Pivoting to Accomplish Public Engagement Goals in Transportation Planning
Project Experiences During the 2019-2021 Public Health Crisis
US 278 Corridor Improvements – Beaufort County & Hilton Head Island

- Capacity Improvement Project, including bridge replacement. Follow NEPA process to establish Purpose and Need, Alternatives Analysis and prepare project for design build delivery

- Public Engagement Goals:
  - Traditional NEPA engagement requirements
  - Continue stakeholder and community relationships through meaningful dialogue
How we pivoted:

- Additional emphasis on visualizations and videos
- Stakeholder Meeting format change
  - Provided hard copy materials in advance
  - Personal connections to ensure availability of information and ability to participate
- Provision of “office hours” in the study area
- Additional emphasis on public health during public hearing
US 278 Corridor Improvements

Casting a Light on the Community’s Transportation Future

Project Information

Beaufort County, in coordination with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), is proposing to make improvements to the US 278 corridor between Bluffton and Hilton Head Island, from Moss Creek Drive to Spanish Wells Road. This would improve the final segment of US 278 between I-95 and the Cross Island Parkway. The purpose of this project is to address structural deficiencies at the existing eastbound MacKay Creek Bridge and reduce congestion along US 278 from Moss Creek Drive to Spanish Wells Road.
## US 278 – By The Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Information Meeting (Fall 2019)</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-person attendees</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual attendees</td>
<td>5,979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>6,309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL Comments</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual Comments</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Hearing (Summer 2021)</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-person attendees</td>
<td>355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual attendees</td>
<td>6,159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Hearing Appointments</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>6,546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL Comments</td>
<td>546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual Comments</td>
<td>452</td>
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</table>
I-526 Widening “Lowcountry Corridor”
West and East

- Capacity Improvement Project, including bridge replacements
  Follow NEPA process to establish Purpose and Need, Alternatives
  Analysis and prepare project for design build delivery
- LCC West -> Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
- LCC East -> Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL)
- Public Engagement Goals:
  - Traditional NEPA engagement requirements
  - Maintain project schedule
  - Preserve meaningful dialogue through NEPA process
Project Experience – I-526 Lowcountry Corridor

How we pivoted:

- Additional emphasis on visualizations and videos
- Stakeholder Meeting format change
  - Provided hard copy materials in advance
  - Personal connections to ensure availability of information and ability to participate
- LCC WEST: Provision of appointment based in person meetings in the study area
- LCC EAST: Hosted all virtual public meeting and MetroQuest survey for PEL study
- Additional emphasis on public health during public hearing
- Public Meeting format changed:
  - Online public hearing, live Q&A session, appointment-based meetings at project office
  - Outdoor venues
The Study Limits

After conducting initial traffic and environmental studies, SCDOT found that improvements may be necessary beyond the original project study limits. Because of that, the corridor has been divided into two study areas, I-526 LCC WEST and I-526 LCC EAST.

Below is more information that is specific to each study area.

From Paul Cantrell Blvd/Glenn McConnell Boulevard in West Ashley to Virginia Avenue in North Charleston.

From Virginia Avenue in North Charleston to U.S. Highway 17 in Mount Pleasant.
Fly-Through Videos

- Full Fly Through of the Recommended Preferred Alternative
- Virginia & North Rhett Avenues
- I-26/I-526
- Paul Cantrell Boulevard
## I-526/Lowcountry Corridor – By The Numbers

### I-526 LCC WEST

#### Public Information Meeting (2019)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Attendees</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-person attendees</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual attendees</td>
<td>5,982</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Drop-in attendees</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>6,393</td>
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#### TOTAL Comments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Comments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TotalComment</td>
<td>553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual comments (web, email)</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Public Hearing (Fall 2020)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Attendees</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Virtual attendees</td>
<td>8,176</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Drop-in attendees</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Hearing Appointments</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>8,299</td>
<td></td>
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#### TOTAL Comments

<table>
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<th>Type</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TotalComment</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual comments (web, email, virtual comment session, live chat)</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### I-526 LCC EAST

#### Public Information Meeting (2020) - all virtual

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Attendees</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-person attendees</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual attendees</td>
<td>2,129</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MetroQuest Surveys</td>
<td>3,103</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</table>

#### TOTAL Comments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TotalComment</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual Comments</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**In person community information meetings to be held in October 2021**
ACOG Regional Freight Mobility Plan

Regional freight mobility plan, identifying and addressing infrastructure needs and other challenges related to supporting freight related development pressures and multimodal transportation needs

Public Engagement Goals:
- Non-traditional outreach – largely focused on the freight industry
- Obtain input from the general public about concerns related to freight transportation
- Create and sustain plan champions to support plan implementation
- Create interagency and public-private partnerships and collaboration
Project Experience – Regional Freight Plans

How we pivoted:

- Moved to 100% virtual outreach program
- Hosted Adobe Connect format stakeholder meetings
- Provided recordings and hosted on project website
- Hosted “Palmetto Freight Series” webinar series for stakeholders and other interested parties
- Held one-on-one interviews by phone, opposed to in person

How this performed:

- High participation rate for stakeholder meetings
- Interviews were a larger challenges
- Implementation Champions is to be determined
DOWNLOAD THE FINAL PLAN AND APPENDIXES HERE:

- Regional Freight Mobility Plan
- Freight Plan Executive Summary Brochure
- Freight and Economics Executive Summary Brochure
- Appendix A: Public Engagement Summary
- Appendix B: Best Practices and Freight Technology
- Appendix C: Freight Network Analysis
- Appendix D: Land Use Analysis
- Appendix E: Freight and Economic Analysis

The Appalachian Council of Governments (ACOG) serves as the regional planning organization for the six counties of the Appalachian Region of South Carolina and has a voluntary membership of 43 municipalities and three metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs). The Appalachian Region of South Carolina includes the counties Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Oconee, Pickens, and Spartanburg counties. The Appalachian Regional Freight Mobility Plan will also include all of Laurens County.

This need for a comprehensive strategy to address goods movement in this region results from significant growth in both population and industry.

Figure 4-1: Graphic examples of social media campaign

SURVEY NOW LIVE! THROUGH OCTOBER 23

Figure 3-16: Statewide Freeway Network - Adopt Statewide Multimodal Plan by Aug. 30, https://cdec.org

APPALACHIAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
REGIONAL FREIGHT MOBILITY PLAN

Staff Contact
Lance Estes, AICP
Principal Planner and Project Manager
864-343-9723
lance@acogsc.org

Committee Meeting
Freight Plan Steering and Advisory Committee Joint Session
- Presentation of the Final Plan (07.28.2020): PDF | PPT | Video
- Freight Plan Steering Committee
  - Introduction to Freight Planning (06.04.2020): PDF | PPT | Video
  - Best Practices and Network Assessment (07.46.2020): PDF | PPT | Video
  - Land Use Analysis (08.13.2020): PDF | PPT | Video
  - Goals, Objectives and Performance Measures (09.10.2020): PDF | PPT | Video
  - Economic Impact Analysis (10.08.2020): PDF | PPT | Video
  - Draft Plan Recommendations + Policies and Programs (11.22.2020): PDF | PPT | Video
- Freight Plan Advisory Committee
  - Introduction to Freight Planning (07.30.2020): PDF | PPT | Video
  - Freight Plan Status Update (09.24.2020): PDF | PPT | Video
- CEC/Freight Board
  - Smart Cities and Rail Technical Guide (07.46.2020): PDF | PPT | Video
  - Truck Parking Automation (06.13.2020): PDF | PPT | Video
  - Freight Data and Economic Outlines (09.22.2020): PDF | PPT | Video
  - South Carolina Port Authority Overview (11.02.2020): Video

CDE Smith
What considerations and lessons learned do we carry forward?
Considerations & Challenges

Legal Requirements

- Federal, state, local requirements
- Recording vs. live availability
- Other requirements, such as:
  - Viewing committee member faces / names
  - Vote taking
  - Quorum
Considerations & Challenges

Timing & Messaging

- Time
- Audience
- Message
Considerations & Challenges

Accessibility

- Visual or auditory/ADA requirements
- Language(s) (LEP)
- Ease of understanding
- Computer/Internet access
- Technical experience
Considerations & Challenges

Choose the Right Platform

- Audience
- Access
- Availability
- Technical Familiarity
- Interaction Needed
- Chat
- Screen-share
- Polling

Virtual Public Meeting
Lessons Learned

Large Public Meetings

- Usually pre-recorded
  - Include closed captioning
- Provide materials for download
  - Include metatags on website materials for ADA compliance
- Keep “meeting” open for weeks
- Be clear on how to comment or ask questions
Lessons Learned

Stakeholder/Technical Committee Meetings

- Generally live
- Provide presentation, materials & platform in advance
- Provide a call-in number
- Have “slideshow” backup plan
- Ensure presenters have screensharing capabilities
- Have a clear moderation plan
- Provide “safe place” for in person opportunities
- Provide recording for those unable to attend
Lessons Learned

Promote Your Engagement Opportunities

- Email
- Postcards/Mailers
- Websites/Social
- Radio
- Newspapers
- Newsletters
Lessons Learned

Reaching Traditionally Underrepresented Populations

- Community Groups
- Essential Services
- Collect Ideas for Improvements
Lessons Learned

Be prepared to continue to pivot!

July 22, 2021

August 31, 2021