

MINUTES
I-26 Fixed Guideway Alternatives Analysis
Transit Talk – Environmental & Community Organizations

DATE: 4/14/2015

TIME: 8:30 PM – 10:00 PM

LOCATION: Coastal Community Foundation – Zucker Conference Room

PURPOSE: Environmental and Community Organizations Transit Talk

ATTENDANCE: See attached Sign-In sheet

Agenda:

- I. Introductions
- II. Project Overview
- III. Alternatives Screening
- IV. Environment and Mobility Discussion Items
 - a. Multi-modal mobility
 - b. Low Income Households
 - c. Transit Dependent Populations
 - d. Natural, Cultural, and Historic Resources
 - e. Funding
- V. Upcoming Public Meetings
- VI. Project Next Steps

Discussion/Comments:

The livability transit talk was focused on bringing together a mix of environmental and community organizations throughout the study area to discuss how transit can preserve and enhance the natural and human environment along the I-26 Corridor between Summerville and Charleston. The intent of the transit talk was to inform these organizations about the study and upcoming public meetings; as well as solicit input regarding the mobility needs and concerns of these groups.

The following comments were noted:

- Transit has to become a part of a regional multi-modal system through education and outreach efforts. The public has to be educated and informed about what services the system offers and how to use/navigate the transit system.

- The current #10 Rivers Avenue route has the highest ridership of the CARTA routes. It was noted that given the already high use along this corridor (~25% ridership), it might be telling that this corridor is most suited for an alternative like BRT.
- Community safety is of major importance. Both current and future transit stops/stations have to consider safe pedestrian crossings for users at these locations.
- Summerville has a great need for transit within the local community. The current commuter service provided does not circulate around the city. Summerville residents need transit to get to medical appointments, shop, work, etc., as well as commute from Summerville to downtown Charleston.
- Comment was made about the high ridership that originates from the US 52 corridor out of Berkeley County to the K-Mart Park and Ride (Rivers Avenue). This might reflect a high demand along this US 52 corridor (Goose Creek and Moncks Corner).
- Given that the mode utilized is closely tied to the trip purpose and the distance one needs to travel, has any data been collected that will provide this information? The study has undertaken both an employer survey and origin-destination (O-D) survey that will provide this information.
- Question was posed to CARTA about the materials and system signage that are provided for non-English speaking users. CARTA provides Spanish translated system schedules to the public. On-route signage is however, primarily in English.
- “Millennials” are making the choice to use alternative modes such as transit. However, they have the flexibility to move to regions that have robust transit systems that can support their mode choice. Low-income and senior populations are usually dependent on transit services and do not have the same level of mobility as millennials. They therefore have to stay in place and make do with the current transit system. Transit should serve the needs of both of these groups.
- The land use along the corridor should look for infill opportunities to preserve currently undeveloped land and save rural areas.
- Although the current study looks at the I-26 Corridor, there has been a marked increase in use along the US 17 corridor (West Ashley/Mount Pleasant). There is a need to identify how these other corridors of high use will tie into the proposed system.
- A participant noted that this project has to show or demonstrate the viability of a new system (operational viability). If a system is proposed that is not viable and it fails, it will negatively impact the public attitude toward transit in the region.
- In determining an alternative, the community might place higher importance on a mode that is easy to implement (cost) and also has a fast implementation timeframe. Looking at these factors, BRT might be a supported mode since it seems have a relatively quick setup time (~4 years), and its startup cost is lower relative to other alternatives (commuter rail/light rail).
- A comment was noted regarding air quality; although the region is not currently a “non-attainment” area, historically, we have come close. In the future those standards may change, and our region may be faced with “non-attainment” status. Air quality should be a consideration in the study.
- The Rivers Avenue corridor might also be the best corridor to run BRT service because it has the space (median), it is already a high transit use corridor and it has the option to serve the Amtrak station, which is the future site for the Intermodal facility.