



Transportation Ad Hoc Committee  
June 22, 2021 –4:00 PM  
Zoom Meeting  
2020 Hampton Street, Columbia, SC 29201

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Overture Walker, Chair, Bill Malinowski, Yvonne McBride, Paul Livingston, and Jessica Mackey

OTHERS PRESENT: Allison Terracio, Chakisse Newton, Gretchen Barron, Cheryl English, Michelle Onley, Angela Weathersby, Tamar Black, Leonardo Brown, Ashiya Myers, Michael Niermeier, John Thompson, Ali Eliadorani, Allison Steele, Rasheed Muwwakkil, Elizabeth McLean, Lori Thomas, Randy Pruitt, Kim Toney, Mohammed Al-Tofan, Kellie Odom, Jeff McNesby, Stacey Hamm, Dale Welch, Alicia Pearson, Michael Maloney, Alex Burton and Geonard Price.

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Mr. O. Walker called the meeting to order at approximately 4:00 PM.

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

a. **Regular Session: May 25, 2021** – Mr. Paul Livingston moved, seconded by Ms. Mackey, to approve the minutes as published.

In Favor: Malinowski, Livingston, O. Walker, and Mackey

Not Present: McBride

The vote in favor was unanimous.

3. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA** – Ms. Mackey moved, seconded by Mr. Livingston, to adopt the agenda as distributed.

In Favor: Malinowski, Livingston, O. Walker, and Mackey

Not Present: McBride

The vote in favor was unanimous.

4. **ITEMS FOR ACTION**

a. **Spears Creek Church Rd. Project** – Mr. Niermeier stated staff's request is to have scope built back into the Spears Creek Church Road Widening Project. Staff is recommending the committee consider widening to 5-lanes of the portion of Spears Creek Church Road between Earth and I-20. This would result in a \$2.4M increase over the referendum budget, and take it to \$29M.

Mr. Malinowski noted, on p. 4, it states, "There are currently sufficient funds in the budget for all

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design costs related to this project. The funds for utilities, right-of-way and construction will be requested in future fiscal year budgets.” He inquired if we know there is enough money for these things without any changes.

Mr. Niermeier responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Malinowski inquired about the total number of de-scoped projects.

Mr. Niermeier responded he does not know the exact number, but he believes there are approximately 15.

Mr. Malinowski stated, if we keep adding funds to current projects, it negatively affects the projects lower on the list because there will be no funding for them. If this is needed for one project, we should evaluate all the other plans to see if changes are needed. To add to one, at the exclusion of others, does not seem fair. He inquired if the project could be reevaluated to the projects would be closer to what the people voted on in the referendum.

Mr. Niermeier responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Malinowski moved, seconded by Ms. McBride, to direct transportation staff to review the de-scoped projects, find out what could be done, with the additional funding, to help increase the level of service and safety, and get them as close to what the voters approved in the referendum.

Mr. Livingston made a substitute motion, seconded by Ms. Mackey, to support the staff recommendation.

Mr. Livingston stated he shares Mr. Malinowski’s concerns, but they have to get to a certain stage in the projects to know the actual costs. He noted he was not sure how long it would take to review the de-scoped projects. It may end up delaying the projects, and costing more. He suggested finishing this project, and figuring out a way to move forward with the rest of the projects.

Ms. McBride stated she wanted to review all of the projects to ensure we are being fair. She inquired if there are other resources the County could use to assist in infrastructure projects.

Mr. Niermeier responded there is outside funding available, but it is a matter of knowing about it and having the resources to apply for them.

Ms. Steele noted there were a couple of unique issues on the project. When the de-scope was presented to Council in 2020, there was no preliminary work done. Without that information, they were unable to present any recommendation, as far as re-scopes, like they are recommending now. Staff received the information when the contract was awarded to the engineer in the Spring. The engineer was able to do their preliminary and traffic studies. With this information, staff concluded to recommend Council approve widening this small section of the roadway to 5-lanes. Staff also discovered an existing issue with SCDOT’s road, at the crossing on Spears Creek Church Road. When doing work on SCDOT’s road, SCDOT requires the County bring the road up to SCDOT’s current standards. That in itself will raise the cost of this project above the \$20M estimate, and require staff to request an additional \$5-6 million.

Mr. O. Walker inquired how staff determined which de-scoped projects to re-scope.

Mr. Niermeier responded they have to be looked at on a case-by-case basis and make sure the money is available in the appropriate program category. If there is money that needs to be moved, staff will present it to Council for three readings and a public hearing.

Ms. Steele stated she took a look at projects there were over referendum, and the projects under referendum that did go through de-scoping. She noted they had a lot of traffic, safety and crash data to go by, and some preliminary design done. Staff is fairly confident they would like to stick with the de-scope plans for the majority of the projects. They would only look to re-scope if there was something failing or a project had a significant hazard that needed to be addressed.

Mr. Malinowski inquired if in March/April the data was available or when they got the data.

Ms. Steele responded they did both during the Spring.

Mr. Malinowski noted it would take only 2 – 3 months to look at all the other projects. He inquired if the \$5 – 6 million is for the new re-scope, or would it be \$5 – 6 million more if they stay with the original de-scope.

Ms. Steel responded they are requesting an additional \$9M over the de-scoped amount. If they went with the original re-scope they would still need to come back and request an additional \$5 – 6 m due to the existing condition of the roadway.

Mr. Livingston noted, for this project, when they talked about when they engaged in de-scoping, was the fact they may need to come back and look at some projects. That is why they did not allocate all the funds. This request did not surprise him.

Ms. Mackey noted she understood, and agreed with Mr. Malinowski's concerns about evaluating the de-scoped projects. She does not think it is necessary to stop or not move forward with this project. She believes moving forward with this project was the right thing to do based on the information they have, and knowing they want to provide the best level of service on that road for the constituents. She noted we have to remember that things change, and the projects may change. We need to be open to new information being provided for these projects.

Ms. McBride stated, when they did the de-scoping, it was out of necessity because of funding, and to ensure the other projects had an opportunity to receive some funding based on the referendum.

Mr. O. Walker inquired where the funding came from.

Mr. Niermeier responded the funding is from the Penny Tax funds.

Ms. English inquired about the prioritization, and how it was done. She noted her district always seems to be last on the list.

Mr. Niermeier responded there were different methodologies for different categories. The dirt roads follow the ordinance. Resurfacing is based on a pavement index that was created, and ranked, worst to first. The widenings, greenways, and sidewalks have a different methodology. He noted he would be willing to discuss it in detail with Ms. English.

Mr. Malinowski inquired where on the original list did list project fall.

Mr. Niermeier responded it was closer to the bottom (14 out of 17).

Mr. Malinowski inquired if some of the roads that were de-scoped were ahead of this project on the original priority list.

Mr. Niermeier responded there three (3) that were not built yet.

Mr. Malinowski inquired if this project was jumping higher on the list.

Mr. Niermeier responded Hardscrabble Road was a State project, where the funding was provided, so it is considered to be complete. Clemson Road Widening and Leesburg Road Widening were State projects where the County will be providing the referendum amount of \$4M to the State. The North Main Street Widening was a partnership with the City, and utilized Federal grant funding.

Ms. Steele noted all the other projects, with the exception of Pineview, have been awarded, and the design started, before this project was awarded, thus making this project the last on the list, and the last one to be started.

Ms. Newton inquired where Lower Richland Boulevard Road Widening fit in.

Mr. Niermeier responded it was below the Spears Creek Church Road.

In Favor: Livingston, O. Walker and Mackey

Opposed Malinowski and McBride

The vote was in favor.

5. **ADJOURNMENT** – The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:44PM.