



Town of Hilton Head Island TOWN COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING Tuesday, April 28, 2026, 3:00 PM Minutes

Call to Order

Mayor Perry called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Council Members present: Alan Perry, Mayor; Alex Brown, Ward 1, Mayor Pro-Tempore; Patsy Brison, Ward 2; Steve DeSimone, Ward 3; Tammy Becker, Ward 4; Steve Alfred, Ward 5; Melinda Tunner, Ward 6

Others Present: Marc Orlando, Town Manager; Curtis Coltrane, Town Attorney; Kim Gammon, Town Clerk; Shawn Gillen, Assistant Town Manager, Brian Kinzelman of MKSK; Jonathan Guy of Kimley-Horn and Jeff Buckalew of Infrastructure Consulting and Engineering

Adoption of the Agenda

Mr. Alfred moved to approve. Ms. Becker seconded. Motion carried 7-0.

Workshop Discussion

Beaufort County Update on William Hilton Parkway Gateway Corridor Bridge Project

Mayor Perry introduced the Workshop Discussion and stated that this Workshop is addressing the status of the scope of the base of the bridge from Windmill Harbor through Spanish Wells. Mayor Perry then turned the meeting over to the Town Manager, Marc Orlando. Mr. Orlando introduced Jared Fralix, Assistant County Administrator of Beaufort County.

Jared Fralix provided a presentation of the status of the William Hilton Parkway Gateway Corridor Bridge Project and a brief to Town Council on the Federal Highway Administration Large Bridge Grant application. Mr. Fralix provided an outline as to how a potential grant award would allow for expansion of the project scope to include replacement of the westbound bridge. Currently, the US278 bridge project scope focuses on replacing the eastbound bridge entering Hilton Head Island in order to eliminate structural deficiencies and provide new bridge and roadway approaches.

With regard to the expected timeline, Mr. Fralix relayed that as to design, the project is 60% complete; environmental documents are being submitted with the Federal Highway Administration, followed by right of way acquisition with respect to Pinckney Island, final design anticipated to be completed in the spring/summer of 2027 followed by requests for bids in the fall/winter of 2027 and an expectation that a contractor will be procured with construction beginning early 2028, and an expected two and a half year build for a summer of 2030 timeline

completion.

Additionally, Mr. Fralix introduced a new website for obtaining information regarding the project: www.SCDOT278BridgeReplacement.com

During discussion, Council raised questions and requested clarification regarding:

- How grant funding may affect the project timeline
- Expected cost of the project
- Possible changes to the level of service
- Whether the scope of the project will address structural deficiencies
- Improvement of access on and off Pinckney Island
- Future lane configuration
- Priority of project assignments by the Transportation and Advisory Committee
- SCDOT and Beaufort County deadline, if any, for a decision to move forward without federal grant money in order to address structural issues
- Possible changes in weight designation for the bridge
- Town and County deadline, if any, by which a decision would need to be made to continue the federal grant application
- Status of a decision by the Federal Highway Administration to award funding as a result of recent meetings in Washington, DC

Mr. Fralix indicated that:

- An answer as to the Federal Grant application has not yet been received; additional improvements made possible by the receipt of grant funding will affect the project timeline by increasing it from two and a half years to three years
- Project cost is \$311,000,000.00 and the funding is in hand for the current project scope
- Currently, there will be no changes to the level of service as to congestion or intersection safety
- Structural deficiencies are addressed as part of the project scope
- Pinckney Island on and off entrance will be improved
- Lane configurations will remain at 2 lanes in each direction
- Transportation and Advisory Committee has an understanding as to widening and resurfacing issues but is unclear as to the intersection and safety issues, and they are working on prioritizing project opportunities to assist in making decisions
- The decision to move forward with the project, absent federal grant money, was made in June of 2025; SCDOT is monitoring the bridge for structural deficiencies and is prepared to make temporary improvements to make sure the bridge remains open
- Per Secretary Powell, improvements are anticipated to keep weight restriction open (no restrictions)
- No timeline as to making a decision to continue the application for the federal grant; further decisions will need to be made by the Town and, in particular, SCDOT, as to the project scope if such monies are granted

- Mr. Fralix met last week with federal delegates, USDOT and the Federal Highway Administration; federal delegates are speaking on the Town and County's behalf, no further updates as to status of the grant award

Mayor Perry thanked Mr. Fralix for his presentation.

Review and Discussion of Proposed William Hilton Parkway Gateway Corridor Master Plan

Mr. Orlando began by stating that the William Hilton Parkway Gateway Corridor Master Plan (the "Plan") reflects prior direction, coordination with Beaufort County and the SCDOT, technical and engineering analysis and public comment and input and presents a path forward which can be implemented. He also expressed that the Stoney Historic Neighborhood is a primary consideration with regard to the Plan with a focus on safety, mobility and system improvements and access while recognizing the community's cultural and historic significance.

The objective of the Workshop and presentation of the Plan is to obtain Town Council policy direction to finalize the Plan and advance public engagement, funding, partnerships, and implementation as well as to confirm alignment with Town Council priorities and to provide direction on advancing the Plan into the next phase. This includes final refinement of the Plan, initiation of broader public engagement, and development of a coordinated funding and implementation strategy.

Mr. Orlando then turned the meeting over to Shawn Gillen, Assistant Town Manager, who introduced and provided background on the team: Brian Kinzelman of MKSK, Jonathan Guy of Kimley-Horn and Jeff Buckalew of Infrastructure Consulting and Engineering.

Mr. Kinzelman and Mr. Guy provided a presentation of the William Hilton Parkway Gateway Corridor Master Plan which included the extent of the project, bridge project overview (as previously presented by Jared Fralix), project objective along with guiding principles and influences, a summary of the improvements, Jenkins Island improvements, Stoney Neighborhood improvements, Old Wild Horse corridor improvements and an analysis of the performance matrix, implementation sequence, project descriptions/cost estimates and additional transportation system improvement projects.

The Guiding Principles (listed below) for the corridor plan were laid-out and specific data was relayed for each Guiding Principle in order to convey an overall better understanding of the Plan:

- Fix the transportation safety issues of the corridor
- Improve the safety and quality of life for residents, businesses and neighborhoods (in particular, the Stoney Neighborhood) impacted by the corridor improvements
- Create a gateway to Hilton Head Island that the region will be proud of
- Improve the hurricane/evacuation route

The Plan, in its current form, sets forth a cost estimate of \$122,800,000.00

Mayor Perry asked for public comment.

Donald Furtado addressed Council regarding his concern that the proposed US278 reconfiguration does not adequately address the US278/Squire Pope Road westbound intersection and suggested a longer merge/acceleration lane to decrease collisions.

Skip Hoagland addressed Council to express his concern that the corridor improvements will alleviate traffic congestion at the north end of the Island but not at the south end. He expressed gratitude for the installment of the existing traffic light at the Windmill Harbor intersection and suggested that a traffic loop at the intersection would further alleviate traffic, and expressed his desire to have Windmill Harbor made a part of the Town of Hilton Head Island.

Steven Baer addressed Council and expressed concern that the Plan is not cost-specific enough and that it needed to include better traffic analysis. He also suggested that more community input is needed and requested more opportunities for the community to work with the project experts and offer suggestions and feedback.

Richard Bisi addressed Council regarding his concern that the corridor plan has not yet been finalized and also suggested that transparency and community input could help in finalizing the corridor plan.

Christopher Cliffe addressed Council and expressed that he was pleased by the presentation but questioned whether SCDOT traffic data was used in connection with the Plan regarding traffic on the Cross Island Parkway. Additionally, he expressed concern that the corridor plan improvements will affect the cultural aspects of the Island relating to visitor impact, as well as concern as to the cost of the improvements.

John Stewart addressed Council and expressed concern that the improvements would attract more tourists to the Island and would not alleviate traffic congestion, in particular with regard to the Stoney Neighborhood.

William Stewart addressed Council and expressed his concern that the Plan does not contain enough specific data regarding improvement dimensions, start points and end points.

Tammy Gore addressed Council with concern that the current motor vehicle count (Average Annual Daily Traffic Volumes) contained in the Plan may be insufficient considering Beaufort County and Jasper County rates of growth and development.

Diederick Advocaat addressed Council regarding implementing a better traffic management system.

During discussion, Council raised the following questions and concerns for consideration:

- Possibility of completing certain projects on an accelerated timeline with funds that will become available in the near future (perhaps funds from the State) to alleviate travel times and safety issues on an expedited basis, with emphasis on the Squire Pope Road/US278 and Wild Horse Road/Spanish Wells Road/US278 intersections
- Whether there has been consideration of construction costs for utility interference during improvement construction (Mr. Buckalew relayed that a contingency of 15% of the flat rate of construction costs was factored in)
- Whether there may be funds in the Town budget earmarked for intersection improvements
- Whether the Town has the capacity to fund some of the intersection improvements and begin some of the intersection improvements immediately
- The need to focus on the William Hilton Parkway Gateway Corridor Master Plan as the key to strategically obtaining funding for the improvements and all mechanisms for finding funding should be used
- Possibility of Beaufort County funding with regard to improvements that do not lie on Town of Hilton Head Island land and the importance of itemizing the cost of those improvements
- Protection of Hilton Head Humane Society and Island businesses during design planning
- Possibility of the SCDOT reducing motor vehicle speed on US 278
- Council's responsibility is to take the time to ensure the corridor project is done correctly, taking as much consideration and advice as they can obtain
- Restricting the use of existing bond money which is slated for property purchase and not for corridor improvements
- Whether the Gum Tree Road/Cross Island Parkway intersection should be included in the Plan for corridor improvements
- What future economic opportunities, if any, might the historic neighborhoods expect as a result of the corridor improvements
- Preparing a list of improvement project priorities which can then be reviewed along with assigned estimated costs
- Meeting timelines in presenting a plan for consideration of funding sources, including State and Federal sources

Mr. Orlando then reported on discussions with the SCDOT and relayed that the SCDOT was supportive of the Guiding Principles and thought that they were well done and addressed traffic flow and safety, and added a place-based value to the community and to the Island. The SCDOT asked about the Town's willingness and ability to help in funding the project as it will take many sources and layers of funding. He shared with the SCDOT that the Town's proposed FY2027 budget will contain some soft costs toward the funding and the SCDOT relayed that they will know more when the Town provides collective support for the Plan.

Mr. Orlando stated that once the Town has confirmed a final Plan, he would like to try to figure out a funding strategy which he can then present to Council with next steps to follow, and

thanked Council for all of their time, guidance, efforts and input.

Public Comment - Non Agenda Items

Mayor Perry asked for public comment.

Skip Hoagland addressed Council regarding use of taxpayer funds.

Richard Bisi addressed Council to recommend a later start time for Council meetings in order that community members who work full time may attend and give feedback.

Brenda Armstrong addressed Council regarding representation of the community.

Adjournment

The Workshop Meeting was adjourned at 6:29 p.m.



Kimberly Gammon, Town Clerk



Alan R. Perry, Mayor

The full recording and a transcript of this meeting can be found on the Town's website at www.hiltonheadislandsc.gov