



Location and Design Public Hearing

for the proposed

Johnnie Dodds Boulevard Improvements Project

Charleston County, South Carolina
December 17, 2008

Welcome to the Public Hearing

Charleston County Government welcomes you to the public hearing on the proposed roadway improvements along Johnnie Dodds Boulevard (U.S. Route 17) from the Arthur Ravenel Jr. Bridge to the Mark Clark Expressway (I-526) in Charleston County, South Carolina. The purpose of this hearing is for the public to review the Environmental Assessment document and impacts of the proposed roadway improvements.

This public hearing will consist of an informal session from 6 p.m. to 7 p. m., where the public has an opportunity to view the Preferred Alternative and interact with project staff on a one-on-one basis. At 7 p.m., a short presentation will be made by the project representatives, followed by a formal opportunity for the public to comment on the proposed project, which will last until 8 p.m. If you wish to speak during the formal portion of the public hearing, please sign up at the sign-in table from 6 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Those who are interested in continuing to view the exhibits during the formal presentation and comment period may feel free to do so.

Displays representing the proposed project have been placed around the room and project staff (identified by nametags) are available to assist citizens and answer questions. You have also been given this public hearing booklet, which is intended to provide you information about the proposed project and its potential impacts. If you wish to provide comments about this project, you can use the comment form that has been provided to you. You can submit comments on the project in the following ways:

- You can complete the comment form provided to you when you signed in and deposit it in the “comment form box” located in the public hearing room this evening.

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Points of Interest

- The purpose of this hearing is to allow you to review the proposed design of the Preferred Alternative.
- You can make comments by several different methods explained in this booklet.



- You can verbally record comments in the designated area of the public hearing room or during the formal portion of the hearing.
- You can mail your comment form to the address listed on the form. **Comments must be postmarked by January 7, 2009.**
- You can submit comments online at the Charleston County RoadWise Web site. Go to www.ccroadwise.org and follow the “contact us” link to submit comments. **Comments must be received by January 7, 2009.**
- You can call the Charleston County RoadWise Office at (843) 329-0500 or toll-free at 1-866-885-4506 and provide your comments over the phone to our staff.

Charleston County RoadWise staff will evaluate your comments and suggestions on the Preferred Alternative, prior to completing the final design, and send you a response letter. Additionally, all comments received will be made part of the official public hearing transcript, which will be available for review along with the project plans at the Charleston County RoadWise Office, located at 4401 Belle Oaks Drive, Suite 105, North Charleston, South Carolina, 29045, and online at www.ccroadwise.org.

We would like to thank you for your attendance and participation.

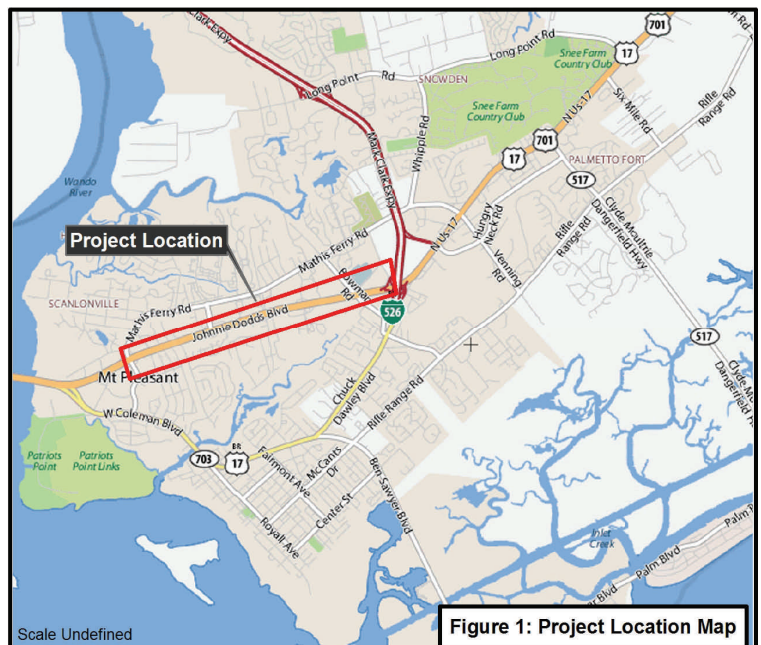
Project Introduction and Description

The project area is located on Johnnie Dodds Boulevard (U.S. Route 17) from the Arthur Ravenel Jr. Bridge to the interchange with the Mark Clark Expressway (I-526) in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, (refer to Figure 1).

An Environmental Assessment has been prepared pursuant to the *National Environmental Policy Act of 1969* (NEPA), as amended, and in accordance with U.S. Federal Highway Administration regulations found in 23 CFR Part 771 and Council on Environmental Quality Regulations found in 40 CFR Part 1500.

The purpose of the proposed project is to improve traffic flow and safety through the Johnnie Dodds Boulevard corridor while maintaining local access and enhancing bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

The Town of Mount Pleasant has experienced substantial population growth, with the average annual growth rate being 4.5 percent from 1990 to 2000 based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau. With the increase in population, daily traffic volumes have also increased on Johnnie Dodds Boulevard. By 2030,





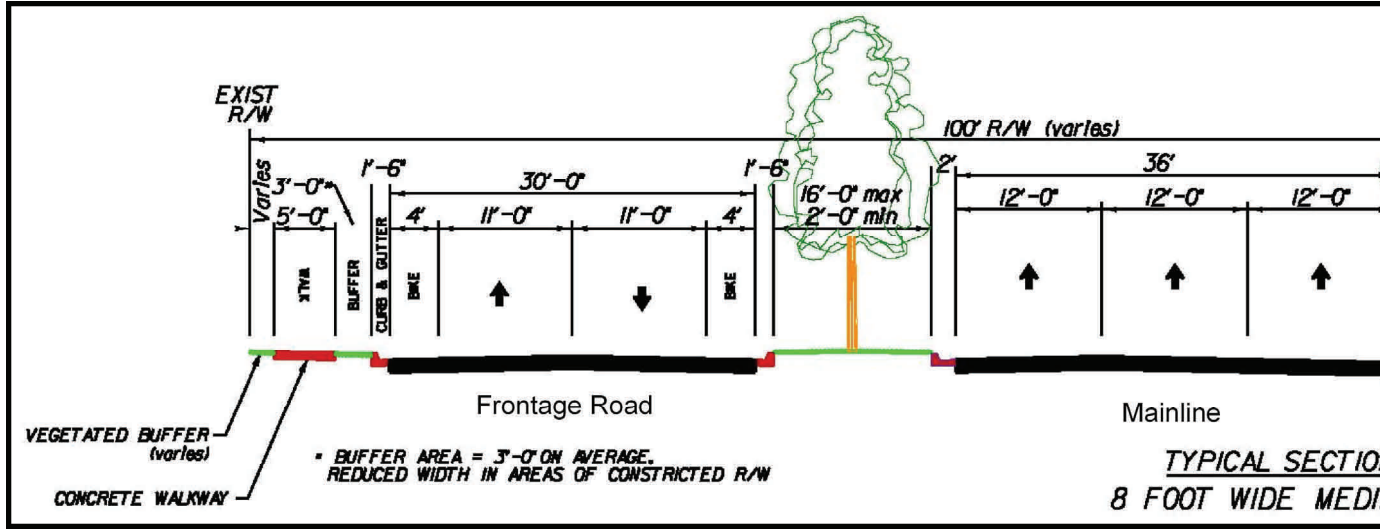
the number of vehicles using the roadway is expected to increase by 21,500 vehicles per day on Johnnie Dodds Boulevard at Houston Northcutt Boulevard, and by 23,900 vehicles per day on Johnnie Dodds Boulevard at Bowman Road. Increased congestion is anticipated to occur at the major cross streets along Johnnie Dodds Boulevard, as well as along the frontage roads intersecting with the cross streets.

Johnnie Dodds Boulevard and its frontage roads also lack adequate bicycle and pedestrian access. Currently, a very limited amount of sidewalk and no bicycle lanes exist within the corridor, and pedestrians and bicyclists must use the edges of frontage roads, which may create a dangerous situation, especially during times of heavy vehicular congestion or when it is dark. The U.S. Federal Highway Administration, S.C. Department of Transportation, Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments, and Charleston County recognize the need to provide safe accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians, where applicable, when upgrading existing roads or constructing new roads.

The Preferred Alternative would include widening Johnnie Dodds Boulevard to six lanes with standard left- and right-turn lanes where warranted. It would also include additional lanes and potential future traffic signals at the frontage road/side street intersections, as well as widening side streets between the frontage roads and Johnnie Dodds Boulevard; installation of curb and gutter; addition of four-foot bike lanes on both sides of the frontage roads; and the addition of a five-foot wide sidewalk along the frontage roads. In addition, pedestrians and bicyclists wishing to cross Johnnie Dodds Boulevard would have safe crossing accommodations at McGrath Darby Boulevard, Anna Knapp Boulevard, South Shelmore Boulevard, and Bowman Road. The project design was coordinated with the Town of Mount Pleasant's current land use/redevelopment plan for the corridor. Intersection improvements along Johnnie Dodds Boulevard would include a right-in/right-out intersection at McGrath Darby Boulevard; standard-signalized intersections at Houston Northcutt Boulevard/Mathis Ferry Road, South Shelmore Boulevard, Dragoon Drive, and Anna Knapp Boulevard; and an interchange at Bowman Road where Johnnie Dodds Boulevard would cross over Bowman Road at a different height, so that the two roads would not directly intersect at the same elevation (also known as a grade-separated interchange).

The Preferred Alternative would improve the Johnnie Dodds Boulevard Corridor in the following ways:

- **Widening the mainline of Johnnie Dodds Boulevard to six lanes and adding turn lanes where needed;**
- **Adding turning lanes to the intersections of frontage roads with cross streets, as well as traffic signals, where warranted;**
- **Widening cross streets between the frontage roads and the mainline;**
- **Installing curb and gutter;**
- **Adding four-foot bike lanes on both sides of the frontage roads;**
- **Installing a five-foot sidewalk along the frontage roads;**
- **Adding a right-in/right-out at the intersection of McGrath Darby Boulevard with the mainline;**
- **Installing standard-signalized intersections at Houston Northcutt Boulevard/Mathis Ferry Road, South Shelmore Boulevard, Dragoon Drive, and Anna Knapp Boulevard and the mainline; and,**
- **Constructing a grade-separated interchange at Bowman Road and Johnnie Dodds Boulevard.**



The typical section, shown in Figure 2, depicts what the Preferred Alternative is expected to look like for the mainline of Johnnie Dodds Boulevard. The proposed project would accommodate the additional two travel lanes to the inside of the existing roadway, which would reduce the center median width from the existing 36 feet to 8 feet. This would maximize the usable space on the outside of the center lanes for landscaping and transit uses, which would minimize impacts to the frontage roads, reduce right-of-way impacts, and move pedestrians further away from the main stream of traffic on Johnnie Dodds Boulevard.

The grade-separated interchange (compact urban diamond) proposed at Bowman Road would require an approximately 150-foot long, single-span structure carrying Johnnie Dodds Boulevard over Bowman Road. The frontage road relocation would be designed to align with relocated Hospital Drive, which is associated with the expansion of East Cooper Medical Center. This would benefit the interchange design by providing greater separation between the ramp and the frontage road, as well as consolidating the number of road connections to Bowman Road in the vicinity of the interchange. Relocating the I-526 ramp would increase the merging distance by approximately 130 feet, which would improve safety.

Schedule

The final design and right-of-way plans are scheduled to be completed in March 2009, and right-of-way acquisition is scheduled to begin in May 2009. A contractor would be selected to construct the project, and construction would begin while the right-of-way acquisition process continues. The Town of Mount Pleasant, Charleston County, and the S.C. Department of Transportation will be involved to assure that the design meets the function and intent of the Preferred Alternative.

There will be a strong emphasis on maintaining access to businesses along the Johnnie Dodds Boulevard corridor during construction. Project construction is expected to begin the summer or fall of 2009. The proposed completion date would be one of the factors used to evaluate proposals from the design-build contractors.

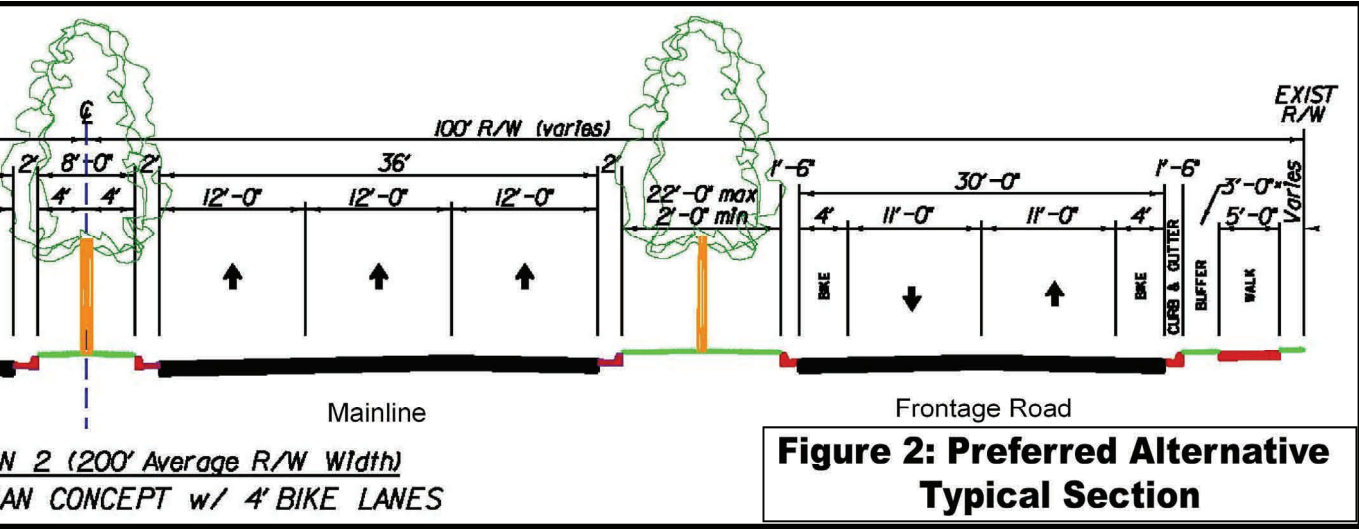


Figure 2: Preferred Alternative Typical Section

Alternatives

Based on previous studies and input received both at the July 17, 2007, public meeting and from the Mount Pleasant Town Council, five Build Alternatives were identified and evaluated in the 2008 Traffic Analysis. The results of the traffic modeling allow for Level of Service (LOS) comparisons to be made between corridor alternatives that are based on the same future traffic projections. The five Build Alternatives were then evaluated in the Environmental Assessment along with the No-build Alternative, to determine which would best meet the Purpose and Need of the proposed project.

As presented in the Environmental Assessment, Alternative E was determined to best fit the project's Purpose and Need of improving traffic flow and increasing safety on Johnnie Dodds Boulevard, while maintaining local access and enhancing bicycle and pedestrian facilities (see description in the "Project Introduction and Description" section of this booklet).

Two additional roadway projects are planned immediately adjacent to the Preferred Alternative: the Hospital Drive Realignment project and the Bowman Road Widening project (includes a bridge over Shem Creek). The design of the Preferred Alternative would continue to be coordinated with these adjacent projects.

The Level of Service (LOS) is a ranking system of how well traffic flows on a roadway or at an intersection, with A being the best for traffic operations without many delays and F being the worst with lengthy delays.



Summary of Environmental Impacts

An Environmental Assessment was conducted to determine the probable environmental and social impacts that would occur if the Preferred Alternative was constructed. The Environmental Assessment was approved by the S.C. Department of Transportation on November 25, 2008, and by the U.S. Federal Highway Administration on November 26, 2008. Copies of the document are available for review at the public hearing. In addition, copies of the document are available at the Mount Pleasant public library and at the main branch of the Charleston County public library. For those who have Internet access, the document can be viewed electronically on the Charleston County RoadWise Web site at http://www.ccroadwise.org/johnnie_dodds.html.

Based on the Environmental Assessment, no significant environmental or social impacts are anticipated as a result of the Preferred Alternative. A summary of the probable impacts to the environment is provided in the following section.

Land Use: No impacts are anticipated to land use in the project area. The Preferred Alternative was designed to complement the land use redevelopment plan for the Johnnie Dodds Boulevard corridor being completed by the Town of Mount Pleasant.

Farmlands: The land in the project area is no longer considered farmlands due to urbanized development; therefore, no impact is anticipated to farmlands from the Preferred Alternative.

Cultural Resources: No historic properties would be affected by the Preferred Alternative.

Section 4(f) and 6(f) Resources: The Preferred Alternative would not impact public lands, parks, or recreation areas because none exist within the project area.

Socioeconomics and Demographics: The Preferred Alternative would not impact environmental justice populations. No business or residential relocations are anticipated, but minor acquisitions would be needed along the existing right-of-way, totaling approximately eight acres. The Preferred Alternative would not adversely impact travel patterns, disrupt planned or established communities, or cause long-term changes in employment in the project area.

Noise: 55 residences and businesses would be impacted by noise by the Preferred Alternative in 2030, which includes 4 residences, 2 hotels, and 49 businesses. Of these residences and businesses, the four residences, one of the hotels, and eight businesses are currently being impacted by noise from the existing roadway. If the proposed project is not constructed, these same residences and hotels would still be impacted by noise from Johnnie Dodds Boulevard in 2030, as well as an additional 18 businesses. A noise barrier analysis was completed for the Preferred Alternative and it was determined that a noise barrier would not be feasible.

Air Quality: No impacts are anticipated from the Preferred Alternative.

No significant impacts are anticipated from the Preferred Alternative to environmental and social resources in the project area.



Hazardous Material Sites: One potential hazardous material site would be impacted by the Preferred Alternative. Further investigation would be done at this site prior to construction occurring near the site.

Water Quality: The Preferred Alternative is not likely to impact groundwater or surface water quality in the project area, or impair drinking water sources.

Wetlands: Approximately 0.09 acre of wetlands would be impacted by the Preferred Alternative. Further coordination would occur with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control—Ocean and Coastal Resource Management during the permitting phase of the Preferred Alternative.

Uplands: No natural uplands exist within the project area; therefore, the Preferred Alternative is not likely to impact upland communities.

Federally Protected Species and Wildlife: The Preferred Alternative is anticipated to have no effect on federally protected species and minimal impacts to wildlife due to the absence of habitat within the project area.

Essential Fish Habitat: The Preferred Alternative is not likely to impact essential fish habitat in Shem Creek.

Floodplains: The Preferred Alternative is anticipated to have 3,560 feet of encroachment into the 100-year floodplain. Detailed hydrologic studies and further coordination would occur with the Charleston County Stormwater Manager and the Federal Emergency Management Agency during the detailed design phases of the Preferred Alternative.

Wild and Scenic Rivers: No wild or scenic rivers exist in the project area; therefore, the Preferred Alternative would have no effect on these resources.

Indirect and Cumulative Impacts: Indirect and cumulative impacts to resources in the project area are not likely as a result of the Preferred Alternative.

Right-of-way Procedures

Once the right-of-way plans have been completed, they will be furnished to the right-of-way agent assigned to the project. The agent's first job is conducting title research to determine the ownership of each parcel of land shown on the plans. The agent will then contact the property owner to verify ownership and explain how the project will affect their property. An appraiser will determine the fair market value of the property to be acquired. Anyone with further questions regarding right-of-way procedures may contact Mr. Ken Burger, by phone at (843) 329-0050 or by mail at Charleston County RoadWise, 4401 Belle Oaks Drive, Suite 105, North Charleston, South Carolina 29405.

Title VI Compliance

Charleston County Public Works, in response to nondiscrimination requirements set forth by the Federal regulations issued by the U.S. Department of Transportation to effectuate Title VI of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964*, complies with all regulations in this regard.



Any person who believes he/she has been discriminated against because of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin under a program receiving Federal Aid has the right to file a complaint with Charleston County. The complaint shall be filed in writing and forwarded to the following person:

Ms. LoElla Smalls
Charleston County Title VI Coordinator
4045 Bridge View Drive, Suite B-288
North Charleston, South Carolina 29405

The complaint should be submitted no later than ninety days after the date of the alleged act of discrimination. It should outline as completely as possible the facts and circumstances of the alleged act of discrimination, and should be signed by the person making the complaint.

Comments

You may comment by filling out the form provided to you and dropping it into the comment box during the public hearing; recording your comments verbally at the private recording station; leaving a comment at the www.ccroadwise.org Web site; leaving a comment with Charleston County RoadWise by calling (843) 329-0500, or Toll-Free at 1-866-885-4506, or by mailing in the enclosed comment form to the following address: TranSystems, 4390 Belle Oaks Drive, Suite 220, North Charleston, South Carolina, 29405. **Comments must be postmarked by January 7, 2009.**

Once again, thank you for attending the public hearing, your input on this project is greatly appreciated.