



Town of Hilton Head Island

William Hilton Parkway Gateway Corridor Independent Review Advisory Committee Meeting

**Wednesday, January 10, 2024, 1:00 PM
1 Town Center Court, Hilton Head Island, SC
Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers**

The meeting can be viewed on the [Town's YouTube Channel](#), the [Beaufort County Channel](#), and Spectrum Channel 1304.

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Approval of the Minutes**
 - a. Regular Meeting Minutes of December 12, 2023
- 3. Unfinished Business**
 - a. General Observations Noted During the Site Visit
 - b. Status of Growth Rate Determination
 - c. Update on Modeling Capabilities
 1. Approach to Alternatives
- 4. Appearance by Citizens:** Citizens who wish to speak on the matters being discussed during the meeting may do so by submitting the [Request to Speak form](#) no later than the day prior to the meeting.
- 5. Adjournment**

FOIA Compliance: Public notification of this meeting has been published, posted, and distributed in compliance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act and the requirements of the Town of Hilton Head Island.

In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"), the Town of Hilton Head Island will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in its services, programs, or

activities. Auditory accommodations are available. Any person requiring further accommodation should contact the Town of Hilton Head Island ADA Coordinator as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before the scheduled event.

Municipal Association of South Carolina (MASC) Civility Pledge:
“I pledge to build a stronger and more prosperous community by advocating for civil engagement, respecting others and their viewpoints, and finding solutions for the betterment of my city or town.”



Town of Hilton Head Island
**William Hilton Parkway Gateway Corridor
Independent Review Advisory Committee**

Tuesday, December 12, 2023, 10:00 a.m.

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Mayor Perry called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM. Present were: Mayor Alan Perry, Diederik Advocaat, Charles Walczak, Edward C. Warner, Jr., and Willie Young. Henry Ford was absent.

2. FOIA Compliance

Public notification of this meeting has been published, posted, and distributed in compliance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information act and the requirements of the Town of Hilton Head Island.

3. Roll Call

See Call to Order above.

4. Approval of Minutes – November 3, 2023

There being no changes, the minutes from the November 3, 2023 meeting, a motion to approve was made by Advocaat, seconded by Young. The motion to approve the minutes of the November 3, 2023 meeting was approved by a vote of 5-0.

5. Appearance by Citizens

Public comments concerning agenda items were to be submitted electronically via the Open Town Hall portal. Comments have been posted and these have been provided to the Committee Members and are attached to the Minutes and made a part hereof. Mayor Perry noted that while every Committee meeting is not video recorded, it is audio recorded, and today's meeting is being recorded through Microsoft Teams and will be posted to the Town's website and on the Project website, as well. Recordings from previous meetings can be obtained through a FOIA request to the Town.

6. Unfinished Business

a. Presentation of Initial Findings of Existing Project Reports

Shawn Colin, Assistant Town Manager – Community Development, reminded everyone that the Town has executed a contract with Lochmueller Group, Inc. to conduct an independent review for the Gateway Corridor Project on the Cross Island route down to Sea Pines Circle, on the business route down to Whooping Crane and Indigo Run Drive and look at alternative assessments, assumptions in traffic modeling and forecasting, and to make some recommendations related to the overall project that is right for Hilton Head Island. Lochmueller is intended to be a true and independent evaluator of the project and bring forward recommendations from their engineering and corridor planning team. They will review initial findings today, and with input from the Committee, they will give guidance on how to narrow the alternatives from a very wide position down to a narrow position. This will enable them to do the in-depth modeling that needs to occur, to understand

performance costs, and identify the capabilities and alternatives that should be considered further. He introduced his team participating in the meeting today both in person and virtually, and the Lochmueller team both present and appearing virtual.

Nate Nohren, Project Manager, introduced his team and outlined each of their responsibilities. He updated the Committee on what had transpired since the November 3rd meeting, including receipt of additional traffic counts and incorporated them into previously received counts to develop those into a very accurate report based on 2023 volumes. He described in detail the next steps to be taken in the modeling process. Colin noted the scope that was approved by the Committee, and Town Council had requested the outcome and data from the adaptive traffic signal project be included into the evaluation. This will ensure that based upon this new technology, any impact to traffic operations would be captured. That information is being obtained now to be able to incorporate into the modeling capability, and we are making sure that we are doing exactly what the Committee and Town Council asked for from that standpoint.

b. Presentation of Initial Findings of Travel Demand Model Assumptions

Sharif Ullah, Lochmueller team member, appeared virtually and updated the Committee on the preliminary findings of the in-depth analysis of the existing travel demand models reviewed. A PowerPoint presentation outlined the models and studies reviewed and the differences found. Lochmueller felt the models citing the traffic growth rate at the bridge cannot be used. Other options were suggested and time and cost associated with each option. However, with information provided by the Town on accommodation tax received, restaurant revenues, parking revenue collected, etc., Ullah felt confident that a model could be created which would be correlated with all the independent variables together to identify how traffic flow at the bridge is being influenced.

c. Discussion of Criteria for Alternative Evaluation

Kate Swinford, Lochmueller team member, suggested narrowing down the vast array of possible alternatives available for this corridor. She pointed out that in the study process, Lochmueller is not currently able to definitively identify which exact alternatives to analyze, so a better understanding from the Committee is needed to determine desirability or opposition to various alternatives.

She listed four different major themes and suggested discussion as needed on each of these individually.

The first alternative is a potential corridor alignment or alternative involving grade separation, meaning an overhead bridge component, vertical separation between the roadway and some component, such as what you traditionally see on an interstate as an interchange, or it could be only certain movements and not the entire intersection. This is considered in traffic analysis when you have a very congested corridor, but the Town may not desire to impede the beautiful views of surrounding nature or waterways.

The second alternative involves left turn treatments, where left turning vehicles pass their original point of turn and potentially do a u-turn to come back and make a right turn or cross the road ahead of where you normally would make the left turn and then make the left turn in about the same vicinity as you would today.

The third alternative would be for additional right-of-way acquisition, perhaps in specific areas to protect communities or the environment.

The fourth alternative is access management, which means how or where people are allowed to make a left out onto the corridor or a left from the corridor onto a side street. This could include turning right or left from any direction for full access, or re-routing vehicles onto a different path to access different parts of the corridor.

Swinford indicated there is no alternative that does not include at least one of the four she outlined to reduce congestion. Therefore, if the Town is serious about improving the feel of the corridor with less congestions and delays, she needs to understand which of these alternatives are acceptable to explore further so that the result is an analysis that is a collaborative effort that balances preferences from the Town, the Committee, and the community.

A lengthy discussion followed among the Members, Colin, and Swinford. Swinford indicated that the professional opinion provided by Lochmueller will not be swayed by the Committee preferences, however, the final report will reflect a true collaboration among the Town, the Committee, and Lochmueller.

Colin reminded the Committee that the scope of work for Lochmueller was to narrow down to these four alternatives, but the evaluations of intersection treatments will be based on what Lochmueller and the Committee come up with as reasonable alignments, and the feedback from the Committee will enable Lochmueller to proceed with the simulations, taking into account throughput and traffic simulation, costs, and also safety, environmental and community impacts. He indicated the scope of work could be modified to add more work if needed. He expressed confidence that the scope of work will provide the answers needed for the Town. Taking the comments today from the Committee, Lochmueller has the confidence to narrow the alternatives, which was the feedback they needed.

Swinford indicated the comments provided from the Committee gives them the confidence needed to narrow the alternatives, which was the feedback they needed. She outlined the comments received as follows: overpasses will be considered, but are not preferred; u-turns should not included; and right-of-way property takings need to be kept to a minimum at all possible, specifically in the Stoney community, and minimized along the remainder of the corridor.

i. Throughput and Traffic Simulation

Discussed as a part of 6c.

ii. Costs

Discussed as a part of 6c.

iii. Safety, Environmental and Community Impacts

Discussed as a part of 6c.

d. Timeframe for Modeling Capabilities

Swinford indicated that this week Lochmueller is collecting site data, both at specific intersection locations, and by driving the corridor to better understand the Adaptive Modeling Signal that was just implemented. She also indicated they are also in the process of acquiring additional growth-related data such as accommodation taxes, parking revenue, new building permits, etc. that will enable them to complete the quick model to estimate a confident growth rate. Once this week's data is completed, the existing conditions models can be completed, with the next step being a future no-build to measure future improvements, and finally altering the no-build models into configurations that are

perceived improvements for the future – and those are the future alternatives that everyone is excited to see.

Mayor Perry asked for comments from the audience.

Stephen Baer asked that peak demand times be used and not average demand, that Town-owned land is located in the area of interest for possible right-of-way expansion, and options to reduce the bridge size should be considered.

Joseph Kernan expressed concern that the streets and intersections on the Island do not have enough flexibility to distribute the traffic, and additional lanes coming onto the Island will not solve the congestion. He suggested examining the management of the overall situation, which includes the development of the traffic patterns before they reach the Island, focusing on the morning pattern. He suggested reviewing the alternative of a second bridge and causeway.

An unidentified citizen commented on the State's view of Hilton Head Island as a "cash cow," and the final cost should not be a deterrent. He asked for assurance to the public that this study will be a truly independent study of all political considerations. Colin responded that the Committee and Town Council approved the scope of work for the consultant and the Committee is making sure that the consultant follows the scope of work independently. They should be aware of previous efforts, but not let it bias their goal.

Frank Babel, a bicycle and pedestrian advocate, outlined his background over the last 10 years as Co-Chair of the Bicycle Advisory Committee, and various other organizations. He shared with the Committee the plan proposed by the SCDOT for the bicycle and pedestrian pathways between Moss Creek Drive to Spanish Wells Road. He expressed concerns about the 10' pathway along US 278 and the pathway at the intersection of Gumtree and William Hilton Parkway. Babel presented a copy of the SCDOT letter referencing the plan, a copy of which is attached to and made a part of the minutes.

Christopher Cliff noted that history is a poor basis on which to formulate projections, and the unreliability of historical data for growth and traffic.

Steve Robinson thanked the consultants for their presentation and the Committee for its work. He expressed his opinion on the reduction of visitors to the Island in 2023 from 2022, just based on traffic. He urged that the data base should include the increase in census from new home permits, note the taxation of residents vs. non-residents, and use information from restaurants as to location of workers.

Committee Members discussed what would occur at the conclusion of the project study, the Sea Pines studies, and funding aspects.

e. New Business

a. Monthly Meeting Dates

A regular meeting date going forward was proposed for the second Wednesday of each month with a timeframe of between 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM. There being no objections, the meeting dates for 2024 was approved.

f. Adjournment

Mayor Perry adjourned the meeting at 11:20 AM

Submitted by Lynn Buchman, Administrative Assistant

APPROVED:_____

Please note that a quorum of Town Council may result if four (4) or more of their members attend this meeting.