



Richland County Council
 Transportation Ad Hoc Committee
MINUTES
 April 23, 2024 – 2:00 PM
 Council Chambers
 2020 Hampton Street, Columbia, SC 29204

COMMITTEE COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT: Overture Walker, Chair; Paul Livingston, Don Weaver, and Jessica Mackey.

Not Present: Yvonne McBride

OTHERS PRESENT: Gretchen Barron, Chakisse Newton, Michelle Onley, Michael Maloney, Angela Weathersby, Anette Kirylo, Patrick Wright, Ashiya Myers, Susan O’Cain, Stacey Hamm, Tamar Black, Lori Thomas, John Thompson, Kyle Holsclaw, Leonardo Brown, Jackie Hancock, Jennifer Wladischkin, Maddison Wilkerson, Nathaniel Miller, Thomas Gilbert, and Todd Money

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Councilman Paul Livingston called the meeting to order at approximately 2:00 PM.

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

a. March 26, 2024 – Mr. Livingston moved to approve the minutes as distributed, seconded by Mr. Weaver.

In Favor: Livingston, Weaver, Walker, and Mackey

Not Present: McBride

The vote in favor was unanimous.

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

In Favor: Livingston, Weaver, Walker, and Mackey

Not Present: McBride

The vote in favor was unanimous.

4. **ITEM FOR DISCUSSION/ACTION**

a. Transportation Road Map Projects and Principles – Mr. Ray Jones, Parker Poe, thanked Mr. John Black, Transportation Penny Advisory Committee – Chair, for doing all that has been asked of the committee to assist with moving the ball forward. In addition, Council has given First Reading to the Penny Ordinance. The hope is that the Transportation Ad Hoc will provide input today that can be used to move the penny forward.

Mr. Jones outlined the “**The Funnel**”

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 Transportation Needs

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 Define Principles to determine which Projects will be completed to address Transportation Needs

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Projects must then be grouped by referendum Category so Council can determine how to divide the penny

Mr. Jones noted the three (3) categories of projects are community investment projects, county advancement projects, and COMET enhancement projects.

Project Principles – County Council established guidelines to allow flexibility in how and where the proceeds of the next transportation penny will be used to fund the County’s transportation needs.

What's the Purpose of the Principles?

Penny Ordinance	After Approval of Referendum
Transform Needs into Actionable Projects	Enable Administration and Transportation Department to manage the Penny program
Put Projects into Categories	Prioritize projects
Determine the portion of the penny to assign to each Category	Regular reports to Council
Show major projects within each category as Exhibit to Ordinance	Enable input from Council on unaddressed projects and emerging needs

Development of Principles:

- Availability of Matching Funds
- Unfunded from prior penny
- Number of residents affected
- Cost vs. number of residents affected
- Public Safety impacts
- Addressing blight through better access
- Regular needs review
- Alignment with County's strategic plan
- Addressing an emerging need
- Impact on economic development
- Impact on commercial growth
- Impact on underserved communities
- Keep a certain portion undesignated for emerging needs

The Transportation Penny Advisory Committee is working to put priorities around the principles. Not all of the principles can be weighted in the same way. If you do, you will not be in a position to make decisions about projects.

The guiding document entitled "Richland County, South Carolina 2024 Penny Projects, Principles, and Categories" will begin to take shape and breathe life and ultimately be reported out to Council at the June 25th work session. The document would then be approved by resolution at the July 16th Council meeting, which will also be the Third Reading of the Penny Ordinance.

The ordinance itself checks all the boxes of what the statute requires. It describes the project categories. The exhibit to the ordinance assigns major projects to categories. The ordinance will always point back to the principle document, which is the guidepost for the penny and how to manage it going forward.

Ms. Mackey expressed that we should not allow the potential receipt of State funds to dictate a project being prioritized further down the list.

Mr. Jones made note of Ms. Mackey's observation.

Ms. Newton inquired if one of the principles could also be that receiving matching funds could elevate a project instead of delaying it.

Mr. Jones responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Weaver inquired if we have received feedback on the percentage the COMET will be requesting.

POINT OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE – Mr. Walker acknowledged that Mr. Maurice Pearl, COMET – Executive Director, was in the audience.

Mr. Jones stated the COMET Board is working toward an ask for the projects and an amount. The COMET funding is for operations. It is also to pay for capital improvements associated with the mass transit system. We have requested a list of items they would like to have funded through the Penny, including additional operations or routes for consideration by Council. It is his understanding the percentages will be discussed at several different meetings. The Transportation Ad Hoc Committee will meet again before Second Reading to determine the proposed percentages.

County Attorney, Patrick Wright, noted that Council will have to determine the percentages. Specifically, regarding the COMET, Council will also have to determine the number of years.

Mr. Walker pointed out that his understanding was that the recommendation would be that projects were not enumerated in this ordinance like in the 2012 referendum. Instead, we would recommend a resolution where the projects are enumerated.

Mr. Jones replied philosophically, we want to leave you with flexibility. Between now and Second Reading, we are going to define what the "projects" are. He suspects it might include

“resurfacing and repaving secondary roads in the county.” We are talking about more broad strokes and will always refer to the needs assessment, which is part of the projects and principles document approved by resolution. There may be some countywide projects that are so impactful that the Council may determine they need to be mentioned in the ordinance. We will give Council leave to mention them without being bound to them. Likewise, for those wondering what COMET enhancement projects there are, we would want to include them in the ordinance so people can see them.

b. Penny Project Progress Update—Mr. Michael Maloney, Transportation Director, gave an overview of the projects.

- *Bluff Road Improvement Phase II* – The project is in design.
- *SERN II – Rabbit Run Sidewalk* – SCDOT is currently reviewing 80% of plans; utility coordination effort is ongoing.
- *Trenholm Acres/Newcastle NIP* – SCDOT encroachment process has begun.
- *Lower Richland Blvd. Widening* – The project is in design; and awaiting right-of-way acquisition.
- *Polo Road Widening* – Getting final comments completed for right-of-way acquisition.
- *Shop Road Widening* – Had technical comments dealing with pedestrian crossings and certain islands. Currently going through final technical reviews and the right-of-way acquisition. Evaluations and appraisals of properties have begun.
- *Crane Creek Greenway* – Awaiting Army Corp of Engineers permit. The final construction plan will be sent to the City of Columbia for review and approval.
- *Polo Road/Windsor Lake Greenway* – Preliminary work on this project has begun. They have found some issues; these concerns will be coming back to the committee for discussion.
- *Alpine Road Sidewalk (Two Notch Road to Percival Road)* – The project is under construction.
- *Resurfacing Package “S”* – Completed and closed out the package.
- *Blythewood Road Widening (Syrup Mill Road to I-77)* – The project is under construction and should be completed in April 2025.
- *Blythewood Road Area Improvements* – This includes the widening and improvement of McNulty Street from Main Street to Blythewood Road and Creech Road from Blythewood Road to Main Street.

Ms. Mackey inquired if adding the signal would be a further cost to the county and, if so, if it would put us outside of the allotted contingency amount.

Mr. Maloney indicated there is an additional cost, but it does not exceed the contingency amount.

- *Garners Ferry Road and Harmon Road Intersection* – The project is complete; the final punch list has to be completed. It has been inspected and is operational.
- *Screaming Eagle Road and Percival Road Intersection* – The project is complete, and its punch list has been completed.
- *Broad River Corridor NIP*—The project is to cut down on the number of mid-block driveway entrances and to focus on better intersection control. The project is currently in design.
- *Decker/Woodfield NIP* – Various parts of the project have been completed. They received authorization to proceed with the Brookfield Sidewalk, which goes from Decker Boulevard to Richland Northeast High School.
- *Kelly Mill Road* – The project was launched in June 2023. Sidewalks are critical to this project because they provide access to Round Top Elementary and Blythewood Middle Schools.
- *Sunset Drive Sidewalk (Elmhurst Road to River Drive)* – There was a groundbreaking event for this project in March 2024. Construction will begin the first week of May 2024.
- *Atlas Road Widening* – This project is in the bidding process. Council recently approved Phase II of the project.
- *Crane Creek NIP* – The project is in design.
- *Dirt Road Paving Package “O”* – The project is underway. They are currently constructing on Nathan Ridge Lane in District 10 and then will begin on Jackson Road. Howard Coogler Road is also under construction. This project stopped due to a concern regarding wetlands; therefore, they will extend the project to the end of the county-maintained area by putting in low volume-paving. Sara Matthews Road in District 7 is also a part of this paving package.
- *Dirt Road Paving Projects Years 1 & 2 and Years 3 & 4* – These are projects they are currently working on. Some of which have been completed. The Transportation Penny website (www.richlandpenny.com) will be updated to note which projects have been completed.

Ms. Mackey asked when you go on the website if it tells you which roads are completed and, if not completed if it shows when the road is slated to start.

Mr. Maloney indicated it does not show on the forecast. It shows which roads are completed and which ones they are working on. They are reviewing the list of roads dropped for consent/denial or other right-of-way issues. There is a plan to utilize an

appraiser now. He noted that there is a push to complete the roads in Districts 2 and 10 by the end of summer.

Ms. Mackey asked if Mr. Maloney would be able to share an end date for Years 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Mr. Maloney indicated he should be able to work out which roads are going forward by January 2026.

Ms. Mackey inquired if any processes could help get the roads paved quicker or if there was anything that limited us moving forward.

Mr. Maloney responded there are no processes to aid them in moving forward. He noted they are currently using six different consultants to work on this.

Mr. Wright mentioned there were some misconceptions about the county not paving roads and the issues with obtaining right-of-way. Until about a year ago, one or two people on the road could stop a project, even if the majority wanted it.

Ms. Mackey requested that citizens be contacted regarding their dirt road sooner rather than later.

Mr. Weaver indicated several members of the Conservation Commission suggested it might be wiser to extend the Gills Creek Greenway to Timberlane.

Mr. Maloney stated they will need commercial and residential right-of-way for the Gills Creek Greenway. The City of Columbia signified they would assist with this. There is a preliminary design for this; they would be willing to extend the greenway if there is enough funding.

Mr. Brown expressed that right-of-ways are critical to the overall program. He does not think we have adequately explained to people that even though we have identified projects, ultimately, where there are landowners where funding has to take place, it affects the availability of funding on some of these projects. If a landowner does not want to participate in or support the project, the landowner does not have to sell the property. In some instances, the county has honored the citizens' desire not to proceed. The county does not routinely take people's property.

- *Broad River Road Widening* – The project is set to begin construction in approximately a year. They are in right-of-way acquisition. They have met with all of the property owners except for one new property owner. It was noted the memo of understanding for the utility easement process with the City of Columbia is not working properly.
- *Pineview Road Widening* – This project is in land acquisition.
- *Spears Creek Church Road Widening* – Awaiting authorization to begin land acquisition.
- *Clemson Road and Sparkleberry Lane Intersection* – Recently, there was an updated public information meeting. There is an upcoming meeting to talk about the project.
- *Gills Creek Greenway* – There was a negotiation by the project manager with the technical college to allow them to utilize their parking lot for the greenway.
- *Rocky Branch Greenway* – The project is currently in right-of-way acquisition.
- *Percival Road Sidewalk (Forest Drive to Decker Boulevard)* – This project just received authorization to proceed to construction. They are meeting with the Office of Small Business Opportunity to establish their SLBE goals so the project can be put out to bid by Procurement.
- *Bull Street and Elmwood Avenue Intersection* – This project is complete, except for its final punch list.
- *N. Main Street Widening* – This project has been completed.

Mr. Maloney noted the chart on the next to last page of the agenda shows the work remaining to be completed with the existing penny.

Mr. Livingston requested a breakdown of the projects to be completed in 2025, 2026, and 2027.

5. **ADJOURNMENT** – Mr. Livingston moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Mackey.

In Favor: Livingston, Weaver, Walker, and Mackey

Not Present: McBride

The vote in favor was unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:00 PM.