



Town of Hilton Head Island
TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL WORKSHOP
Monday, June 17, 2024, 5:00 PM
Minutes

Call to Order

Mayor Perry called the workshop to order at 5:00 p.m.

Council Members present: Alan Perry, Mayor, David Ames, Ward 3, Mayor Pro-Tempore; Alex Brown, Ward 1; Patsy Brison, Ward 2; Tammy Becker, Ward 4; Steve Alfred, Ward 5; Glenn Stanford, Ward 6

Also present: Marc Orlando, Town Manager; Curtis Coltrane, Town Attorney; Kimberly Gammon, Town Clerk

Adoption of the Agenda

Mr. Ames moved to approve. Mr. Alfred seconded. Motion carried 6-0.

Report of Findings from Gateway Corridor Project Independent Study

Shawn Colin, Assistant Town Manager, Engineering and Capital Projects provided background information regarding the proposed project. He introduced the following: Jared Fralix, Assistant County Administrator; Thomas Boxley, Executive Director, Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods CDDC; Brian Kinzelman, Senior Principal, MKSK; and representatives of Lochmueller Group.

Mr. Colin proceeded to his presentation.

This project began in 2017 as a need was identified by the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) to improve the eastbound Mackay Creek Bridge that connects the mainland to the island (there are two bridges in each direction). The Town and County requested a more comprehensive approach to address this corridor rather than a series of projects and improvements over several years.

November, 2018 - Sales Tax Referendum was approved containing the following: » \$80 Million would go towards U.S. 278 Corridor Traffic Improvements including repairing and replacing the existing spans of the bridges to Hilton Head Island and the other improvements between Moss Creek Drive and Suire Pope Road. Since that time, Beaufort County as the project sponsor and SCDOT as the Project Manager have involved time and funding to conduct an evaluation of alternatives and prepared a draft Preferred Recommendation following the NEPA process. There has been public involvement, with many workshops, well over 60 public meeting, and opportunities to provide comments.

April, 2021, the Town worked with technical consultants with expertise in engineering,

planning, and design, starting in April 2021 to review the project and draft recommendations to improve the corridor alignment and design elements.

Town Council approved 26 recommendations on October 12, 2021, to be considered within the project to improve the corridor alignment and design elements.

In order to make certain that all reasonable alternatives have been evaluated before a final decision is made. Town Council approved a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Beaufort County on October 4, 2022. The MOA outlined a critical path and steps to take to reach a point for municipal consent consideration.

Town Council created the William Hilton Parkway Gateway Corridor Independent Review Advisory Committee in February, 2023. Appointments made on March 21, 2023.

Town Council approved Request for Proposals and Scope of Work for Independent Study in June, 2023.

August, 2023 to October, 2023 Consultant, The Lochmueller Group, Inc. procured to conduct Independent Study.

October, 2023 CBB Transportation Engineers and Planners, contracted through Beaufort County, presented findings from its Independent Review of the Gateway Corridor.

October, 2023 to present Hilton Head Island Procured Independent Study in progress (10 public meetings of the Committee occurred between November 3, 2023, and June 12, 2024)

December, 2023 – June, 2024 the Lochmueller Group presenting findings and recommendations to the Committee in accordance with the Town Council approved Scope of Work.

The purpose of this project is to address structural deficiencies, identified by SCDOT in 2015 at the existing eastbound Mackay Creek bridge and reduce congestion within the project study area. The Mackay Creek bridge was built during the 1950s (opened in 1956) and is scheduled for replacement as part of SCDOT's bridge replacement program.

Cracks can be seen on the underpinnings of the mainland end of U.S. 278's Karl S. Bowers Bridge over Mackay Creek on Aug. 18, 2015. The span, built in 1956, has been listed among South Carolina's 25 most structurally deficient bridges.

Mr. Colin reviewed the full project extent and reference points.

In order to see the full presentation and preferred alternative video for the WHP Gateway Corridor project please go to the following link:

[William Hilton Parkway Corridor June 17, 2024 Town Council Workshop Presentation \(hiltonheadislandsc.gov\)](https://www.hiltonheadislandsc.gov/William-Hilton-Parkway-Corridor-June-17-2024-Town-Council-Workshop-Presentation)

[HHI Final V5 on Vimeo](#)

Throughout the presentation, Council members held discussion, asked questions and made comments regarding: clarification of the February 18 report – the Committee proposed a mitigation plan for Stoney and Town Council did not adopt it at that time;

confirmation that the guiding principle to consider future transportation alternatives has been completed; inquiry as to notification and involvement process for Jenkins Island and Windmill Harbour regarding the current design; an opinion the proposed project is not aesthetically designed; question as to whether all guiding principles have been met; inquiry and confirmation photos regarding congestion were taken during a.m. workday peak traffic hours; confirmation the environmental assessment prepared by SCDOT was reviewed; inquiry as to a second bridge alternative; inquiry as to the County's position on a second bridge; clarification a second bridge alternative is not part of this specific project; comment that decisions are being made prior to determination being assessed; clarification as to what trees will be impacted; inquiry as to better access to pickleball courts on Old Schoolhouse property; inquiry as to cost of improvements put forth from Hilton Head Island Town Council and confirmation of additional costs for Hilton Head Island as they are not included in the projected cost; confirmation SCDOT and the County did not agree to the costs for the additional items and overruns regarding requests and they will be incurred by local funding; concern over the process for Municipal Consent; concern over what recourse they have after giving Municipal Consent; confirmation that until there is a final design a line item cost estimate cannot be completed; discussion regarding width and medians on the existing bridge and proposed project; confirmation the medians will be concrete barriers; concern over minimal impact of time saved in commuting to the Island; suggestion transportation alternatives need to be discussed; lengthy discussion on the impact on the Stoney Community; and confirmation discussions have been ongoing with business and private property owners; concerns about failure of Lochmeuller to compete all tasks within their scope of services; confirmation that their would be a reduction in project costs when reducing the number of lanes on the bridge sections and through Stoney; expression of great alarm at the display of a slide showing potential "second bridge" locations which had not been seen by Town Council.

Public Comment

John Stewart addressed Council regarding his concern regarding noise pollution and spoke in opposition to the plan.

Linda Harrington addressed Council regarding her opposition to the plan by reading her statement noting they are risking destroying the habitat without proper studies.

Christopher Cliffe addressed Council regarding his opinion that there is no need for a bridge this size with a useless bike lane.

Chris Ruffner addressed Council stating a larger bridge will bring more people and suggested tax incentives and flexible work hours could possibly alleviate the traffic issues.

Frank Babel addressed Council stating the existing bridge is failing and businesses are failing because people cannot get here. If we can't get the bridge fixed, the Town will be in trouble.

Skip Hogland addressed Council regarding allowing too much tourism and the effect it has on the Island. He stated the Town needs to stop promoting Hilton Head Island and the proposed corridor will not solve traffic problems.

Felice Lamarca address Council stating the more we build, the more people will come. She proposed looking at other solutions.

Gray Smith addressed Council in opposition to the plan noting he supports refurbishing the existing bridge.

John O'Toole addressed Council stating the need for empathy for people dealing with the bridge traffic and the need to address an aging infrastructure before a major catastrophe takes place.

David Johnson addressed Council stating the guiding principles need to be revisited.

Steve Robinson addressed Council stating the bridge is not safe and a new one needs built. His opinion is the lights are the issue with traffic.

Angie Hutchins addressed Council regarding the need to be creative due to the job shortage.

Deiderick Advocaat addressed Council stating the advisory committee has yet to make a final recommendation and encouraged Council not to dissolve the committee.

Lynn Greeley addressed Council regarding the crowdedness of Hilton Head Island and the traffic lights do not address the issue of traffic back-up.

Peter Kristian addressed Council and encouraged them to address the growth issue on the Island and implement a moratorium on development.

Richard Bisi addressed Council stating congestion is more than inadequate roads and bridges, but it is due to Island capacity. He suggested a moratorium on marketing the Island.

John Casey addressed Council stating the advisory committee has not yet made a recommendation to Council and suggestions the Town is being pressured by Beaufort County.

Yolanda Cohen McKinley addressed Council stating the negative impacts that will impact the Native Island Community. She expressed concern of their voices not being heard and the negative effects on the quality of life within the Stoney Community.

A woman that did not identify herself addressed Council stating the proposed bridge looks like a bridge built for Interstate 95 rather than as an entrance to Hilton Head Island.

Tom Reitz, Beaufort County Council member, addressed Council and advised them to hold off on Municipal Consent. He stated more answers were needed before a decision can be made.

Memorandum of Understanding with Beaufort County for the William Hilton Parkway Gateway Corridor Project

Ms. Brison raised a question about how to proceed with this item on the agenda and asked that the Town Attorney address the questions. The Town Attorney provided options. ~~Due to the lateness of the hour, this item was not discussed.~~

Ms. Brison also expressed concern regarding the Town Council meeting scheduled for June 20 which included action items regarding William Hilton Parkway. Mayor Perry stated he would take the concerns under advisement to determine the next steps forward.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:49 p.m.

Approved: September 17, 2024


Kimberly Gammon, Town Clerk


Alan R. Perry, Mayor

The recording of this Meeting can be found on the Town's website at www.hiltonheadislandsc.gov