

PUBLIC OUTREACH SUMMARY

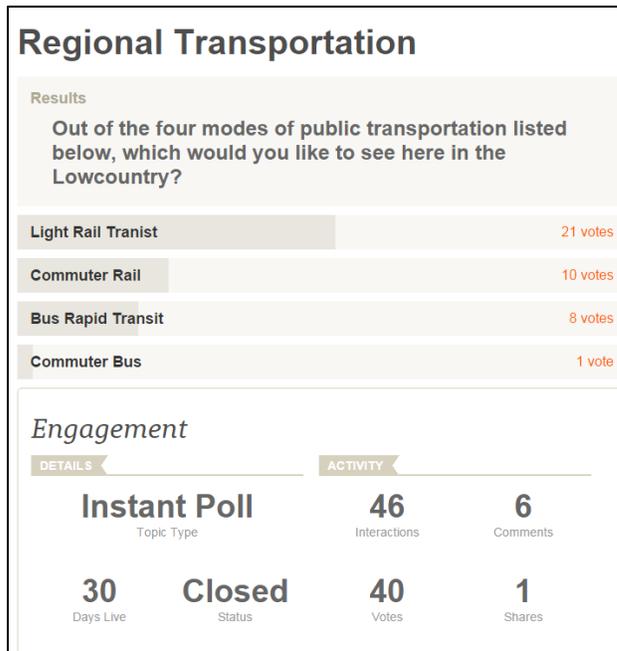
I-26 Fixed Guideway Alternatives Analysis

Spring 2015

In addition to three public meetings as described in the April 2015 Public Meeting Recap memorandum, the i-26ALT participated in several outreach activities in spring 2015. The following summarizes those activities.

Project MindMixer Launch:

On April 11, 2015, i-26ALT launched *Imagine an Alternative to Traveling I-26*, a new and innovative community engagement website developed by MindMixer. This online



community engagement tool allows the project team to stay connected with the public throughout the process. Citizens are able to connect, communicate and collaborate with community decision makers and other residents on the I-26 Fixed Guideway Alternatives Analysis. Through the site, the project team has posted various polls, surveys, and idea submittals that have gathered feedback on topics such as identifying the region's top transit priority, current transit system improvements, possible fixed guideway alignments, and preferred transit modes.

A QR Code was created to promote the MindMixer site and was used on all project handouts and outreach material. (i26alt.mindmixer.com)

i26alt.mindmixer.com

As of August 2015, since its launch, the project's MindMixer Website has had a total of 210 participants, with 87 participants considered active. To date, the site has received 9,617 page views and 3,426 unique visitors.

Transit Talks:

A series of Transit Talks were held during April and May 2015.

Environmental and Community Organizations Transit Talk

A livability transit talk was held on April 14, 2015 and 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

connecting Summerville, North Charleston, and Charleston. The intent of the transit talk was to inform these organizations about the study, as well as solicit input regarding the mobility needs and concerns of these groups. There were 16 in attendance at this breakfast meeting. The groups represented included:

- Charleston Moves
- CARTA
- City of Charleston
- City of Mount Pleasant
- Dorchester County
- Coastal Conservation League
- League of Women Voters
- HungryNeck Straphangers
- Private Citizens

Land Use Transit Talk

The Land Use focused transit event held on April 30, 2015 was comprised of a Developer's Workshop hosted by the Charleston Chapter of the Urban Land Institute and a public forum held at the Charleston Museum. The Developer's Workshop provided an opportunity to engage the development community about the role of transit in the region. Marilee Utter of the Urban Land Institute served as the moderator of the event. As an expert in Transit Oriented Development (TOD), she shared her experience with TOD and the transit-land use relationship. There were 12 attendees representing the following organizations:

- Urban Land Institute
- CityVolve
- Grambling Brothers
- Middle Street Partners
- SC Community Loan Fund
- Dorchester County
- The I'On Group
- CC&T Real estate
- Stone Street Capital
- The Beach Company
- Greystar
- Nexsen Pruet

Major take-aways from this workshop include:

- Major growth will occur along I-26 where land is available; primarily from outside I-526 and beyond Summerville.
- The Summerville area will become a major employment/activity center in the region, which will impact commute patterns, more particularly, create a reverse commute.
- The Park Circle and Upper Peninsula areas were identified as having TOD development opportunity.
- Major corridors identified that could support transit include:
 - Old Trolley Road to Dorchester Road to Magnolia, Peninsula, and MUSC
 - US 78 to Rivers Avenue, McMillan-Shipwatch and Morrison Drive.
- The Rivers Avenue corridor was the most commonly accepted corridor to support high capacity transit.
- North Charleston offers a potential opportunity for TOD zoning districts since the city has a tendency to be pro-growth.
- The group identified Rivers Avenue from Montague to Reynolds Avenue as a prime segment to implement as a first phase in implementing a fixed guideway

Business Transit Talk – “Transit Makes Good Business”

The business focused Transit Talk, “Transit Makes Good Business”, was held on May 5, 2015 at the Montague Terrace in North Charleston. This forum focused on how transit and business can successfully partner to improve access to jobs and boost our regional economy and competitive advantage. The goal of the transit talk was to better understand what matters most to business/employees in terms of employee mobility, congestion, parking, etc. and identify obstacles and opportunities for transit along the I-26 Corridor as an alternative. Approximately 41 people attended the event.

A panel discussion was held with representatives from business/organizations that have successfully partnered to provide transit alternatives to their employees. Panelists included:

- Perrin Lawson, Deputy Director, Charleston Area Convention & Visitors Bureau: Supporting the Tourism Industry – How Transit Serves Tourism in our Region
- Mike Graney, VP Global Business Development, Charleston Regional Development Alliance: Maintaining a Competitive Edge - Transit’s Role when Industries Consider our Region
- John Runyon, Director, Business Services, Medical University of South Carolina: Leveraging Employee Parking with Transit – MUSC’s Partnership with CARTA
- Raymond Smith, Director of Human Resources, Santee Cooper: Building Successful Partnerships - Santee Coopers iRide Program and Partnership with TriCounty Link

Major take-away from this forum included:

- Major challenges in our region are -
 - Geographic: Our region has unique geographic challenges, i.e. rivers and waterways that do not lend themselves to a traditional “hub & spoke system”. We do not have a central city with surrounding suburbs, and as a result, growth tends to be linear.
 - Cultural: Transit is not part of our community culture. People are attached to their cars and do not have confidence in the transit system. In other cities, transit is more culturally accepted.
- Industrial jobs will continue to grow, and the I-26 corridor it will expand, since environmental limitations prevent growth in other directions.
- Currently, manufacturing/industrial is main industry looking at the region, but 3-5 years from now, the IT cluster/creative cluster is anticipated to grow, which will bring a workforce looking for transit alternatives. The region needs to be on top of it today to be ready for that market.
- Access to talent is the number one priority. Are there workers with skills/capacity to do the job and will the talent be attracted to this region if coming from a metropolitan area with a robust transit system?
- The corridor needs to be efficient and predictable.

Transit Stop Outreach:

The project team performed an in-field visit on April 15, 2015 to the two most heavily utilized stops in the CARTA system; the North Charleston SuperStop (8:00 AM – 10:30 AM) and the Mary Street Transfer Center (3:00 PM – 5:00 PM) in Downtown Charleston. Project staff members spoke to transit riders about their experiences with the current CARTA system, as well as their impressions of what worked well with the system and what needed improvement.

Comments collected at this outreach effort will provide useful information in developing the CARTA Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA).

Comments ranged from route specific recommendations to systemwide suggestions. The following presents a general summary of the most common themes recorded:

- Routes need to be more frequent and reliable.
- Neighborhood routes 13, 102, 103, and 104 need to operate on Sundays.
- Routes need to operate later evening hours. Many routes stop operating too early. The Route 10 – Rivers Avenue operates until 12 midnight; however, riders are unable to connect to other routes because they are not operating at that time. Later service will also serve the many service workers who work late night shifts.
- More express service is needed from Summerville, Goose Creek, and Moncks Corner.
- The express service routes 1, 2, and 3 work well.
- West Ashley needs more service (increased frequency and longer operating time).
- CARTA needs to better advertise their service. Bus stop signage needs to be more noticeable. Stops need more shelter/bench infrastructure. System maps are difficult to understand.
- Rivers Avenue is not a pedestrian friendly corridor.
- Light rail and commuter rail might be best for the region to move people from Summerville to Charleston.
- Need buses that serve the beaches in the area.



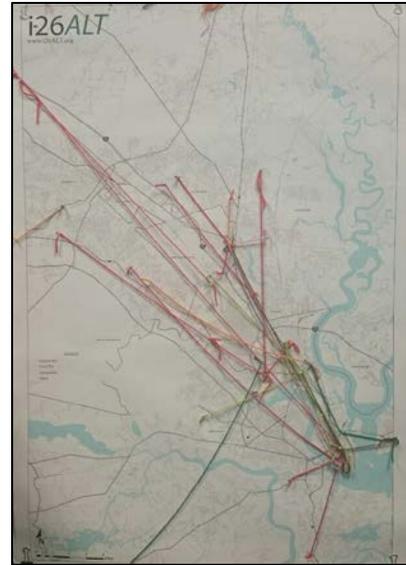
Project team member speaking to riders at the Mary Street Transfer Center

Charleston Black Expo 2015:

The i-26ALT project team secured a booth at the Charleston Black Expo event on March 14, 2015. The study team focused on sharing information about the purpose of the I-26 Fixed Guideway Alternatives Analysis as well as gaining input from the community on their vision for transit in the Charleston region.

The following comments were recorded:

- Please run the Route 10 - Rivers Ave. from 10 PM – 12 PM. People are still working these times, later on Sunday night.
- Don't use current system because it does not come to my neighborhood.
- Current transit is more convenient in downtown areas.
- Need to have better signs and shelters/benches for users.
- Service need to more frequent and on time.
- Need to focus on connecting Summerville to North Charleston since North Charleston is becoming the new "Midtown" employment area for the region.



"Draw Your Commute" exercise Board from the Charleston Black Expo Event

MUSC and North Charleston Earth Day Festivals:

i-26ALT was a part of both the North Charleston and MUSC Earth Day events. Project team staff took the opportunity to not only educate the public about the I-26 Fixed Guideway Alternative Analysis Study, but also gather feedback from participants about their vision for transit in the region.

Project materials provided information on the transit technologies proposed for the corridor (Bus Rapid Transit, Light Rail Transit, Commuter Rail and Express Bus) and the various alignments that were under consideration. The public was able to comment on their preferred alignment and transit mode or suggest additional alignments or modes that should be included in the study. Comments were also collected about the current transit system.

General comments gathered at these events include:

- There is a need to develop better east-west circulators in Mount Pleasant and West Ashley.
- Need to introduce express service from the Goose Creek area.



North Charleston Earth Day event booth set-up.

- Many MUSC employees work non-typical schedules on Friday (half-day or short-workday). These workers usually drive on Friday so they can leave earlier than normal. It might be beneficial to operate express service during the midday period or offer an earlier express service trip on Friday afternoon.
- In general, CARTA needs to offer more express service and more park-and-ride locations. There needs to be an express bus directly from Summerville.
- CARTA should operate a route to Summerville and Goose Creek, even if it is every 60 minutes.
- Commuter rail service from Summerville will be great.
- The region needs a commuter rail system if it is reliable, efficient, and cost effective.
- Should provide a park-and-ride facility on James Island to serve the Harborview Community.
- West Ashley needs more or better routes especially with the elderly community in the area. Frequency on West Ashley routes need to be increased.
- Trolleys produce considerable noise pollution.
- Rivers Avenue would be the best alignment for mass transit because it is currently used throughout the day.
- Pedestrian and bike infrastructure needs to be improved.
- Roper Hospital employees benefit from the CARTA express service. CARTA and Roper Hospital need to develop a partnership.
- The MUSC community loves the express service. Express Route #2 works very well.