of the island.
78	would like an alternate route along the marsh side that would take west bound traffic from Squire Pope Rd off Island to a 3 lane bridge and another one that would take the eastbound traffic from Spanish Wells from 3 lane bridge; No 3 lanes in Gullah Community; encourages mass transit
79	Concerned about safety of community at large and thinks the speed limit is too high, taking of land from native islanders; would like a 2nd bridge for the islanders
80	Would like to see the culvert reopened connecting the tidal creek around Hog Island because its currently causing a loss of shrimp/oyster beds; wants sidewalks/bike paths on HHI to connect to the bridge
81	Thinks the traffic problem is only during peak hours during peak season; does not want any additional tourists; options should not adversely impact native islanders or the environment; should consider only 1 reversable lane, not 2
82	Does not think the road needs to be widened, the speed limit needs to be reduced. Concerned about Stoney community.
83	Would like to see a bridge come onto the island but would like to come up with a plan to come around the Stoney area. Would like to look at Spanish Well Road or S. Pope Road to have a new road leaving the island. They (Stoney Community) would like to meet with the head of the SCDOT.
84	Does not want intrusion into his family land (108 William Hilton Parkway)
85	Concerned specifically about 2 Gullah families specifically in that area. Instead proposes to use the powerline corridor behind Stoney starting at Windmill Harbor and over to the Cross Island or use the Jarvis Creek Waterway by bridging from Windmill Harbor to the Cross Island parkway.
86	Provided information on a new 200- unit housing development near Spanish Wells & Jonesville Road. Thinks the traffic study needed for the development is done by SCDOT and has questions about that.
87	endorse and encourage the inclusion of a new safe bicycle pathway system stretching from Squire Pope over the bridges onto the Mainland
88	would like to see a bicycle pathway that would allow bicycle traffic to travel safely across the bridge
89	Represents the Native Island community and would like to see if he would host a Q&A in the community
90	I am writing to express my desire for safe, separated, bike/ped facilities across the bridge to connect Bluffton and HHI's bike/ped network
91	very supportive of project. Would like bike lanes
92	Both on road bicycle lanes and off-road multi-user side paths are appropriate and warranted
93	I would urge you to include bike and pedestrian pathways from Squire Pope Road to Moss Creek



Beaufort County - US 278 Corridor Improvement Project

STATE INFRASTRUCTURE BANK APPLICATION

94	When the SC 802 bridge connecting Lady's Island and Beaufort was built, a fairly narrow ped facility was included. I have been over the bridge literally dozens of time. I have yet to see the ped facility empty. Also mostly African Americans exercising walking over the bridge and back. When SCDOT designs a single-track bike/ped facility, please provide a parking area on each side of the bridge, the mainland and especially on HHI side. Not much, enough for perhaps 20 cars. Ditto a small lot on Pinckney Island.
95	Same email as sent to the project email. Email Included 8 pages of further description from previous comment
96	I would strongly encourage you to incorporate into this project special bike/walking lanes. Currently the bridge is shared by cars, bikers and even pedestrians and it would be beneficial to have better separation and protection.
97	Against having an expressway through their residential, native community. Sites the difficulty getting out of her driveway and suggests lower speed limits, traffic lights and more circles like the southern end of the island. If there is a need to have a high-speed way, I would suggest that a high speed thoroughfare be connected to the bridge or the Bluffton Parkway, travel over the waterway and connect to the Cross Island Expressway. This can be at a cost to the travelers. Does not want increased lanes to manage traffic.
98	it is imperative to include bike lanes
99	In support of bike lanes; points to NWP that runs out of parking spaces during peak season but could accommodate more bikes if there were a safe way to get there.
100	Has concerns about environmental impact of water pipes underneath current 278 structure
101	Note on behalf of the Fish & Wildlife Service in response to LOI
102	Comments on behalf of Savannah Riverkeeper about the NWR, Stoney Community, & Boat Ramp



4.7 LOCAL RESOLUTIONS

The resolutions listed below convey support for this project and corroborate that the current bridges along US 278 connecting to Hilton Head Island are an impediment to citizens and visitors, a safety hazard (particularly during emergency evacuations) and hinder economic activity and future development of the area. A full-size copy of each resolution is provided in **Appendix A**.

Beaufort County Council Resolution

RESOLUTION 2018 / 28

A RESOLUTION OF THE BEAUFORT COUNTY COUNCIL TO MAKE A FINDING, WITH SUPPORTING INFORMATION, THAT THE U.S. HIGHWAY 278 BRIDGES TO HILTON HEAD ISLAND IMPROVEMENT PROJECT IS ESSENTIAL TO THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE AREA, IS CONSISTENT WITH APPLICABLE LOCAL LAND USE PLANS, AND IS ON ALL PRIORITY LISTS MAINTAINED BY BEAUFORT COUNTY

WHEREAS, the 3.7-mile section of United States Highway 278 (US 278) from Moss Creek Drive to Squire Pope Road currently experiences severe daily congestion due to traffic volumes that exceed the capacity provided by the four travel lanes; experiences rear-end crash rates that are substantially higher than similar roadways in South Carolina due to stop and go traffic conditions; and produces congestion and delay leading to crucial interruptions in the transportation network that Beaufort County and the region rely on for the movement of goods and people; and

WHEREAS, the deficient bridge conditions, traffic congestion, and bottlenecks that occur along this portion of US 278 impact evacuations from Hilton Head Island as this route is the only land-based emergency evacuation route off Hilton Head Island; and

WHEREAS, improving the US 278 Bridges to Hilton Head Island will provide a mechanism for long term economic competitiveness by: improving transportation efficiency and reliability for the movement of people and goods; improving access between employment centers, job opportunities, and workforces; increasing the economic productivity of labor (the fewer hours employees spend commuting will result in higher productivity at their jobs); and supporting long term job creation; and

WHEREAS, the deficient bridge conditions, traffic congestion, and bottlenecks that occur along this portion of US 278 impact the reliability and resiliency of the Strategic Statewide Freight Roadway Network as listed in the SCDOT South Carolina Statewide Freight Plan, which Beaufort County relies on to support its robust tourism economy; and

WHEREAS, according to a 2017 Regional Transactions Concepts, LLC study, over 2,600,000 tourists visit Hilton Head Island each year, estimated to contribute an economic impact (output) of approximately \$1.44 billion within the County in 2016. Most of these tourists travel to Hilton Head Island using the US 278 bridges; and

WHEREAS, according to a 2017 study by the U.S. Travel Association, Beaufort County supplied the 3rd highest number of tourism jobs in the state; and

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, Inflow/Outflow Analysis (2015), 12,693 people commute to Hilton Head Island daily from other areas using the US 278 bridges, representing 61.5% of the workforce on Hilton Head Island; and

WHEREAS, the Beaufort County Council does hereby find that the current condition of the US 278 Bridges to Hilton Head Island is a significant impediment to our citizens and visitors and a hindrance to the economic activity and future development in the region; and

WHEREAS, the US 278 Bridges to Hilton Head Island Improvement Project represents tangible progress towards achieving goals and objectives set by the State and Beaufort County; and

WHEREAS, according to the Beaufort County 2010 Comprehensive Plan, the US 278 Bridges to Hilton Head Island Improvement Project is located within a rural/undeveloped land use area, providing the transportation linkage between regional commercial land along the US 278 corridor in Bluffton and a mix of land use types on Hilton Head Island including park, non-residential, and residential land; and

WHEREAS, the US 278 Bridges to Hilton Head Island Improvement Project is projected to cost in excess of \$245,000,000 based on the 2018 SCDOT engineering estimate; and

WHEREAS, Beaufort County has committed over \$100 million in County funding in the past to help preserve capacity and improve safety of the US 278 corridor; and

WHEREAS, Beaufort County voters have supported the November 2018 1 cent transportation referendum committing \$80 million in local funds for the US 278 Bridges to Hilton Head Island Improvement Project; and

WHEREAS, Beaufort County has funded 66% of the \$6 million Environmental Assessment in partnership with SCDOT and FHWA; and

WHEREAS, the \$6 million Environmental Assessment will analyze options and develop an appropriate solution to address long-term operations, capacity, and safety along US 278 from Moss Creek Drive to Squire Pope Road; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BEAUFORT COUNTY COUNCIL, that the US 278 Bridges to Hilton Head Island Improvement Project is essential to continued economic development in Beaufort County; and

BE IT RESOLVED, the US 278 Bridges to Hilton Head Island Improvement Project is consistent with the existing and planned future land use plans as described in the Beaufort County 2010 Comprehensive Plan; and


BE IT RESOLVED, Beaufort County has listed the US 278 Bridges to Hilton Head Island Improvement Project as a top priority under the Policy Agenda for the 2018 Beaufort County Strategic Plan.

Adopted this 10th day of December 2018.

COUNTY COUNCIL OF BEAUFORT COUNTY

By: 
D. Paul Sommerville, Chairman

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


Thomas J. Keaveny, II, Esquire
Beaufort County Attorney

ATTEST:


Connie L. Schröyer, Clerk to Council



Lowcountry Area Transportation Study Policy Committee Resolution



A RESOLUTION of the Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS) Policy Committee to make a finding, with supporting information, that the US 278 Bridges to Hilton Head Island Improvement Project is essential to the economic development in the Lowcountry area and is on the priority project list. In the LATS Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

WHEREAS, the 3.7-mile section of United States Highway 278 (US 278) from Moss Creek Drive to Squire Pope Road currently experiences severe daily congestion due to traffic volumes that exceed the capacity provided by the four travel lanes; experiences rear-end crash rates that are higher than similar roadways in South Carolina due to stop and go traffic conditions; and produces congestion and delay leading to crucial interruptions in the transportation network that the Lowcountry area relies on for the movement of goods and people; and

WHEREAS, all four of the US 278 bridge structures are listed as functionally obsolete and the eastbound structure of the Karl Bowers Bridge over Mackay Creek is structurally deficient; and

WHEREAS, US 278 impacts evacuations from Hilton Head Island as this route is the only land-based emergency evacuation route off Hilton Head Island; and

WHEREAS, the deficient bridge conditions, traffic congestion, and bottlenecks that occur along this portion of US 278 impact the reliability and resiliency of the Strategic Statewide Freight Roadway Network as listed in the SCDOT South Carolina Statewide Freight Plan, which the Lowcountry area relies on to support its robust tourism economy; and

WHEREAS, improving the US 278 Bridges to Hilton Head Island will provide a mechanism for long term economic competitiveness by: improving transportation efficiency and reliability for the movement of people and goods; improving access between employment centers, job opportunities, and workforces; increasing the economic productivity of labor (the fewer hours employees spend commuting will result in higher productivity at their jobs); and supporting long term job creation; and

WHEREAS, according to a 2017 Regional Transactions Concepts, LLC study, over 2,600,000 tourists visit Hilton Head Island each year, estimated to contribute an economic impact (output) of approximately \$1.44 billion within the County in 2016. Most of these tourists travel to Hilton Head Island using the US 278 bridges; and

WHEREAS, according to a 2017 study by the U.S. Travel Association, Beaufort County supplied the 3rd highest number of tourism jobs in the state.

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, Inflow/Outflow Analysis (2015), 12,693 people commute to Hilton Head Island daily from other areas using the US 278 bridges, representing 61.5% of the workforce on Hilton Head Island; and

c/o Lowcountry Council of Governments
PO Box 98 634 Campground Road
Yemassee, South Carolina 29945
Main: 843.473.3990 Planning: 843.473.3958 Fax: 843.726.5165
www.lowcountrycog.org



WHEREAS, the Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS) Policy Committee does hereby find that the current condition of the US 278 Bridges to Hilton Head Island is a significant impediment to our citizens and visitors and a hindrance on the economic activity and future development in the region; and

WHEREAS, the US 278 Bridges to Hilton Head Island Improvement Project represents tangible progress towards achieving goals and objectives set by the Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS) Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP); and

WHEREAS, the US 278 Bridges to Hilton Head Island Improvement Project will provide for positive progress towards the following guiding principles of the Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS) Metropolitan Planning Organization's Long Range Transportation Plan (2040 LATS LRTP): Barriers to Mobility, Congestion Mitigation, and Economic Vitality/Tourism; and

WHEREAS, the improvements of the US 278 Bridges to Hilton Head Island is projected to cost in excess of \$240,000,000 based on SCDOT engineering estimates and contingency factors; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LOWCOUNTRY AREA TRANSPORTATION POLICY COMMITTEE (LATS), that the US 278 Bridges to Hilton Head Island Improvement Project is essential to continued safety and economic development in the Lowcountry area; and

BE IT RESOLVED, the Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS) policy Committee has listed the US 278 Bridges to Hilton Head Island as a top priority project that will support the implementation of the 2040 LATS Metropolitan Planning Organization's Long Range Transportation Plan (2040 LATS LRTP).

Adopted this 7th day of June, 2019.

LOWCOUNTRY AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY POLICY COMMITTEE

Lisa Sulka, Chair
Mayor, Town of Bluffton

c/o Lowcountry Council of Governments
PO Box 98 634 Campground Road
Yemassee, South Carolina 29945
Main: 843.473.3990 Planning: 843.473.3958 Fax: 843.726.5165
www.lowcountrycog.org



Town of Hilton Head Island Town Council Resolution

Resolution Number _____

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA, SUPPORTING THE JOINT PURSUIT, WITH BEAUFORT COUNTY, AND IN COORDINATION WITH THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA, THE FUNDING, ANALYSIS AND ULTIMATE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION PROJECT KNOWN AS "SCDOT PROJECT ID PO30450 - U.S. 278 CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS", A PORTION OF WHICH IS WITHIN THE TOWN LIMITS OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND, BEAUFORT COUNTY, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PLANS OF SAID PROJECT.

WHEREAS, the South Carolina Department of Transportation ("SCDOT"), proposes to survey, analyze, design, permit, construct, reconstruct, alter, or improve the 3.7-mile section of United States Highway 278 ("U.S. 278") from Moss Creek Drive to Spanish Wells Road including the bridges connecting the mainland to Hilton Head Island in connection with that certain project known as "SCDOT Project ID PO30450 - U.S. 278 Corridor Improvements" (hereinafter, the "Project"), of which a portion is located within the corporate limits of the Town of Hilton Head Island (hereinafter, the "Town"); and

WHEREAS, SCDOT has allocated \$40,000,000 to improve or replace the structurally deficient eastbound span of the Karl Bowers Bridge over Mackay Creek; and

WHEREAS, the traffic capacity limitations and deficient bridge conditions may have dire consequences on public safety during emergency evacuations from Hilton Head Island and post disaster re-entry and recovery operations on Hilton Head Island, as this route is the only land-based route connecting the Island to the mainland; and

WHEREAS, an estimated 2,600,000 tourists visited Hilton Head Island in 2016 and contributed an estimated \$1.44 billion in economic impact (output) according to the 2017

Regional Transactions Concepts, LLC study, and the vast majority of these tourists used the US 278 bridges to access Hilton Head Island; and

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, Inflow/Outflow Analysis (2015), 12,693 people commute to Hilton Head Island using the US 278 bridges, representing 61.5% of the workforce on Hilton Head Island; and

WHEREAS, the 2017 Town of Hilton Head Island Comprehensive Plan states the U.S. 278 Bridges to Hilton Head Island are critical public facilities that provide the only vehicular access for residents and visitors to the Island, and the only ground transportation link for emergency evacuations, and therefore ensuring they are structurally and functionally sound is a top priority; and

WHEREAS, the Project shall provide for long term economic benefits to the Town, the County and the State by improving long-term transportation efficiency and reliability for the Strategic Statewide Freight Roadway Network, as listed in the SCDOT South Carolina Statewide Freight Plan, by improving the movement of people and goods, and the access between employment centers, job opportunities, and workforces; and

WHEREAS, future highway corridor planning must be broadened beyond mere traffic engineering and access management to encompass land use, economic development, pedestrian safety, and aesthetic issues, as well as impacts to existing residents along the corridor; and

WHEREAS, the Project will include an Environmental Assessment currently underway to assess all of the possible solutions and their potential impact on community, natural and cultural resources before committing to a design; and

WHEREAS, THE Town of Hilton Head Island will be appointing a task force made up of community groups to provide input as part of the Environmental Assessment; and

WHEREAS, the Project will improve road capacity; improve safety during daily trips and during emergency evacuations; improve access to U.S. 278 from adjoining roads and properties; improve efficiency through the U.S. 278 corridor; and consider related infrastructure and connectivity for non-motorized transportation; and

WHEREAS, the improvements to the U.S. 278 corridor between Moss Creek Drive and Spanish Wells Road, including repairing or replacing both bridges across Mackay Creek and Skull Creek, is projected to cost in excess of \$245,000,000 (based on SCDOT engineering estimates dated November 2018, adjusted for inflation and contingency factors); and


WHEREAS, Beaufort County voters supported the November 2018 1 cent transportation referendum committing \$80 million in local funds for the U.S. 278 Corridor Improvement Project.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA, that the Project is essential to the safety and welfare of the citizens of, and the continued economic development within, the Town of Hilton Head Island; and

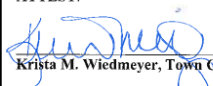
- The Town of Hilton Head Island supports the joint pursuit of funding from the South Carolina Transportation Infrastructure Bank to plan, analyze and implement the Department of Transportation project known as "SCDOT Project ID PO30450 - U.S. 278 Corridor Improvements".

- In supporting this project the Town will not consider any future use of its Jenkins Island property within this corridor until all needs for this project have been identified.


PASSED AND APPROVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL, THIS 18th DAY OF December, 2018


John J. McCann, Mayor

ATTEST:


Krista M. Wiedmeyer, Town Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


Gregg Alford, Town Attorney

Introduced by Council Member William Harkins

In addition, support for this project has been received by Henry McMaster, Governor of South Carolina, The City of Beaufort, and the Town of Bluffton, as well as listed and prioritized in many long range and strategic plans. Appendix B contains the signed letters of support received for the project to date. Appendix C contains a listing of existing plans where this project is prioritized or referenced.

4.8 REGIONAL AND STATEWIDE SIGNIFICANCE

ENHANCEMENT OF MOBILITY AND SAFETY

Congestion Reduction

Studies have shown that **congestion on urban road networks cost the nation billions per year** in longer and less reliable journey times, reduced mobility, increased vehicle operating costs, and environmental degradation.¹⁵

Congestion results when traffic demand approaches or exceeds the available capacity of the roadway system. Bottlenecks, signal timing, and traffic incidents all contribute to congestion. Traffic congestion varies daily along the US 278 bridges to Hilton Head Island due to increased travel during peak hours of morning and evening commute periods and local school traffic. The summertime also sees increased traffic congestion due to the large number of tourists that visit the island each year.



IMAGE 7: CONGESTION LEADING UP TO US 278 BRIDGES TO HILTON HEAD ISLAND

The stretch of US 278 from Fording Island Road to Spanish Wells Road (roughly covering the project area) has seen a steadily increasing annual average daily traffic count over the last ten years (an 18.5% increase from 2008 – 2018). This section of the roadway has not been upgraded or improved to account for this added traffic flow, while both adjoining ends of US 278 have been widened or additional routes have been provided. The impact of this is illustrated in Figure 1. This bridge replacement and congestion relief project will address the present traffic issues as well as allow for continued growth and economic development for the region while also addressing structural concerns.

US 278 has been widened to six lanes, except the portion from Moss Creek Drive to Squire Pope Road, which remains a four-lane section. This has created a bottleneck on both ends of the project area. **Bottlenecks on the roadway account for 40% of all traffic congestion** with the next leading contributor, traffic incidents, at 25%.¹⁶ Many of the traffic incidents that occur along this section of US 278 are due to the bottleneck and congestion. This bottlenecking of the roadway presents a challenge for maintaining flow rates along the corridor. Vehicles are forced to travel at lower speeds and either merge or allow others to merge into the two available lanes. The narrowing of the roadway chokes the traffic flow and limits the overall capacity of the highway. The widening of these bridges into Hilton Head Island will allow all previous widened sections along US 278 and all added routes, like Bluffton Parkway, to operate in a complete, more efficient system.

With the bridges being only two lanes in each direction, any traffic incident can delay traffic and cause congestion long after the roadways have been cleared. As compared to other arterial routes with alternative routes, this section of US 278 does not have any alternative routes, meaning that any traffic incident or congestion occurring along the bridge is much more significant compared to other arterials that have alternative routes. This widening project would provide the expanded capacity needed to reduce this congested section of roadway and deliver a more efficient east-west corridor for the region.

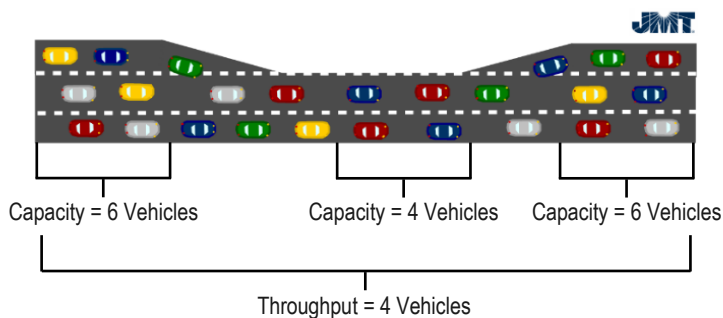


FIGURE 1: The capacity at the bottleneck will dictate the capacity of the roadway. Traffic cannot travel faster than the speed through the bottleneck.

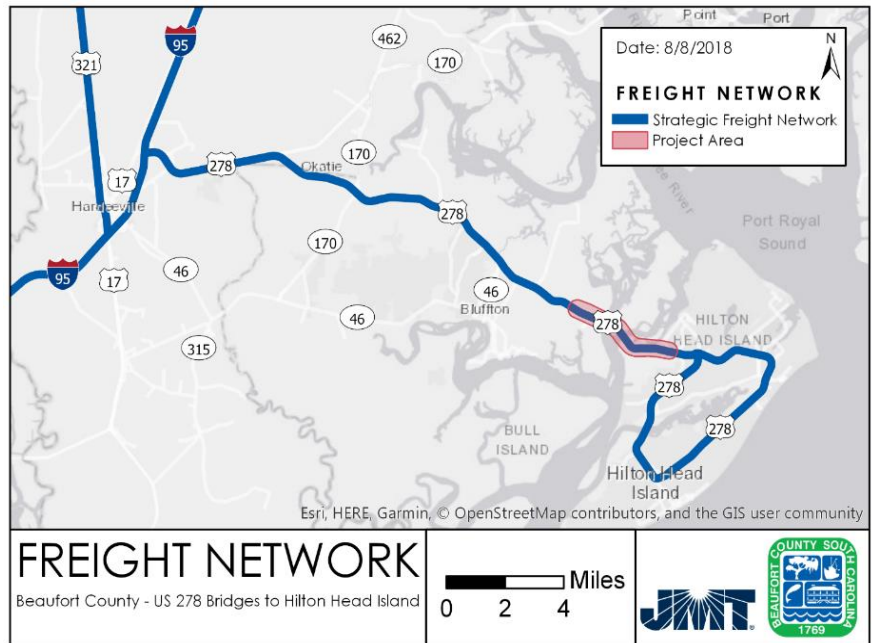
¹⁵ Office of Economic and Strategic Analysis, U.S. Department of Transportation, *Assessing the Full Costs of Congestion on Surface Transportation Systems and Reducing Them through Pricing*, (2009)

¹⁶ SCDOT, *South Carolina Strategic Corridors Plan*, (2014)

Strategic Freight Network

US 278 is listed as part of the Strategic Statewide Freight Roadway Network in the SCDOT South Carolina Statewide Freight Plan (See Map 7). The Statewide Freight Roadway Network identifies roadway networks that provide through state and cross-regional movement as well as connections to the nodes of the network that include ports, airports and inland freight facilities. These networks have been identified as important to the flow of goods. Preserving the Statewide Freight Network assets is key to the success of the state's economy as these routes sustain the reliability and efficiency of the goods movement network in South Carolina. The deteriorating bridge conditions, traffic congestion, and bottlenecks that occur on US 278 impact the reliability and resiliency of this system,¹⁷ increasing costs to freight carriers and consumers.

MAP 7: ROADWAY FREIGHT NETWORK



Improving the US 278 bridges as listed in this application represents tangible **progress towards 10 of the 11 state freight objectives** listed in the SCDOT 2018 State Freight Plan¹⁷ (Table 4. The state's goals align with the National Freight Goals required in Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act).

TABLE 4: SCDOT GOALS & OBJECTIVES (EXCERPT FROM 2018 STATE FREIGHT PLAN¹⁷)

OBJECTIVES:	ACHIEVED BY THIS PROJECT
STATE GOAL: MOBILITY AND SYSTEM RELIABILITY NATIONAL GOAL: ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS	
Reduce the number of system miles at unacceptable congestion levels.	✓
Improve travel time reliability (on priority corridors or congested corridors).	✓
Reduce congestion on the freight transportation system.	✓
Improve the year-round reliability of freight transportation on the interstate system.	✓
STATE GOAL: SAFETY NATIONAL GOAL: SAFETY, SECURITY, RESILIENCY / ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY	
Improve the safety, security, and resilience of the freight transportation system.	✓
Improve substandard roadways.	✓
Enhance truck parking availability and information management on SC interstates/South Carolina Freight Network.	-
STATE GOAL: INFRASTRUCTURE CONDITION NATIONAL GOAL: STATE OF GOOD REPAIR	
Maintain or improve the current state of good repair for the National Highway Service (NHS).	✓
Reduce the percentage of remaining state highway miles (non-interstate/strategic corridors) moving from a "fair" to a "very poor" rating while maintaining or increasing the % of miles rates as "good".	✓
Improve the condition of the state highway system bridges.	✓
STATE GOAL: ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY VITALITY NATIONAL GOAL: ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS / ECONOMIC EFFICIENCY	
Utilize the existing transportation system to facilitate enhanced freight movement to support a growing economy.	✓

¹⁷ SCDOT, *South Carolina Statewide Freight Plan*, (2018)



REGIONAL ECONOMY IMPACTS

Access between Hilton Head Island and the mainland is critical to economic vitality and sustaining local, regional, and statewide economies. The congestion and delay produced by this stretch of US 278 is a crucial interruption in a transportation network that Beaufort County and the region rely on for the movement of goods and people.

Improving the bridges to alleviate congestion will provide a mechanism for long term economic competitiveness by:

- Improving long term transportation efficiency and reliability for the movement of people and goods
- Improving access between employment centers, job opportunities, and workforces
- Increasing the economic productivity of labor (the fewer hours employees spend commuting will result in higher productivity at their jobs)
- Supporting long term job creation

Tourism is a critical source of revenue and employment for South Carolina as it generates \$21.2 billion annually and supports one in every ten jobs in the state.¹⁸ Tourists contribute to sales, profits, jobs, tax revenues, and personal income. According to a 2017 study, over 3,020,000 tourists visit Beaufort County each year. In 2016, tourism in Beaufort County was estimated to contribute an economic impact (output) of approximately \$1.53 billion within the County. This is approximately 7% of all of the tourism industry in South Carolina.¹⁴ Having a robust and efficient transportation system is a cornerstone to attracting and sustaining tourism and the economic impacts that it brings. Tourism related revenues can provide alternative sources of revenues for local governments to support visitors and the local population. This revenue can also be used as a tool to offset increasing local taxes or placing the burden on residents. Improving the US 278 corridor to Hilton Head Island is crucial to maintaining the tourism industry flourishing in Beaufort County, particularly on Hilton Head Island.

As areas in Beaufort County, such as Hilton Head Island and Bluffton, continue to experience population growth and increasing visitors, the local governments will depend on tourism as an economic driver. As popularity and travel grow, the efficiency of the highways and roadways become even more essential to the economic preservation of the area. The mobility of the region allows for the proper flow of tourists, goods, and the necessary transportation system for the labor force. US 278 must be improved to provide Beaufort County with an efficient transportation system to support its booming tourism industry.

Economic Impact of Tourism

Hilton Head Island is home to over 24 public and private championship golf courses, 12 miles of pristine beaches, 250 restaurants, and hundreds of other amenities that make the island one of the most visited places in South Carolina.¹⁹ Tourism continues to grow in Beaufort County, bringing positive economic impacts, but also putting increased pressure on the transportation network. The US 278 bridges to Hilton Head Island are part of the critical transportation network necessary to support a bustling tourism economy. Investing in and improving these bridges will increase the efficiency of the transportation network and increase the mobility of people, goods, and services necessary to preserve the flourishing tourism industry and associated economic impacts felt across the region.

Tourism is a major economic engine that not only fuels Beaufort County, but also provides positive economic impacts for the region and the state. **Tourism is a \$21.2 billion industry in South Carolina and supports one in every 10 jobs in the state.** In 2015, the U.S. Travel Association estimated that spending on travel or on behalf of tourism in South Carolina totaled \$21.2 billion in 2016. This represents a 4.7% increase from 2015.²⁰

According to a 2017 study, over 3,020,000 tourists visit Beaufort County each year. In 2016, **tourism in Beaufort County was estimated to contribute an economic impact (output) of approximately \$1.53 billion within the County.** Tourist spending generated a positive impact on net revenues to local governments in Beaufort County of approximately \$15 million; this does not include revenues generated by state and local accommodations tax and local hospitality taxes. The estimates output multiplier for total tourist spending for Beaufort County was 1.40, meaning that every dollar spent by tourists in Beaufort County increases output in the County's economy by a total of \$1.40.¹⁴ This impact is important for local governments to help lessen the tax burden on residents by providing a supplement (or alternative) revenue stream.

¹⁸ South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism, *Fiscal Year 2017-18 Accountability Report*, (2018)

¹⁹ Hilton Head Island Visitor and Convention Bureau, *Explore Hilton Head Island*, SC. <https://www.explorehiltonhead.com/>, accessed on August 8, 2018



IMAGE 8: PALMETTO BREEZE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SERVICE

Not only are tourists arriving to and traveling around Hilton Head Island by personal vehicle, but bicycle tourism also accounts for a noteworthy portion of the economic impacts of tourism. Regional Transactions Concepts, LLC estimated that bicycle tourism contributed approximately \$12 million in 2017 to the total tourist expenditures on Hilton Head Island.¹⁴ This number accounts only for biking related expenditures and does not include other associated bicycle tourism impacts on service industries such as dining and lodging.

Workforce Deficit

In 2016, Beaufort County supplied over 13,800 direct tourism jobs (increased by 300 jobs since 2015). Beaufort County supplies the 3rd highest number of tourism jobs in the state. In 2016 it was estimated that there were 17,208 jobs that comprise the estimated total employment impact generated by tourists in Beaufort County, meaning **tourism jobs accounted for 16.5% of all jobs in Beaufort County** in 2016.²⁰

Even though the tourism industry is booming across Beaufort County and Hilton Head Island some business owners in the resort and hospitality industries are struggling to find workers to fill open positions. A newspaper article from May 24, 2017 by the Island Packet²¹ documented that job fairs hosted by the South Carolina Restaurant and Lodging Association on Hilton Head Island attracted dozens of employers, but few job seekers. According to the article, some of the workforce deficit can be attributed to new E-Verify requirements for legal workers, but business owners also cited the traffic delays and difficulties traveling to and from the Island using the US 278 bridges as a cause for workers not being able to access jobs on the Island.

Most of the resort and hospitality workers do not live on Hilton Head Island. The lack of affordable housing on the Island means that many workers must commute from other areas to reach their places of employment on the Island. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies it is estimated that in 2015 there were a total of 20,636 people employed on Hilton Head Island. **Of the total number of people employed on the island, 12,693 people (61.5%) commuted to the Hilton Head Island daily from other areas.** An estimated 5,398 people live on Hilton Head Island but commute off the island daily for their jobs. Additionally, it is estimated that there were 7,943 people that both lived and worked on Hilton Head Island.²²

Palmetto Breeze offers public transportation service from inland areas to Hilton Head Island. Many Island employees use this public transit service riding from Allendale, Colleton, Hampton and Jasper Counties, and elsewhere in Beaufort County to Hilton Head Island. Allendale riders, as an example, face a 1.5-hour commute (approximately 76 miles) to travel between their homes in Allendale, SC to commute to their jobs on Hilton Head Island. The delays along the commute are often attributed to congestion caused by the bottlenecks of the US 278 bridges. Improving the bridges to alleviate congestion would increase traffic flow making

²⁰ U.S. Travel Association, *The Economic Impact of Travel on South Carolina Counties 2016* (2017).

²¹ The Island Packet, *Workforce Crisis: At Hilton Head Job Fair, Employers Far Outnumber Job Seekers*, Article by Teresa Moss, <https://islandpacket.com/news/business/article152191112.html>, accessed on August 8, 2018

²² U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, *Inflow/Outflow Analysis* (2015)

it easier and faster to commute on and off the Island. Making access to the Island easier will encourage more workers to apply for jobs on the Island, eliminating some workforce deficit.

INCREASE IN THE QUALITY OF LIFE AND GENERAL WELFARE OF THE PUBLIC

Population Growth

The region has developed significantly with new residents moving in regularly, making Beaufort County the 7th fastest growing county in South Carolina. Both the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton-Beaufort MSA and Beaufort County's growth rates are projected to be higher than the overall growth rate of the state. According to population projections by the South Carolina Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office and as illustrated in Chart 9: Population Growth Rate, **by 2030 the population of Beaufort County is anticipated to grow by approximately 33%, Hilton Head Island-Bluffton-Beaufort MSA will grow by approximately 21%, and the state of South Carolina will grow by about 19%.**

The transportation system needs to support the increasing residential population, additionally it must account for the daily influx of commuters and visitors. According to the Beaufort County Comprehensive Plan, tourists, visitors, seasonal residents, and daily commuters increase the County's population by an additional 34% on an average day.²³

CHART 8: PROJECT POPULATION GROWTH

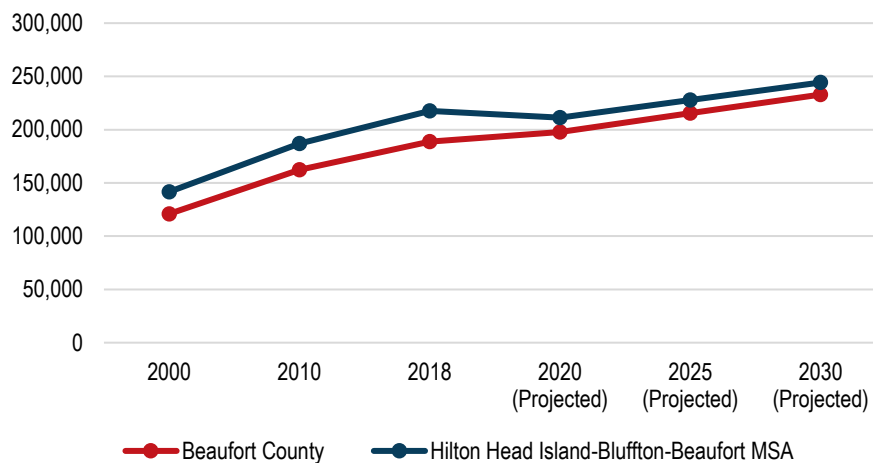
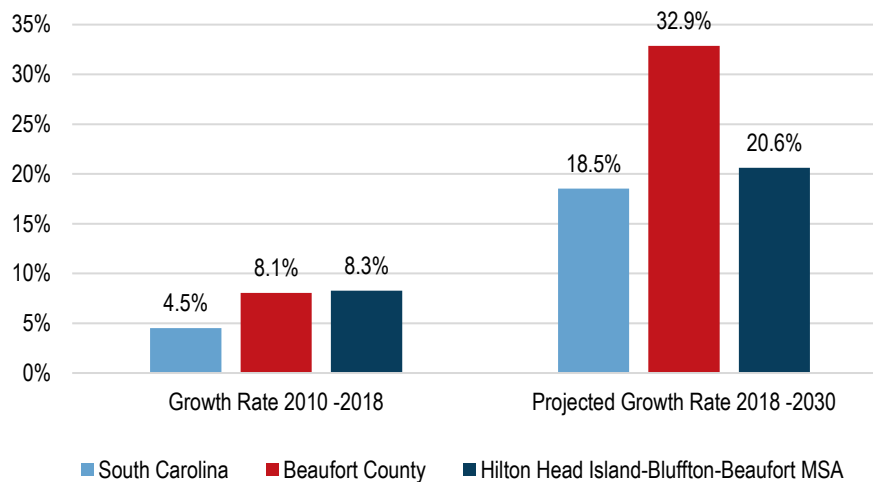


CHART 9: POPULATION GROWTH RATE



*Information based on population projections provided by the South Carolina Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office and S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce Community Profile

²³ Beaufort County, *Beaufort County Comprehensive Plan*, (2010)

Air and Environmental Effects

Traffic congestion contributes to a reduction in local and regional air quality. When vehicles travel at the posted speed limits they function more efficiently. When vehicles travel through congested corridors there is an increased amount of stop-and-go actions, which can decrease fuel efficiency and increase air pollution produced by vehicles. Improving congestion along this corridor could lead to improved air quality for the region and increased quality of life for residents and visitors.



IMAGE 9: TOURIST BIKE RENTAL COMPANIES
Source: Explore Hilton Head Island

Enhanced Bicycle and Pedestrian Networks

Improving the multimodal connections along the US 278 bridges to Hilton Head Island would mean **improved safety for pedestrians and bicyclists** traveling through the corridor. This project will evaluate all options to improve the multimodal connections throughout the corridor.

Beaufort County and Hilton Head Island provide an extensive bicycle and pedestrian transportation and recreation network. Bicycling and walking are not only modes of transportation, but they can be forms of recreation and improve an individual's overall health and well-being. A study from the American Journal of Public Health found that when an environment is more walkable and bikeable, the obesity rates are lower, and a larger percentage of adults achieve the recommended level of physical activity.²⁴

With such a large percentage of Hilton Head Island's workforce commuting into the island from over the bridge, a non-motorized transportation alternative could improve the health of the region as well as reduce congestion on the roadway. As the US 278 Corridor Improvement Project aims to decrease traffic congestion, multi-modal transportation options will also be considered to remove some of the congestion by replacing vehicle trips with bicycle or pedestrian trips. Improving connectivity over the bridge could create a potential for new bicycle shops, hotels, and restaurants in the region. This could have a beneficial impact on the mainland's economic development and physical health of the population.

Hilton Head Island is recognized as a Gold Level Bicycle Friendly Community by the American League of Bicyclists, giving the designation as one of the top bicycle-friendly communities in the United States.²⁵ Hilton Head Island is one of only three Gold Level Communities in the Southeast and only one of four on the East Coast to receive this designation. The Gold Level distinction recognizes the Town's commitment to improving conditions for bicycling through its investment in bicycling promotion, education programs, infrastructure and pro-bicycling policies.



HILTON HEAD ISLAND BICYCLE FACTS:

The island is only 12 miles long and five miles wide but there are:

- 1 mile of bike lanes
- 120 miles of shared-use paths
 - 64 miles paved public paths
- 8 miles of planned pathways
- 2 miles of single track
- 24% of arterial streets have bikes lanes or paved shoulders

²⁴ The U.S. Department of Transportation – *Safer People, Safer Streets: Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Initiative*

²⁵ The League of American Bicyclists, *Bicycle Friendly State ranking, and summary list of Bicycle Friendly Communities, Businesses, and Universities within the state.* <https://bikeleague.org/bfa/awards#community>, accessed on June 13, 2019

The Island provides a bicycle network of over 108 miles of multiuse paths for people to enjoy by bicycle or on foot²⁶ (see MAP 8: PUBLIC PATHWAYS MAP TOWN OF HILTON HEAD (2015)).

Hilton Head Island supports a bicycle culture that can be felt across the community and numerous bicycle shops and hotels across the Island. The 35 bicycle shops and hotels provide a combined 25,000 bicycles that may be rented any day of the week.

Hilton Head Island provides 30 Pathway Kiosks featuring maps, biking brochures, and biking do's and don'ts videos for out of town guests and visitors. Hilton Head Island has even developed its own bicycling app, Island Compass, which includes information for biking around the Island.

As shown in MAP 8: PUBLIC PATHWAYS MAP TOWN OF HILTON HEAD (2015), **there are no bicycle lanes or pathways along US 278 to connect Hilton Head Island to the mainland.** A pathway across Jenkins Island will be considered to tie into the US 278 bridges. This potential future connection across Jenkins Island and the bridges could provide bicycle access from Hilton Head Island to the mainland as well as the 7.7-mile Pinckney Island Ride Trail on the Pinckney Island National Wildlife Refuge.

MAP 8: PUBLIC PATHWAYS MAP
TOWN OF HILTON HEAD (2015)

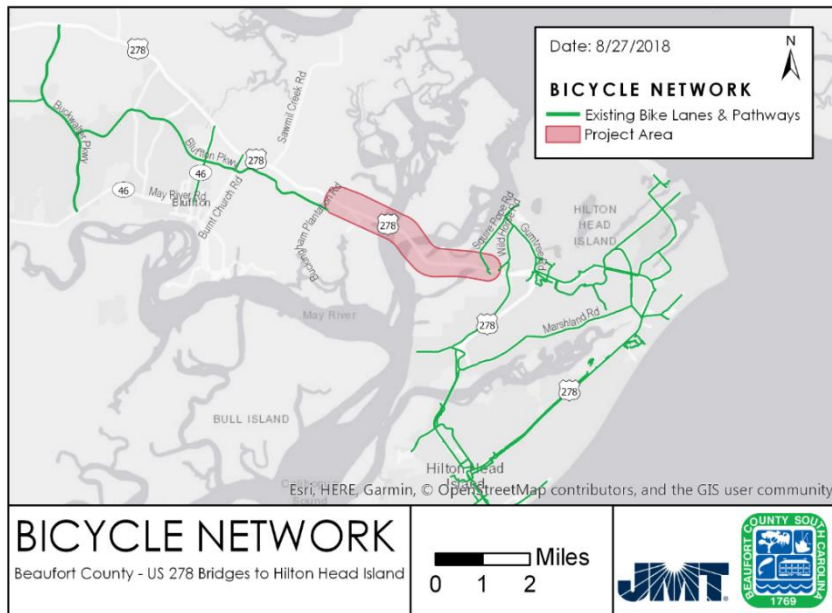


²⁶ Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce & Visitor and Convention Bureau, *Biking on Hilton Head Island*, Explore Hilton Head Island, SC. <https://www.hiltonheadisland.org/see-do/biking/biking-hilton-head-island>, accessed on October 24, 2018.

Bluffton Parkway is paralleled by a shared use path which currently stretches between Buckwalter Parkway and Buckingham Plantation Road, ending approximately 1,500 feet before the Bluffton Parkway flyover ramps connecting to the US 278 bridges to Hilton Head Island. There is also a shared use path along US 278 on Hilton Head Island, beginning at the intersection of US 278 and Gumtree Rd and continuing east along US 278 connecting into Hilton Head Island's extensive pathway network.

As shown in Map 9: Existing Bicycle Network, the missing link in the bicycle network is from the end of the Bluffton Parkway shared use path at Buckingham Plantation Road across the US 278 bridges to the intersection of US 278 and Gumtree Rd on Hilton Head Island. Creating a bicycle connection across this portion of US 278 could provide the missing link in the network and offer an alternative mode of transportation between Hilton Head Island and the mainland.

MAP 9: EXISTING BICYCLE NETWORK



A bicycle connection along the US 278 bridges is supported in multiple area planning documents. The Town of HHI Comprehensive Plan (2017) Goal 6.3-D is "To have a pathway network that provides for recreational opportunities as well as an alternative means of transportation to and on the Island." On page 88 of the plan, Implementation Strategy 6.3-D is to "Coordinate with SCDOT and Beaufort County to provide a pathway link to the mainland." The 2010 Beaufort County Comprehensive Plan contains a map from the Trails and Blueways Master Plan, which recommends adding a trail along the US 278 bridges.²⁷ The 2040 Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS) Long Range Transportation Plan recommends a future roadway improvement over the bridges to include 10' outside paved shoulders as shown in Figure 2.²⁸ Wide shoulders are useful not only for bicycle access but also for emergency vehicle access and improved evacuation capacity.

Multimodal transportation improvements will be considered in the US 278 Bridges to Hilton Heads Island Project. Regardless of the type of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, any improvements to the non-motorized connections across the US 278 bridges will:

- Enhance non-motorized transportation alternatives
- Improve the appeal of the Island to visitors
- Improve bicycle, pedestrian and driver safety

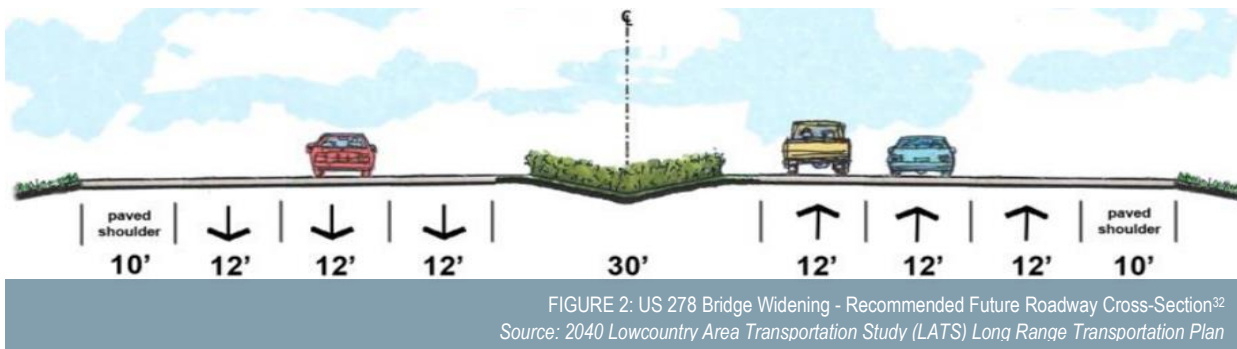


FIGURE 2: US 278 Bridge Widening - Recommended Future Roadway Cross-Section³²
Source: 2040 Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS) Long Range Transportation Plan

²⁷ Beaufort County, *Beaufort County Comprehensive Plan – Appendix 10 A - Trails and Blueways Master Plan*, (2010)

²⁸ Lowcountry Council of Governments, *The 2040 Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS) Long Range Transportation Plan*, (2015)



IMAGE 10: TRAFFIC INTENSIFIES DURING THE MANDATORY EVACUATION DUE TO IMPENDING HURRICANE. Source: <https://www.longroom.com>

HURRICANE EVACUATION

In the event of a mandatory evacuation of an area, congestion and delays are expected and unavoidable on the roadways. With each evacuation event, Beaufort County analyzes the efficiency of their roadway network and works to identify regions or areas where congestion and delays are at unacceptable levels. These evaluations are based on actual evacuations. Improvements to Beaufort County's evacuation system over the past few years include the Bluffton Parkway project and the widening of Okatie Highway (SC 170). The remaining piece to this upgrade of the evacuation network is the widening of the US 278 bridges to Hilton Head Island, an area at higher risk of evacuation events.

There are 32 American Red Cross shelter locations within the 46 counties in South Carolina where hurricane evacuees can seek safety. While temporary shelters are available during smaller scale storms, Beaufort County has no shelters for its residents for any Category 1 or greater hurricanes. In the event of an evacuation, the nearest location would be the sole shelter in Jasper County.²⁹ Due to the low elevations of the Lowcountry, the coastal barrier islands of Jasper, Beaufort, Colleton, and Charleston Counties are typically the first to require evacuation. When Hurricane Irma hit South Carolina in 2017, these islands had to be vacated, affecting 44,457 residents. Of this number, 42,000 evacuees were from Hilton Head Island.³⁰

Several other threatening hurricanes have hit South Carolina in the past years, including Hurricane Joaquin in 2015 which caused intense flooding and Hurricane Matthew in 2016 that brought immense economic impacts throughout the South.

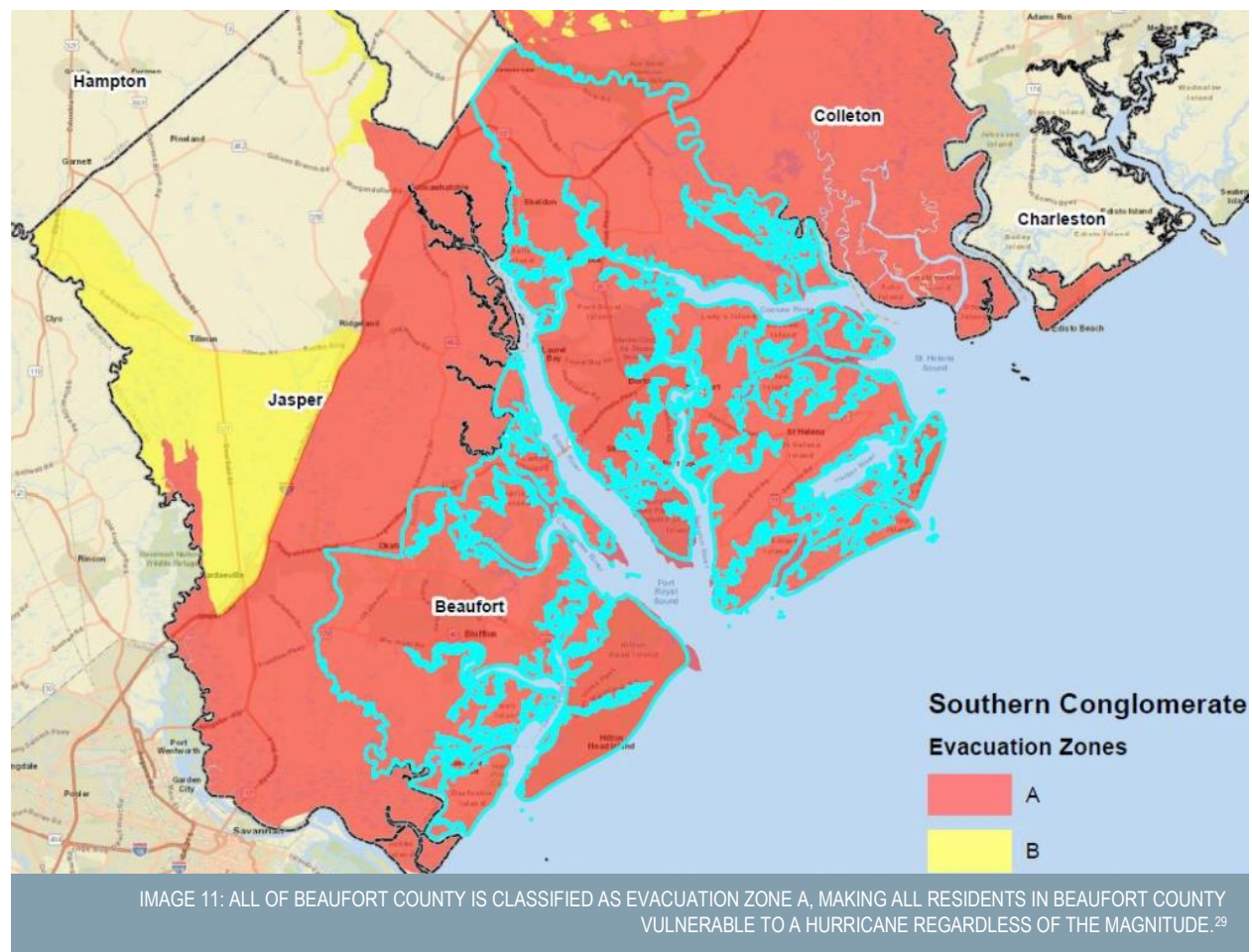
²⁹ The American Red Cross, *Red Cross Supporting Evacuation Shelters in South Carolina*, (2016)

³⁰ The Post and Courier – *44,457 South Carolina Residents Impacted by Evacuations in Response Hurricane Irma*, (2017)

Evacuation Zones

South Carolina's 2018 Critical Need Transportation Operations Plan evaluated the state's elevations and assigned evacuation zones based on the projected surges that would affect the areas. Evacuation Zone A represents the most vulnerable locations of each county. Beaufort County is the only county in the state that is entirely comprised of Zone A (as shown in Image 11).³¹ With this susceptibility, the county's hurricane evacuation routes must be as efficient and functional as possible. This 2018 Operations Plan found that the time it takes to execute an evacuation is based on multiple variables which include the coastal county at risk, the category of storm, time of year, and time of day that the evacuation commences.²⁹ The state is divided into four conglomerates: northern, western, central, and southern. In the event of an evacuation, the southern conglomerate, which includes Beaufort, Jasper, Colleton, and Hampton County could take up to 24 hours to fully vacate.²⁹

While the completion of the Bluffton Parkway provided an alternative evacuation route from east to west and the widening of US 170 and parts of US 278 decreased delays in the Bluffton and Beaufort area, it did not solve the problem entirely. The US 278 bridges that all Hilton Head Islands' residents, employees, and tourists must cross to leave the island are only 4 lanes total, creating massive delays as the road bottlenecks. ***This stretch of US 278 from Moss Creek Drive to Squire Pope Road is the only remaining 4-lane portion of the roadway.*** In an emergency event, Hilton Head Island residents face extreme traffic conditions before they can reach the widened portion of US 278 or Bluffton Parkway. With the population steadily growing on the island and storm frequency and severity increasing, the issue worsens each year.



³¹ South Carolina Emergency Management Division, *State of South Carolina Critical Transportation Need Evacuation Operations Plan*, (2018)

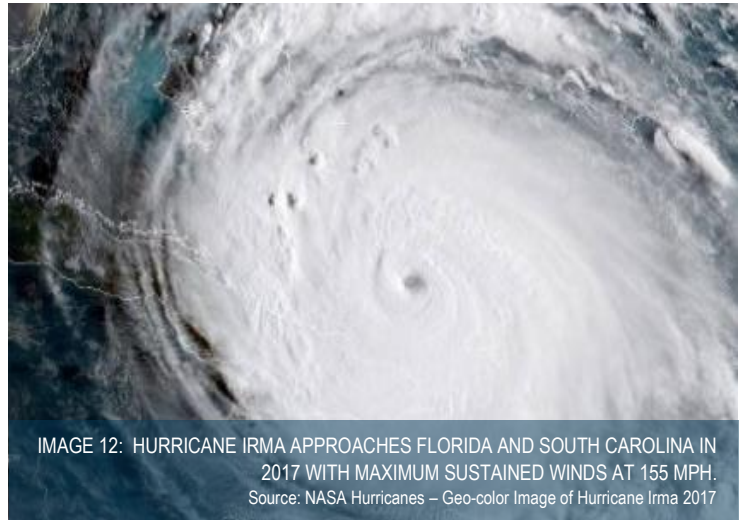
Evacuation Routes

The need to improve evacuation routes and decrease evacuation times is critically important to the areas that are experiencing growth and are subject to constant storm threats. After Hurricane Matthew made landfall in 2016, South Carolina reevaluated their evacuation plans and incorporated several new operational methods including the use of school buses as the primary mean for Critical Transportation Needs (CTN) evacuees.²⁹

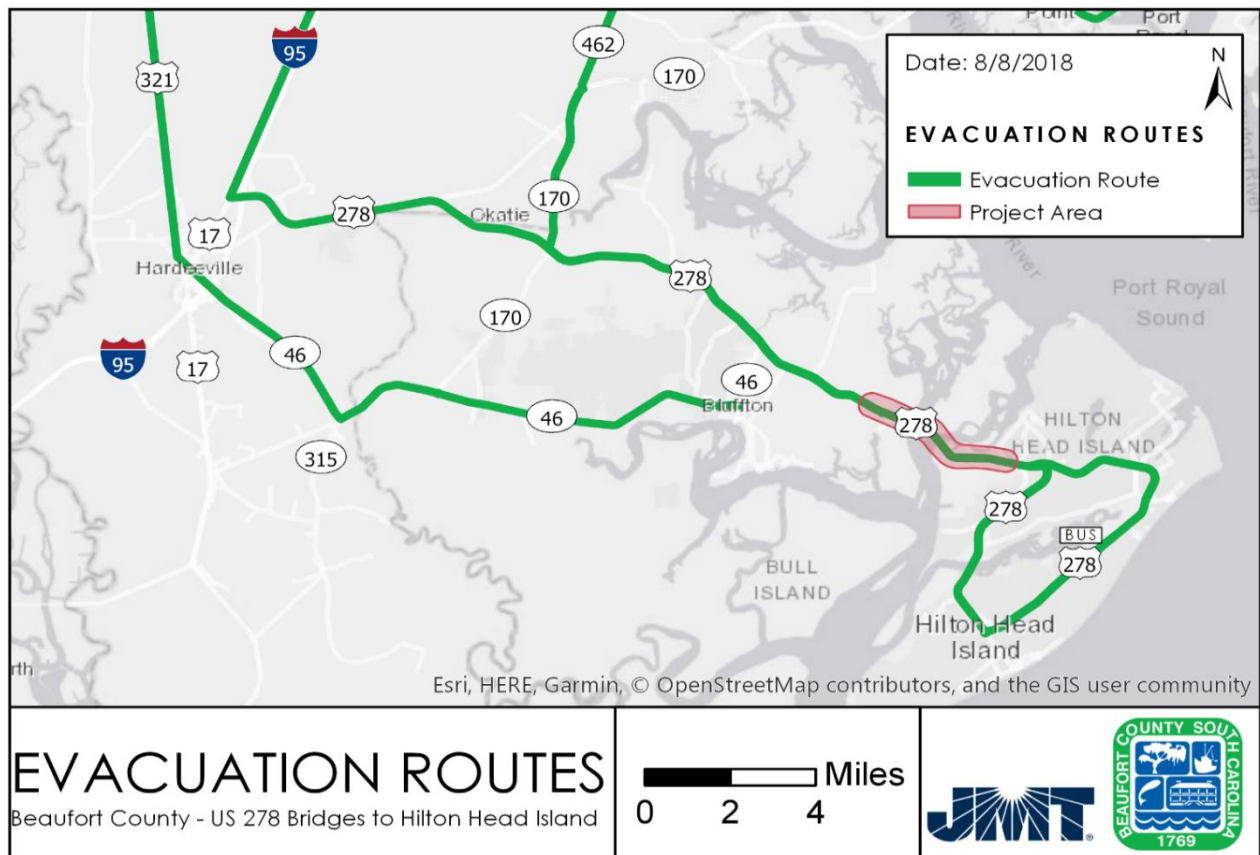
While South Carolina is using their lessons learned to improve the evacuation process, the changes that are in discussion and implementation will likely not significantly change the evacuation times from Hilton Head Island due to the bottleneck at the bridges. This narrowing of US 278 will continuously present serious delays unless the roadway is widened.

Increasing the capacity of the road, such as widening the bridges will allow for continuous, constant flow of traffic off the island and eradicate the largest cause of evacuation delay in the area.

To keep up with the island's growing population, the worsening structural state of the bridge and the intensifying threat of hurricanes, the bridges into Hilton Head Island must be improved and the capacity increased. The goals of this project will complete the transformation of the county's roadway network into an efficient and appropriate evacuation route.



MAP 10: HURRICANE EVACUATION ROUTES IN BEAUFORT COUNTY



**MAP 11: HURRICANE STORM SURGE AREAS
TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND**

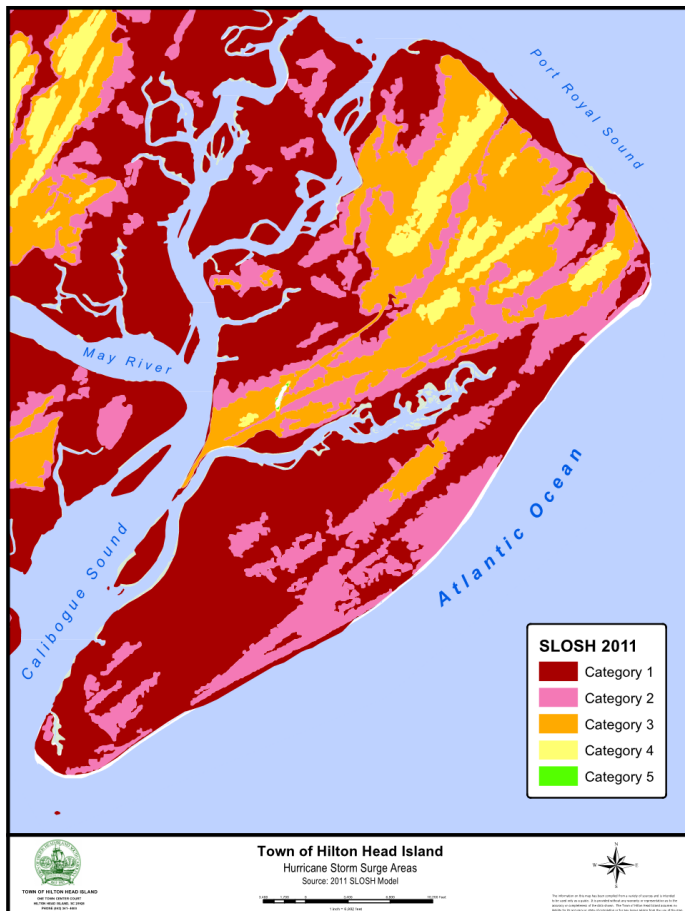


TABLE 5: BEAUFORT COUNTY INTERIM HURRICANE EVACUATION TIMES (HOURS)

Hurricane Category & Evacuation Response	Southern Normal Lane Use	
	Occupancy	
	Low	High
CATEGORY 1 – 2		
Rapid	8 (9)	13 (15)
Medium	11 (13)	15 (17)
Slow	13 (15)	18 (21)
CATEGORY 3 - 5		
Rapid	14 (16)	19 (22)
Medium	17 (20)	22 (25)
Slow	19 (22)	24 (28)

(#) factors in the population increase between 2010 and 2018

Storm Surges

Recent studies have found that the climate change is producing more destructive and powerful hurricanes. As sea levels rise globally, storm surge levels will likely increase in magnitude and frequency. **The rainfall rates produced by a hurricane will increase by 10-15% and the intensities of these storms will heighten by 1-10% in the Atlantic Basin.**³² The rise in storm surge level is particularly alarming for Beaufort County due to the low elevation. A category 3 storm currently produces a storm surge of 9-12 feet in southeast South Carolina,³² which would flood almost all of Hilton Head Island and much of the mainland of Beaufort County (See MAP 11). Beaufort County cannot afford having a poorly functioning evacuation route with its extreme vulnerability to storm surge levels. Because this study also found that there will be more frequent occurrences of intense storms, there will also be more strain on the already structurally deficient bridge as evacuations become more frequent. This intensification of the region's hurricanes will cause further destruction and need for evacuation in the future.

South Carolina Emergency Management Division (SCEMD) has estimated the Hurricane Evacuation Clearance Times for 2018 as illustrated in Table 5. The 2018 clearance times were estimated using the increase in population (15% increase, as estimated by ESRI Business) in the evacuation zones of Beaufort County from 2010 to 2018. The population increase was then applied to the clearance times that were developed for the 2013 Hurricane Evacuation Study (HES).

³² NOAA, Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory: *Global Warming and Hurricanes*, <https://www.gfdl.noaa.gov/global-warming-and-hurricanes/>, accessed on June 17, 2019

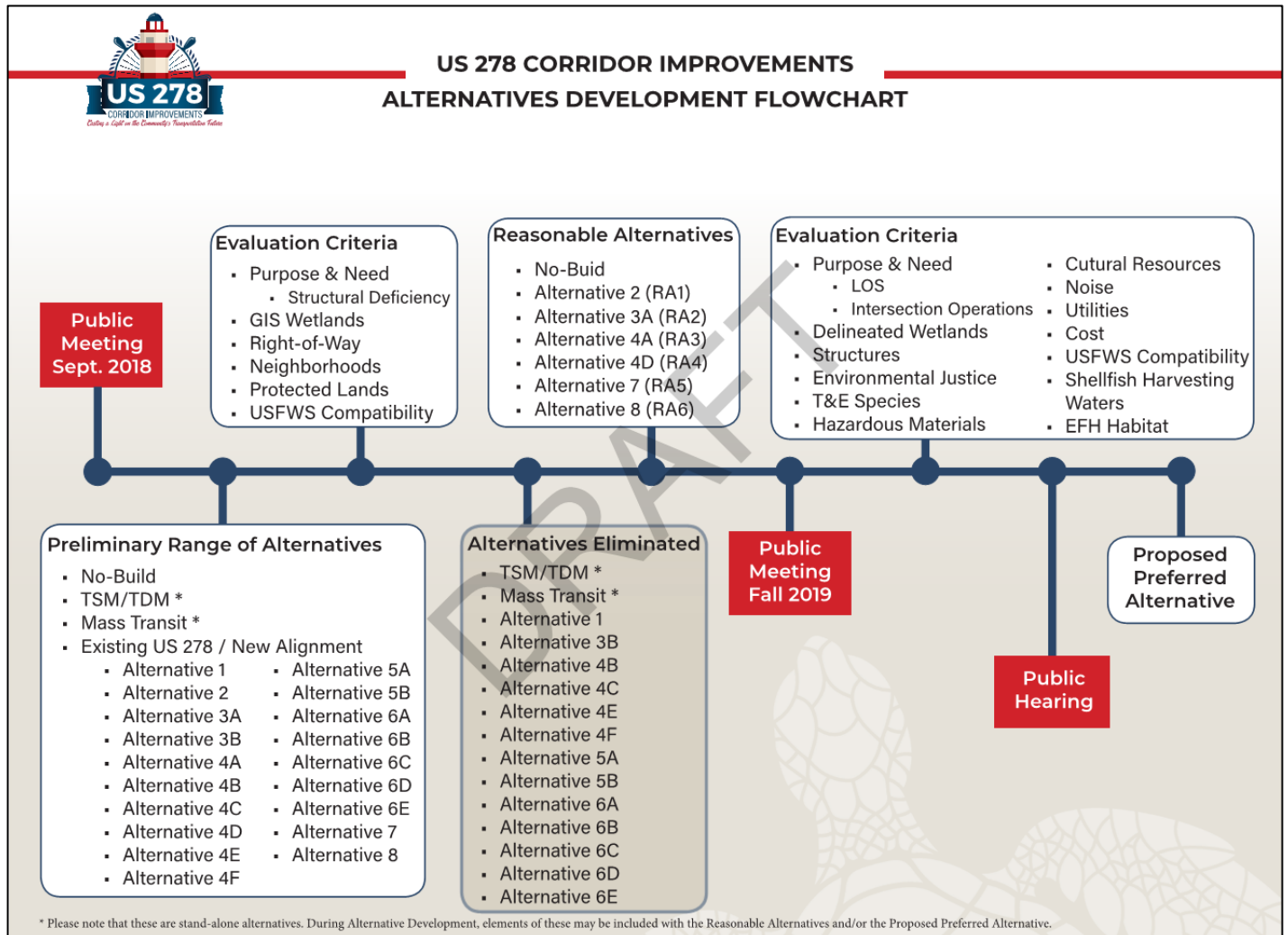
4.9 PROS AND CONS OF ALL ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION PLANS TO THE PROJECT

SCDOT evaluated a range of alternative transportation plans for this project corridor, seven are currently being carried forward as reasonable alternatives. These remaining seven alternatives will be further reviewed and refined, with a proposed preferred alternative to be determined after a Public Hearing. Chart 10 illustrates the range of alternatives that have been considered and the remaining process that will determine the final proposed preferred alternative.

SCDOT used the following evaluation criteria to evaluate the pros and cons of each of the original alternatives, this led to the identification of the remaining seven alternatives:

- **Structural Deficiencies:** This criterion evaluates whether the alternative addresses the structural deficiencies along eastbound US 278 (bridge over Mackay Creek)
- **Wetlands:** Freshwater and critical area wetlands, as defined through GIS mapping, were identified based on the total area of potential impact by the alternatives
- **Right-of-Way:** A review of the total acreage of right-of-way impacted as well as the number of individual tracts was evaluated per alternative.
- **Neighborhoods:** The total number of neighborhoods anticipated to be impacted was evaluated for each alternative
- **Protected Lands:** Each alternative was evaluated to determine if protected lands were impacted as well as the total acreage and number of individual tracts.
- **Pickney National Wildlife Refuge Compatibility:** Each alternative was evaluated to determine if it was compatible with the Pickney National Wildlife Refuge.

CHART10: ALTERNATIVES DEVELOPMENT FLOWCHART



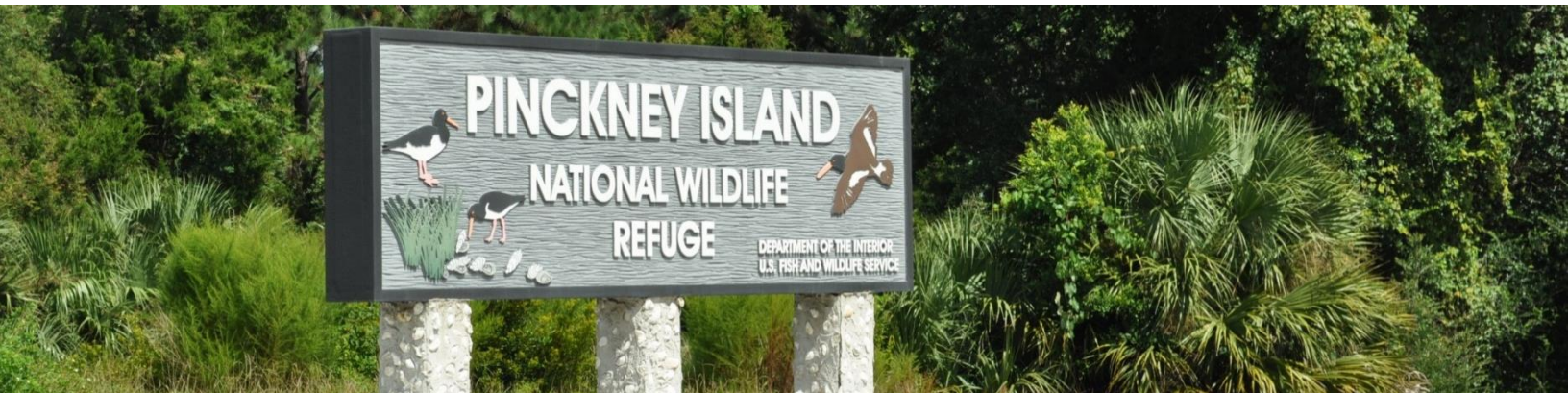


IMAGE 13: PINCKNEY ISLAND NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE ENTRANCE

4.10 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF PROJECT

Lying along the Intracoastal Waterway, Hilton Head Island encompasses 42 square miles of semi-tropical geography. The geography surrounding the project area includes barrier islands with constantly changing ecosystems, wetlands, salt marshes, tidal creeks, forestland, brushland, freshwater ponds, and uncultivated fields. The area is home to a variety of wildlife including deer, alligators, loggerhead sea turtles, manatees, dolphins, and hundreds of species of birds. **Currently this project is 40% through the Environmental Assessment (EA) process for this project and will have preliminary alternatives developed by Fall 2019**

The entrance to Pinckney Island National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) is located between the Karl Bowers Bridge and the J. Wilton Graves Bridge. The 4,053-acre refuge was established in December 4, 1975. The island was once part of a plantation owned by Major General Charles Cotesworth Pinckney; a prominent lawyer active in South Carolina politics from 1801 to 1815. Few traces of the island's plantation exist today, as most of the Island has been returned to its natural form.³³

The environmental features are part of the attraction for tourists visiting Hilton Head Island. This project aims to improve access to Pinckney Island and minimize environmental impacts from roadway improvements. Map 12 illustrates some of the known environmental features located within the project area. As shown in the map, the project is located within the vicinity of wetlands, refuge areas, and threatened and endangered species (including plants and animals). The map also shows the NEPA Study Area, during NEPA investigations more detailed environmental impacts and mitigation opportunities will be determined.

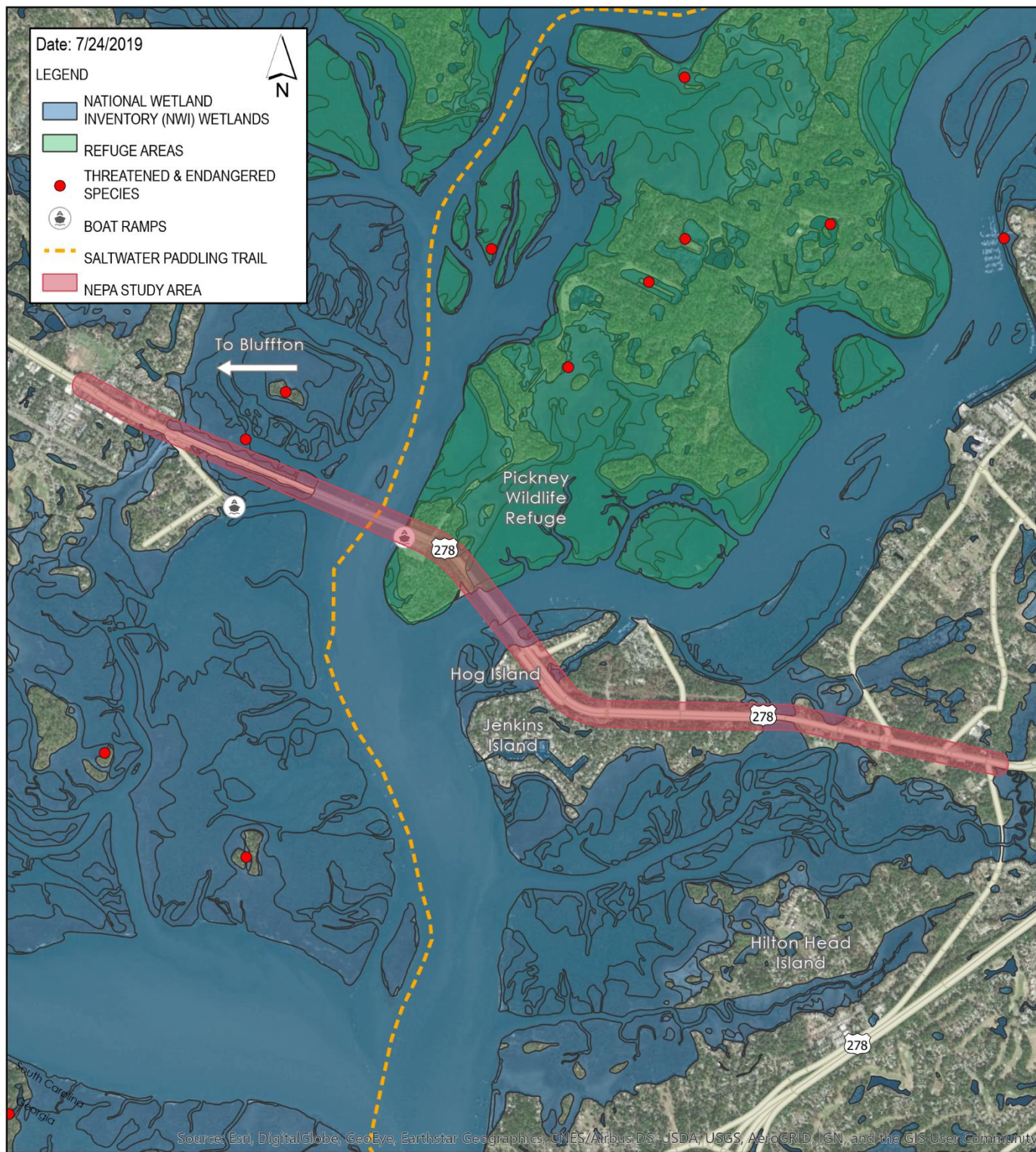
EXPECTED LEVEL OF NECESSARY ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT

The expected level of Environmental Document is a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), which is anticipated to be approved by early 2021. It is anticipated that a US Army Corps permit will be required. In addition, it is anticipated that the following permits will also be required:

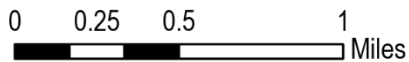
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- US Coast Guard
- South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC)

³³ U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, *Pinckney Island – About the Refuge*. Department of the Interior, Jan. 6, 2015. https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Pinckney_Island/about.html, Accessed: August 14, 2018

MAP 12: ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES & NEPA STUDY AREA



ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES
Beaufort County - US 278 Corridor Improvement Project

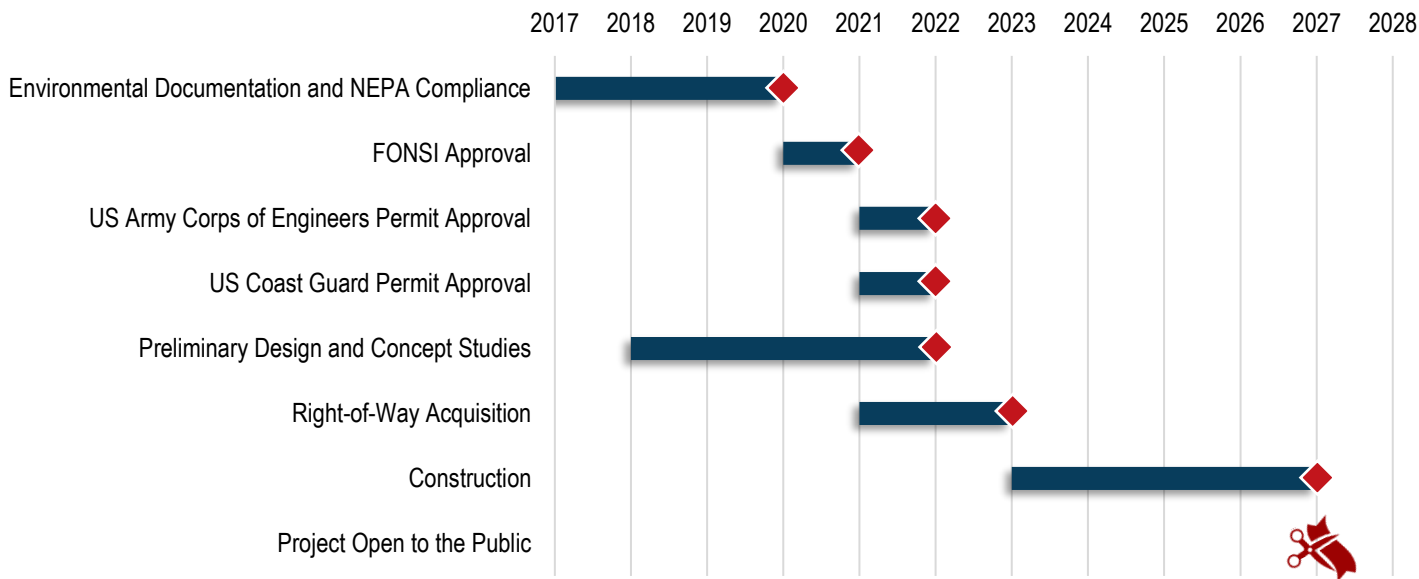


4.11 EVENTS/MILESTONES TO IMPLEMENT PHASES OF PROJECT

This application is being submitted upon the passing of the Beaufort County Special Transportation Sales and Use Tax. The project is currently going through the Environmental Documentation and NEPA Compliance process which will conclude in 2020.

The FONSI will be approved by FWHA in early 2021. The US Army Corps of Engineers permit approval and the US Coast Guard permit approval are both anticipated by 2022. The Preliminary Design and Concept Studies is currently underway and will conclude in 2020. Right-of-Way Acquisition is anticipated to begin in 2021 and be completed in 2023. The construction bid date is in 2023 with a 4-year construction duration beginning in 2023 and concluding in 2027, with the project opening to the public in 2027.

CHART 11 : MAJOR PROJECT EVENTS AND MILESTONES



4.12 CURRENT STATUS OF THE PROJECT

SCDOT is moving the project through the planning phase with an environmental assessment (EA). The goal is acquiring right-of-way and building the selected preferred alternative. In association with FHWA and Beaufort County, SCDOT will develop the EA, a process that will include reviewing alternatives and comparing the beneficial and negative impacts on the natural and human environments. Efforts will be focused on community involvement and communication to ensure the successful development of the environmental process.

During the Alternative Development Process a range of alternatives will be considered and evaluated, including the no-build option, mass transit, high-occupancy vehicle lanes, and ridesharing. The alternatives analysis will explain how alternatives were evaluated and why each alternative was eliminated from consideration. The range of alternatives, reasonable alternatives, and results of the analysis will be presented and available for comment in the fall of 2019.



4.13 ENTITY STATEMENT AGREEING TO RESPONSIBILITIES

TABLE 6: ACTIVITIES & RESPONSIBLE ENTITIES

ACTIVITIES & RESPONSIBLE ENTITIES				
ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY	CONTACT NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE
Environmental Studies	SCDOT	Craig Winn	955 Park Street, Room 401 Columbia, SC 29202-0191	(803) 737-6376
Design of Project	SCDOT	Craig Winn	955 Park Street, Room 401 Columbia, SC 29202-0191	(803) 737-6376
Rights of Way Acquisition	SCDOT	Mark Westbury	PO BOX 308, 858 Highway 15 North, St. George, SC 29477	(843) 636-9681
Construction	SCDOT	Toby Wickenhoefer	6355 Fain Boulevard, North Charleston, SC 29406	(843) 746-6734
Construction Management	SCDOT	Toby Wickenhoefer	6355 Fain Boulevard, North Charleston, SC 29406	(843) 746-6734
Operation	SCDOT	Josh Johnson	6355 Fain Boulevard, North Charleston, SC 29406	(803) 602-4415
Maintenance	SCDOT	Michael Black	6355 Fain Boulevard, North Charleston, SC 29406	(843) 746-6715

Contract documents will be available upon request once finalized and signed.

4.14 PROJECT SCORE

The SIB Criteria states that “the ranking and scoring is done as part of the program categories Long Range Plan.” In addition, SC Code Section 57-1-370(B)(8) states that the project shall be “taking into consideration at least the following criteria:

- a. financial viability including a life cycle analysis of estimated maintenance and repair costs over the expected life of the project;
- b. public safety;
- c. potential for economic development;
- d. traffic volume and congestion;
- e. truck traffic;
- f. the pavement quality index;
- g. environmental impact;
- h. alternative transportation solutions; and
- i. consistency with local land use plans.”

This project has met each of these criteria and is listed in the priority list by SCDOT as well as being the number one priority in the LATS MPO. Through the LATS MPO criterion scoring of projects, this project, identified as the **number one priority**, has a score of 74. An explanation of the LATS MPO scoring is in **Appendix D**.

Based on the provided criteria for Public Benefit, as well as identifying that these improvements are part of **both the National Highway System and the State Freight Network**, the resulting score is a 74/100 which equals 37 points x 1.1=40.7. As the maximum number of points within the Public Benefit section is capped at 50, **this project scores 40.7 points for the Public Benefit criteria**.

4.15 CONSULTATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Not applicable. The South Carolina Transportation Infrastructure Bank (the Bank) criteria states: “*Consultation with the Department of Commerce is recommended for guidance in scoring when submitting a project that supports Economic Development for the State. The prioritization scoring scale for a project with this purpose would use a 0-100% scoring scale based on the Department of Commerce scoring criteria.*” This project is not an Economic Development project.



V. FINANCIAL PLAN

5.1 TOTAL PROJECT COST

The total cost of the US 278 Corridor Improvement Project is \$246 million.

This cost estimate was provided by SCDOT Project Manager Craig Winn on October 12, 2018 as part of the US 278 Corridor Improvements project (www.scdot278corridor.com).

TABLE 7: TOTAL PROJECT COST EXPENSE CATEGORIES

Expense Categories	Estimated Amount
Preliminary Engineering through Construction Plans (10% of Construction Costs)	\$18,200,000
Environmental Permitting and Mitigation	\$10,000,000
Right-of-Way (to be obtained)	\$2,000,000
Utility Relocations	\$10,000,000
Total Construction Cost*	\$205,800,000
Total Project Cost	\$246,000,000
Local Obligations Contingency**	\$26,370,112**
Total Project Risk	\$272,370,112

* Total Construction Cost includes General Mitigation, 15% Inflation Cost, 13% CEI and Contingency. SCDOT contributions are limited and 66.7% of the work will be funded by Beaufort County, with all associated risks of project delivery.

**The local obligations contingency is not included within the total project cost at this time, however, elements such as Bridge Foundation Contingency, Portland Cement Index (FHWA Technical Advisory T 5080.3), Steel, and additional right-of-way are all included within the total project risk.

5.2 PROJECT WITH TOTAL COST: IN EXCESS OF \$50 MILLION

This project is in excess of \$50 million and will follow the guidelines as described in Section 5.2.a. requiring a local contribution of at least 25% of the total project costs with additional credit provided for the grant application for each additional 5% of local contribution and non-Bank funding. **The \$246 million project, including project risk, is broken down as follows:**

TABLE 8: AMOUNT OF LOCAL CONTRIBUTIONS

FUNDING SOURCE	AMOUNT
Beaufort County one-cent tax referendum, as approved by the voters on November 6, 2018	\$80,000,000
Beaufort County Road Impact Fees	\$12,300,000
<i>Per Section 5.25</i>	
Federal Guideshare / Local money for the Environmental Assessment/Preliminary Engineering	\$4,200,000
SCDOT Bridge Replacement Funds	\$43,521,112
Beaufort County Funds for Jenkins Island Work	\$9,000,000
Town of Hilton Head Island Right-of-Way Dedication	\$3,350,000
Total Local / Non-Bank Funded Match including Project Risk (see Table 7)	\$152,370,112
SCIB Grant Request	\$120,000,000
Total Project Risk	\$272,370,112

Based on the points calculation within Section 5.2.a, the following points are allocated for this project:

For a project over \$50 million, the amount of local contribution must be at least 25%. With a \$246 million project, 25% of the total cost is \$61.5 million. The Beaufort County one-cent tax provides \$80 million specific to this project, thereby meeting the 25% local fund commitment, and exceeding the match with an additional \$18.5 million. This equates to **15.04 points**.

The Beaufort County Road Impact Fees provide an additional \$12.3 million equating to an additional **10 points**.

Per Section 5.24, the additional elements as noted in Table 8 provide an additional local match / non-Bank funded amount of \$60.1 million. This equates to **24.42 points**.

The committed funds in both local match as well as non-Bank funds result in a total score of **49.46 points of the available 50 points**.



5.3 SOURCE OF LOCAL CONTRIBUTION

Beaufort County voters have passed a 1% local sales tax that will generate \$80 million for the US 278 Bridge Corridor Improvement project to Hilton Head Island as part of this project. This tax was passed under the South Carolina Code of Laws Title 4 – Counties, Chapter 37 Optional Methods for Financing Transportation Facilities §4-37-30. The tax will generate a total of \$120 million which will be used on transportation projects across Beaufort County. The additional funds generated from this tax will include \$10 million for sidewalk and pathway improvements, \$30 million for traffic improvements on US 21 across Lady’s Island, and \$80 million committed to the US 278 Bridge Improvement project. The key attributes of the transportation sales tax cite that the funds are to be used for a clearly delineated list of projects, the tax is for a fixed period, and the tax is for a fixed dollar amount of revenue to be generated. The sales tax approved by the voters of Beaufort County explicitly stated that these funds would be used for the project noted above, with \$80 million for the US 278 bridge improvements, and would automatically sunset after 4 years or as soon as \$120 million is generated. The sales tax cannot be put into effect again without voter approval.

Additional local matches and non-Bank funding is discussed in Section 5.2

5.4 AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE REQUESTED FROM BANK

Beaufort County formally requests \$120,000,000 from the South Carolina State Transportation Infrastructure Bank Board to assist in the completion of the US 278 Corridor Improvement Project. This grant would represent 44.1% of the overall project cost.

5.5 FORM OF ASSISTANCE REQUESTED

Beaufort County requests that the funding from the SIB be in the form of a \$120,000,000 grant. The money generated from the local match and the non-Bank funded sources previously described will provide the remaining 55.9% of the program’s costs.

5.6 OTHER PROPOSED SOURCES OF FUNDS

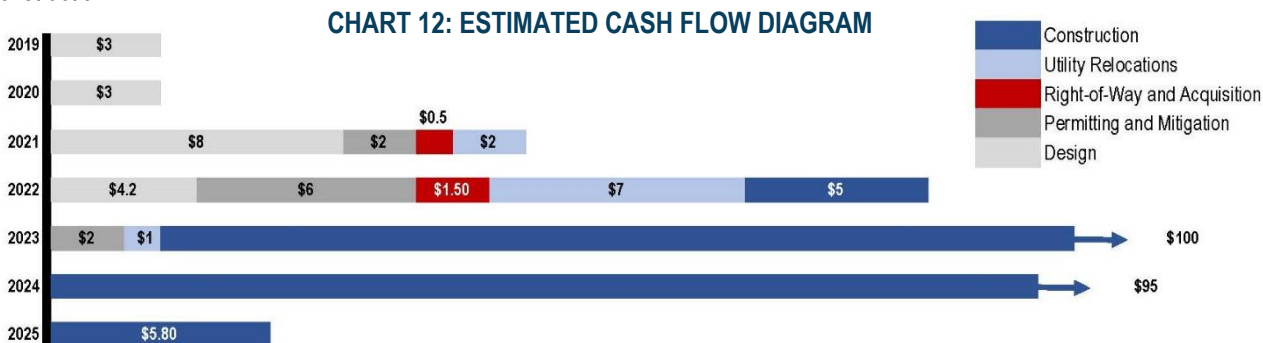
As listed above, Beaufort County has passed a local sales tax that will generate \$80 million for traffic improvements on Hilton Head Island as part of this project. The sales tax language, as approved, specifies the use of the funds and states:

“I approve a special transportation sales and use tax in the amount of one percent to be imposed in Beaufort County for no more than 4 years, or until a total of \$120 million dollars in resulting revenue has been collected, whichever comes first.” These improvements are specific to traffic improvements on Hilton Head Island, traffic improvements on Lady’s Island, and sidewalk & pathway improvements in Beaufort County.

As documented in the Capital Program, SCDOT is committed to funding \$43.5 million to be used for replacing the eastbound span of the Karl Bowers Bridge using bridge replacement funds. SCDOT’s statement regarding the commitment of these funds, as well as the County’s letter requesting this statement, is in **Appendix E**.

5.7 ANTICIPATED SCHEDULE OF FUNDS DISBURSEMENT

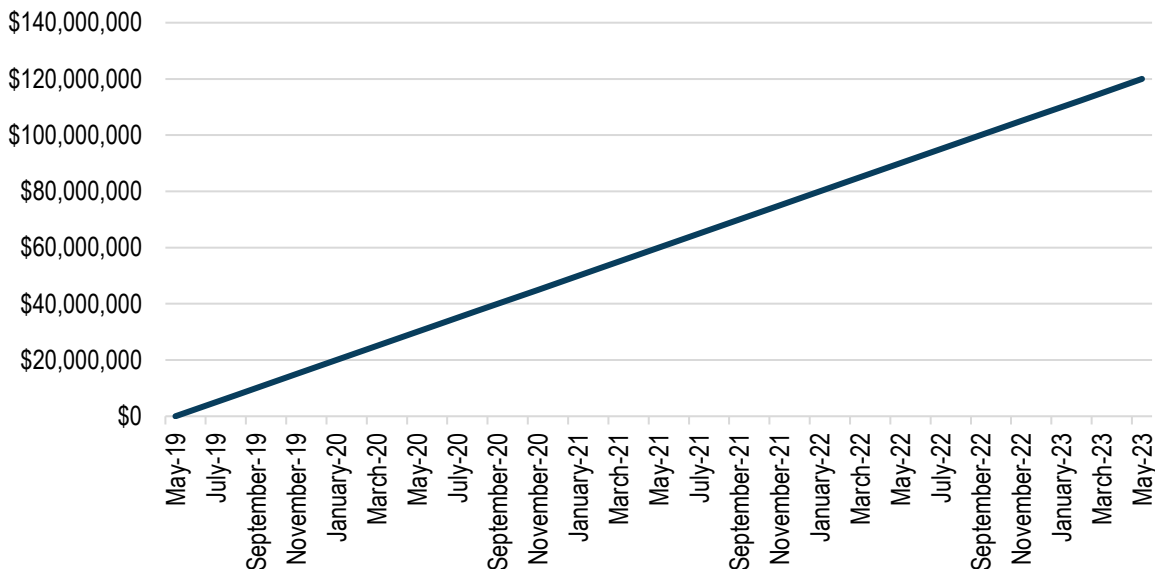
The following represents the anticipated schedule of funds disbursement for the project to move forward. While the construction is not anticipated for several years, the urgency of the grant application is to ensure that the project can continue to move forward with necessary key next steps including completion of environmental review and documentation, design and construction.



5.8 SCHEDULE OF PROJECT RECEIPT FOR LOCAL CONTRIBUTIONS

It is anticipated that the Beaufort County 1% local sales tax will generate approximately \$2.5 million per month, \$30 million per year, for the life of the tax referendum (four years or until the total amount is \$120 million; whichever comes first). This is the total tax referendum amount, of which \$80 million is committed to this project. The projection of receipt of local contributions is as follows:

CHART 13: SCHEDULE OF PROJECTED REVENUES FOR LOCAL CONTRIBUTIONS



5.9 COMMITMENT TO FUTURE MAINTENANCE

US 278 is within the state owned and maintained network and, after improvements are completed, will remain within the state owned and maintained highway network. Therefore, the future maintenance and responsibility of this roadway will be with SCDOT and included within their annual maintenance and operational programming.

5.10 CONTINGENCY PLANS SHOULD THE BOARD APPROVE LESS THAN THE REQUESTED FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE OR ACTUAL PROJECT COSTS EXCEED ESTIMATED PROJECT COSTS

The \$246 million estimate that is currently being used was developed by SCDOT as an estimate of what a project of this size could potentially cost based upon major structures cost and contingency.

Should the Board fail to approve the amount requested and/or the project costs exceed the current estimate, Beaufort County would consider another referendum in 2020 for the project. In addition, we would work with SCDOT in order to identify other state or federal grant programs such as BUILD Grants in order to fund this vital piece of infrastructure. Phasing of the project would be difficult given the topography and that the primary nature of the improvements are bridges which are the only surface transportation link to the mainland. However, preliminary reviews suggest it could be accomplished by constructing the western-most MacKay bridges first or focusing on only the east bound segment of the corridor.

The current SCDOT estimate for this project includes a minimal contingency value, however, should actual costs exceed the estimated costs, shortfalls may be addressed using County Road Impact Fees, County TAG fees, CTC funding, or other locally appropriated funds.

5.11 IMPACT FEES

Beaufort County has implemented traffic impact fees dedicated to the preliminary planning and engineering of this project to assist in its financing.



5.12 HOSPITALITY TAX

Beaufort County has not implemented a hospitality tax dedicated to this project to assist in its financing. This tax may be allocated for this project by County Council action. Currently traffic impact fees have already been allocated for project funding.

5.13 LOCAL SALES TAX

Beaufort County voters passed a 1% local sales tax that will generate \$80 million for traffic improvements on Hilton Head Island as part of this project. More information regarding the sales tax is in Section 5.3 SOURCE OF LOCAL CONTRIBUTION.

5.14 USER FEE

Beaufort County has not implemented user fees dedicated to this project to assist in its financing. User fees are not appropriate to use along this corridor, as user fees (tolls) are typically used where motorists have an option to pay a toll or use another road. US 278 is the only route for motorists to access Hilton Head Island.

5.15 TAX INCREMENT FINANCING DISTRICTS

Beaufort County has not implemented a Tax Increment Financing Districts (TIF) dedicated to this project to assist in its financing. TIFs are typically used in areas that redevelopment of blighted properties or public property development is targeted or desired. This is not the case for areas in and around Hilton Head Island and Beaufort County that would be impacted by the US 278 Bridges. The development goals for the area align with preservation of the corridor and accommodating the existing and projected traffic needs than redevelopment or additional development making a TIF an inappropriate funding source for this project.

5.16 ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

Beaufort County has not implemented an assessment program dedicated to this project to assist in its financing. An assessment program is not appropriate for this project as the impact of improving the US 278 bridges to Hilton Head Island reaches far beyond just the property owners within the area. The impact of these bridges is felt across the region and the state in terms of the large amount of tourism occurring in Hilton Head Island and resulting economic impacts and revenues.

5.17 DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT PROGRAM

Beaufort County has not implemented a development agreement program dedicated to this project to assist in its financing. A development agreement program is not appropriate for this project as the improving the US 278 bridges to Hilton Head Island is not to service any specific development. These bridges are part of the critical transportation system serving both the region and state interests.

5.18 ZONING & LAND USE CONTROLS TO FOSTER USE OF EXISTING ROADS TO CONNECT DEVELOPMENTS

This section is not applicable to the US 278 bridges to Hilton Head Island, as this project is the only connection of ground-based transportation connection between Hilton Head Island and the mainland of South Carolina. This project reaches well beyond the purpose of connecting developments. These bridges are part of the critical transportation system serving both the region and state interests.

5.19 CASH FLOW ANALYSIS

The major determination for this project currently is to make the most effective and efficient use of funds for the region. With the status of the Karl Bowers Bridge, SCDOT must invest funds to replace the structure. While the remaining three bridges were constructed between 1982-1983 and are not in need of immediate replacement due to structural deficiencies, they do suffer from deferred maintenance and will require improvements for congestion relief, and eventually, will require replacement for capacity improvements as the region continues to grow. Based on this, the estimated system preservation costs versus the current project cost, illustrate the current investment is a better use of funds economically, as well as for the public benefit obtained.



Potential system preservation costs for these types of structures, using present day value and assuming a 70-year lifespan for these structures (replacement in 2053), is shown below:

TABLE 9: ESTIMATED MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR COSTS OF PROJECT OVER EXPECTED USEFUL LIFE

TIME FRAME	MAINTENANCE ACTIVITY	ESTIMATED COST
2020 – 2025:	Miscellaneous Steel Repairs / Painting	\$10M - \$15M
2030 – 2035:	Miscellaneous Steel Repairs	\$1.0M - \$2.0M
	Major Systems Preservation Investment	\$85M - \$95M
2035 – 2040:	Miscellaneous Crack Repair / Crevice Corrosion	\$10M - \$15M
2040 – 2045:	Miscellaneous Steel Repairs	\$1.0M - \$2.0M
2050 – 2055:	New Structures to be Built / Existing Structures demolished	\$190M - \$200M
	Karl Bowers Bridge Structure to be modified	\$20M - \$25M
TOTAL		\$317M - \$329M

5.20 INFLATION RATE

The South Carolina Department of Transportation used an inflation factor of 15% in the proposed cost estimate. This inflation factor only covers the 36-month design development period.

5.21 CONDEMNATION PROCEEDINGS

The South Carolina Department of Transportation is willing to serve as the named party in any condemnation proceedings if condemnation is needed to complete this project, as this is a SCDOT project improving SCDOT infrastructure.

5.22 OTHER FUNDING SOURCES SOUGHT

Other funding, besides those already listed hereinabove, have not been utilized or sought for this project at this time. The South Carolina gas tax increase is not able to be used for this project as most of that funding is going to address deteriorating infrastructure that has already been prioritized by the state. These bridges were not part of that list as three of the four bridge spans of US 278 to Hilton Head Island were built in the 1980's and are not in need of repair due to deteriorating infrastructure but instead need expansion to address the lack of capacity.

5.23 POTENTIAL OBSTACLES

Currently Beaufort County has no legal issues related to this project. There are no pending lawsuits against the County associated with this project at this time. An Environmental Assessment (EA) is currently underway on the project. SCDOT anticipates an approved FONSI by 2021 and US Army Corps of Engineers and US Coast Guard permits by 2022 Right-of-way costs have not yet been calculated.

Managing Obstacles

Beaufort County and SCDOT have a long and successful history of collaboration on major highway projects and are both committed to ensuring the success of this project. Beaufort County has been proactively engaging and coordinating with the public, stakeholders, and partners including:

- South Carolina Department of Transportation
- Town of Hilton Head
- Town of Bluffton
- USACOE
- SCDHEC
- Coastal Conservation League
- Native Island Community

5.24 LOCAL MATCH OR CONTRIBUTION

Per the evaluation criteria, this information is listed within Section 5.2 PROJECT WITH TOTAL COST: IN EXCESS OF \$50 MILLION. The Financial Plan scope for this application is **49.46 points out of a maximum score of 50 points**



APPENDIX A

LOCAL RESOLUTIONS



Beaufort County Council Resolution

RESOLUTION 2018 / 28

A RESOLUTION OF THE BEAUFORT COUNTY COUNCIL TO MAKE A FINDING, WITH SUPPORTING INFORMATION, THAT THE U.S. HIGHWAY 278 BRIDGES TO HILTON HEAD ISLAND IMPROVEMENT PROJECT IS ESSENTIAL TO THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE AREA, IS CONSISTENT WITH APPLICABLE LOCAL LAND USE PLANS, AND IS ON ALL PRIORITY LISTS MAINTAINED BY BEAUFORT COUNTY

WHEREAS, the 3.7-mile section of United States Highway 278 (US 278) from Moss Creek Drive to Squire Pope Road currently experiences severe daily congestion due to traffic volumes that exceed the capacity provided by the four travel lanes; experiences rear-end crash rates that are substantially higher than similar roadways in South Carolina due to stop and go traffic conditions; and produces congestion and delay leading to crucial interruptions in the transportation network that Beaufort County and the region rely on for the movement of goods and people; and

WHEREAS, all four of the US 278 bridge structures are listed as functionally obsolete and the eastbound structure of the Karl Bowers Bridge over Mackay Creek is structurally deficient; and

WHEREAS, the deficient bridge conditions, traffic congestion, and bottlenecks that occur along this portion of US 278 impact evacuations from Hilton Head Island as this route is the only land-based emergency evacuation route off Hilton Head Island; and

WHEREAS, improving the US 278 Bridges to Hilton Head Island will provide a mechanism for long term economic competitiveness by: improving transportation efficiency and reliability for the movement of people and goods; improving access between employment centers, job opportunities, and workforces; increasing the economic productivity of labor (the fewer hours employees spend commuting will result in higher productivity at their jobs); and supporting long term job creation; and

WHEREAS, the deficient bridge conditions, traffic congestion, and bottlenecks that occur along this portion of US 278 impact the reliability and resiliency of the Strategic Statewide Freight Roadway Network as listed in the SCDOT South Carolina Statewide Freight Plan, which Beaufort County relies on to support its robust tourism economy; and

WHEREAS, according to a 2017 Regional Transactions Concepts, LLC study, over 2,600,000 tourists visit Hilton Head Island each year, estimated to contribute an economic impact (output) of approximately \$1.44 billion within the County in 2016. Most of these tourists travel to Hilton Head Island using the US 278 bridges; and

WHEREAS, according to a 2017 study by the U.S. Travel Association, Beaufort County supplied the 3rd highest number of tourism jobs in the state; and

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, Inflow/Outflow Analysis (2015), 12,693 people commute to Hilton Head Island daily from other areas using the US 278 bridges, representing 61.5% of the workforce on Hilton Head Island; and

WHEREAS, the Beaufort County Council does hereby find that the current condition of the US 278 Bridges to Hilton Head Island is a significant impediment to our citizens and visitors and a hindrance to the economic activity and future development in the region; and

WHEREAS, the US 278 Bridges to Hilton Head Island Improvement Project represents tangible progress towards achieving goals and objectives set by the State and Beaufort County; and



WHEREAS, according to the Beaufort County 2010 Comprehensive Plan, the US 278 Bridges to Hilton Head Island Improvement Project is located within a rural/undeveloped land use area, providing the transportation linkage between regional commercial land along the US 278 corridor in Bluffton and a mix of land use types on Hilton Head Island including park, non-residential, and residential land; and

WHEREAS, the US 278 Bridges to Hilton Head Island Improvement Project is projected to cost in excess of \$245,000,000 based on the 2018 SCDOT engineering estimate; and

WHEREAS, Beaufort County has committed over \$100 million in County funding in the past to help preserve capacity and improve safety of the US 278 corridor; and

WHEREAS, Beaufort County voters have supported the November 2018 1 cent transportation referendum committing \$80 million in local funds for the US 278 Bridges to Hilton Head Island Improvement Project; and

WHEREAS, Beaufort County has funded 66% of the \$6 million Environmental Assessment in partnership with SCDOT and FHWA; and

WHEREAS, the \$6 million Environmental Assessment will analyze options and develop an appropriate solution to address long-term operations, capacity, and safety along US 278 from Moss Creek Drive to Squire Pope Road; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BEAUFORT COUNTY COUNCIL, that the US 278 Bridges to Hilton Head Island Improvement Project is essential to continued economic development in Beaufort County; and

BE IT RESOLVED, the US 278 Bridges to Hilton Head Island Improvement Project is consistent with the existing and planned future land use plans as described in the Beaufort County 2010 Comprehensive Plan; and

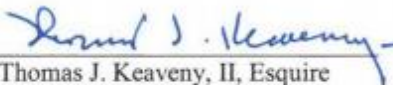
BE IT RESOLVED, Beaufort County has listed the US 278 Bridges to Hilton Head Island Improvement Project as a top priority under the Policy Agenda for the 2018 Beaufort County Strategic Plan.

Adopted this 10th day of December 2018.

COUNTY COUNCIL OF BEAUFORT COUNTY

By: 
D. Paul Sommerville, Chairman

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


Thomas J. Keaveny, II, Esquire
Beaufort County Attorney

ATTEST:


Connie L. Schroyer, Clerk to Council



Lowcountry Area Transportation Study Policy Committee Resolution



A RESOLUTION of the Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS) Policy Committee to make a finding, with supporting information, that the US 278 Bridges to Hilton Head Island Improvement Project is essential to the economic development in the Lowcountry area and is on the priority project list In the LATS Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

WHEREAS, the 3.7-mile section of United States Highway 278 (US 278) from Moss Creek Drive to Squire Pope Road currently experiences severe daily congestion due to traffic volumes that exceed the capacity provided by the four travel lanes; experiences rear-end crash rates that are higher than similar roadways in South Carolina due to stop and go traffic conditions; and produces congestion and delay leading to crucial interruptions in the transportation network that the Lowcountry area relies on for the movement of goods and people; and

WHEREAS, all four of the US 278 bridge structures are listed as functionally obsolete and the eastbound structure of the Karl Bowers Bridge over Mackay Creek is structurally deficient; and

WHEREAS, US 278 impacts evacuations from Hilton Head Island as this route is the only land-based emergency evacuation route off Hilton Head Island; and

WHEREAS, the deficient bridge conditions, traffic congestion, and bottlenecks that occur along this portion of US 278 impact the reliability and resiliency of the Strategic Statewide Freight Roadway Network as listed in the SCDOT South Carolina Statewide Freight Plan, which the Lowcountry area relies on to support its robust tourism economy; and

WHEREAS, improving the US 278 Bridges to Hilton Head Island will provide a mechanism for long term economic competitiveness by: improving transportation efficiency and reliability for the movement of people and goods; improving access between employment centers, job opportunities, and workforces; increasing the economic productivity of labor (the fewer hours employees spend commuting will result in higher productivity at their jobs); and supporting long term job creation; and

WHEREAS, according to a 2017 Regional Transactions Concepts, LLC study, over 2,600,000 tourists visit Hilton Head Island each year, estimated to contribute an economic impact (output) of approximately \$1.44 billion within the County in 2016. Most of these tourists travel to Hilton Head Island using the US 278 bridges; and

WHEREAS, according to a 2017 study by the U.S. Travel Association, Beaufort County supplied the 3rd highest number of tourism jobs in the state.

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, Inflow/Outflow Analysis (2015), 12,693 people commute to Hilton Head Island daily from other areas using the US 278 bridges, representing 61.5% of the workforce on Hilton Head Island; and

c/o Lowcountry Council of Governments

PO Box 98 | 634 Campground Road
Yemassee, South Carolina 29945
Main: 843.473.3990 Planning: 843.473.3958 Fax: 843.726.5165
www.lowcountrycog.org



WHEREAS, the Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS) Policy Committee does hereby find that the current condition of the US 278 Bridges to Hilton Head Island is a significant impediment to our citizens and visitors and a hindrance on the economic activity and future development in the region; and

WHEREAS, the US 278 Bridges to Hilton Head Island Improvement Project represents tangible progress towards achieving goals and objectives set by the Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS) Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP); and

WHEREAS, the US 278 Bridges to Hilton Head Island Improvement Project will provide for positive progress towards the following guiding principles of the Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS) Metropolitan Planning Organization's Long Range Transportation Plan (2040 LATS LRTP): Barriers to Mobility, Congestion Mitigation, and Economic Vitality/Tourism; and

WHEREAS, the improvements of the US 278 Bridges to Hilton Head Island is projected to cost in excess of \$240,000,000 based on SCDOT engineering estimates and contingency factors; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LOWCOUNTRY AREA TRANSPORTATION POLICY COMMITTEE (LATS) , that the US 278 Bridges to Hilton Head Island Improvement Project is essential to continued safety and economic development in the Lowcountry area; and

BE IT RESOLVED, the Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS) policy Committee has listed the US 278 Bridges to Hilton Head Island as a top priority project that will support the implementation of the 2040 LATS Metropolitan Planning Organization's Long Range Transportation Plan (2040 LATS LRTP).

Adopted this 7th day of June, 2019.

LOWCOUNTRY AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY POLICY COMMITTEE

Lisa Sulka, Chair
Mayor, Town of Bluffton

c/o Lowcountry Council of Governments

PO Box 98 | 634 Campground Road
Yemassee, South Carolina 29945
Main: 843.473.3990 Planning: 843.473.3958 Fax: 843.726.5165
www.lowcountrycog.org



Town of Hilton Head Island Town Council Resolution

Resolution Number _____

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA, SUPPORTING THE JOINT PURSUIT, WITH BEAUFORT COUNTY, AND IN COORDINATION WITH THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA, THE FUNDING, ANALYSIS AND ULTIMATE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION PROJECT KNOWN AS “SCDOT PROJECT ID PO30450 – U.S. 278 CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS”, A PORTION OF WHICH IS WITHIN THE TOWN LIMITS OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND, BEAUFORT COUNTY, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PLANS OF SAID PROJECT.

WHEREAS, the South Carolina Department of Transportation (“SCDOT”), proposes to survey, analyze, design, permit, construct, reconstruct, alter, or improve the 3.7-mile section of United States Highway 278 (“U.S. 278”) from Moss Creek Drive to Spanish Wells Road including the bridges connecting the mainland to Hilton Head Island in connection with that certain project known as “SCDOT Project ID PO30450 – U.S. 278 Corridor Improvements” (hereinafter, the “Project”), of which a portion is located within the corporate limits of the Town of Hilton Head Island (hereinafter, the “Town”); and

WHEREAS, SCDOT has allocated \$40,000,000 to improve or replace the structurally deficient eastbound span of the Karl Bowers Bridge over Mackay Creek; and

WHEREAS, the traffic capacity limitations and deficient bridge conditions may have dire consequences on public safety during emergency evacuations from Hilton Head Island and post disaster re-entry and recovery operations on Hilton Head Island, as this route is the only land-based route connecting the Island to the mainland; and

WHEREAS, an estimated 2,600,000 tourists visited Hilton Head Island in 2016 and contributed an estimated \$1.44 billion in economic impact (output) according to the 2017



Regional Transactions Concepts, LLC study, and the vast majority of these tourists used the US 278 bridges to access Hilton Head Island; and

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, Inflow/Outflow Analysis (2015), 12,693 people commute to Hilton Head Island using the US 278 bridges, representing 61.5% of the workforce on Hilton Head Island; and

WHEREAS, the 2017 Town of Hilton Head Island Comprehensive Plan states the U.S. 278 Bridges to Hilton Head Island are critical public facilities that provide the only vehicular access for residents and visitors to the Island, and the only ground transportation link for emergency evacuations, and therefore ensuring they are structurally and functionally sound is a top priority; and

WHEREAS, the Project shall provide for long term economic benefits to the Town, the County and the State by improving long-term transportation efficiency and reliability for the Strategic Statewide Freight Roadway Network, as listed in the SCDOT South Carolina Statewide Freight Plan, by improving the movement of people and goods, and the access between employment centers, job opportunities, and workforces; and

WHEREAS, future highway corridor planning must be broadened beyond mere traffic engineering and access management to encompass land use, economic development, pedestrian safety, and aesthetic issues, as well as impacts to existing residents along the corridor; and

WHEREAS, the Project will include an Environmental Assessment currently underway to assess all of the possible solutions and their potential impact on community, natural and cultural resources before committing to a design; and



WHEREAS, THE Town of Hilton Head Island will be appointing a task force made up of community groups to provide input as part of the Environmental Assessment; and

WHEREAS, the Project will improve road capacity; improve safety during daily trips and during emergency evacuations; improve access to U.S. 278 from adjoining roads and properties; improve efficiency through the U.S. 278 corridor; and consider related infrastructure and connectivity for non-motorized transportation; and

WHEREAS, the improvements to the U.S. 278 corridor between Moss Creek Drive and Spanish Wells Road, including repairing or replacing both bridges across Mackay Creek and Skull Creek, is projected to cost in excess of \$245,000,000 (based on SCDOT engineering estimates dated November 2018, adjusted for inflation and contingency factors); and

WHEREAS, Beaufort County voters supported the November 2018 1 cent transportation referendum committing \$80 million in local funds for the U.S. 278 Corridor Improvement Project.

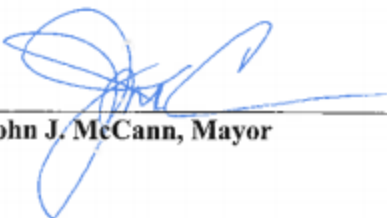
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA, that the Project is essential to the safety and welfare of the citizens of, and the continued economic development within, the Town of Hilton Head Island; and

1. The Town of Hilton Head Island supports the joint pursuit of funding from the South Carolina Transportation Infrastructure Bank to plan, analyze and implement the Department of Transportation project known as "SCDOT Project ID PO30450 – U.S. 278 Corridor Improvements".



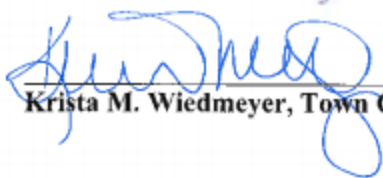
2. In supporting this project the Town will not consider any future use of its Jenkins Island property within this corridor until all needs for this project have been identified.

PASSED AND APPROVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL, THIS 18th DAY OF December, 2018.



John J. McCann, Mayor

ATTEST:



Krista M. Wiedmeyer, Town Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



Gregg Alford, Town Attorney

Introduced by Council Member William Harkins



TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND

Community Development Department

TO: Stephen G. Riley, ICMA~CM, *Town Manager*
FROM: Charles Cousins, AICP, *Community Development Director* *CFC*
CC: Josh Gruber, *Assistant Town Manager*
DATE: December 10, 2018
SUBJECT: Resolution Supporting U.S. 278 Corridor Improvements Project/ S.C.
Transportation Infrastructure Bank Application

Recommendation: Staff recommends that Town Council approve the attached resolution supporting the joint pursuit, with Beaufort County, and in coordination with the State of South Carolina, of funding, analysis and implementation of SCDOT's "U.S. 278 Corridor Improvements" project.

Summary: SCDOT has identified as a project "U.S. 278 Corridor Improvements". This project encompasses the area along U.S. 278 between Moss Creek Drive and Spanish Wells Road. A portion of this section of U.S. 278 includes the eastbound span of the Karl Bowers Bridge over Mackay Creek which has been determined to be structurally deficient. SCDOT has allocated \$40,000,000 to improve or replace this bridge span. The entire cost of the "U.S. 278 Corridor Improvements" project has been estimated by SCDOT at \$245,000,000. In October 2019 Beaufort County voter approved a 1 cent sales tax referendum intended to raise \$80,000,000 for this project. It is anticipated that the remainder of the \$245,000,000 would be funded by the South Carolina Transportation Infrastructure Bank.

Background: SCDOT's project "U.S. 278 Corridor Improvements" is underway to study and improve the 3.7 mile section of U.S. 278 between Moss Creek Drive and Spanish Wells Road. This project includes 4 bridge structures which cross either Mackay Creek or the Intracoastal Waterway. Initial SCDOT cost estimates for this project are \$245,000,000. One of these bridge spans, the eastbound Karl Bowers Bridge over Mackay Creek, has been identified as structurally deficient. SCDOT has allocated \$40,000,000 to address this deficiency. A 1 cent sales tax referendum was passed by Beaufort County voters in October of this year to provide \$80,000,000 towards the cost of this project. Town and County staff, along with the County's consultant, have been preparing an application to the South Carolina Transportation Infrastructure bank to provide additional funds needed for this project. In support of this application, local governments and key stakeholders have been requested to pass resolutions of support.



APPENDIX B

LETTERS OF SUPPORT



Henry McMaster, Governor of South Carolina – Letter of Support



HENRY McMASTER
GOVERNOR

October 25, 2018

Mr. John B. White, Jr.
Chairman
South Carolina Transportation Infrastructure Bank
955 Park Street, Suite 120 B
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Chairman White:

It is my understanding that Beaufort County and the Town of Hilton Head has submitted a request for funding assistance to the S.C. Transportation Infrastructure Bank in order to widen and improve the U.S. 278 corridor.

Through their transportation planning processes, the local governments have identified this highway corridor as a high priority for improvements to facilitate continued economic growth, tourism, improve safety as well as to provide for efficient hurricane evacuations.

These local needs are consistent with many of the statewide strategic objectives that I have identified for the State of South Carolina. I have stated that our statewide goals for public infrastructure and economic development should include building a world-class and safe public infrastructure to enhance the quality of life of our citizens and to promote the state in global competitiveness as a location for business, investment, talent, innovation and visitors.

Additionally, I firmly believe that it is our duty to our citizens to deliver a government that serves the needs of South Carolinians and achieves inter-agency collaboration to deliver highly effective, efficient and innovative programs.

The proposed U.S. 278 widening project is a great example of where the S.C. Transportation Infrastructure Bank could partner with local governments to stretch infrastructure funding to generate a greater benefit for the tax payers and poise the region for continued economic growth for years to come.

Yours very truly,

Henry McMaster

HDM/tw

cc: The Honorable Tom Davis



The City of Beaufort – Letter of Support

William A. Prokop
CITY MANAGER
843-525-7070
FAX 843-525-7013



CITY OF BEAUFORT
1911 Boundary Street
BEAUFORT, SOUTH CAROLINA 29902

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Billy Keyserling, Mayor
Mike McFee, Mayor Pro Tem
Nan B Sutton
Philip Cromer
Stephen Murray

October 3, 2018

Mr. John B. White, Jr., Chairman
S.C. Transportation Infrastructure Bank
955 Park Street, Suite 120 B
Columbia, SC 29201


Dear Chairman White:

As the City Manager for the City of Beaufort, I am proud of what our community has done to contribute to the overwhelming popularity of the Beaufort County area. In fact, Hilton Head Island-Bluffton-Beaufort, S.C. is the 23rd fastest growing area in the country according to the USA Today. According to recently released data from the US census Bureau, the City of Beaufort is also one of the fastest growing cities in South Carolina. With the great success of region comes many challenges, and we take pride in maintaining a high quality of life for our residents and keeping the southern charm of our community in tact for generations to come. Our local government has implemented many improvements in our downtown and has invested millions in capital improvements throughout our city to welcome and embrace the three million visitors that come to Beaufort County each year, but we need the completion of US 278 to help move people and commerce.

Beaufort County and its municipalities, including the City of Beaufort, recognize the immediate need for the US 278 bridge project to be completed and support this application documenting it as a top priority for this region. Regional Transactions Concepts, LLC Economic Modeling estimated that in 2016 tourism in Beaufort County was estimated to contribute an economic impact (output) of approximately \$1.53 billion within the County annually. The functioning of US 278 is an absolute necessity if we wish for this success to continue in years to come. The impact that tourism has on our local budget is critical for maintaining high levels of service for our residents, fund the services necessary for public safety related to increased traffic, and keep property taxes at an affordable rate. A significant portion of the City budget is directly attributed to tourism.

Over the years, Beaufort County has been proactive in securing several different revenue streams to pay for much needed improvements. The residents of Beaufort County have supported significant local funding commitments through sales tax funds, impact fees and general obligation borrowing to build transportation improvements, including many which are owned by the State of South Carolina. As the popularity of this area continues to increase, our city government is committed to again supporting the proposed one-cent tax increase on the November 2018 referendum and doing our part in raising \$80 million dollars of local dollars to help fund this project.

Sincerely yours,


William Prokop
City Manager



The Town of Bluffton – Letter of Support

Lisa Sulka
Mayor

Larry Toomer
Mayor Pro Tempore

Marc Orlando
Town Manager



Council Members
Fred Hamilton
Dan Wood
Harry Lutz

Kimberly Chapman
Town Clerk

October 9, 2018

John B. White, Jr.
Chairman
SC Transportation Infrastructure Bank Board
955 Park Street
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Mr. White:

The purpose of this letter is to express support for Beaufort County, South Carolina in its efforts to obtain funding for the bridge widening project along U.S. 278 between the Towns of Bluffton and Hilton Head Island. The Town of Bluffton is located a few miles west of the Town of Hilton Head Island and shares the U.S. 278 corridor which links the two municipalities.

This portion of roadway is heavily traveled by local residents, visitors and the labor work force which supports over \$1.5 billion in annual economic impact to the region. We believe the proposed improvements in the project will positively impact commerce while enhancing safety for travelers. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Lisa Sulka
Mayor

CC: Members of the Town of Bluffton Town Council
Marc Orlando, Town Manager, Town of Bluffton
Paul Sommerville, Chairman, Beaufort County Council
Robert McFee, Director of Construction, Engineering & Facilities, Beaufort County



Southern Carolina Regional Development Alliance – Letter of Support



1750 Jackson Street, Suite 100 Barnwell, SC 29812

December 11, 2018

Mr. John B. White, Jr., Chairman
S.C. Transportation Infrastructure Bank
955 Park Street, Suite 120 B
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Chairman White:

As President & CEO of SouthernCarolina Regional Alliance, the regional entity for marketing and economic development supporting the counties of Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton and Jasper counties, I am pleased to write in support the US 278 bridges to Hilton Head Island Project. Each year Beaufort County sees over 3,000,000 visitors with a \$1.53 billion impact on our state. US Hwy 278 is the most critical corridor to the region's success. Our organization has reviewed this project and believe it is essential to economic development and will have a positive impact on the transportation system and the economic development in the State of South Carolina.

SouthernCarolina Alliance appreciates the opportunity to serve and support the citizens of the Lowcountry Area.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 803-541-0023.

Sincerely,

Danny Black
President & CEO



APPENDIX C

EXISTING PLANS WHERE THIS
PROJECT IS PRIORITIZED OR
REFERENCED



This project has unanimous support from all local governing bodies and jurisdictional entities and has been listed and prioritized in many long range and strategic plans. This roadway project has been listed as a priority project in the following documents:

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:

- **SCDOT Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) (2017-2022)**

The US 278 Corridor Improvements / US 278 Corridor Improvements from Buckingham Plantation Dr to Squire Pope Road, including replacement of eastbound Mackay Creek Bridge, intersection improvements on Pinckney Island and improvements to Jenkins Island is listed in the SCDOT STIP

- **SCDOT Lowcountry Project/Ten Year Plan (2018)**

- The 2018 SCDOT Ten-Year Plan for the Lowcountry region lists the US 278 eastbound bridge over Mackay Creek replacement as a priority project.³⁴
- Listed under Lowcountry Projects:
*“Route: Fording Island Rd (US 278 EB)
County: Beaufort
Project Name: US 278 EBL over Mackay Creek
Construction Year: 2023
Category: Eliminate Interstate/NHS Structurally Deficient Bridges”*

- **2016 SCDOT Interstate/NHS Bridge Replacement Priority List**

- The US 278 eastbound lane of the Karl Bowers Bridge over Mackay Creek is #2 ranked structurally deficient bridge in South Carolina.

- **South Carolina 2040 Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan (2014)**

- *“US 278 has been identified for priority improvements to preserve and improve freight movements by truck within South Carolina.”³⁵*

LOWCOUNTRY AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY (LATS) METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION:

- **Lowcountry LATS Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) (2019)**

- *“US 278 Corridor Improvements from Buckingham Plantation Dr to Squire Pope Rd, including replacement of the EB Mackay Creek Bridge, intersection improvements on Pinkney Island and improvements to Jenkins Island.”³⁶*

³⁴ South Carolina Department of Transportation, *Lowcountry Project/Ten Year Plan*, (2018)

³⁵ South Carolina Department of Transportation, *South Carolina 2040 Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan*, (2014)

³⁶ Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS) Metropolitan Planning Organization, *Lowcountry LATS Transportation Improvement Program*, (2019)



BEAUFORT COUNTY:

- **Beaufort County Strategic Plan (2018)**
 - *"U.S. Highway 278 Expansion/Improvements is listed as a top priority under the Policy Agenda for the Beaufort County Strategic Plan."³⁷*
 - *"U.S. Highway 278 Corridor (Gateway): Environmental Assessment for Bridge is listed as a top priority under the Management Agenda for the Beaufort County Strategic Plan."³⁷*
- **Beaufort County Comprehensive Plan (2010)**
 - *"Additional Planned Transportation Improvements to Address 2025 Needs: US 278 Bridge Widening from to Hilton Head Island to 6 lanes divided. Estimated cost = \$155 Million"³⁸*
- **Southern Beaufort County Regional Plan (2006)**
 - *"The most visible consequence of southern Beaufort County's fast rate of growth is the demand it places on the region's roads. The rapid rate of growth has already caused portions of U.S. 278, the region's primary east-west arterial, to fail with traffic volumes far exceeding capacity between S.C. 46 and the bridges to Hilton Head Island."³⁹*

TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND:

- **Town Council 2018 Key Priorities Dashboard (2018)**
 - *"The Hilton Head Town Council authorized funding in the amount of \$45,882 to assist Beaufort County with the engineering services required to prepare this application to the State Infrastructure Bank (SIB). An intergovernmental agreement has been executed as a result."⁴⁰*
- **Town of Hilton Head Island Comprehensive Plan (2017)**
 - *Goal 6.3-D is "To have a pathway network that provides for recreational opportunities as well as an alternative means of transportation to and on the Island" ... Implementation Strategy 6.3-D is to "Coordinate with SCDOT and Beaufort County to provide a pathway link to the mainland."*
 - *"The bridges onto the Island are critical public facilities that provide the only vehicular access for residents and visitors to the Island, as well as the only ground transportation link for emergency evacuations. Protection of these critical facilities should be a priority."⁴¹*
- **Mayor's Task Force for the Island's Future - Vision for 2025 (2010)**
 - *"THREATS - Third Priority Tier: - Limited capacity of bridge to mainland; ... It is the intent of the Town Council of Hilton Head Island to revitalize the Island's buildings and infrastructure by: Improving access to the Island (local, county, state, and federal) as well as internal connectivity and circulation."⁴²*

³⁷ Beaufort County, *Beaufort County Strategic Plan*, (2018)

³⁸ Beaufort County, *Beaufort County Comprehensive Plan*, (2010)

³⁹ Beaufort County, *Southern Beaufort County Regional Plan*, (2006)

⁴⁰ Town of Hilton Head Island, *Town Council 2018 Key Priorities Dashboard*, (2018)

⁴¹ Town of Hilton Head Island, *Town of Hilton Head Island Comprehensive Plan*, (2017)

⁴² Town of Hilton Head Island, *Mayor's Task Force for the Island's Future - Vision for 2025*, (2010)



Improving the US 278 bridges to reduce congestion between Moss Creek Drive and Squire Pope Road and replacing the structurally deficient eastbound span on the Karl Bowers Bridge corresponds with priorities, goals, and objectives listed in all local and regional planning documents and has unanimous support from all entities with jurisdictional influence in the area.

The project is also listed in the following additional local land use plans and related documents:

Beaufort County:

- Beaufort County Strategic Plan (2018)
- Jenkins Island Access Management System - Preliminary Project Planning Environmental Screening Report (2015)
- Beaufort County Comprehensive Plan (2010)
- Cursory Above Water & Underwater Investigation of US 278 Eastbound & Westbound Over MacKay Creek and Skull Creek (2010)

South Carolina Department of Transportation:

- South Carolina Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (2017-2022)
- South Carolina Strategic Corridors Plan (2014)
- South Carolina 2040 Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan (2014)

Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS) Metropolitan Planning Organization:

- 2040 Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS) Metropolitan Planning Organization's Long-Range Transportation Plan (2015)

Town of Bluffton

- Town of Bluffton Comprehensive Plan (2014)

Town of Hilton Head Island:

- Town of Hilton Head Island Comprehensive Plan (2017)

Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS) Metropolitan Planning Organization:

- 2040 Lowcountry Regional Transit and Coordination Plan (2014)

Jasper County, South Carolina

- Jasper County Comprehensive Plan (2014)



APPENDIX D

LATS MPO Scoring Criteria



Beaufort County - US 278 Corridor Improvement Project

STATE INFRASTRUCTURE BANK APPLICATION

LATS 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan
Roadway Corridor Prioritization

Project ID	Spot/Corridor	Type	Source	Location	Congestion Mitigation	Livability / Complete Streets	Barriers to Mobility	Multimodal Integration	Economic Vitality / Tourism	Environmental Stewardship	Consistency with Comprehensive Plans	Financial Viability	Total Score
C-5	Corridor	ITS/Access Management	SC 170/US 278 Corridor Study; N Beaufort City Plan	SC 170 from US 278 to US 21 Bus	15	10	18	5	15	5	5 Yes	3	71
C-18	Corridor	ITS/Access Management	Kimley-Horn - congestion	SC 315 / SC 46 from SC 170 to Pin Oak St	15	10	19	5	15	5	5 Yes	0	69
C-19	Corridor	Bridge Widening and related improvements	Bift City Comp Plan; US 278 Long Term Needs Study	US 278 from Buckingham Plantation Dr to Squire Pope Rd	25	10	14	5	15	0 Yes	0 Yes	5	74
C-22	Corridor	ITS/Access Management	Beaufort County Comprehensive Plan	US 278 / US 278 Bus in Hilton Head Island	15	10	18	5	10	5	5 Yes	0	63
C-1	Corridor	ITS/Access Management	Kimley-Horn - congestion	SC 802 from US 21 to Brickyard Point Rd / Holly Hall Rd	5	10	19	5	10	10	10 Yes	0	59
C-21	Corridor	ITS/Access Management	Kimley-Horn - congestion	SC 315 / SC 46 from US 17 to SC 170	15	10	15	5	5	5	5 Yes	0	55
C-8	Corridor	ITS/Access Management	Vision Beaufort	Ribaut Rd (US 21 / SC 281) from Lenora Rd to US 21 Bus	5	10	19	5	5	5	10 Yes	0	54
C-7	Corridor	ITS/Access Management	Northern Beaufort County Plan	US 21 from Mink Point Blvd to SC 170	5	10	15	5	10	5	5 Yes	3	53
C-4	Corridor	ITS/Access Management	Kimley-Horn - congestion	Joe Frazier Rd from SC 116 to Broad River Blvd	5	10	16	5	10	5	5 Yes	0	51
C-12	Corridor	ITS/Access Management	Beaufort County Comprehensive Plan	Buck Island Rd from Bluffton Pkwy to US 278	5	10	18	5	5	0	10 Yes	3	51
C-23	Corridor	Roadway Widening	Kimley-Horn - congestion	SC 315 / SC 46 from US 17 to SC 170	10	10	15	5	5	5	5 Yes	0	50
C-9	Corridor	Roadway Widening	Kimley-Horn - congestion	Argent Blvd from US 278 to SC 170	10	5	14	0	15	5	5 Yes	0	49
C-10	Corridor	Roadway Widening	Kimley-Horn - congestion	US 278 from I-95 to Argent Blvd	10	10	9	5	5	5	5 Yes	0	44
C-11	Corridor	Roadway Widening	H'ville 2009 Comp Plan	US 321 from US 17 to Honey Hill Rd	0	5	20	0	5	10	0 Yes	3	43
C-16	Corridor	Roadway Widening	H'ville 2009 Comp Plan	I-95 from Georgia line to US 278	10	5	12	0	15	0	0 Yes	0	42
C-2	Corridor	New Location	Boundary Street Master Plan, Civic Master Plan	From S-281 to S-167	15	5	10	0	5	0	0 Yes	0	35
C-15	Corridor	New Location	Bluffton Parkway Phases 6 & 7	from Bluffton Pkwy to SC 46	0	5	10	0	10	5	5 Yes	3	33
C-20	Corridor	New Location	Kimley-Horn - connectivity	Stroup Lane extension from Burnt Church Rd to Buckingham Plantation Dr	0	5	10	0	10	5	5 Yes	0	30
C-13	Corridor	New Location	Bluffton Pkwy Access Mgmt Plan; Phase 5B	Bluffton Pkwy from Buckwalter Pkwy to Buck Island Rd	0	10	10	5	0	5	5 Yes	0	30
C-3	Corridor	New Location	Civic Master Plan	From US 21 to S-73	0	5	10	0	5	5	5 Yes	5	30
C-24	Corridor	Roadway Widening	Lowcountry LRTP	US 17 from Georgia line to SC 170	0	10	9	5	5	0	0 Yes	0	29
C-14	Corridor	New Location	Bluffton Parkway Phases 6 & 7	Bluffton Pkwy from Riverport Pkwy to SC 170	0	5	10	0	10	0	0 Yes	0	25
C-6	Corridor	New Location	Civic Master Plan	From Myrtle St to Reynolds St	0	5	10	0	5	0	0 Yes	3	23
C-17	Corridor	New Location	H'ville 2009 Comp Plan	from SC 170 to US 321	0	0	10	0	0	0	0 Yes	0	15



APPENDIX E

SCDOT Commitment of Funds



COUNTY COUNCIL OF BEAUFORT COUNTY
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
BEAUFORT COUNTY GOVERNMENT ROBERT SMALLS COMPLEX
100 RIBAUT ROAD
POST OFFICE DRAWER 1228
BEAUFORT, SOUTH CAROLINA 29901-1228
TELEPHONE: (843) 255-2023
FAX: (843) 255-9403
www.beaufortcountysc.gov

CHERYL H. HARRIS
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

ASHLEY M. JACOBS
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

July 23, 2019

Mr. Brent L. Rewis, PE
Director of Planning
South Carolina Department of Transportation
955 Park Street
Columbia, SC 29229

Dear Mr. Rewis:

As you know, over the past six months as Beaufort County has been developing its State Infrastructure Bank Application for Financial Assistance, we have been requesting an affirmation letter from SCDOT as it relates to your cost estimate, committed level of funding, maintenance and operation and eminent domain activities on behalf of the US 278 Corridor project.

Please let this letter act as an additional record to those numerous requests. Applications are due August 1, 2019, and we would deeply appreciate your assistance as soon as possible.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Robert McFee of my staff at (843) 255-2730.

Sincerely,

Ashley M. Jacobs
County Administrator

AMJ:ch

cc: Robert McFee, Division Director, Construction, Engineering and Facilities



July 22, 2019

Ms. Ashley Jacobs
County Administrator
Beaufort County Administration Building
100 Ribaut Road
Beaufort, South Carolina 29901-1228

RE: Beaufort County's South Carolina
State Transportation Infrastructure Bank (SCTIB) Application

Dear Ms. Jacobs:

The South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) is in receipt of Beaufort County's request for confirmation of the Department's funding commitment for the US 278 Corridor Improvement project in Beaufort County.

In response to the requirements of the SCTIB *Financial Assistance Application Process*, Section V (5.6) Financial Plan, "Other proposed sources of funds, including a written commitment of all parties," SCDOT offers the following:

SCDOT has committed \$43,520,112 of Interstate/NHS Bridge Replacement funds for the replacement of the southbound Mackay Creek Bridge to be included in the US 278 Corridor Improvement project as outlined in the financial participation agreement with Beaufort County, see attached. Preliminary engineering funds are currently available and construction funds will be available in FY2024.

SCDOT looks forward to a continued partnership in improving transportation in Beaufort County.

Sincerely,

Brent L. Rewis
Director of Planning

BLR:sdb
Enclosure

cc: Christy Hall, Secretary of Transportation
Leland Colvin, Deputy Secretary for Engineering
Jim Feda, Deputy Secretary for Intermodal Planning
Randy Young, Chief Engineer for Project Delivery
John Boylston, Director of Preconstruction
Craig Winn, Lowcountry Program Manager
Jennifer Necker, Lowcountry RPG Engineer
Rob McFee, PE, Beaufort County Engineer

File: Pln/BLR



FPA-29-17

If Applicable
CFDA No. 20.205
Highway Planning & Construction

Project ID No.: _____
Cost Center: _____
WBS No.: _____
Fund: _____
PIN: _____
Functional Area: _____

Financial Participation Agreement
Between
South Carolina Department of Transportation
And
Beaufort County

THIS AGREEMENT is made this 27th day of April, 2017, by and between the South Carolina Department of Transportation (hereinafter referred to as "SCDOT") and Beaufort County (hereinafter referred to as "COUNTY") (collectively referred to as "Parties") for the below described Project:

WITNESSETH THAT:

WHEREAS, SCDOT and COUNTY want to work together in the planning and implementation of the US 278 Corridor Improvements in Beaufort County; and

WHEREAS, SCDOT is an agency of the State of South Carolina with the authority to enter into contracts necessary for the proper discharge of its functions and duties; and

WHEREAS, COUNTY is a body politic with all the rights and privileges of such including the power to contract as a necessary and incidental power to carry out COUNTY's obligations covered under this Agreement; and

WHEREAS, SCDOT is agreeable to provide the services necessary to administer the services covered by this Agreement;

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the several promises to be faithfully performed by the parties hereto as set forth herein, SCDOT and COUNTY do hereby agree as follows:

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project which is the subject of this Agreement consists of: all preliminary engineering for the preparation of an Environmental Assessment document for the US 278 Corridor Improvements, which consists of: the widening of US 278 from four lanes to six lanes from Buckingham Plantation Drive to Squire Pope Road, including replacement of the eastbound Mackay Creek Bridge, intersection improvements of US 278 on Pinckney Island, and incorporating improvements to Jenkins Island being developed by COUNTY.

"Exhibit A," attached hereto and specifically made a part of this Agreement, provides a map of the Project area.



FPA-29-17

The Project as described above shall be referred to hereinafter as "the PROJECT."

II. PROJECT SCOPE

SCDOT will be responsible for PROJECT Preliminary Engineering for the environmental documentation for US 278 Corridor Improvements from Buckingham Plantation Drive to Squire Pope Road to include: project organization and management, aerial mapping and field surveys, preliminary geotechnical services, conceptual bridge and roadway plans, preliminary hydrology and hydraulic design, bridge seismic analysis and recommendations, subsurface engineering (SUE) and a preliminary utility report, preliminary right-of-way coordination, environmental documentation to complete and Environmental Assessment document, and NEPA compliance.

Remaining Preliminary Engineering, right-of-way acquisition, and construction of the US 278 Corridor Improvements will be addressed in a future agreement between the Parties.

III. FUNDING

A. PROJECT COST

The estimated PROJECT cost is \$3,000,000.00. SCDOT will contribute \$1,000,000.00 of Federal Bridge Interstate / NHS Funds as approved by the SCDOT Commission on September 15, 2016. The Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS) will contribute \$2,000,000.00 of Federal Guidesshare Funds as approved by LATS on January 13, 2017. SCDOT will provide the required matching funds for both sources of funds above.

B. COST OVERRUNS

If it becomes apparent that the cost of the PROJECT will exceed the estimated cost set forth above, SCDOT will provide COUNTY notice prior to total expenditure of funding available and will provide the estimate of funds needed to complete the PROJECT. COUNTY and SCDOT shall jointly agree on the appropriateness of any such cost overruns and upon such agreement the COUNTY shall remit to SCDOT within thirty (30) days of receipt of the notice the additional funds needed to complete the PROJECT. In the event of PROJECT overruns, SCDOT will be responsible for 33% of the additional costs, and COUNTY will be responsible for 67% of the additional costs.

C. COST UNDERRUNS

In the event that the total cost of the PROJECT is less than originally estimated, 33% of expended costs will be allocated to SCDOT and 67% of expended costs will be allocated to LATS, with unspent funds remaining with their sources.

D. SPECIAL FUNDING NOTICE

COUNTY will have eighteen months from FHWA approval of the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) Document in which to secure funding for remaining preliminary engineering, right-of-way acquisition, and construction phases of the US 278 Corridor Improvements. Approval of the EA Document is



FPA-29-17

established just prior to the public hearing, and SCDOT will notify COUNTY, in writing, at the start of the eighteen month period.

If COUNTY fails to secure the necessary funding for the remaining preliminary engineering, right-of-way acquisition, and construction phases of the US 278 Corridor Improvements, SCDOT will abandon the Corridor Improvements work described in Section I of this Agreement and will proceed, independent of COUNTY, with plans to replace only the eastbound Mackay Creek Bridge. Additionally, COUNTY will be required to reimburse SCDOT on behalf of LATS for all Federal Guideshare Funds and state matching funds expended on this PROJECT.

SCDOT shall notify COUNTY of the date when the eighteen month period identified above will end, and if reimbursement is required, COUNTY shall make quarterly payments to SCDOT starting at the beginning of the next quarter. COUNTY shall have two years to reimburse all Federal Guideshare Funds and state matching funds to SCDOT.

IV. PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

The effective date of this Agreement is the date identified above. This Agreement shall be deemed complete upon receipt of a PROJECT Finding of No Significant Impacts (FONSI) from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and completion of all activities of the parties contemplated herein. This Agreement may be terminated pursuant to Section VII. D of this Agreement at any time prior to receipt of FONSI.

Once a scope has been established, the Parties will enter into a new agreement for the remaining Preliminary Engineering, Right-of-Way acquisition, construction, and maintenance phases of the planned project when funds are identified and a NEPA document is approved.

V. SCDOT WILL:

- A. Provide PROJECT funding and notifications as specified in Section III of this Agreement.
- B. Assign a SCDOT employee to serve as liaison and contact between the Parties hereto.
- C. Provide a monthly update to the County Administrator and County Engineer, as needed, on the status of the PROJECT and funds.
- D. Plan PROJECT and all work to be performed pursuant to this Agreement.
- E. Prepare a detailed scope of work, budget, and schedule for the PROJECT with input from COUNTY.



FPA-29-17

- F. Advise COUNTY as to changes in scope, budget, and schedule as the scope develops through public involvement.
- G. Be responsible for all contract administration; advertising and awarding of contracts; review and approval of payment of contracts; and any other related or necessary activities or functions.
- H. Perform all or any part of the work with its own forces or may contract out any of the work or services to outside private or governmental consultants or contractors at SCDOT's sole discretion if SCDOT determines that such contracting out would be more efficient or cost effective or would result in more expeditious completion of the PROJECT.
- I. Be entitled to bill or draw payment at its normal and customary billing rates for services by its in-house personnel.
- J. Use reasonable efforts to assist COUNTY in identifying and pursuing potential funding sources at the local, State, and Federal levels that might be available to satisfy the remaining preliminary engineering, right-of-way acquisition, and construction phases of the US 278 Corridor Improvements.

VI. COUNTY WILL:

- A. Provide COUNTY's share of cost overruns as specified in Section III of this Agreement.
- B. Assign a Beaufort County employee to serve as liaison and contact between the Parties hereto.
- C. Provide input on the PROJECT to SCDOT.
- D. Use its best efforts to identify and allocate funding for the remaining preliminary engineering, right-of-way acquisition, and construction phases of the preferred alternative.
- E. Reimburse SCDOT pursuant to Section III of this Agreement if funding for the remaining preliminary engineering, right-of-way acquisition, and construction phases is not secured within the eighteen month period.

VII. GENERAL TERMS

- A. CONFORMITY WITH LAWS. The Parties hereto agree to conform to all SCDOT policies; all State, Federal, and local laws, rules, regulations, and ordinances governing agreements or contracts relative to the acquisition, design, construction, maintenance and repair of roads and bridges, and other services covered under this Agreement.



FPA-29-17

- B. **AMENDMENTS.** The PARTICIPANT, or its authorized agent, shall agree to hold consultations with SCDOT as may be necessary with regard to the execution of supplements to this Agreement during the course of this PROJECT for the purpose of resolving any items that may have been unintentionally omitted from this Agreement. Such supplemental agreements shall be subject to the approval and proper execution of the Parties hereto. No amendment to this Agreement shall be effective or binding on any Party hereto unless such amendment has been agreed to in writing by all Parties hereto.
- C. **REVIEWS/APPROVALS.** Any and all reviews and approvals required of the Parties herein shall not be unreasonably denied or withheld.
- D. **TERMINATION.** This Agreement may be terminated by COUNTY upon written notice to SCDOT, provided that COUNTY covers all costs incurred prior to termination and as the result of termination. SCDOT may terminate this Agreement if COUNTY fails to pay according to the terms of the Agreement. SCDOT will provide written notices of termination to COUNTY, and COUNTY shall be responsible for all costs incurred prior to termination and as the result of termination. Upon written notification of termination, all work on the PROJECT shall cease, unless otherwise directed. COUNTY's obligation to make payments and reimbursements for costs incurred prior to termination or for claims and judgments relating to the PROJECT received after termination shall survive the termination hereof.
- E. **DISPUTES.** All claims or disputes shall be filed with the SCDOT Project Manager. The Parties will meet to attempt to resolve any dispute or claim. If unable to resolve the dispute with the SCDOT Project Manager, the Parties may appeal the claim or dispute to the appropriate SCDOT Deputy Director. The Deputy Director's decision in the matter shall be final and conclusive for both Parties.
- F. **NOTICES.** All notices required to be given hereunder, except as otherwise provided in this Agreement, shall be deemed effective when received by the other party, through certified mail, registered mail, personal delivery, or courier delivery. All such notices shall be addressed to the parties as follows:
1. As to SCDOT:
South Carolina Department of Transportation
955 Park Street
Post Office Box 191
Columbia, South Carolina 29202-0191
Attn.: Deputy Secretary for Engineering
 2. As to COUNTY:
Mr. Gary Kubic
Beaufort County Administrator



FPA-29-17

100 Ribaut Road
Beaufort, South Carolina 29902

- G. **CONSENT OF MUNICIPALITY.** COUNTY is responsible for obtaining any municipal consent required pursuant to South Carolina Code of Laws Section 57-5-820.
- H. **WAIVERS** No waiver of any event of default by SCDOT or COUNTY hereunder shall be implied from any delay or omission by the other party to take action on account of such event of default, and no express waiver shall affect any event of default other than the event of default specified in the waiver and it shall be operative only for the time and to the extent therein stated. Waivers of any covenants, terms, or conditions contained herein must be in writing and shall not be construed as a waiver of any subsequent or other breach of the same covenant, term, or condition. The consent or approval by a party of any act by the other requiring further consent or approval shall not be deemed to waive or render unnecessary the consent or approval to or of any subsequent or similar act. No single or partial exercise of any right or remedy of a party hereunder shall preclude any further exercise thereof of the exercise of any other or different right or remedy.
- I. **SUCCESSORS AND ASSIGNS.** SCDOT and COUNTY each bind themselves, their successors, executors, administrators, and assigns to the other Party with respect to these requirements, and also agrees that no Party shall assign, sublet, or transfer its interest in the Agreement without the written consent of the other.
- J. **BENEFIT AND RIGHT OF THIRD PARTIES.** This Agreement is made and entered into for the sole protection and benefit of SCDOT and COUNTY, and their respective successors, executors, administrators, and assigns. No other persons, firms, entities, or parties shall have any rights, or standing to assert any rights, under this Agreement in any manner.
- K. **SAVINGS CLAUSE** Invalidation of any one or more of the provisions of this Agreement by any court of competent jurisdiction shall in no way affect any of the other provisions hereof, all of which shall remain, and is intended by the Parties to remain, in full force and effect.
- L. **EXECUTION IN COUNTERPARTS.** This Agreement may be executed and delivered in counterparts, and if so executed, shall become effective when a counterpart has been executed and delivered by all Parties hereto. All counterparts taken together shall constitute one and the same Agreement and shall be fully enforceable as such. Delivery of counterparts via facsimile transmission or via email with scanned attachment shall be effective as if originals thereof were delivered.



FPA-29-17

M. **AUTHORITY TO EXECUTE** By executing this Agreement, the undersigned each affirms and certifies that he or she has authority to bind his or her principal thereto and that all necessary acts have been taken to duly authorize this Agreement under applicable law.

N. **ENTIRE AGREEMENT**. This Agreement with any attachments constitutes the entire Agreement between the parties. The Agreement is to be interpreted under the laws of the State of South Carolina.

[Signature blocks on next page]



FPA-29-17

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have caused this Agreement to be executed on their behalf

SIGNED, SEALED AND DELIVERED
IN THE PRESENCE OF

C. King Harris
Witness

BEAUFORT COUNTY
By: [Signature]
(Signature)
Title: Administrator

[Signature]
Witness

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION
[Signature]
By: Brian W. Kays
Deputy Secretary for Finance and Administration
or Designee

RECOMMENDED BY:
[Signature]
Deputy Secretary or Designee

[Signature]
REVIEWED BY:
Brent Renick

Title: RP61 Engineer

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACTING

By: [Signature]
Chief Procurement Officer or Designee



Exhibit A

