



Summary of Public Hearings and Public Comments

Prepared for
South Carolina Department of Transportation,
Charleston County, and the Federal Highway Administration

October 2010



**Mark Clark Expressway Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and
SCDOT's Recommended Preferred Alternative
Summary of Public Hearings and Public Comments
October 11, 2010**

Five **Public Hearings** were held as follows:

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| • 6:00 PM Tuesday, August 31, 2010 at Burke High School | Attendance - 171 |
| • 6:00 PM Thursday, September 2 , 2010 at Burke High School | Attendance - 93 |
| • 6:00 PM Tuesday, September 7, 2010 at West Ashley High School | Attendance - 210 |
| • 6:00 PM Wednesday, September 8 , 2010 at James Island High School | Attendance - 430 |
| • 6:00 PM Thursday, September 9 , 2010 at St. John's High School | Attendance - 326 |

Total Attendance - 1,230

*154 attended multiple
hearings, for a total of 1,076
individuals

Summary of Comments

Comments on the project were received beginning July 28, 2010 and ending September 30, 2010. Comments were received via email, US mail, the project toll-free hotline number, vocal comments delivered at the public hearings, written comments left in comment boxes at the public hearings:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------|
| • Email | 1,310 |
| • Hotline | 2 |
| • Mail-in | 169 |
| | |
| • Burke, Aug. 31, Written | 55 |
| • Burke, Sept. 2, Written | 38 |
| • West Ashley, Written | 59 |
| • James Island, Written | 113 |
| • Johns Island, Written | 89 |
| | |
| • Burke, Aug. 31, Vocal | 28 |
| • Burke, Sept. 2, Vocal | 19 |
| • West Ashley, Vocal | 25 |
| • James Island, Vocal | 52 |
| • Johns Island, Vocal | 45 |

*169 vocal comments given at the meetings were delivered by 128 individuals.

Additionally, 260 emails and phone calls to Charleston County Councilwoman Colleen Condon were submitted to SCDOT for consideration. Of the 260 emails, 94 were duplicates of emails sent to SCDOT. 166 unique emails were processed. Of these, 6 were of a personal nature to the councilwoman, not related to the project.

2,170 comments were received from 1,657 individuals.

Summary of Individual Comments

Of the 1,657 individuals submitting comments:

- 1,033 (62%) were opposed to the extension or a build option;
- 522 (32%) were in support of the project/ the extension, and;
- 102 (6%) had questions or suggestions about the project

Those *in support* of extending the Mark Clark Expressway stated that the project would:

- help to alleviate traffic congestion;
- contribute to safer roads;
- reduce travel times;
- aid in hurricane evacuation;
- contribute to economic development for the region;
- support future growth, and;
- provide important regional infrastructure.

Those *opposed to* the project as presented by SCDOT were concerned that it would:

- increase traffic congestion;
- impact traffic Folly Road and at the intersection of the James Island Connector and Calhoun Street;
- increase development and thus, add traffic;
- impact wetlands/marshes and communities and contribute to noise;
- devalue property, and;
- cost too much for a minor benefit.

Those *opposed to* the project suggested:

- improving existing roads instead of building the project (378);
- additional consideration of mass transit and light rail along the I-26 corridor (209), and;
- additional consideration of the New Way to Work alternative (73).

Petitions:

In addition to individual comments, four (4) petitions were received during the comment period:

- A petition was received at the September 2 hearing at Burke High School, with 77 names opposed to the project; an additional 55 names were received at the September 8 hearing at James Island High School, and 203 additional names were received via US mail.
- A petition was mailed from Savannah HOA with 19 names having questions/concerns about the impacts of the project;
- A petition was mailed with 14 names in support of the project;
- A petition was mailed with 169 names in support of the project;

Local Municipal Input:

The Town of Kiawah Island submitted a letter in support of the extension of the Mark Clark Expressway.

The Town of Seabrook Island submitted a letter in support of the extension of the Mark Clark Expressway.

The Mayor of the Town of James Island submitted a letter that stated he is not in support of utilizing Up on the Hill Road to access Central Park Road.

The Town Council of James Island passed a resolution by a vote of 3 to 2 reaffirming the resolution passed in 2009, which stated opposition to extending I-526 in any form through James Island town limits.

The City of Charleston is pleased with the SCDOT's Recommended Preferred Alternative being a variation of the parkway proposal submitted by the city [Alternative 18] and provided suggestions for improvements to the Recommended Preferred Alternative [Alternative G].

*The City of Folly Beach previously submitted a resolution opposing the proposed project (April 28, 2009). This letter was not received during the public comment period, but the City's input was included in Appendix I of the DEIS.

Frequently heard comments regarding traffic issues:

Both supporters and non-supporters expressed concern that parkway speeds were too low and not enforceable and that numerous traffic lights would further congestion. These individuals (147) suggested that the project should be built to interstate standards.

59 were in favor of constructing an overpass at Folly Road to improve traffic flow from the parkway to the James Island Connector and to improve flow along Folly Road.

Comments expressed concern that traffic congestion would increase on Folly Road and at the intersection of the James Island Connector and Calhoun Street, causing a bottleneck at peak times (115).

Frequently heard comments regarding neighborhood/community concerns:

West Ashley:

- The Savannah Homeowners Association (HOA) expressed concern over loss of revenue to the HOA from the loss of 16 units. They had several questions, particularly regarding compensation to the HOA and to individuals; what types of barriers of a noise reduction or safety nature might be installed; and what is the timeline of the project. (14 individual comments)

Johns Island:

- The Bend at River Road HOA expressed concern about: the proximity of the Connector Road A and the noise it might generate; changes in traffic along River Road affecting their ingress/egress; impacts to property values; and the elevation of the road and effects to privacy.
- Shoreline Farms HOA expressed concern at the increase of traffic along Maybank Highway. In addition to the HOA letter, 2 individuals from Shoreline Farms also provided comments echoing these concerns.
- Headquarters Island HOA requested that the alignment not curve towards Headquarters Island but rather stay equidistant between the island and mainland Johns Island. This would put the alignment behind a natural buffer, thus reducing noise and visual impacts. In addition to the HOA letter, 21 individuals from Headquarter Island also provided comments echoing these concerns.

James Island:

- Riverland Crossing HOA expressed concern at the increase of traffic on James Island; impacts to the environment; disruption to homeowners; and a statement that the project was a waste of money. In addition to the HOA letter, 3 individuals from Riverland Crossing also provided comments echoing these concerns.
- The Regatta HOA expressed concern or opposed Up on the Hill Road being upgraded to provide access from the parkway to Central Park Road. They requested that access to the parkway be moved between the adjacent movie theater and the US Post Office, if a connection was needed. The letter also expressed concern over encroachment and loss of community amenities, privacy issues, noise impacts, and loss of property value. They also suggested that the parkway should remain an at-grade facility, including the intersection of the parkway and Folly Road, in order to reduce noise impacts. In addition to the HOA letter, 93 individuals from the Regatta also provided comments echoing these concerns. *84 individuals did not want Up on the Hill Road to be used as access to Central Park Road.*

Comments regarding community issues received from individuals:

West Ashley:

- Battery Haig residents (15) expressed concern that the height of the roadway was too low, increasing noise and creating privacy issues.
- Waterway South residents (57) expressed concern about impacts to the surrounding marsh, impacts to their views of the marsh, and a significant increase in noise.
- Residents (32) in the West Ashley neighborhoods located between US 17 and the Stono River expressed concern about East Shore Lane being cut off, making access to nearby Oakland Elementary School difficult, and involving a more circuitous route along US 17. This would also force traffic onto Piper Drive, which currently floods. These residents were also concerned about noise, drainage, and pollution impacts.

Johns Island:

- Rushland Plantation residents (19) expressed concern about the proximity of Connector Road A and increased traffic on River Road.

James Island:

- Terrabrook residents (7) are concerned about the proximity of the parkway, noise impacts, and property values declining.